

*1994 North Dakota
Rural Life Poll*

*Summary Frequencies
Press Releases*

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Sponsored by

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THE 1994 NORTH DAKOTA RURAL LIFE POLL

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires are mailed out to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The primary objectives of the poll are:

1. To collect timely and relevant data on the conditions of rural North Dakota.
2. To disseminate the results of the poll to state and national policy makers, as well as other interested groups, organizations, and individuals.
3. To monitor the changing conditions in rural North Dakota.

The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. Approximately 2000 small town residents and 2000 farm operators are in this panel study. The sampling frame for the small town residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*.

The rural residents' surveys were mailed April 15 and the farm residents' surveys were mailed May 4, 1994; a postcard reminder to all respondents was mailed; on May 26, a replacement survey was mailed June 23 to all nonrespondents; and a final replacement survey was mailed to all nonrespondents on August 2. Of the 4129 surveys mailed, 116 were returned as nondeliverable and 978 were returned completed for a final overall response rate of 24.3 percent. The response rate for the farm respondents was 21.2 percent (N=425) while the response rate for the rural respondents was 27.5 percent (N=553) with margins of errors of 4.75% and 4.17%, respectively.

While a sample size of 425 and 553 is respectable, the low response rate (less than 25%) gave us concern about the possibility of response bias. To check for the possibility of respondent bias, we conducted a telephone survey of approximately 30 rural resident nonrespondents and 30 farm nonrespondents. We used a reduced version of the surveys which included questions common to both such as questions dealing with rural economic development as well as demographic questions for both and farm enterprise characteristics for the farm nonrespondents.

The test for significant differences between respondents (mailed survey) and nonrespondents (telephone survey) revealed some significant differences in gender for both the farm and rural respondents and in education for the rural respondents. The rural and farm nonrespondents tended to be women more than men which was expected

since the telephone surveys were conducted during business hours. The rural nonrespondents also tended to have slightly less education than did the respondents (4.41 and 5.01, respectively). We judged that this difference was not substantively significant since the nonrespondents' (telephone survey) mean is midpoint between "4 -- having some college or vocational school" and "5 -- having a two year degree". There were no other significant differences on demographic items and farm enterprise characteristics between the respondents and nonrespondents. Thus, based only on demographic and farm enterprise characteristics, we conclude there is no response bias in regards to these characteristics.

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of North Dakota. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by contributions from various organizations, agencies and officials concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, Department of Human Services, Farm and Ranch Guide, UND Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UND Child Welfare Research Bureau, Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1. Membership in cooperatives

Type	None	Member	Attend Annual Meeting	Board Member	Did Some Business	Did All Business
Farm Market	.					
Rural	46%	12%	8%	2%	11%	9%
Farm	26%	38%	24%	5%	19%	29%
Farm Supply						
Rural	37%	15%	8%	2%	20%	10%
Farm	13%	45%	27%	6%	35%	28%
Farm Credit						
Rural	54%	5%	1%	0%	7%	1%
Farm	43%	22%	6%	1%	15%	10%
Credit Union						
Rural	40%	23%	4%	1%	14%	8%
Farm	48%	18%	6%	2%	11%	7%
Rural Electric						
Rural	35%	29%	10%	1%	10%	17%
Farm	5%	65%	22%	1%	7%	52%
Rural Telephone						
Rural	38%	24%	6%	0%	7%	15%
Farm	27%	41%	9%	0%	7%	30%
Rural Water						
Rural	50%	10%	1%	0%	4%	7%
Farm	47%	24%	5%	1%	4%	15%
Commodity Processing						
Rural	54%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Farm	58%	6%	3%	1%	6%	3%
Consumer						
Rural	43%	9%	2%	0%	14%	4%
Farm	42%	11%	2%	0%	14%	5%

Table 2. Summary of cooperative involvement

Area	Not a Member	Member	Some Business	All Business	Attend Meetings	Board of Directors
Rural	28%	13%	19%	18%	18%	4%
Farm	9%	10%	9%	29%	32%	13%

Table 3. Support for cooperatives

Statement	Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Coops need my support to survive.	Rural	17%	42%	26%	11%	5%
	Farm	29%	50%	12%	7%	3%
I don't have much influence in my coops.	Rural	14%	36%	26%	18%	7%
	Farm	10%	30%	16%	33%	10%
Coops are less important now than before	Rural	5%	17%	30%	34%	14%
	Farm	6%	14%	22%	42%	17%
There is little difference between coops and private business	Rural	3%	18%	22%	42%	15%
	Farm	4%	17%	16%	47%	17%
Coops provide better prices	Rural	5%	33%	34%	19%	8%
	Farm	6%	27%	32%	28%	8%
Coops provide better services	Rural	6%	31%	40%	16%	7%
	Farm	6%	30%	35%	23%	7%
Coops provide better products	Rural	3%	21%	46%	23%	8%
	Farm	4%	18%	38%	33%	7%
Coops should promote economic development	Rural	14%	53%	27%	4%	2%
	Farm	13%	54%	22%	8%	3%
We need more agric. commodity processing coops	Rural	19%	38%	33%	7%	4%
	Farm	20%	49%	20%	9%	2%

Table 4. Opinion about cooperatives

Area	Highly Favorable	Moderately Favorable	Not Too Favorable	Unfavorable
Rural	27%	58%	13%	2%
Farm	33%	54%	11%	2%

Table 5. Support for cooperative principles

Principles	Area	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Open and voluntary membership	Rural	32%	59%	10%
	Farm	35%	56%	9%
Democratic control:	Rural	41%	53%	6%
	Farm	47%	47%	6%
Limited interest on shares	Rural	18%	66%	16%
	Farm	18%	63%	19%
Return of surplus to members	Rural	40%	53%	7%
	Farm	44%	49%	7%
Co-operative education	Rural	27%	60%	12%
	Farm	22%	67%	21%
Co-operation among cooperatives	Rural	33%	58%	10%
	Farm	34%	57%	9%

Table 6. Opinion about rural development strategies

Item	Area	Strongly Favor	Favor	Undecided	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
More local commodity processing	Rural Farm	31%	46%	22%	1%	0%
		29%	56%	12%	2%	1%
Improve & maintain infrastructure	Rural Farm	30%	54%	14%	1%	0%
		33%	55%	9%	3%	1%
Retention/expansion of existing industries	Rural Farm	29%	54%	15%	1%	1%
		25%	57%	16%	2%	1%
More manuf. jobs in nonagric. industry	Rural Farm	29%	53%	14%	2%	1%
		17%	57%	22%	3%	2%
Encourage universities to focus on econ. dev.	Rural Farm	21%	49%	26%	3%	1%
		14%	50%	27%	7%	2%
Mainstreet commercial develop.	Rural Farm	22%	51%	23%	4%	1%
		14%	59%	24%	3%	1%
Investment capital for small businesses	Rural Farm.	24%	50%	22%	3%	3%
		18%	56%	17%	5%	1%
Promote tourism in state	Rural Farm	24%	50%	22%	3%	1%
		19%	56%	17%	5%	3%
Diversify agricultural production	Rural Farm	26%	51%	21%	1%	1%
		18%	64%	14%	3%	1%
Provide tax incentives to locate in state	Rural Farm	20%	40%	26%	10%	4%
		13%	46%	24%	12%	5%
Identify & promote growth centers	Rural Farm	6%	23%	42%	20%	9%
		3%	18%	37%	28%	15%
Promote gambling for tourism	Rural Farm	7%	16%	26%	26%	26%
		5%	17%	23%	26%	28%
Provide subsidies to develop tourism	Rural Farm	8%	35%	36%	16%	5%
		4%	24%	34%	26%	12%

Table 7. Choice of electric utility in providing services

Statement	Area	Private	City	Cooperative	No Difference
Fairness of the rates they charge	Rural	10%	11%	56%	22%
	Farm	7%	4%	70%	19%
Keeping up with technology	Rural	21%	8%	41%	30%
	Farm	14%	4%	50%	32%
Providing dependable service	Rural	14%	9%	42%	35%
	Farm	8%	3%	52%	37%
Interest in their customers	Rural	13%	8%	54%	25%
	Farm	10%	1%	61%	28%
Fairness of their profits	Rural	9%	9%	61%	22%
	Farm	5%	2%	73%	20%
Efficiency in managing their business	Rural	25%	8%	34%	32%
	Farm	25%	2%	71%	33%
Influence of customers	Rural	12%	8%	57%	24%
	Farm	7%	2%	68%	23%
Communicating with customers	Rural	14%	6%	49%	31%
	Farm	8%	2%	58%	31%
Concern for the environment	Rural	10%	8%	39%	44%
	Farm	5%	1%	44%	49%

Table 8. Opinion about electric utilities providing community service

Statement	Rural	Farm
Assistance to local schools	53%	40%
Information to consumers about efforts to protect the environment	56%	46%
Assistance to local health & social service organizations	42%	28%
Assistance to individuals or groups starting a new business	52%	47%
Assistance to arts and other cultural programs	20%	11%
Assistance in local economic development efforts	67%	60%
None of these	13%	16%

Table 9. Opinion regarding increases in spending for different program areas.

Item	Area	Great Deal More	Slightly More	Same	Slightly Less	Great Deal Less
Elementary & Secondary Education	Rural Farm	23%	44%	28%	3%	1%
		19%	41%	26%	6%	4%
Higher Education	Rural Farm	10%	36%	40%	10%	4%
		8%	27%	40%	17%	8%
Health Care for Low Income and Elderly	Rural Farm	18%	37%	36%	7%	3%
		11%	27%	45%	13%	4%
Soc. Services for Low Income and Elderly	Rural Farm	13%	31%	41%	12%	3%
		7%	25%	44%	18%	6%
Highway and Road Maintenance	Rural Farm	10%	36%	51%	3%	0%
		11%	46%	46%	3%	1%
Law Enforcement	Rural Farm	10%	30%	53%	6%	1%
		6%	25%	59%	6%	4%
Economic Development	Rural Farm	13%	42%	35%	8%	1%
		6%	34%	43%	11%	6%
Agricultural Research	Rural Farm	9%	24%	49%	12%	6%
		12%	33%	44%	7%	4%
Cooperative Extension Service	Rural Farm	5%	17%	44%	26%	8%
		6%	22%	45%	20%	8%

Table 10. Opinion regarding increases in spending for different age groups.

