



Figure 13.

THE NORTHERN LAKE REGION (Economic Subregions 65, 67, 68, 88)

Here, as in the Northeastern Dairy Region, are the glacial soils, shallow and lacking in natural fertility. They probably are somewhat more fertile than the former and respond to good cultural practices. Some of the lighter soils ordinarily yield one-half to three-fourths of the production of the heavier soils. Summer rainfall and temperatures favor the production of hays and other roughages, so one-third of the total cropland is used for these purposes. Only the Northern Woods Region and the Northeastern Dairy Region exceed this proportion, with one-half or more of the total cropland used for hays.

Within the last generation this area has greatly increased the quantity of milk marketed as fluid milk but it has not changed the proportion of its income from dairying. It still has about the same proportion of the income from crops, poultry, and other livestock.

The different market outlets for milk when compared with those in the Northeastern Dairy Region are shown by the proportions of such products as butter and cheese sold from the respective areas. The Northern Lake Region produces approximately twice as much milk as the Northeastern Region. Yet it markets 10 times as much milk in the form of butter and more than 16 times as much cheese. Even so, the fluid-milk market is taking a continuously increasing share of milk production of the area.

Although the averages of these economic subregions show considerable uniformity, the number of farms in the two extreme economic classes varies greatly. Economic Subregion 65 has the most large farms, 14 percent, and the fewest small farms, 13 percent, Economic Subregion 88 has only 2 percent large farms and nearly 40 percent very small farms. This difference between the two subregions is to be expected, since Subregion 65 encompasses most of the eastern Wisconsin industrial concentration with its better local markets and higher land values, while Subregion 88 is a border area between the Northern Woods and the more completely agricultural area to the South.

The usual cropping system of farms in the Northern Lake Region consists of corn, small grains, and hay. The larger farms grow more corn and small grains while the smaller farms have a greater proportion of hay. The change is gradual from the larger to the

smaller farms. A reduction in the portion of the cropland used for corn from 37 percent for Economic Class I farms to 20 percent for Class VI farms is accompanied by a smaller change in the total acreage of small grains and an increase in the hay acreage from 32 to 53 percent of the harvested cropland.

The small farms average 6 to 7 cows per farm in the different economic subregions while there is a wide range in the number of cows per herd on the larger farms. Economic Subregion 88 has 46 milk cows per farm on Economic Class I farms; Economic Subregion 65 has an average of 75 cows.

The different proportions of various crops are also geographic to a considerable extent. The southeastern part of the area has a heavy concentration of canning crops. Wisconsin has a greater acreage devoted to canning crops than any other State. These crops are grown as secondary enterprises on dairy farms. Each farmer produces only a few acres of canning peas or sweet corn and this reduces small grain or corn acreages to a like extent. Potatoes are grown in the eastern part of Subregion 67. A much larger acreage was grown earlier when the light soils were newly broken and before the organic matter was reduced. Much of this acreage is now in a rotation with feed grains and hay but an increasing number of farms grow potatoes as the important or only crop. Overhead irrigation from local subsurface sources supplies most water for the irrigation of potatoes, although a few of the operators pump directly from small streams. A large percentage of barley used for brewing is raised in the eastern part of the area, centering around the three important bodies of water—Lake Winnebago, the Four Lakes, and the Horicon Marsh. Practically all the rye grown in the area is found on the light soil of Economic Subregion 67.

Here, as in other dairy areas, the farm depends upon the farm family for most of its labor force, and since from three-fifths to four-fifths of all farm work is chore labor—and most of this with the dairy herd—the number of milk cows may well determine the labor used. The amount of family labor available for farm work remains fairly constant both among subregions and within economic classes.

So far as the age of dairy-farm operators is concerned, this area differs slightly from the three major dairy areas to the east. It has 3 percentage points, 20 percent, more operators under 35 years old and around 7 percentage points, 20 percent, fewer operators over 55 years. This means that a few more young men are taking up dairying than in the areas to the east and more of the older men are dropping out. One interpretation of this situation is that dairy farming in the Northern Lake Region offers a somewhat better opportunity for young men when expressed in terms of local alternatives than is true in other major dairy regions.

The modest incomes received by most dairymen in this region is shown by the average total farm income as well as by the income minus specified expenses.

Fifty-eight percent of these dairy farmers have less than \$5,000 total income per farm and 20 percent have less than \$2,500 (Table 24). The smallest average income among them is in Economic Subregion 88 where average total value of sales is \$3,533, or only 57 percent of the income received by dairy farmers of Economic Subregion 65. The net income of \$2,342 is more than half the average net income of Subregion 65, and, if total rather than specified expenses were subtracted from the total income, the net would be about half the present figure. The problem of buying capital items, meeting living expenses, and laying anything aside for emergencies, is burdensome indeed for operators with such small incomes. This again is a real problem with the farmers in Economic Classes IV, V, and VI. The size tabulation emphasizes the importance of volume of business if incomes are to be increased.