HOPKINS FINDS DROUGHT INTENSIFYING RELIEF AND REHABILITATION NEEDS

Distress is piled on distress by the extensive drought now prevailing in the Midwest, Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, finds in a survey of relief conditions throughout the stricken area.

"The families who lose out in the present drought," Administrator Hopkins points out, "will be added to the large numbers still under care of Federal agencies because of previous droughts. Many families already had lost their resources, sold cattle until the herds could be reduced no more, and piled up a mountain of debt. This is particularly true of the Dakotas, eastern Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, western Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and northwest Texas."

A survey of the drought area by the Division of Social Research of the Works Progress Administration, with the cooperation of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture, includes detailed reports on the economic effects of the droughts of 1934 and earlier years on farmers in typical sections of the Great Plains region. The survey was undertaken to determine the basic causes of the widespread rural distress in the drought-stricken areas, with the ultimate purpose of assisting in the development of rehabilitation programs adapted to the different areas.
"Most of the Great Plains area faces its third major drought in six years," Administrator Hopkins explained. "Some of the regions, particularly those in central and western North and South Dakota, have experienced low crop yields since 1930. In practically all of the areas the severe drought of 1934 intensified the distressing rural economic conditions which had been accumulating over a period of many years. The extent of wind erosion and crop damage has varied widely in different sections of the stricken area, and a few sections, favored with normal rainfall over a long period, have escaped soil and crop ravages altogether. This was true, for example, of sections of the Red River Valley, in North Dakota, in part of southeastern South Dakota, and, to some extent, in southeastern Nebraska."

In other areas, such as in sections of the North Plains of Texas, wind erosion has caused damage to as much as 95 percent of the crop land, according to the Division of Social Research reports. A large proportion of this land is so badly damaged as to be of questionable future value. Much of the crop land in sandy loam areas should be shifted immediately to permanent grass land. The map of the condition of pasture land released by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, June 19, 1935, indicates focal points of poor and very poor pasturage in large portions of the same states that have already suffered from previous droughts. Pasture land in some localities is less than 25 percent of normal, and the shortage of feed crops as a result of successive drought years has caused a drastic reduction in herds. Reductions of 40 to 50 percent in herds have been reported in many areas while in Hale County, Texas, they have been reduced more than 60 percent.
"In the counties surveyed, the farmers' income had been so greatly reduced by successive crop failures since 1930 that large numbers of them had turned to public agencies for financial assistance," said Mr. Hopkins. "In some counties, such as Divide, North Dakota, 90 percent of all the farmers in the county were on relief in 1935. In many areas a large percentage of farm operators had gone on relief even before the severe drought and crop failure of 1934, indicating that the farmers had no reserves with which to supplement their abnormally low incomes of 1931, 1932, and 1933.

"Some drought areas, notably the Dakotas, have been in a distressed condition for six years as a result of droughts, grasshopper plagues, dust storms, soil erosion and low crop prices. Whole communities of people in South Dakota who had been able to withstand former disasters were forced to accept emergency relief in 1934. Of the total number of farm operators who went on relief between July and October 1935, all but four percent in North Dakota and five percent in South Dakota had been on relief rolls at previous times, which indicates the general economic insecurity of farmers in the two states at the present time.

"Further evidence of long-standing rehabilitation and relief needs throughout the drought area is shown by the fact that cases receiving public assistance this spring (including relief, Works Program employment, and Resettlement emergency grants) were almost as numerous as in 1935. For the five subregions combined, 22 percent of all rural families received some form of public assistance in February 1936 as compared with 20 percent in February 1935. From this it appears that before the drought of 1936 much dependency remained from previous poor years.