Age Group	Area	Increase	Same	Decrease
Children less than seven years	Rural Farm	32%	56%	12%
		22%	58%	20%
Young adults	Rural Farm	9%	40%	51%
		6%	39%	54%
Adults	Rural Farm	11%	47%	42%
		7%	41%	52%
Older Adults	Rural Farm	40%	48%	12%
		29%	47%	23%

Table 11. Responses to questions about stress and anxiety

Item	Area	Almost Never	Never	Some-times	Fairly Often	Very Often
No opportunity to become person you would like to be	Rural Farm	16% 20%	24% 27%	45% 43%	9% 8%	5% 3%
Felt confident in dealing with problems of life	Rural Farm	6% 4%	6% 7%	28% 25%	42% 45%	19% 20%
Felt you couldn't solve some problems facing you	Rural Farm	16% 23%	20% 21%	52% 43%	9% 9%	3% 4%
Felt you could do little to change important things	Rural Farm	16% 19%	20% 20%	47% 46%	12% 12%	4% 3%
Felt what happens in future depends on you	Rural Farm	3% 2%	7% 3%	27% 25%	37% 40%	26% 28%
Felt you were being pushed around	Rural Farm	18% 21%	35% 27%	39% 41%	5% 7%	3% 4%
Felt you could do just about anything you wanted	Rural Farm	8% 9%	13% 11%	37% 43%	30% 27%	12% 11%
Felt you had little control over things happening to you	Rural Farm	17% 20%	22% 16%	48% 51%	10% 10%	4% 3%
Felt nervous and stressed	Rural Farm	17% 16%	12% 9%	49% 55%	16% 15%	7% 6%
Felt difficulties piling too high to overcome them	Rural Farm	25% 28%	35% 32%	32% 34%	6% 4%	3% 2%
Often have shortness of breath	Rural Farm	19% 22%	45% 46%	30% 26%	5% 4%	2% 2%
Often restless	Rural Farm	17% 22%	21% 18%	50% 51%	8% 6%	3% 3%
Worry excessively	Rural Farm	26% 27%	23% 22%	38% 40%	9% 8%	3% 3%
Difficulty in concentrating because of anxiety	Rural Farm	28% 30%	29% 30%	35% 36%	5% 4%	3% 1%
Felt keyed up or on edge	Rural Farm	20% 23%	16% 16%	51% 52%	9% 7%	3% 3%
Have trouble falling asleep	Rural Farm	24% 31%	18% 23%	40% 34%	15% 8%	3% 3%

Table 12. Perception of child well being

Item	Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Occasional drinking by children should be ignored	Rural	2%	4%	4%	40%	50%
		2%	4%	4%	43%	47%
I don't mind if children use tobacco in my presence	Rural	2%	2%	1%	30%	64%
		2%	2%	2%	34%	60%
There is a drinking problem among high school youth in our community	Rural	21%	36%	28%	9%	6%
		16%	38%	30%	11%	4%
Children (<18) are getting a quality education	Rural	6%	53%	24%	13%	3%
		6%	57%	20%	11%	4%
Formal sex educ. should be taught in elem. thru high school	Rural	11%	33%	22%	21%	12%
		9%	38%	20%	21%	12%
Formal sex educ. should be restricted to high school only	Rural	4%	23%	21%	37%	15%
		4%	25%	25%	32%	14%
It is okay for high school boys to engage in sex. inter.	Rural	1%	3%	5%	31%	60%
		1%	2%	6%	37%	64%
It is okay for high school girls to engage in sex. inter.	Rural	1%	2%	5%	30%	63%
		1%	2%	6%	35%	55%
Parents should talk with their children about contraceptives	Rural	29%	47%	13%	5%	6%
		22%	55%	12%	6%	5%
Teenage pregnancy is a problem in our community	Rural	18%	37%	25%	16%	3%
		10%	35%	28%	24%	2%
More & more children are discouraged by parents to enter full-time farming	Farm	23%	52%	15%	9%	2%
Farm children have more responsibility than other children of their age	Farm	33%	57%	7%	3%	0%
Children should not be allowed to ride along on farm equipment	Farm	12%	27%	20%	31%	10%
Farm children are at risk of suffering injury while operating farm equipment	Farm	19%	62%	9%	8%	2%
It's okay for farm children to work more than 8 hours a day on the farm during the busy season	Farm	11%	50%	15%	19%	5%
There is a need for a farm safety program in our community	Farm	14%	53%	21%	9%	3%

Table 13. Knowledge and use of regional and county social services.

Question	Rural	Farm
Ever heard of phrase human service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 80	<u>% Yes</u> 70
Amount of knowledge about services available from human service centers	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Know Little	66	66
Don't Know	19	12
Know A Lot	14	22
Ever gone to a human service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 31	<u>% Yes</u> 17
Satisfied with service received from a human service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 80	<u>% Yes</u> 78
Why not satisfied with services received from a human service center?	<u>Count</u>	<u>Count</u>
Services not available/didn't meet need	4	2
Not eligible	9	3
Treatment received	4	2
Bureaucratic	2	0
Ever heard of phrase county social service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 78	<u>% Yes</u> 71
Amount of knowledge about service available from county social service center?	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Know Little	70	62
Don't Know	16	26
Know A Lot	15	13
Ever gone to a county social service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 26	<u>% Yes</u> 16
Satisfied with services received from county social service center?	<u>% Yes</u> 80	<u>% Yes</u> 78
Why not satisfied with services received from county social service center?	<u>Count</u>	<u>Count</u>
Services not available/didn't meet need	1	0
Not eligible	9	1
Treatment received	8	4
Bureaucratic	3	3

Table 14. Type of family problems experienced.

Family Problem	Rural%	Farm%
Drug use	4	2
Alcoholism	15	6
Unemployment	19	10
Youth gangs	3	1
Child abuse/neglect	3	1
Elderly abuse/neglect	2	0
Spouse abuse	3	1
Job dissatisfaction	17	10
Lack of job training	12	5
Unwanted pregnancies	3	1
Gambling abuse	3	1
Lack of good paying jobs	34	26
Lack of medical care	13	8
Lack of child day care	6	3
Lack of nursing home care	4	2
Lack of employment opportunities	34	24
Lack of youth recreation	20	11
Lack of health insurance coverage	21	15
Lack of public transportation	12	7
Lack of elderly services	10	6

Table 15. Future plans

Future Plans	Rural %
Take an evening class	11
Enter college full time	2
Take at least a week vacation	46
Bring one or more children into business	1
Seek a new job	8
Start a new business	3
Retire from business	7
Buy anew car or pickup	17
Buy or build a new house	4
Purchase a major household appliance	18
Remodel existing home	16
	Farm %
Increase acres farmed	12
Diversify farm enterprise	13
Retire	28
Quit farming or ranching	9
Seek off-farm employment	8
Start new business	3
Reduce short- or long-term debt	30
Bring children into operation	20
Seek vocational training	1
Use futures market to hedge prices	13
Change from cash rent to crop share	3
Buy crop insurance	21
Postpone major farm purchase(s)	24

Share labor or machinery with neighbors	11
Reduce expenditures for hired help	6
Keep better financial records	23
Pay closer attention to marketing	31
Transfer land to lender	2

Table 16. Agricultural policy preferences - farm operators

Policy	Strongly Favor	Favor	Undecided	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Keep present system	12%	31%	35%	17%	6%
Establish a mandatory supply control program with all farmers required to participate in approved in a referendum	8%	16%	27%	27%	23%
Separate government payments from production (decoupling)	8%	26%	45%	13%	7%
Gradually eliminate commodity programs	11%	22%	27%	25%	15%
Target farm program payments to a certain amount of production on all farms & eliminate payments above those limits	29%	32%	21%	9%	9%
Farmers receive support from the government only when their revenue falls below 60-70% of what they usually receive	9%	19%	31%	23%	18%

Table 17. Perceived threats to rural North Dakota by rural residents.

Perceived threat	Severely threatens%	Somewhat threatens%	Does not threaten%	Don't know%
Lack of jobs	70	24	2	4
Locating trash facilities in rural areas	27	38	26	10
An increase in crime	24	46	24	6
Rural out-migration	57	31	5	6
Closing of small businesses	72	26	1	2
Loss of family farms	75	22	2	1
School consolidation	32	46	17	4
Increasing poverty	36	46	10	8
Low wages and low income	50	43	4	3

Closing of hospitals	49	38	10	3
Less rural political influence	31	47	12	9
Loss of urban support for rural issues	39	45	7	10

Table 18. Rural residents' perceptions of community life

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
People don't depend on each other like they once did	32%	53%	6%	8%	1%
I can always count on my community if I need help	8%	41%	31%	17%	4%
Whenever someone in our community needs help, there are always plenty of neighbors willing to help them	12%	51%	21%	13%	2%
I am so busy nowadays, I don't seem to have time to visit my neighbors	13%	49%	11%	25%	2%
It is difficult to get people to volunteer to help on community projects	19%	50%	14%	16%	8%
I'm not as active in community affairs as I should be	11%	52%	12%	21%	4%
People don't seem to be as willing to help each other as they once did	14%	53%	12%	20%	1%
About the only time I see my neighbors is when they drive past my house	7%	38%	8%	46%	2%
Our community is closely knit	4%	30%	30%	32%	4%

Table 19. Rural residents concern about community.

