

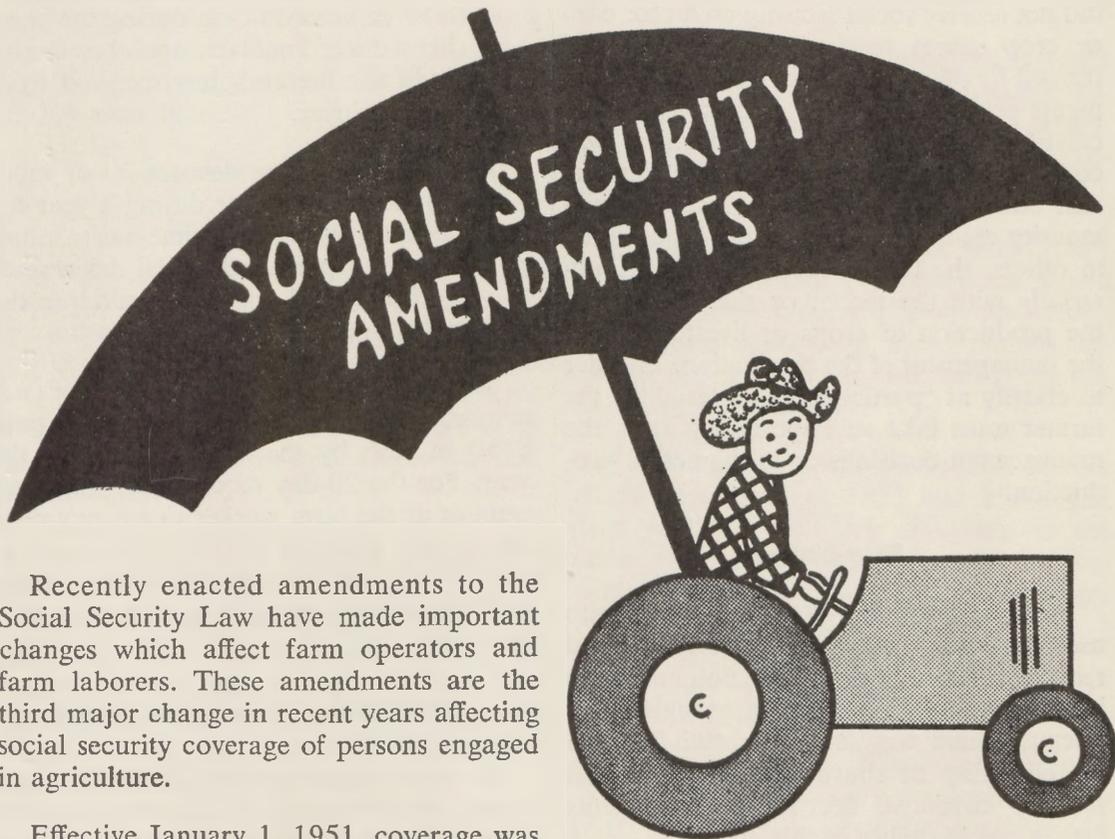
AGRICULTURAL NEWS LETTER

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Recently enacted amendments to the Social Security Law have made important changes which affect farm operators and farm laborers. These amendments are the third major change in recent years affecting social security coverage of persons engaged in agriculture.

Effective January 1, 1951, coverage was extended to farm workers for the first time; at the beginning of 1955, farm operators, or self-employed farmers (including tenants), were covered. The 1956 amendments changed the methods by which farm operators can report their earnings for social security credit and broadened the coverage extended in 1951 and 1955.

Since they were first covered by the law, self-employed farmers reporting on a cash basis have had optional methods of figuring their net earnings for social security credit. The 1956 amendments slightly revised the optional methods, and for the first time, farm partnerships and individual farmers keeping books on an accrual basis are permitted to use the revised optional methods. For taxable years ending on or after Decem-

ber 31, 1956, self-employed farmers may report net earnings for social security purposes by one of the following optional methods.

- ★ If gross income from agricultural self-employment does not exceed \$1,800, the farmer may count as net earnings either his actual net earnings or two-thirds of the gross farm income.
- ★ If gross farm income is more than \$1,800 and net farm earnings are less than \$1,200, the farmer may use either his actual net earnings from farming or \$1,200.
- ★ If gross farm income exceeds \$1,800 and net farm earnings are \$1,200 or

more, the actual amount of net farm earnings must be used.