"The variation in rural distress is apparent from the differences in the proportion of rural families receiving some form of public financial
assistance in the five areas. In the Southwestern Great Plains Area (eastern Colorado, New Mexico, and western Texas and Oklahoma), 35 percent of the total families were receiving assistance in February 1936, as compared to 33 percent in the previous year. The Spring Wheat Area (North Dakota, northern South Dakota, and eastern Montana), had 26 percent of its total rural families on relief in February 1935, and in February of this year the percentage had increased to 31 percent. The proportion receiving rural relief in the Western Corn Belt (eastern South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas), was 13 percent in both February of this year and last year. The rural families on relief in the Winter Wheat Area (Kansas, western Oklahoma, and the Texas Panhandle), decreased from about 20 percent in February 1935 to 15 percent in February 1936. The Northern Great Plains Area (western South Dakota, eastern Montana, western Nebraska, and eastern Wyoming), still had 21 percent of its rural relief families receiving public assistance in February of this year, as compared to 30 percent last year."

In all of the drought areas surveyed, 1934 crop sales brought in almost no revenue, and in some counties during that year approximately three-fourths of the farmers' cash income in some counties was derived from government payments for livestock or production control.

Many farmers who have succeeded in staying off the relief rolls have done so by selling their livestock or by incurring heavy debts, the reports show. About 40 percent of the land was found to be mortgaged in nearly all the drought counties, with the proportion reaching 54 percent in Dallam County, Texas, in the Panhandle region. Tax delinquencies in all areas surveyed were high, with the percentage of delinquencies amounting to 62 percent of the farm land in Cheyenne County, Colorado, and over 70 percent in Divide County, North Dakota.
Feed and seed loans indicate the varying extent to which drought has been felt in the different areas. In Moody County, South Dakota such loans averaged less than $100 per farm while they averaged as high as $866 per farm in Divide County, North Dakota.

The W.P.A. reports indicate that mistaken methods of land use over many years are in a large measure responsible for the distress in the drought area. Periods of dryness and low crop yields recur frequently and temporary relief will not protect farmers from future visitations of distress. Both the immediate program of relief, and a long range program of regional rehabilitation, are being plotted on the basis of improved land use policies.

The severe depletion in the livestock numbers, necessitated by feed shortages or inadequate income from crops, has left a high percentage of drought area farms seriously understocked. Immediate financial assistance to enable farmers to rebuild their herds as well as to buy feed should occupy an important place in the present relief program. Even if rain comes it will be too late to produce feed crops this year.

Immediate financial assistance also is needed for grass seed advances so that farmers can shift present eroded or unprofitable crop land to grass. Tax exemptions and in many cases financial subsidies are required to encourage farmers to establish permanent sod. Excessive indebtedness has already placed many farmers beyond the reach of an extension of credit facilities, the reports point out. Their condition emphasizes the need for a long range program of land utilization that is adjusted to frequent periods of drought.
Three major elements in a revised land use program for the area are suggested in the reports. First is the conversion of cultivated crop land to permanent pasture range in many parts of the area. Steps must be taken to assist in the restoration of a permanent grass cover on these lands as a means of soil conservation. Second, small holdings that are unsuited to crop production and yet not large enough for economic cattle units should be increased in size to make possible a greater emphasis upon grazing, and less dependence upon crops.

A third step in the revised land use program for the drought area will consist of helping families who are unable to make the necessary change to larger and less intensive types of operation to move out of the area to other regions where better opportunities for farming may be found. This type of resettlement appears to be particularly desirable in certain parts of North and South Dakota, in northwestern Texas, and in parts of Colorado and Kansas where damage by wind erosion has been most severe.

"The burden of assisting farmers will be slightly lessened by the fact that large numbers of the farm population in the drought-stricken area have already left their farmsteads, having apparently abandoned hope of satisfactory farm operations," said Mr. Hopkins. Decreases in the farm population from 1930 to 1935 have been recorded in 10 of the 1934 drought states.

"During the six months period ending December 15, 1935, more than 32,000 persons emigrated from 19 drought states to California alone. Over 37 percent of the total drought emigrants came from the Dust Bowl Area (parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas). Similar movements into Oregon and Washington have also taken place."

Conditions in the typical areas surveyed are summarized below:
1. Northwestern North Dakota

Temporal by Divide County. In this county, representative of a cash-grain range livestock area, crop yields have been below normal since 1929, and in 1931 and 1934 they were almost complete failures. If precipitation is the measure of short crops, failure or near failures are to be expected in this area one year out of eight, and short crops two years in five.