Statement	Very Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Uncertain	Slightly Concerned	Not Concerned	Mean
How concerned are you about the financial condition of your community?	34%	43%	12%	8%	4%	3.07

Table 20. Rural residents' optimism about the future of their communities.

Statement	Generally Optimistic	Uncertain	Generally Pessimistic	Mean
How optimistic are you about the future of your community?	39%	44%	16%	2.77

Table 21. Issues impacting agriculture -farm operators

Issue	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Loss of competitive markets	3%	16%	81%
Declining viability of rural communities	4%	23%	73%
Declining number of farms in the state	6%	18%	76%
Market concentration of large-scale agribusiness	10%	36%	54%
Vertical contracting that links farming with processors	5%	42%	52%
The influence of multinational agribusiness corporations	11%	36%	52%
Consumers changing food preferences	6%	45%	48%
Increasing environmental concerns about agricultural chemicals	5%	30%	65%
Increasing health concerns about agricultural chemicals	4%	29%	67%

Table 22. Rural labor force composition

Labor force characteristic	Rural	Farm
In labor force	645	749
No. employed full time	<u>Count</u> <u>Percent</u> 346 53.6%	<u>Count</u> <u>Percent</u> 451 60.2%
No. employed part time & want part time	56 8.7%	87 11.6%
No. employed part time & want full time	98 15.2%	66 8.8%
Not looking for work	25 3.9%	36 4.8%
No. unemployed	73 11.3%	33 4.4%
Sought job in last four weeks	29 4.5%	21 2.8%
Expect to report to work in next four weeks	19 2.9%	12 1.6%

Table 23. Comparison of rural underemployment rates

	1994		1990*		1988**	
Underemployment Rates	Rural	Farm	Rural	Farm	Rural	Farm
Unemployed	11.3%	4.4%	9.4%	8.1%	10.2%	7.6%
Subemployed	15.2%	8.8%	6.2%	5.2%	7.9%	6.1%
Discouraged Workers	3.9%	4.8%	5.6%	5.4%	6.6%	8.7%
Total Rate	26.5%	18.0%	21.2%	18.7%	24.7%	22.4%

* 1990 Rural Life Poll

**1988 Rural Life Poll

Table 24. Respondents choice of minimum wage for adults with dependents

Minimum wage for adult with dependents	Overall	Rural	Farm
Mean	\$6.36	\$6.75	\$6.18
Mode	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$5.00
<\$4.25	21%	20%	18%
\$4.25-\$5.25	25%	20%	25%
\$5.25-\$6.25	23%	25%	22%
\$6.25-\$7.25	12%	9%	13%
\$7.25-\$8.25	10%	12%	11%
>\$8.25	9%	13%	7%

Table 25. Household financial and lifestyle adjustments

Adjustments	Area	Major	Minor	None
Postponed major household purchase	Rural	17%	25%	58%
	Farm	23%	31%	90%
Reduced life insurance coverage	Rural	7%	7%	86%
	Farm	10%	14%	76%
Reduced health insurance coverage	Rural	8%	9%	83%
	Farm	10%	16%	74%
Changed food buying habits	Rural	10%	30%	60%
	Farm	9%	37%	54%
Purchased more items on credit	Rural	9%	16%	75%
	Farm	9%	20%	71%
Cut back on entertainment expenses	Rural	14%	24%	62%
	Farm	18%	33%	48%
Family member has taken outside employment	Rural	5%	5%	90%
	Farm	15%	13%	72%
Postponed medical care	Rural	8%	17%	74%
	Farm	10%	18%	72%
Have not been able to pay property taxes	Rural	3%	5%	92%
	Farm	3%	4%	92%

Table 26. Perceptions of the adequacy of coverage of various farm topics - farm operators

Information	Not Enough	About Right	Too Much
Farm Market Information	22%	75%	3%
Crop & Livestock Management	11%	85%	4%
Farm Supplies & Equipment	9%	81%	9%
Farm Policy	22%	73%	6%
Weather	22%	74%	4%
Agricultural Research	24%	72%	3%
Rural Issues & Concerns	26%	72%	2%
Human Interest	17%	76%	6%

Harvesting	44%	5%	1%	2%	1%	45%	2%	Ext. Ser. 1 Exp. Sta. 3 Seminar 1
Diversification	66%	10%	1%	1%	0%	20%	2%	Ext. Ser. 2 Exp. Sta. 4 Seminar 1 Mktplace 1
Forage/Hay	63%	6%	0%	1%	2%	26%	2%	Ext. Ser. 2 Exp. Sta. 4 Seminar 1
Grain Hand.	56%	6%	1%	1%	9%	25%	2%	Ext. Ser. 2 Exp. Sta. 3 Coop 1 Elevator 2 Seminar 1
Livestock	57%	7%	3%	3%	2%	23%	6%	Ext. Ser. 5 Exp. Sta. 4 Seminar 1 Vetinar. 4
Small Grain	50%	8%	2%	2%	4%	28%	7%	Ext. Ser. 12 Exp. Sta. 4 Coop 1 Seminar 1 Consult. 1
Spec. Crops	57%	5%	3%	1%	8%	21%	5%	Ext. Ser. 5 Exp. Sta. 5 Coop 1 Supplier 1 Seminar 2
Oil Seeds	51%	5%	2%	2%	12%	22%	5%	Ext. Ser. 5 Exp. Sta. 6 Elevator 1 Supplier 1 Seminar 2
Row Crops	54%	7%	1%	1%	7%	26%	4%	Ext. Ser. 5 Exp. Sta. 4 Coop 2 Supplier 1 Seminar 2
Farm Business	65%	11%	3%	1%	0%	15%	4%	Ext. Ser. 7 Exp. Sta. 4 Seminar 1 Bank 1

Table 28. Percent of farm operators reporting crop loss and amount of loss in 1993

Crop	Yes	0%	1-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%	100%	Covered
Durum	13	15	44	20	13	5	3	0	38
Oats	26	44	19	19	8	3	5	2	23
Corn	21	7	15	16	19	18	15	10	30
Sunflowers	30	11	12	15	26	17	8	10	46
SprWheat	86	20	30	25	12	4	8	1	39
WinWheat	35	14	32	25	18	6	4	0	36
Barley	37	19	30	21	13	4	9	4	37
Sugar Beets	11	29	57	14	0	0	0	0	40
Flax	20	36	29	29	0	0	7	0	29
Potatoes	13	0	67	0	0	33	0	0	0
Canola	15	20	0	20	60	0	0	0	0
Hay	35	21	12	24	18	9	15	3	0
Soybeans	46	4	10	29	31	8	15	2	36
Pinto Beans	29	7	13	0	47	7	20	7	67
Navy Beans	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80

Table 29. Respondents familiarity with agricultural development programs.

How familiar are you with:	Area	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Familiar
Marketplace	Rural	6%	32%	62%
	Farm	9%	37%	54%
Pride of Dakota	Rural	7%	51%	42%
	Farm	9%	50%	41%
Agricultural Products Utilization Commission	Farm	4%	16%	80%

Table 30. Attendance at Marketplace.

Have you ever attended Marketplace?	Yes%	No%
Rural	19	81
Farm	26	74

Table 31. How respondents became familiar with Pride of Dakota.

How did you hear about Pride of Dakota?	Rural%	Farm%
Newspaper	61	44
Trade Show Display	33	36
State Fair	27	25
Magazine	45	28
Word of Mouth	37	18

Table 32. Farmers satisfaction with USDA programs

How satisfied are you with the:	Very Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Agric. Stabil. & Conser. Service	26%	48%	16%	9%
Farmers Home Administration	10%	28%	28%	33%
Soil Conservation Service	22%	42%	25%	11%

Table 33. Mean, median and categorical age for respondents

Age Category	Rural	Farm
Mean age	45	46
Median age	48	50
18-19	1%	0%
20-29	2%	1%
30-39	15%	14%
40-49	20%	25%
50-59	16%	22%
60-69	19%	26%
70-79	19%	9%
80+	7%	3%

Table 34. Gender of respondents.

Gender	Rural	Farm
Male	50%	80%
Female	31%	6%

Table 35. Marital status of respondents.

Marital Status	Rural	Farm
Married	73%	84%
Never Married	8%	11%
Widowed	13%	3%
Divorced	7%	2%

Table 36. Educational attainment of respondents.

Educational Attainment Category	Rural	Farm
7 years or less	1%	1%
8 to 11 years	16%	19%
High school graduate	26%	24%
Some college/vocational	25%	28%
2 year college degree	8%	9%
4 year college degree	16%	15%
Post graduate degree	7%	5%

Table 37. Community size for respondents

Community Size	Rural	Farm
<250	19%	36%
250-499	13%	16%
500-999	21%	16%
1000-2500	27%	19%
>2500	21%	12%

Table 38. Political affiliation of respondents.

Political Affiliation	Rural	Farm
Conserv. Republican	20%	19%
Moderate Republican	12%	8%
Liberal Republican	2%	1%
Indep. Leaning Republican	15%	14%
Independent	18%	21%
Indep. Leaning Democrat	12%	12%
Conserv. Democrat	6%	13%
Moderate Democrat	12%	9%
Liberal Democrat	3%	1%

Table 39. Family income of respondents.

Family Income Before Taxes	Rural	Farm
<\$5000	4%	2%
\$5000-\$9999	10%	2%
\$10000-\$14999	10%	3%
\$15000-\$24999	19%	13%
\$25000-\$34999	20%	20%
\$35000-\$49999	18%	19%
\$50000-\$74999	13%	17%
\$75000-\$99999	4%	10%
\$100000+	2%	16%

Table 40. Years farming for farm respondents.

Years Farming	Farm
Mean	33
<10	3%
10-19	19%
20-29	22%
30-39	17%
40-49	24%
50-59	10%
60+	4%

Table 41. Farms by sales category.