Income from Land Rented to Others

Prior to the 1956 amendments, a farmer did not receive social security credit for cash or crop shares received as rent for land farmed by others. However, the new amendments provide that cash or crop shares received from tenants or share-farmers will count for social security purposes under certain conditions. In order to receive social security credit for income from land rented to others, the farmer must *participate materially* with the tenant or share-farmer in the production of crops or livestock or in the management of the production. In order to classify as "participating materially," the farmer must take an important part in the management decisions or in the actual production.

Share-farmers

Since the beginning of 1955, a farmer who used farm land owned by someone else and received a share of the production may have been covered by social security legislation. Because there was some uncertainty as to the eligibility of share-farmers for social security coverage, the 1956 amendments clarify the eligibility of this group.

A share-farmer is considered a self-employed farmer for social security purposes if, under an ordinary crop-sharing arrangement, the crops or livestock produced are divided between the share-farmer and the landlord with the share-farmer's income depending upon the total amount produced. Thus, the share-farmer is considered to be self-employed even if the landowner takes an active part in the farm's operation. This rule is effective for all taxable years ending after 1954.

Farm Worker Coverage

Prior to 1957, a farm worker received social security credit if he was paid \$100 or more in cash wages during the calendar

year. Under the new law, beginning with 1957, earnings from farm work will count toward social security benefits under either of the following conditions.

- ★ If a farm employer pays a farm worker \$150 or more in cash during the year, the worker receives social security credit for the cash pay received from that employer.
- ★ If a farm worker devotes 20 or more days to an employer during a year for cash pay figured on a time-basis, rather than on a piece-rate basis, the worker receives social security credit for the cash wages received.

The total number of days worked does not matter, provided the farm worker is paid \$150 in cash by the employer during the year. For the 20-day requirement, the total amount of the farm worker's cash pay does not matter, provided he works for one employer on 20 days or more for cash pay based on some unit of time, such as an hour, a day, or a week.

Farm Labor Crews and Crew Leaders

Wages paid to members of a labor crew—such as those used to pick cotton and harvest fruits and vegetables—may be covered by the Social Security Law. In the past, it sometimes has been difficult to determine whether the farmer for whom the work was being done was the employer of the crew members or whether the crew leader was their employer. The new amendments to the Social Security Law make it easier to determine whether the farmer or the crew leader is the employer.

- ★ A crew leader is the employer of his crew members unless he and the farmer have entered into a written agreement specifying that the crew leader is an employee of the farmer.
- ★ A farm operator is the employer of the crew workers if he has entered into a written agreement with the crew leader

stating that the operator is an employer of the crew leader.

Foreign Agricultural Workers

Under the new amendments, agricultural work performed by laborers admitted on a temporary basis to the United States from any foreign country will not be covered by the law after 1956.

Social Security Contributions

Effective January 1, 1957, contributions under the Social Security Law will be increased. Self-employed farmers will pay 3¾ percent of their net earnings, and both farm employers and farm workers will contribute 2¼ percent. Previously, contribution rates were 3 percent for the self-employed farmer and 2 percent for both farm employers and farm laborers.

Fat Improves Turkey Feed

Turkeys utilize feed more efficiently and grow faster when small amounts of supplementary fat are added to their rations, according to results of tests at the Research Center of the United States Department of Agriculture at Beltsville, Maryland.

Two varieties of turkeys—Broad Breasted Whites and Beltsville Small White poults—were used in the tests. The birds were fed an all-vegetable-protein diet, plus 8 percent of stabilized lard.

The Broad Breasted Whites receiving supplementary fat consumed an average of 13.4 pounds of feed per bird during the 10-week period and reached an average weight of 5.6 pounds, while a control group of the same variety ate an average of 15.1 pounds of feed and weighed an average of 5.1 pounds at the end of the 10-week period.

The early maturing Beltsville Small White poults receiving supplemental fat in their rations consumed an average of 17.9 pounds of feed per bird and weighed an average of 6.2 pounds at the end of a 13-week feeding

period. A control group which received no extra fat ate an average of 20.1 pounds of feed each and weighed an average of 6.1 pounds at the end of the 13-week period.