Nearly 90 percent of all Divide County farmers have been forced to turn to relief agencies for assistance, and future adverse periods, it is believed, will return the farmers to a similar state or dependency. Over 50 percent of this county's farmers were on relief before January 1, 1934, showing that they did not have sufficient reserves to supplement their abnormally low incomes of 1931, 1932 and 1933. Only farmers with exceptional agricultural and managerial ability managed to accumulate feed reserves prior to the 1934 drought.

The acute feed shortage forced drastic reductions of livestock. Forty-six percent of the farm land was mortgaged, and in 1935 outstanding feed and seed loan indebtedness averaged $866 a farm. During the past six years tax delinquency has increased rapidly, and in 1933 and 1934, there were delinquencies on over 70 percent of the land.

In 1934, 74 percent of the cash income of the farmers inter-
viewed came from Federal cattle purchases, crop production payments and emergency relief payments.

The rehabilitation measures for this area should include a soil conservation program whereby many unprofitable crop acreages will be shifted to permanent grasses. An adjustment in holdings of pasturage could also be accomplished by the organization of grazing districts. Farmers might be encouraged to shift crop acreage by (1) advances that will provide grass seed, and (2) exemption from taxation of land during the process of establishing permanent sod. Replacement of livestock is needed to prevent increased dependence on crop production for income. Advances to obtain such livestock are desirable.

The needed adjustment of all farms of less than 500 acres from an average size of 329 to an average size of 480 acres, without acquiring acreage from the larger farms, would involve displacement of 18 percent of all Divide County farmers.
2. Central North Dakota

Typified by Sheridan County. This cash-grain, range livestock area in the Missouri Plateau has suffered droughts since 1930, but complete failure of crops was limited to 1934. Many crop acreages were abandoned, and cash reserves and working capital were depleted while indebtedness steadily mounted. In May 1935, 32 percent of all farmers in the county were receiving relief. The government cattle purchase program reduced herds by more than one third. Approximately 40 percent of the farm land was mortgaged, and tax delinquencies were high as early as 1930. Feed and seed loan indebtedness averaged nearly $200 per farm by the summer of 1935. Machinery repairs were below normal during the entire drought period, and rehabilitation in this area should include such repairs. Although wind erosion has not been serious, some crop land should be shifted to permanent pasture. This will not involve displacement of a large number of farmers. Abandonment of farms to date has been negligible.
3. Red River Valley

Typified by Traill County, North Dakota. Traill County had normal crop yields from 1931 to 1934, farmers were able to increase their numbers of livestock, and there were no farmers on relief in the spring of 1935. Indebtedness was slight. Where two emergency loans per farmer was the average by December 1934 for the entire state of North Dakota, in Traill County this average was only one loan, averaging about $148, to every two farmers. Taxes were delinquent on only 12 percent of the land during three years in the period from 1924-1934.

Fertile soils, a semi-humid climate with relatively high and reasonably certain crop yields, and an average annual precipitation of 20 inches from 1911 to 1934 combine to make this area particularly favorable for cash-grain farming. The climate is especially suited for the production of spring wheat and potatoes. Barley, oats, and corn for fodder are also grown. Eighty-three percent of the farm land is in crops.

Farms of 160 to 480 acres are commonly found in this area, and many farmers are maintaining a fair standard of living on farms of 160 acres. Since there are 308 farms in the county with 400 acres or more, which are operated by tenants or part-owners, it should be possible, without displacing any of the present operators, to establish new farmers on farms of 160, 240 and 320 acres by acquiring
portions of these larger farms. This manner of acquiring land for new settlers is held preferable to the purchase of the 40,000 acreage held by corporations, commercial banks, lending agents and mortgage and insurance companies, since the latter method might involve displacement of farmers.
4. Southwestern North Dakota

Typified by Hettinger County. The 1934 drought merely brought to a head serious agricultural ills that had been accumulating for more than a decade in this "cash-grain, some range livestock" area. Rural distress was widespread in the Stark-Hettinger area of southwestern North Dakota in 1935, following crop failure in 1934, and low yields in 1930, 1931, and 1933. Crop sales, normally the source of more than two thirds of the farm income, brought in almost no revenue in 1934. The small cash income received came chiefly from government payments for livestock or production control. Shortage of feed forced farmers to dispose of a substantial portion of their livestock. Nearly 30 percent of all farmers in Hettinger County went on relief in 1934.