Farms by Sales Category	Percent
<\$5000	6%
\$5000-\$9999	5%
\$10000-\$24999	8%
\$25000-\$39999	10%
\$40000-\$49999	6%
\$50000-\$99999	26%
\$100000-\$249999	29%
\$250000-\$499999	8%
\$500000+	1%

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Rural Residents Fear Loss of Community, Farms and Businesses

The tightly knit rural community known for its hospitality and neighborliness may be a relic of the past according to data recently released from the 1994 North Dakota Rural Life Poll by the Social Science Research Institute at UND. Although a majority of rural residents believe that their neighbors and their community can be counted on to help those who need assistance in an emergency or following a tragedy, for the most part, they recognize that the everyday acts of neighborliness and of community involvement are not as prevalent as they once were says Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, who conducted the poll.

When answers to "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were totaled, 85 percent of residents said that people don't depend on each other like they once did and 67 percent said that people don't seem to be as willing to help each other as they once did (Table 1). They were less willing to admit, however, that their community is closely knit with 34 percent agreeing, 30 percent uncertain, and 36 percent disagreeing. Although the extent of interdependence and willingness to help each other may have declined, about half of rural residents said they thought they could count on their community if they ever needed help and three-fifths said that whenever someone in their community needed help there were always plenty of people to help them.

Stofferahn explains the discrepancy in these findings by saying that the norms of providing assistance to neighbors and community members in times of emergency or tragedy is still fairly strongly ingrained in rural community culture. It is this norm he says, that makes it possible for rural communities to respond informally to these situations. "With a less dense population base, it just makes sense for rural people to respond in this way realizing that they might sometime in the

future be the recipient of such services. In larger cities, this response is often handled by formal organizations."

Although they are too busy to visit with their neighbors (62% agree), they were split evenly between agree (45%) and disagree(48%) to the statement that the only time that they ever see their neighbors is when they drive past their house. Similarly, they perceive that active community involvement, once a characteristic of rural communities, is not as strong a norm as it once was. Almost seventy percent agreed that it was difficult to get people to volunteer to help on community projects, and slightly over sixty percent agreed that they were not as involved in community affairs as they should be.

Rural residents also appear to be concerned about the loss of the economic base of their communities (Table 2). When asked to rate twelve "threats" to rural North Dakota as "severely threatens", "somewhat threatens", "does not threaten", or "don't know", seventy percent of more said that the loss of family farms, the closing of small businesses, and the lack of jobs severely threatens rural North Dakota. Half or more said that rural out migration, low wages and low income, and the closing of hospitals severely threatens rural North Dakota.

These responses in total indicate they have a degree of uncertainty about the future of rural communities says Stofferahn. Slightly over two fifths said they were moderately concerned about the financial condition of their community while one third were very concerned (Table 3). Slightly more than two fifths said they were uncertain when asked about their degree of optimism for their communities while sixteen percent were generally pessimistic (Table 4).

Now that North Dakota has become an "urban" state with half of the population residing in cities of 2500 or more, forty seven percent thought that less rural political influence and 45 percent thought that loss of urban support for rural issues somewhat threatens rural North Dakota. Rural residents were split three ways between an increase in crime, school consolidation, and increasing rural poverty (46 percent each) as somewhat threatening rural North Dakota.

Finally, almost two fifths said that locating trash facilities in rural areas was somewhat a threat to rural North Dakota.

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for the rural non-farm residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for rural non-farm respondents is 4.17% (N=553) .

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of North Dakota. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by various contributions from organizations and officials who are concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, Department of Human Services, Farm and Ranch Guide, UNO Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UNO Child Welfare Research Bureau, Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1. Rural resident's perceptions of community life

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
People don't depend on each other like they once did	32%	53%	6%	8%	1%
I can always count on my community if I need help	8%	41%	31%	17%	4%
Whenever someone in our community needs help, there are always plenty of neighbors willing to help them	12%	51%	21%	13%	2%
I am so busy nowadays, I don't seem to have time to visit my neighbors	13%	49%	11%	25%	2%
It is difficult to get people to volunteer to help on community projects	19%	50%	14%	16%	8%
I'm not as active in community affairs as I should be	11%	52%	12%	21%	4%
People don't seem to be as willing to help each other as they once did	14%	53%	12%	20%	1%
About the only time I see my neighbors is when they drive past my house	7%	38%	8%	46%	2%
Our community is closely knit	4%	30%	30%	32%	4%

Perceived threat	Severely threatens %	Somewhat threatens %	Does not threaten %	Don't know %
Lack of jobs	70	24	2	4
Locating trash facilities in rural areas	27	38	26	10
An increase in crime	24	46	24	6
Rural out-migration	57	31	5	6
Closing of small businesses	72	26	1	2
Loss of family farms	75	22	2	1
School consolidation	32	46	17	4
Increasing poverty	36	46	10	8
Low wages and low income	50	43	4	3
Closing of hospitals	49	38	10	3
Less rural political influence	31	47	12	9
Loss of urban support for rural issues	39	45	7	10

Table 3. Rural residents concern about community.

Statement	Very Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Uncertain	Slightly Concerned	Not Concerned	M
How concerned are you about the financial condition of your community?	34	43	12	8	4	

Table 4. Rural residents' optimism about the future of their communities.

Statement	Generally Optimistic	Uncertain	Generally Pessimistic	Mean
How optimistic are you about the future of your community?	39	44	16	2.77

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Rural Underemployment Rates Remain High

Despite a recovering rural economy, rural underemployment rates remain about the same now as they were in 1990 according to Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, Director of the Social Science Research Institute at UND (Tables 1). Based upon data in the 1994 ND Rural Life Poll, the current underemployment rate for rural non-farmers is 26.5% which is higher than the rates of 21.2% reported in 1990 and of 24.7% reported in 1988. The 1994 rate for farmers is 18.0% which is slightly lower than the rate of 18.7% reported in 1990, and lower than the rate of 22.4% reported in 1988.

The Social Science Research Institute at UND has been collecting rural underemployment rates since 1988 as part of the rural life poll. Underemployment is a combination of the unemployment, discouraged, and involuntary part time employment rates. Those who are not working but are actively looking for work are considered unemployed, those who are not working but have given up looking for work are considered discouraged, and those who are working part time but who would like full time employment are considered involuntary part time.

When the underemployment rate is disaggregated into its components, the rural unemployment and discouraged rates for non-farm rural residents are higher in 1994 (11.3%, 15.2%) than they were in 1990 (11.3%, 15.2%) or 1988 (9.4%, 6.2%), but the discouraged worker rate is lower in 1994 (3.9%) than it was in 1990 (5.6%) and in 1988 (6.6%). A comparison of the rates for farm residents shows that the unemployment rate in 1994 (4.4%) is lower than what it was in 1990 (9.4%) and in 1988 (10.2%), but the involuntary part time rate is higher in 1994 (8.8%) than it was in 1990 (5.2%) and in 1988 (6.1). Stofferahn says the increase in the rural residents' underemployment rate can be attributed to more unemployed and more employed part time in 1994 than in 1990. The reduction in the farm residents underemployment rate can be attributed to fewer unemployed and discouraged workers although there are more involuntary part time workers.

Stofferahn says that while the increase in part-time employment may have been beneficial to households, the number of workers actively looking for work, those who are discouraged from looking and those who would like

to work full time indicate that rural North Dakota needs much more job creation. Although urban areas are experiencing low rates of unemployment and a shortage of laborers, underemployment rates of 18% and 27% indicate a tremendous reservoir of potential laborers for new industries in rural North Dakota..

Other data from the poll also demonstrate the severity of the employment problem in rural areas says Stofferahn (Table 2). Nineteen percent of the non-farm families and ten percent of the farm families reported that unemployment had been a problem for them. Seventeen percent of non-farm families and ten percent of farm families reported feelings of job dissatisfaction and twelve percent of non-farm and five percent of farm families indicated that lack of job training was a problem. The extent of dissatisfaction with rural employment opportunities was most aptly illustrated by the 34 percent of non-farm and 26 percent of farm families who reported that lack of good paying jobs had been a problem for them while 34 percent of the non-farm and 24 percent of the farm families indicated that lack of employment opportunities of any kind had been a problem for them.

This dissatisfaction with employment opportunities was also illustrated by the high percent of non-farm rural respondents who indicated that lack of jobs and low wages/incomes severely threatened rural North Dakota (Table 3). Seventy percent indicated that lack of jobs severely threatened and 24 percent felt lack of jobs somewhat threatened rural North Dakota's future. Furthermore, 50 percent indicated that low wages and low incomes severely threatened and 43 percent thought it somewhat threatened the future of rural North Dakota.

Dissatisfaction with low wages and incomes was further demonstrated by data which indicate that rural residents think that minimum wage to support an adult with dependents should be higher than it is now (Table 4). When asked what they thought the minimum wage for an adult with dependent should be, the average rate reported by rural non-farm respondents was \$6.75, which is 58 percent higher than the current rate, and farm respondents reported an average of \$6.18, which is 45 percent higher than current rate of \$4.25. The most often rate reported for rural non-farm respondents was \$6.00 while for farm respondents it was \$5.00. Stofferahn notes that the rural non-farm average of \$6.75 is still only 95% of the \$7.09 hourly wage to keep a family of four out of poverty. So if a family of four were to be supported by one person working full time at a wage which is 59 percent higher than the current minimum, it would still be in poverty.

When the rates were grouped into increments of one dollar from the current rate, 20 percent of non-farm and 18 percent of farm respondents thought the minimum wage should be less than the current rate, 20 percent of the

non-farm and 25 percent of the farm respondents thought it should be between \$4.25 and \$5.25, and 25 percent of the non-farm and 22 percent of the farm respondents thought it should be between \$5.25 and \$6.25.

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for the rural non-farm residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for farm respondents is 4.75% (N=425), and the margin of error for rural non-farm respondents is 4.17% (N=553).