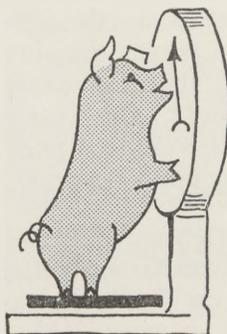
Cover Crops Boost Peanut Yields

If sufficient moisture is available, peanuts will produce higher yields when grown in rotation with cover crops, according to experiments conducted at Oklahoma A. & M. College in 1955.

In the tests, peanut yields were 1,504 pounds of clean nuts per acre when grown without a cover crop, 1,655 pounds following rye as a cover crop, 1,775 pounds following rye and vetch, and 1,836 pounds following vetch alone.

Under poor moisture conditions, peanut yields were lower in 1953 and 1954, and there was no significant difference in the yields, regardless of whether or not the peanuts were grown in rotation with cover crops.

Free-Choice Versus Dry-Lot Pig Feeding



Findings recently were reported on experiments conducted by the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (at Brookings) to learn more about the relative merits of free-choice feeding of pigs compared with feeding mixed rations.

Results of the experiments, which were made both in dry lots and on pastures, show that —

1. Pigs fed in dry lots require slightly less feed per 100 pounds of gain when fed free-choice.
2. The main advantage of a ground mixed ration compared with free-choice feeding appears to be a slight increase in rate of gain.

3. Less protein supplement is consumed in the mixed rations, but the cost of grinding and mixing offsets the difference in feed costs.

4. The use of oats to replace a third of the corn in the ration fed to pigs on pasture lowered the feed cost.

5. Pigs fed in dry lots gained slightly faster and more efficiently than those fed on pastures.

6. No advantage was found in pelleting the rations for pigs fed in dry lots.

Undesirable Trees Rob Texas Farmers

Since trees are more deeply rooted than other plants, they take a larger share of annual rainfall than do cash crops, such as cotton, corn, grain sorghums, and grass. G. O. Hoffman, Extension range specialist of Texas A. & M. College, points out that a mesquite tree requires about 2,000 pounds of water to produce a pound of leaves and bark, while production of a pound of cotton takes only 800 pounds of water and output of a pound of grass requires 600 pounds of moisture.

Trees along a fence row increase the difficulty of fence maintenance, prevent plowing close to the fence, and — if thorny — cause flat tires. A single tree would offer greater wildlife protection if it were cut and piled so that the animals could get under the brush.

A mesquite tree 20 feet high and 10 inches in diameter can prevent cotton and grain sorghums from growing on 7,650 square feet of land, or one-sixth of an acre.

Great strides are being made in agriculture, but there is still much room for progress. Our crops are menaced by approximately 30,000 known diseases; about 10 percent of our meat production is lost through livestock diseases and parasites; rodents and insects damage enough grain to feed about 10,000,000 hogs; and about one-fourth of some varieties of our fruits

and vegetables spoil before reaching the consumers' tables.

Publications

New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station, State College:

Controlling Bindweed in Cotton, Bulletin 397, by J. Wayne Whitworth.

Care and Use of Milking Machines, Press Bulletin 1120, by R. M. Porter, D. D. Miller, and S. R. Skaggs.

1517 BR, A Blight-Resistant Strain of Acala Cotton, Press Bulletin 1132, by L. M. Blank and R. E. Hunter.

When to Apply Anhydrous Ammonia to Cotton, Press Bulletin 1135, by M. R. Pack.

Comparison of Four Nitrogen Fertilizers on Cotton, Press Bulletin 1137, by H. E. Dregne.

Cytospora Apple Canker Disease, Press Bulletin 1138, by John E. Chilton.

Dairy Cattle Feeding and Management, Circular 262, by E. E. Anderson.

New Mexico 11-1, A New Strain of Alfalfa for New Mexico, Research Report 6, by Glen Staten and M. L. Wilson.

Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Stillwater:

Alfalfa vs. Prairie Hay for Dairy Calves, Bulletin No. B-443, by S. D. Musgrave, J. B. Williams, C. L. Norton, and W. D. Gallup.

Greenfield Bermuda-Grass, Bulletin B-455, by W. C. Elder.

Copies of these bulletins may be obtained by request to the respective experiment stations.

The *Agricultural News Letter* is prepared in the Research Department under the direction of J. Z. ROWE, Agricultural Economist.