This area has experienced serious drought one year out of seven, and deficient rainfall one year out of four. A short growing season, some rough land and light soils subject to wind erosion, are other unfavorable factors affecting the agricultural situation in the area.

One third of the farmers surveyed had been operating at a loss since entering the area. In 1933 taxes were delinquent on 43 percent of the farm land. In 1935, 41 percent of the farm land was mortgaged. Even before 1932, farmers were unable to pay
back all indebtedness incurred through Federal emergency crop and feed loans and in the following years practically no repayments were made.

Much of the rural distress in this area is attributed to the small size of farms, more than half of which are less than 440 acres. Even in normal times, incomes of almost two thirds of the operators of these small farms are insufficient to meet expenses.

If the small farms in Hettinger County were combined to give operators a minimum of 480 acres each, 14 percent of the farmers in this county would be displaced. The rehabilitation program suggested for this area includes in addition to increases in size of farms, return of some of the lighter soils to permanent grass, an increase in livestock numbers, and repairs on most farm buildings and machinery.
5. Central South Dakota

Typified by Hyde County. In the cash-grain livestock area in the Missouri Plateau area, crop failures of 1933 and 1934 followed a near crop failure of 1931, and poor yields in every year since 1927, except 1930. In 1924 more than 38 percent of the crop land on 48 representative farms lay idle. No crops were produced on the seeded acreage. Cattle herds on representative farms were reduced 44 percent, hogs were practically eliminated from these farms, and even poultry was reduced to one-third of the normal number. Cash income in 1934 was primarily from government agencies.

More than 70 percent of the farmers in this county were listed on relief rolls in April 1935.

On the average all farmers except small tenants were solvent according to property values reported, but financial records showed a low annual increase of net worth for each farming year. One-fourth of the farmers surveyed reported that their normal cash income had not been sufficient to meet living and operating expenses.

Approximately 40 percent of the farm land in Hyde County was mortgaged in 1935.

A rehabilitation program in this area would include some adjustment of holdings of the present pasture acreage, with the lower limits in size for economical farming units from 480 to 640 acres. Such an adjustment would involve displacement of fourteen percent of all Hyde County farmers. The shifting of unprofitable crop land to grass is suggested for this area, with financial advances to the farmers for grass seed, and tax exemption for land returned to pasture during the process of establishing a permanent sod.
Under the present organization, many farmers need assistance in the replacement of livestock. If the farm and pasture acreages are increased, this need will be even more pronounced. Farmers on the larger farms need assistance in restoring beef cattle, but until pasture acreages are increased, the needs of small farms for replacements will be largely confined to restoring poultry and swine and, in many instances, work stock and milk cows.
6. Southeastern South Dakota

Typified by Moody County. In 1934 rural distress was not as severe in Moody County, in southeastern South Dakota, as in most other sections of the midwest. This county is representative of an intensive livestock production area. The 1934 crop yield in this area was decidedly below the long time average, but near normal crop yields had been obtained from 1931 to 1933 at a time when crop yields in the drought areas were near failures. In general this area is one of stable precipitation and stable crop yields.

Unlike most farmers in the drought area, Moody County farmers, with exception of those receiving relief, were able to maintain normal cattle numbers in 1934.

Federal loans were smaller, and had been made less frequently and to a smaller percentage of farmers in this area than in any other section of the state. In 1935, total indebtedness outstanding in Moody County from all emergency loans was less than $100 per farm in contrast to those of $866 per farm in other parts of the drought area (Divide Co., North Dakota). Ninety-one percent of the 1933 tax delinquencies had been redeemed in 1935. Thirty-nine percent of Moody County farmers were receiving relief in December, 1934, but by June 6, 1935, only 15 percent were on relief rolls. Only four percent of all Moody County farmers had applied for rehabilitation by the date of the survey.