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of North Dakota. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by various contributions from organizations and officials who are concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, Department of Human Services, Farm and Ranch Guide, UND Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UND Child Welfare Research Bureau, Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1. Rural Underemployment Rates

	1994		1990		1988	
Underemployment Rates	Rural	Farm	Rural	Farm	Rural	Farm
Unemployed	11.3%	4.4%	9.4%	8.1%	10.2%	7.6%
Invol. Part-time	15.2%	8.8%	6.2%	5.2%	7.9%	6.1%
Discouraged Workers	3.9%	4.8%	5.6%	5.4%	6.6%	8.7%
Total Rate	26.5%	18.0%	21.2%	18.7%	24.7%	22.4%

Table 2. Employed Related Family Problems

Family Problem	Rural	Farm
Unemployment	19%	10%
Job dissatisfaction	17%	10%
Lack of job training	12%	5%
Lack of good paying jobs	34%	26%
Lack of employment opportunities	34%	24%

Table 3. Employment-Related Perceived Threats to Rural North Dakota.

Perceived threat	Severely threatens	Somewhat threatens	Does not threaten	Don't know
Lack of jobs	70%	24%	2%	4%
Low wages and low income	50%	43%	4%	3%

Table 4. Respondents' Choice of Minimum Wage for Adults with Dependents

Minimum wage for adult with dependents	Rural	Farm
Mean	\$6.75	\$6.18
Mode	\$6.00	\$5.00
<\$4.25	20%	18%
\$4.25-\$5.25	20%	25%
\$5.25-\$6.25	25%	22%
\$6.25-\$7.25	9%	13%
\$7.25-\$8.25	12%	11%
>\$8.25	13%	7%

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Cooperatives Retain Strong Rural Support

"It is not surprising that cooperatives are seen as a vehicle for rural development, especially in value added agricultural processing, given the strong support, involvement and high regard for cooperatives among rural people" says Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, Director of the North Dakota Rural Life Poll at the University of North Dakota. When responses to "strongly favor" and "favor" were summed, 85 percent of rural non-farm respondents and 87 of farm respondents view cooperatives favorably (Table 1). Thirty percent of farm respondents and 18 percent of rural non-farm respondents reported doing all of their business at their cooperatives (Table 2). Although only 13 percent of the rural and 10 percent of the farm respondents indicated they were members, most who conduct business at their local coops become members by virtue of their patronage according to Stofferahn. He concludes that rural residents may not think of themselves as members although they are by their patronage. He cites the high percentage of those who attend annual meetings (18% for rural and 32% for farmers) also as an indication that rural residents are involved in their coops.

Furthermore, when responses to questions dealing with rural residents' perceptions of the necessity for and nature of coops, majorities of farm and rural non-farm respondents support coops (Table 3). For instance, majorities of both farm and rural non-farm respondents believed that coops needed their support to survive, that coops should promote economic development, that coops provide better services, and that we need more agricultural commodity processing coops. Majorities for both farm and rural non-farm respondents disagreed with the statements that coops are less important now than before and that there is little difference between coops and private businesses. Farm and rural non-farm respondents differed in their answers to not having much influence in their coops (rural - 50% agree, farmers - 43% disagree) and coops provide better prices (rural 38% agree, farmers - 36% disagree).

Although there has been debate among cooperatives and academics in recent years about the relevance of the historic Rochdale principles on which the cooperative movement was founded, Stofferahn does not find much support for changing those basic principles among respondents to the poll (Table 4). Majorities still think that open and voluntary membership, democratic control, limited interest on shares, return of surplus to members, cooperative

education, and cooperation among cooperatives are important. Less than one fifth to one tenth did not think these principles were no longer important.

When Stofferahn summarized responses to questions dealing with coop principles, coop involvement, coop opinion, and coop support and compared farm and rural non-farm respondents on the summary measures, he found that they did not differ significantly on their average support for cooperative principles, for their average opinion about cooperatives, or for their average support for cooperatives (Table 5). He did find a significant difference, however, between rural and farm respondents averages on cooperative involvement with rural non-farm respondents having a significantly lower involvement than farm respondents.

Rural residents also believe that their local rural electric cooperatives provide better services than do investor- or municipal-owned electric utilities (Table 6). In eight of nine areas, majorities of both non-farm and farm rural residents preferred their rural electric cooperative over other means of delivering electricity. They believed that RECs' rates were fairer, RECs were better at keeping up with technology, RECs provided more dependable service, RECs were more interested in their customers, RECs profits (patronage refunds) were fairer, RECs were more efficient at managing their businesses, customers had more influence with RECs, and that RECs communicated better with their customers. A majority of rural residents, however, thought there was no difference between RECs and other means of providing electricity when it came to concern for the environment. When respondents' preferences for the kind of provider were summarized, rural residents chose RECs 83 percent of the time while farm residents chose RECs 91 percent of the time (Table 7).

When asked about the kinds of services that local electric companies could provide to their customers (Table 8), slightly over half of rural non-farm residents, but non farm residents, said that they thought it would be alright if they provided assistance to local schools, provided information to consumers about their efforts to protect the environment, and provided assistance to individuals or groups starting a new business. Neither rural non-farm or farm residents supported their electric companies providing support to arts and other cultural programs. A majority of both rural non-farm and farm residents were agreed that it was alright for electric companies to provide assistance in local economic development efforts. Stofferahn says the comparison between rural non-farm and farm responses to these items is interesting since 65 percent of farm respondents are members of and get their electricity from a rural electric utility whereas only 29 percent of non-farm respondents receive their electricity from a rural electric utility.

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for the rural non-farm residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for farm respondents is 4.75% (N=425), and the margin of error for rural non-farm respondents is 4.17% (N=553).

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Table 1. Opinion About Cooperatives

Area	Highly Favorable	Moderately Favorable	Not Too Favorable	Unfavorable
Rural	27%	58%	13%	2%
Farm	33%	54%	11%	2%

Table 2. Summary of Cooperative Involvement

Area	Not a Member	Member	Some Business	All Business	Attend Meetings	Board of Directors
Rural	28%	13%	19%	18%	18%	4%
Farm	9%	10%	9%	29%	32%	13%

Table 3. Support for Coops

Statement	Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Coops need my support to survive.	Rural Farm	17% 29%	42% 50%	26% 12%	11% 7%	5% 3%
I don't have much influence in my coops.	Rural Farm	14% 10%	36% 30%	26% 16%	18% 33%	7% 10%
Coops are less important now than before	Rural Farm	5% 6%	17% 14%	30% 22%	34% 42%	14% 17%
There is little difference between coops and private business	Rural Farm	3% 4%	18% 17%	22% 16%	42% 47%	15% 17%
Coops provide better prices	Rural Farm	5% 6%	33% 27%	34% 32%	19% 28%	8% 8%
Coops provide better services	Rural Farm.	6% 6%	31% 30%	40% 35%	16% 23%	7% 7%
Coops provide better products	Rural Farm	3% 4%	21% 18%	46% 38%	23% 33%	8% 7%
Coops should promote economic development	Rural Farm	14% 13%	53% 54%	27% 22%	4% 8%	2% 3%
We need more agric. commodity processing coops	Rural Farm	19% 20%	38% 49%	33% 20%	7% 9%	4% 2%

Table 4. Support for Cooperative Principles

Principles	Area	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Open and voluntary membership	Rural Farm	32% 35%	59% 56%	10% 9%
Democratic control: one member one vote	Rural Farm	41% 47%	53% 47%	6% 6%
Limited interest on shares	Rural Farm	18% 18%	66% 63%	16% 19%
Return of surplus to members	Rural Farm	40% 44%	53% 49%	7% 7%
Co-operative education	Rural Farm	27% 22%	60% 67%	12% 21%
Co-operation among cooperatives	Rural Farm	33% 34%	58% 57%	10% 9%

Table 5. Summary of Responses to Coop Principles, Coop Involvement and Coop Support

	Rural	Rural	Farm	Farm	Mean Difference
Scale	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Sig.
Coop Principles	0 - 6	5.15	0 - 6	5.09	.759
Coop Involvement	0 - 5	1.97	0 - 5	3.07	.000
Coop Opinion	1-4	3.10	1-4	3.18	.070
Coop Support	12 - 45	31.55	9- 45	31.93	.310

Table 7. Overall Preference for Electric Service Provider

Area	Investor Owned	Municipal	Rural Elec. Coop
Rural	10%	7%	83%
Farm	6%	3%	91%

Table 6. Choice of electric utility in providing services

Statement	Area	Private	City	Coop.	No Difference
Fairness of the rates they charge	Rural	10%	11%	56%	22%
	Farm	7%	4%	70%	19%
Keeping up with technology	Rural	21%	8%	41%	30%
	Farm	14%	4%	50%	32%
Providing dependable service	Rural	14%	9%	42%	35%
	Farm	8%	3%	52%	37%
Interest in their customers	Rural	13%	8%	54%	25%
	Farm	10%	1%	61%	28%
Fairness of their profits	Rural	9%	9%	61%	22%
	Farm	5%	2%	73%	20%
Efficiency in managing their business	Rural	25%	8%	34%	32%
	Farm	25%	2%	71%	33%
Influence of customers	Rural	12%	8%	57%	24%
	Farm	7%	2%	68%	23%
Communicating with customers	Rural	14%	6%	49%	31%
	Farm	8%	2%	58%	31%
Concern for the environment	Rural	10%	8%	39%	44%
	Farm	5%	1%	44%	49%

Table 8. Opinion about electric utilities providing community service

Statement	Rural	Farm
Assistance to local schools	53%	40%
Information to consumers about efforts to protect the environment	56%	46%
Assistance to local health & social service organizations	42%	28%
Assistance to individuals or groups starting a new business	52%	47%
Assistance to arts and other cultural programs	20%	11%
Assistance in local economic development efforts	67%	60%
None of these	13%	16%

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Rural Residents View Teenage Sexuality as Important Youth Problem
and Lack of Good Paying Jobs as Important Family Problem

Although rural residents strongly disapprove of teenage sexual activity, they recognize that it is a problem and that sex education should be taught in elementary through high school according to data from the 1994 North Dakota Rural Life Poll (Table 1). When strongly disapprove and disapprove responses were tallied, ninety percent of both farm and non-farm rural residents disapprove of high school boys and girls engaging in sexual intercourse, but they recognize that it is going on by the 55 percent of rural non-farm and 45 percent of farm residents who agree that teenage pregnancy is a problem in their community. In recognition of the fact that teenagers are sexually active, 44 percent of rural non-farm residents and 47 percent of farm residents believe formal sex education should be taught in elementary through high school. Furthermore, three fourths of both rural non-farm and farm residents believe that parents should talk to their children about contraceptives. Rural residents also disapprove of occasional drinking and tobacco use by children, slightly over half think there is a drinking problem among high school youth in their community.

Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, who directs the poll, says he was somewhat surprised by the poll results because he says rural residents typically have not approved of sex education being taught in the schools. "Responses to the poll indicate that rural residents tend to be very pragmatic when it comes to dealing with teenage sexual activity. While they don't condone it, they realize that it is going on, is a problem, and that both schools and parents have a responsibility in teaching teenagers about sex and contraception."

When it comes to the safety of farm children, farm residents are very aware of the vulnerability of farm children to farm hazards but seem unwilling to make changes to reduce the risks. Eighty one percent of farm respondents agree farm children were at risk of suffering injury while operating farm equipment and 67 percent agree that there is a need for a farm safety program in their community. Although they recognize the dangers facing farm children, only 39 percent agree that children should not be allowed to ride along on farm equipment. The importance of child labor to the farm operation was indicated by the 90 percent who agree that farm children have

more responsibility than other children their age and the 61 percent who thought it was okay for farm children to work more than eight hours a day on the farm during the busy season. Even though farm children are actively involved in farm operations, their parents are seen as discouraging them from entering full-time farming by 90 percent of the farm respondents.

In terms of family problems, lack of good paying jobs was the most often mentioned problem for both rural non-farm and farm residents followed by lack of employment opportunities, lack of health insurance coverage, and unemployment, and job dissatisfaction (Table 2). Stofferahn says that it was not surprising that employment-related questions ranked so highly in terms of responses as family problems when the rural underemployment rate that he calculated based upon the survey data is 26 percent for rural residents and 18 percent for farm residents.

The issue of lack of health insurance coverage for 21 percent of the rural non-farm residents and 15 percent of the farm residents was startling since a survey conducted by the North Dakota Health Task Force by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation indicated that only 9.9 percent of North Dakotans lacked health insurance. That same survey found that 55 percent of North Dakotans receive their health insurance from their place of employment, so he was not surprised that the issue of health insurance ranked up there with the employment related questions. Furthermore, he noted, that according to the Task Force survey, 13 percent of North Dakotans have individual policies. That figure would be even higher for rural residents, many of whom are small businessman or family farmers. Furthermore, many small businesses cannot afford to provide health insurance for their employees, many of whom are part-time. Rural residents' concern about health insurance is further illustrated by the fact that 8 percent of rural non-farm and 10 percent of farm residents report that reducing their life insurance coverage was a major problem for them in the past year.

Although 20 percent of rural residents indicate lack of health insurance coverage was a problem, only 13 percent of rural non-farm residents and eight percent of farm residents report that they lacked medical care. Stofferahn says that questions may be interpreted to mean that they lack access to two reasons: either they can't afford it because they have no insurance or that medical care is not available in their community. He cautioned that one should be careful not to extrapolate too much from the findings, however, since the question asked respondents if any of these areas had ever been a problem for their family.

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents.

Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for the rural non-farm residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for farm respondents is 4.75% (N=425), and the margin of error for rural non-farm respondents is 4.17% (N=553) .

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of North Dakota. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by various contributions from organizations and officials who are concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, Department of Human Services, Farm and Ranch Guide, UND Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UND Child Welfare Research Bureau, Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1. Perception of Child Well Being

Item	Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Occasional drinking by children should be ignored	Rural Farm	2% 2%	4% 4%	4% 4%	40% 43%	50% 47%
I don't mind if children use tobacco in my presence	Rural Farm	2% 2%	2% 2%	1% 2%	30% 34%	64% 60%
There is a drinking problem among high school youth in our community	Rural Farm	21% 16%	36% 38%	28% 30%	9% 11%	6% 4%
Children (<18) are getting a quality education	Rural Farm	6% 6%	53% 57%	24% 20%	13% 11%	3% 4%
Formal sex educ. should be taught in elem. thru high school	Rural Farm	11% 9%	33% 38%	22% 20%	21% 21%	12% 12%
Formal sex educ. should be restricted to high school only	Rural Farm	4% 4%	23% 25%	21% 25%	37% 32%	15% 14%
It is okay for high school boys to engage in sex. inter.	Rural Farm	1% 1%	3% 2%	5% 6%	31% 37%	60% 64%
It is okay for high school girls to engage in sex. inter.	Rural Farm	1% 1%	2% 2%	5% 6%	30% 35%	63% 55%
Teenage pregnancy is a problem in our community	Rural Farm	18% 10%	37% 35%	25% 28%	16% 24%	3% 2%
Parents should talk with their children about contraceptives	Rural Farm	29% 22%	47% 55%	13% 12%	5% 6%	6% 5%
More & more children are discouraged by parents to enter full-time farming	Rural Farm	NA 23%	NA 52%	NA 15%	NA 9%	NA 1%
Farm children have more responsibility than other children of their age	Rural Farm	NA 33%	NA 57%	NA 7%	NA 3%	NA 0%
Children should not be allowed to ride along on farm equipment	Rural Farm	NA 12%	NA 27%	NA 20%	NA 31%	NA 10%
Farm children are at risk of suffering injury while operating farm equipment	Rural Farm	NA 19%	NA 62%	NA 9%	NA 8%	NA 2%
It's okay for farm children to work more than 8 hours a day on the farm during the busy season	Rural Farm	NA 11%	NA 50%	NA 15%	NA 19%	NA 5%
There is a need for a farm safety program in our community	Rural Farm	NA 14%	NA 53%	NA 21%	NA 9%	NA 3%

Table 2. Type of family problems experienced.

Family Problem	Rural%	Farm%
Drug use	4	2
Alcoholism	15	6
Unemployment	19	10
Youth gangs	3	1
Child abuse/neglect	3	1
Elderly abuse/neglect	2	0
Spouse abuse	3	1
Job dissatisfaction	17	10
Lack of job training	12	5
Unwanted pregnancies	3	1
Gambling abuse	3	1
Lack of good paying jobs	34	26
Lack of medical care	13	8
Lack of child day care	6	3
Lack of nursing home care	4	2
Lack of employment opportunities	34	24
Lack of youth recreation	20	11
Lack of health insurance coverage	21	15
Lack of public transportation	12	7
Lack of elderly services	10	6

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ND Farmers Favor Targeting Farm Program Payments

Three fifths of North Dakota farmers favor targeting farm program payments to a certain amount of production on all farms and eliminating payments above those levels according to data recently released from the North Dakota Rural Life Poll conducted in 1994 by the Social Science Research Institute at UND (Table 1). Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, who conducted the poll, says that the high level of support for a drastic change in the farm program among North Dakota farmers was surprising. Even though two fifths favor keeping the present system, most have probably realized, that with a change in Congressional leadership, the farm program may be changed considerably.

The two changes in the farm program that have been advocated by the Republicans in Congress did not receive much support from North Dakota farmers. Only a third supported the decoupling plan by which government program payments would be separated from production levels and a third supported the gradual elimination of all commodity programs while 45 percent were undecided about it.

Another option that has been discussed received even less support. Only 28 percent of North Dakota farmers favored providing government support for farmers only when their revenue falls below 60 to 70 percent of what they usually receive from production. Even fewer (24 percent) supported, and 50 percent opposed, a mandatory supply control program with all farmers required to participate if approved in a referendum. This approach was advocated during the mid 1980s before the 1985 Farm Bill was enacted.

When asked about the importance of various issues impacting agriculture (Table 2), the concern that received the highest percentage as being "very important" was the loss of competitive markets followed by the declining number of farms in the state, the declining viability of rural communities, increasing health concerns about agricultural chemicals, and increasing environmental concerns about agricultural chemicals. Of all the nine concerns listed, a majority of farmers rated each of them as "very important".

Dr. Stofferahn says he thinks that farmers' rating of concerns indicates that they are very aware of the relationship between market concentration among multinational commodity firms and farm prices. Fifty four percent

indicated that market concentration of large scale agribusiness was a "very important" issue impacting agriculture. He points out that farm organizations have called upon Congress to investigate the impacts of market concentration in the meat processing industries as well as in other commodities. Just over fifty percent indicated that the influence of multinational agribusiness corporations and vertical contracting linking farmers with process were "very important" issues impacting agriculture.

Stofferahn also says that the two issues receiving the second and third highest percentages -- the declining number of farms and the declining viability of rural communities -- indicate that farmers are very concerned about the quality of life in rural communities if present trends continue. He calls this the fear of being the "last farmer in the county". "What kind of quality of life would there be for a farmer and his family if they have no neighbors, no school to send their children to, no community to socialize in, no community in which to purchase goods and service, and no place to worship? As they review what has already happened and what could happen if there is a elimination of any kind of farm program, as has been proposed, they have good cause to worry about their future".

The two thirds of farmers who listed as "very important" the increasing environmental and health concerns associated with agricultural chemicals and the nearly a half who listed consumers changing food preferences as "very important" indicate that they are aware that these concerns could dictate a change in their production habits if they are going to be responsive to a changing market demand.