The average size of farms in Moody County is 228 acres. Where livestock production is the major enterprise, many farmers are maintaining a decent standard on farms of 160 acres. While the most efficient use of land would permit this county to support several hundred additional farmers, it is doubtful whether the necessary land could be acquired without a redistribution of existing holdings so extensive as to be impracticable.
Typified by Goshen County. The successive drought years have resulted in frequent crop failures in this area, which is composed of two types of farming areas: a dry farming section, devoted to range-livestock, some cash-grain, potatoes and alfalfa seed; and an irrigated section, described as a sugar beet area with some livestock and potatoes. Sixteen percent of the farmers were on relief rolls in May 1935. Approximately 35 to 40 percent of the farm land is mortgaged while tax delinquencies are serious. In January 1934, the proportion of the farm acreage remaining delinquent for 1928 was 20 percent; for 1929, 28 percent; for 1930, 28 percent; for 1931, 45 percent, and for 1932, 49 percent.

Wind erosion has occurred rather generally throughout the dryland areas. Permanent damage to soils has been limited to local areas, but to prevent the expansion of such areas, the eroded land should be shifted to permanent grasses immediately. This will involve moving some farmers to more productive areas. There already has been considerable abandonment of farms in a number of sections within the area.
Typified by Sherman County, Sherman County, typical of the Central Corn and Livestock farming area of central Nebraska, experienced an almost complete crop failure in 1934, following a series of years in which crop production was below normal. In 1934 the Loess Hills area was receiving more rural relief for each unit of farm population than any other large area in the state. The percentage of farmers actually receiving drought relief funds was comparatively low, but the amount advanced for feed and seed loans was high.

Livestock numbers were drastically reduced in 1934 and the farmers' low income consisted largely of receipts from government agencies. Reports from representative farmers of the area showed that on the average they had not increased their net worth during the years of farming in the area. In March 1935, about 20 percent of the farmers were on relief rolls, and most farmers received crop and feed loans in 1934 and 1935.

Approximately 50 percent of the farm land was mortgaged in 1935. Delinquent taxes in 1934 and earlier were not a serious problem in the county.

The productivity of the rolling land in this area has been decreased by soil erosion, and a rehabilitation program for this area would include maintaining much of the erosive areas permanently in grass. A larger area of grassland seems essential if productivity of the area is to be maintained.

The program in this area should also consider the problem of rebuilding the productive unit, from both long-time and short-time viewpoints. Because of the unequal distribution of pasture and crop lands, some adjustment in holdings or control of land, is desirable. From the short-time standpoint, aid should be given for purchasing breeding stock, for providing grass seed, and for repairs or replacement of equipment.

An increase in acreage would lead to a reduction in the number of farmers, and the necessity of reestablishing them elsewhere.
9. Southwestern Wheat Area of Nebraska

Typified by Perkins County. Rural rehabilitation problems were not immediately pressing in this cash-grain livestock farming area in the spring of 1935. The average gross income in 1934 of representative Perkins County farmers was 50 percent of normal, but many farmers had benefited from improved crop yields and prices in 1934, and from government payments through adjustment contracts. Only three percent of the farmers in the county were on relief on March 1, 1933.

In spite of the recent prolonged drought and frequent dry years in the past, little permanent damage had been done by erosion, and there appeared to be no immediate need for rehabilitation. Eventually, however, permanent readjustments should be made in farm organization in some parts of the area.

This readjustment need within the county seems to be limited to the southern, southeastern and eastern sections, where the soils are predominantly sandy loams. In this section, there are about 155 farms of 320 acres or less, which are too small for profitable management. Even in the best farming sections, it was found that at least 400 acres are necessary to provide a living for the average farm family.

A rehabilitation program in this section should be directed at increasing the size of farms by combining adjacent units, and by removing displaced farmers to the northern and northwestern loam soil area. If farms in that section were improved and suitable buildings erected, it probably could absorb all displaced farmers from other sections of the county. These would include about half the relief families in the county, while the other half could probably be rehabilitated on the farms where they now reside.