When specifically asked about their plans in the next year, 28 percent said they plan to retire and nine percent said they intend to quit farming or ranching, but 20 percent indicated that they plan to bring their children into the farm operation. Looking at these percentages, Stofferahn says, that based upon these figures, the decrease in farms could be higher than the average loss of -1.4% percent a year(-554 farms a year) between 1980 and 1992. Especially dramatic is the percentage of farmers who say they plan to retire he says. This trend will escalate as the average age of North Dakota farmers is 54 and 26 percent of the farmers are 65 years of age or older, according to survey data. Only four percent of the farmers were less than 35 years of age, 37 percent were 35 to 50 years of age, and 32 percent were 50 through 54 years of age.

Other plans include mainly reducing their vulnerability rather than increasing their farm operation: 30 percent plan to reduce short- or long- term debt, 21 percent plan to purchase crop insurance, 24 percent plan on postponing a major farm purchase, 23 percent intend to keep better financial records, 31 percent indicated they will

pay closer attention to marketing, 13 percent said they would use future market to hedge crop prices, 13 percent said they planned on diversifying their farm operation. Only 12 percent said they plan to increase the acres farmed.

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for farm respondents is 4.75% (N=425).

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of North Dakota. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by various contributions from organizations and officials that are concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Farm and Ranch Guide, UND Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UND Child Welfare Research Bureau, North Dakota Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1: Agricultural policy preference - farm operators

Policy	Strongly Favor	Favor	Undecided	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Keep present system	12%	31%	35%	17%	6%
Establish a mandatory supply control program with all farmers required to participate in approved in a referendum	8%	16%	27%	27%	23%
Separate government payments from production (decoupling)	8%	26%	45%	13%	7%
Gradually eliminate commodity programs	11%	22%	27%	25%	15%
Target farm program payments to a certain amount of production on all farms & eliminate payments above those limits	29%	32%	21%	9%	9%
Farmers receive support from the government only when their revenue falls below 60-70% of what they usually receive	9%	19%	31%	23%	18%

Table 2: Issues impacting agriculture -farm operators

Issue	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Loss of competitive markets	3%	16%	81%
Declining viability of rural communities	4%	23%	73%
Declining number of farms in the state	6%	18%	76%
Market concentration of large-scale agribusiness	10%	36%	54%
Vertical contracting that links farming with processors	5%	42%	52%
The influence of multinational agribusiness corporations	11%	36%	52%
Consumers changing food preferences	6%	45%	48%
Increasing environmental concerns about agricultural chemicals	5%	30%	65%
Increasing health concerns about agricultural chemicals	4%	29%	67%

Table 3: Future Plans - Farm Operators

	Farm %
Increase acres farmed	12
Diversify farm enterprise	13
Retire	28
Quit farming or ranching	9
Seek off-farm employment	8
Start new business	3
Reduce short- or long-term debt	30
Bring children into operation	20
Seek vocational training	1
Use futures market to hedge prices	13
Change from cash rent to crop share	3
Buy crop insurance	21
Postpone major farm purchase(s)	24
Share labor or machinery with neighbors	11
Reduce expenditures for hired help	6
Keep better financial records	23
Pay closer attention to marketing	31
Transfer land to lender	2

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Rural Residents Report Low Stress or Anxiety
and Low Financial and Lifestyle Adjustments

Despite the problems associated with the fluctuations in prices, the extremes of weather and an uncertain economic future, rural residents on the average report low levels of stress and anxiety according to data released from the 1994 North Dakota Rural Life Poll. Both rural non-farm and farm residents reported an average score just below the midpoint on stress and anxiety scales (Table 1) according to Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, Director of the UND Social Science Research Institute, who conducted the mail survey.

Contrary to expectations, says Dr. Stofferahn, farm and non-farm rural residents did not differ significantly on their average scores on stress or anxiety (Table 2). "I had expected that since farmers' economic security is dependent often times on factors beyond their control, that they might have shown higher stress than non-farm rural residents, but that was not the case.

A majority of both farm and non-farm residents reported "sometimes" for all but two of the ten items in the stress scale. But a majority of both farm and non-farm rural residents reported that they "fairly often" felt they were confident in dealing with problems of life and what happened in the future mainly depended on them. "So, despite being at the mercy of forces beyond their control, like markets and weather, data from the poll indicate that rural residents feel some control over their lives, but the majorities of one third to one half answering "sometimes" to the other eight questions indicates that rural residents do occasionally feel constrained by forces beyond their control" says Stofferahn. With these relatively low stress levels, it is not unusual that anxiety levels would also be in the same range, and the majorities answering "sometimes" to five of the six questions dealing with anxiety indicate that rural residents experience anxiety occasionally.

On the average, farm families made more household financial and lifestyle adjustments in 1994 than had non-farm families, perhaps out of necessity following crop losses due to the extremely wet summer and fall in 1994 (Table 3). Twenty three percent of farm families indicated that postponing of major household purchases was a major adjustment for them, eighteen percent reported that cutting back on entertainment expenses had been a major

adjustment, and fifteen percent reported that having to have a family member take outside employment was a major adjustment.

For non-farm rural families, seventeen percent indicated that postponing major household purchases was a major adjustment, fourteen percent indicated that cutting back on entertainment expenses was a major adjustment, and ten percent reported changing food buying habits was a major adjustment for them.

When a composite scale of financial and lifestyle adjustments was created, the average adjustment for farm families was a four on an eighteen point scale and for non-farm families it was a 3 on an eighteen point scale. Although these average responses were significantly different, the relatively low averages would place both farm and non-farm families in a low adjustment category (Table 4).

Table 1 . Responses to questions about stress and anxiety.

ITEMS	Area	Almost Never	Never	Some-times	Fairly Often	Very Often
STRESS ITEMS						
No opportunity to become person you would like to be	Rural Farm	16% 20%	24% 27%	45% 43%	9% 8%	5% 3%
Felt confident in dealing with problems of life	Rural Farm	6% 4%	6% 7%	28% 25%	42% 45%	19% 20%
Felt you couldn't solve some problems facing you	Rural Farm	16% 23%	20% 21%	52% 43%	9% 9%	3% 4%
Felt you could do little to change important things	Rural Farm	16% 19%	20% 20%	47% 46%	12% 12%	4% 3%
Felt what happens in future depends on you	Rural Farm	3% 2%	7% 3%	27% 25%	37% 40%	26% 28%
Felt you were being pushed around	Rural Farm	18% 21%	35% 27%	39% 41%	5% 7%	3% 4%
Felt you could do just about anything you wanted	Rural Farm	8% 9%	13% 11%	37% 43%	30% 27%	12% 11%
Felt you had little control over things happening to you	Rural Farm	17% 20%	22% 16%	48% 51%	10% 10%	4% 3%
Felt nervous and stressed	Rural Farm	17% 16%	12% 9%	49% 55%	16% 15%	7% 6%
Felt difficulties piling too high to overcome them	Rural Farm	25% 28%	35% 32%	32% 34%	6% 4%	3% 2%
ANXIETY ITEMS						
Often have shortness of breath	Rural Farm	19% 22%	45% 46%	30% 26%	5% 4%	2% 2%
Often restless	Rural Farm	17% 22%	21% 18%	50% 51%	8% 6%	3% 3%
Worry excessively	Rural Farm	26% 27%	23% 22%	38% 40%	9% 8%	3% 3%
Difficulty in concentrating because of anxiety	Rural Farm	28% 30%	29% 30%	35% 36%	5% 4%	3% 1%
Felt keyed up or on edge	Rural Farm	20% 23%	16% 16%	51% 52%	9% 7%	3% 3%
Have trouble falling asleep	Rural Farm	24% 31%	18% 23%	40% 34%	15% 8%	3% 3%

Table 2. Means and tests of significant differences on Stress and Anxiety Scales

Scale	Rural		Farm		Mean Sig. Diff.
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
Stress	8-45 (20-47)	25.46	8-45 (20-40)	25.63	.792
Anxiety	8-45 (16-40)	24.36	8-45 (16-40)	23.32	.113

Table 3. Household Financial and Lifestyle Adjustments

Adjustments	Area	Major	Minor	None
Postponed major household purchase	Rural	17%	25%	58%
	Farm	23%	31%	90%
Reduced life insurance coverage	Rural	7%	7%	86%
	Farm	10%	14%	76%
Reduced health insurance coverage	Rural	8%	9%	83%
	Farm	10%	16%	74%
Changed food buying habits	Rural	10%	30%	60%
	Farm	9%	37%	54%
Purchased more items on credit	Rural	9%	16%	75%
	Farm	9%	20%	71%
Cut back on entertainment expenses	Rural	14%	24%	62%
	Farm	18%	33%	48%
Family member has taken outside employment	Rural	5%	5%	90%
	Farm	15%	13%	72%
Postponed medical care	Rural	8%	17%	74%
	Farm	10%	18%	72%
Have not been able to pay property taxes	Rural	3%	5%	92%
	Farm	3%	4%	92%

Table 4. Comparison of Farm and Rural Respondents on Average Adjustments

	Rural Range	Rural Mean	Farm Range	Farm Mean	Mean Difference
Adjustments	0 - 18	2.87	0 - 18	4.01	.000

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Rural Residents Favor Spending More on Education and the Same on Other Areas

Rural residents favor spending slightly more on elementary and secondary education, but the same on other spending categories according to data released from the 1994 North Dakota Rural Life Poll. Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, who conducted the mailed survey, said that the increased focus on inequities in the school funding formula as a result of a recent North Dakota Supreme Court opinion, as well as rising property taxes, have probably convinced rural North Dakotans of the necessity of increased state funding for rural education. In all other areas, both rural non-farm and farm residents generally favored about the same amount of state spending for higher education, social services for low income and elderly, law enforcement, agricultural research, and cooperative extension (Table 1).