About 13 percent of the land in Perkins County, located in the sandy sections, should be removed from cultivation and allowed to revert to grass. The soil in this section is so light that soil blowing can hardly be prevented.
10. High Plains Area of Eastern Colorado

Typified by Cheyenne County. Agriculture in this area, which is predominantly a range livestock type of farming area, is characterized by low average annual precipitation, relatively low average yields of crops and large amounts of third-grade farming land under cultivation. The 1934 drought, coming at the end of an 11-year period of generally deficient moisture, caused considerable abandonment of farmsteads, heavy indebtedness, and placed a high percentage of farmers on the relief rolls. A long-time rehabilitation program to safeguard farmers against similar adverse periods should be undertaken in this section if it is to continue as a farming area.

Selected farmers of the county who were interviewed reported damage to four-fifths of their crop land from wind erosion. Over one-fourth of the crop land was considered seriously damaged, and in some instances pasture land had been damaged. Drought has caused some damage during 15 of the last 29 years.

In May 1935, 32 percent of all the farmers in the county were on either direct or drought relief. Twenty-six percent of the land area in the county was mortgaged, and taxes were delinquent on 28 percent of the total land area. The average gross cash income of the representative farmers was 53 percent of normal. The fact that cash income was as high as it was, exclusive of government aid, indicates a strong resistance to unfavorable conditions of farmers in this area. Normally 50 percent of gross cash income is from crop sales. In 1934 about 11 percent of income came from this source.

Although cattle numbers were reduced approximately 40 percent from July 1934 to July 1935, those retained were probably as many as should be carried on the injured pasture land, since the native grass pasture in May...
1935 was only 20 percent of normal. Available free range, with no restriction on grazing, undoubtedly has made possible maintenance of breeding stock through the drought seasons, but to form self-contained economic units, farms in this area should have more pasture than the average small farm was found to possess.

Farmers in this area believed that a system of farming based on livestock production, with little emphasis on cash-grain as a secondary source of income, offered the best chances for future success. This will require increase in present farm acreages. Farms of 320, 480 and 640 acres predominated in the county. It was believed that farm operations based on about 50 head of breeding cattle should have about 300 acres of crop land and 900 acres of pasture. This would require consolidation of some of the smaller farms and a reduction in the number of farms in some of the more thickly populated parts of the area.

The crop land that suffered from wind erosion should be allowed to revert to natural grass cover, and financial aid should be extended to compensate farmers for land taken out of production.
11. North Plains of Texas

Typified by Dallam County. Financial distress in the entire North Plains of Texas, a cash-grain, range-livestock type of farming area, was acute in 1935 as a result of a prolonged period of deficient rainfall. Fields in certain sandy loam localities were so damaged by wind erosion as to be of questionable value for future crop production. A number of farmers had abandoned their farms, and many of those remaining were in need of financial aid.

All yields were so low during 1932 and 1933 that crops were considered failures, and practically no crop was harvested in 1934. The farmers' income from crops was slight, and their income from livestock was primarily from cattle sold in the Emergency Cattle Purchase Program, or because of feed shortage.

Soil blowing and drought have been responsible for 35 to 45 percent of all damage to crops in this area, during the last 33 years. Crops escape damage from these or other causes only one year out of three. Total loss on loam soils is caused by these factors one year out of six, and on sandy soils one year out of five.

Approximately 54 percent of all Dallam County farm land was mortgaged in 1934, the average mortgage per acre being $8.42. In 1935 over 31 percent of all farm land had been tax delinquent for from one to three years. Half of the representative farmers interviewed in the county reported that their 1934 incomes, including relief payments, were insufficient to meet their expenses.

Approximately 28 percent of the farmers of Dallam County were on the relief rolls in May 1935.
In 1935, Dallam County farmers had only 51 percent as many cows, 53 percent as many cattle, and 40 percent as many brood sows as in 1930. Since the breeding stock in 1935 was only about one-half that of 1930, cattle herds will be built slowly. About one-third of the farmers will need additional livestock to reestablish a cattle or hog enterprise, and another one-third will need assistance if their herds are to be reestablished quickly.

Because of the frequency of years of subnormal rainfall in this area, and because of the tendency of the sandy loam soils to blow when moisture is insufficient, a county-wide program of soil conservation is urgent. An alternative is a system of crop production aimed at control of soil erosion. Rehabilitation of farmers on these soils is not suggested. Permanent vegetative cover on this land should be restored.

The difficulty of rehabilitation in this area is increased by the fact that many relief farmers are on farms of less than 320 acres, with a high percentage of land in crops. An increase in the size of these farms is advocated, so that a larger proportion of the farm may be left in grass.
12. **High Plains of Eastern New Mexico**

**Typified by Curry County.** Curry County, representative of the cash-grain, some cotton type of farming area of the upper South Plains of the Texas Panhandle and the High Plains of eastern New Mexico, is subject to frequent and wide variations in both annual and seasonal precipitation. Normal rainfall during the warm season is barely sufficient for crops, and as a result, low crops yields are frequent in the area. Drought has caused damage to crops 2 out of 5 years with serious or total loss 3 out of 10 years. All crop yields were low in 1930, 1932, and 1933, with complete failure in 1934.

In 1935, livestock of representative farmers in Curry County had been reduced to 76 percent of normal. Income of representative farmers in the wheat area in the north and northwestern part of the county was 51 percent of normal in 1934; and income of farmers in the row crop section, in the central and southeastern part of the county, was 66 percent of normal. In the summer of 1935, thirty-six percent of the land was mortgaged; 50 percent of the land had been tax delinquent over a three year period and 42 percent of the farmers were on relief or rehabilitation. Feed and seed loans outstanding averaged $261 per farm.

To date there has been practically no abandonment of farms, and by acreage adjustment, it is believed that all farmers on unproductive or permanently injured soil can be rehabilitated within the county.
13. South Plains of Texas Panhandle

Typified by Hale County. Although 1934 was the first year that the current drought period caused total failure of crops in this section of the Texas Panhandle, indebtedness was heavy by 1935, indicating that savings and reserves of feed and seed sufficient to carry farmers beyond one year were often lacking.

Forty-four percent of the farm land was mortgaged, with an average mortgage indebtedness of $16 an acre, and 44 percent of the land had been tax-delinquent for from one to four years. Twelve percent of the farmers in the county were on direct or work relief in May 1935, many of these being former tenant-farmers who had lost their equipment or farm lease at the close of the 1934 crop year and had moved to town.

Shortage of feed crops and the comparatively small amount of pasture acreage forced liquidation of livestock, which was left at only 37 percent of normal in 1935, but enough breeding stock remains to rebuild the herds and flocks when normal crop conditions return.

Farmers in this area operating farms smaller than 280 acres have done little more than meet their expenses since settling in the area, but on the larger farms capital increases were reported, indicating that an increase in acreage of the smaller farms should form an integral part of any rehabilitation program in this area. All farmers can be rehabilitated in the county, and to date there has been no abandonment of farms.
INTENSITY OF RURAL RELIEF* IN MAJOR SUBREGIONS OF THE GREAT PLAINS, FEBRUARY 1935
AND AREAS OF SPECIAL STUDY

AREAS OF SPECIAL STUDY
1. North Dakota Black Prairies and Scobey Plentywood
2. Missouri Plateau, Central North Dakota
3. Red River Valley (North)
4. Stark-Hettinger, Southwestern North Dakota
5. Missouri Plateau, Central South Dakota
6. Intensive Livestock Production, Southeastern South Dakota
7. Southeastern Wyoming
8. Loess Hills of Central Nebraska
9. Southwestern Wheat Area of Nebraska
10. High Plains of East-Central Colorado
11. North Plains of Texas Panhandle
12. South Plains of Texas Panhandle and High Plains of Eastern New Mexico
13. South Plains of Texas Panhandle

*Ratio of rural cases receiving relief, February 1935, to total rural families, April 1935