Rural non-farm residents were split, however between favoring slightly more and the same for health care for the low income and elderly while farm residents favored spending the same amount. Farm residents were split between favoring spending slightly more or about the same for highway and road maintenance while rural residents favored spending the same. On spending for economic development, rural non-farm residents favored spending slightly more while farm residents favored spending about the same amount.

When respondents were asked whether they favored increasing, decreasing or spending the same amount on different age groups -- children, young adults, adults,

and older adults -- a majority indicated they preferred spending the same amount as is not being spent on them (Table 2).

When responses to the two spending questions (by area or by age group) were summed and average spending levels were obtained, a test for significant differences between rural non-farm and farm respondents revealed that farm respondents generally favored spending less in all age categories and in all program areas than did non-farm rural residents.

Table 1. Opinion regarding increase in spending for different program areas.

Item	Area	Great Deal More	Slightly More	Same	Slightly Less	Great Deal Less
Elementary & Secondary Education	Rural Farm	23%	44%	28%	3%	1%
		19%	41%	26%	6%	4%
Higher Education	Rural Farm	10%	36%	40%	10%	4%
		8%	27%	40%	17%	8%
Health Care for Low Income and Elderly	Rural Farm	18%	37%	36%	7%	3%
		11%	27%	45%	13%	4%
Soc. Services for Low Income and Elderly	Rural Farm	13%	31%	41%	12%	3%
		7%	25%	44%	18%	6%
Highway and Road Maintenance	Rural Farm	10%	36%	51%	3%	0%
		11%	46%	46%	3%	1%
Law Enforcement	Rural Farm	10%	30%	53%	6%	1%
		6%	25%	59%	6%	4%
Economic Development	Rural Farm	13%	42%	35%	8%	1%
		6%	34%	43%	11%	6%
Agricultural Research	Rural Farm	9%	24%	49%	12%	6%
		12%	33%	44%	7%	4%
Cooperative Extension Service	Rural Farm	5%	17%	44%	26%	8%
		6%	22%	45%	20%	8%

Table 2 . Opinion regarding increases in spending for different age groups.

Age Group	Area	Increase	Same	Decrease
Children	Rural	32%	56%	12%
	Farm	22%	58%	20%
Young adults	Rural	9%	40%	51%
	Farm	6%	39%	54%
Adults	Rural	11%	47%	42%
	Farm	7%	41%	52%
Older Adults	Rural	40%	48%	12%
	Farm	29%	47%	23%

Table 3. Test for Significant Differences in Average Spending Levels.

Spending	Area	Range	Mean	Test for Sig. Diff.
Age Category	Rural	-4/0	-1.40	.001
	Farm	-4/0	-1.87	
Program Category	Rural	-16/18	.94	.003
	Farm	-18/18	-2.96	

For Immediate Release

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Rural Residents Welcome Almost Any Rural Development Strategy

According to results from the 1994 North Dakota Rural Life Poll, rural residents are supportive of almost any rural development strategy which may improve rural economies with two exceptions says Dr. Curtis Stofferahn, Director of the Social Science Research Institute at UND who conducted the poll. Three fifths to four fifths of all farm and rural non-farm respondents indicated support (both strongly support and support) for strategies such as more local commodity processing, improving and maintaining infrastructure, retention and expansion of existing industries, more manufacturing jobs in nonagricultural industries, encouraging universities to focus on economic development, mainstreet commercial development, providing investment capital for small businesses, promoting tourism in state, diversifying agricultural production, and providing tax incentives for industries to locate in state (Table 1).

Half of all rural residents were opposed, however, to promoting gambling for tourism, and rural non-farm respondents and farm respondents were split in their support for providing subsidies to develop tourism. Forty three percent of rural non- farm respondents supported it while 38 percent of farm respondents opposed it.

Respondents were also split in their support for a "centers" strategy that has been advocated by some of the media in the urban centers of the state. Forty two percent of rural non-farm residents were undecided about it while 38 percent of the farm respondents opposed it. In analyzing a summary of responses to these items (Table

2), Stofferahn did not find any significant differences in average support for these strategies which indicated, he says, that rural residents are generally supportive of any efforts which may result in an improvement in rural economic well being.

Another question on the poll which asked respondents how much they preferred to spend on different areas supported by state taxes is also an indication of the concern rural residents have for economic development (Table 3). Two-fifths of rural non-farm respondents preferred spending slightly more while thirteen percent preferred to spend a great deal more. Among farm respondents, 43 percent preferred to spend about the same while 34 percent preferred to spend slightly more and six percent preferred to spend a great deal more.

Several questions in the poll attempted to determine rural residents familiarity with several programs which are directly involved in agricultural development such as *Marketplace*, *Pride of Dakota*, or the *Agricultural Products Utilization Commission* (Tables 4, 5, and 6). With the exception of *Pride of Dakota*, a majority of rural non-farm and farm respondents were not familiar with *Marketplace*, and four fifths of all farm respondents were not familiar with the *Agricultural Products Utilization Commission*. About one third of rural residents (farm 32%, rural non-farm 37%), were somewhat familiar with *Marketplace*, although fewer had ever attended it (rural non-farm 19%, farm 26%). *Marketplace* is the annual rural development show sponsored by N.D. Commissioner of Agriculture Sarah Vogel and U.S. Senator Kent Conrad.

Half of both rural non-farm and farm respondents were somewhat familiar with the *Pride of Dakota* program sponsored by the N.D. Department of Agriculture. This program provides marketing assistance to producers of North Dakota products. Most

had heard about Pride of Dakota through newspapers (61% rural, 44% farm), magazines (45% rural, 28% of farm), trade show displays (33% of rural, 36% of farm), state fair displays (27% rural, 25% farm), or word of mouth (37% rural, 18% farm).

The North Dakota Rural Life Poll is a periodic statewide mailed survey of North Dakota's rural residents. Questionnaires were mailed to two target groups: farm operators and small town residents. The poll is a panel study of those respondents who were randomly selected to participate in the first poll in 1987. The sampling frame for the rural non-farm residents is telephone directories for all counties except the urban counties of Grand Forks, Cass, Burleigh, Ward, and Morton. The sampling frame for farm operators was initially drawn from the list of farmers in each county of North Dakota who participate in the commodity programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA supplemented by subscribers to the *Farm and Ranch Guide*. The poll was conducted during the spring and summer of 1994. The margin of error for farm respondents is 4.75% (N=425), and the margin of error for rural non-farm respondents is 4.17% (N=553).

The poll, begun in 1987, is a project of the Social Science Research Institute at the UND. Since 1989, the poll has been funded by the Social Science Research Institute and by various contributions from organizations and officials who are concerned about rural issues. The 1994 Poll was sponsored by North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Farmers Union, Department of Human Services, *Farm and Ranch Guide*, UND Social Science Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, UNO Child Welfare Research Bureau, Department of Economic Development and Finance, and the North Dakota Farm Bureau.

Table 1. Opinion about rural development strategies

Item	Area	Strongly Favor	Favor	Undecided	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
More local commodity processing	Rural Farm	31% 29.%	46% 56%	22% 12%	1% 2%	0 1
Improve & maintain infrastructure	Rural Farm	30% 33%	54% 55%	14% 9%	1% 3%	0% 1%
Retention/expansion of existing industries	Rural Farm	29% 25%	54% 57%	15% 16%	1% 2%	1% 1%
More manuf. jobs in nonagric. industry	Rural Farm	29% 17%	53% 57%	14% 22%	2% 3%	1% 2%
Encourage universities to focus on econ. dev.	Rural Farm	21% 14%	49% 50%	26% 27%	3% 7%	1% 2%
Mainstreet commercial develop.	Rural Farm	22% 14%	51% 59%	23% 24%	4% 3%	1% 1%
Investment capital for small businesses	Rural Farm.	24% 18%	50% 56%	22% 17%	3% 5%	3% 1%
Promote tourism in state	Rural Farm	24% 19%	50% 56%	22% 17%	3% 5%	1% 3%
Diversify agricultural production	Rural Farm	26% 18%	51% 64%	21% 14%	1% 3%	1% 1%
Provide tax incentives to locate in state	Rural Farm	20% 13%	40% 46%	26% 24%	10% 12%	4% 5%
Identify & promote growth centers	Rural Farm	6% 3%	23% 18%	42% 37%	20% 28%	9% 15%
Promote gambling for tourism	Rural Farm	7% 5%	16% 17%	26% 23%	26% 26%	26% 28%
Provide subsidies to develop tourism	Rural Farm	8% 4%	35% 24%	36% 34%	16% 26%	5% 12%

Table 2. Summary of Support for Rural Development Strategies

	Area	Range	Mean	Test for Sig. Diff
Rural Development Support	Rural Farm	-22/22 -16/20	6.44 5.33	.736

Table 3. Opinion regarding increase in spending for different program areas.

Item	Area	Great Deal More	Slightly More	Same	Slightly Less	Great Deal Less
Economic Development	Rural Farm	13% 6%	42% 34%	35% 43%	8% 11%	1% 6%

Table 4. Respondents familiarity with agricultural development programs.

How familiar are you with:	Area	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Familiar
Marketplace	Rural	6%	32%	62%
	Farm	9%	37%	54%
Pride of Dakota	Rural	7%	51%	42%
	Farm	9%	50%	41%
Agricultural Products Utilization Commission	Farm	4%	16%	80%
	Rural	NA	NA	NA

Table 5. Attendance at Marketplace.

Have you ever attended Marketplace?	Yes	No
Rural	19%	81%
Farm	26%	74%

Table 6. How respondents became familiar with Pride of Dakota.

How did you hear about Pride of Dakota?	Rural	Farm
Newspaper	61%	44%
Trade Show Display	33%	36%
State Fair	27%	25%
Magazine	45%	28%
Word of Mouth	37%	18%