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ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED ASPECTS
OF RURAL LIFE AND TECHNOLOGICAL
CHANGE AMONG CENTRAL
BEKA'A FARMERS

الجمهورية اللبنانية
مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

by
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ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED ASPECTS OF RURAL LIFE AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AMONG CENTRAL BEKA'A FARMERS

by

George C. Fetter¹

The following report will present selected aspects of a study financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and with the cooperation of the Division of Rural Improvement of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the American University of Beirut. The field work was carried out during the spring, summer and fall of 1960. The data to be presented here will constitute a descriptive report only. Subsequent analyses will deal with relationships between background factors such as income, education, religion, length of residence in the village, and the attitudinal factors with which this study is concerned.

Methodology

Eleven villages in the Central Beka'a Valley were selected for study on the basis of differences in size, religion, location and predominant type of agriculture, so as to enhance the possibility of comparisons as well as to render more valid modest generalizations regarding the area. The specific villages chosen were the following: Turbol, Lower Serein, Talia, (all Christian); Housh el Raftqa, Bishmistar, Kafr Dabash, Hizzeen, Ksar Naba, Khudr, Nabisheet, (all Shiite Moslem); and Hadat (partly Christian and partly Shiite Moslem)².

1. Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, American University of Beirut.
2. For a more detailed descriptive study of eight of these eleven villages see Churchill, Charles W. "Village Life of the Central Beka'a Valley of Lebanon," *Middle East Economic Papers*, 1959. Professor Churchill's study treats the differences and similarities between the eight villages with respect to household and family size, marital status, education, mobility, housing, occupation, and general background information such as topography, water supply, etc. The reader desiring a more intensive anthropological study of a Lebanese village may turn to John Gulick's "Social Structure and Culture Change in a Lebanese Village," *Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology*, No. 21, 1955. It is not claimed that this is a "typical" village study, as no single village in Lebanon can ever be so regarded.

Random sampling of every third dwelling produced a total of 406 interviews of farmer heads of households. In the six cases out of the total sample where the head of house was either a woman or a man not engaged directly in agriculture the adjacent household was substituted, limiting the interviewing to male heads of households engaged in farming. Actual interviewing was carried out by two trained interviewers in the spring, summer and autumn of 1960.¹ Care in choice of interviewers extended to such considerations as the selection of individuals whose religious identification could not be inferred from their given or family names.

I GENERAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS²

a. *Topography, soil and climate.* The Beka'a plain lies east of the coastal mountain range and is an extension of the Jordan Valley and the Great Rift Valley, with an average altitude of about 800 meters. It is bordered on the eastern side by the anti-Lebanon mountains along the Syrian border. Soils in the Beka'a plain show some variation, but in general can be described as calcareous and low in humus, nitrogen and phosphorus. Heavy clay loam is common, and sands not uncommon in certain areas. Varying erosion patterns account for differing depths and types of soils. Summers are warm and dry, winters cold. Centigrade temperatures of - 5 degrees are frequently recorded, while the mean maximum temperature for the hottest month (August) is 33.07 degrees. Humidity is low in the area and the villages, while differing considerably, have an average annual rainfall of approximately 400 mm. Prevailing winds are westerly, with the exception of the hot dry Khamseen which occurs in the spring.

b. *Prevailing agriculture.* Cereals, potatoes, melons, onions, sugar beets, grapes and other vegetables and fruits constitute the main crops of the Beka'a plain farming area. Ploughing is for the most part performed with the native plough, and most of the seeding is hand done. There is relatively little mechanization of agriculture but the

1. There are at least two methodological risks in the use of a small number of interviewers: 1. interviewing is protracted through several weeks and 2. possible contamination due to a "ripple effect" from early interviews. It was felt that these risks were more than outweighed in this particular social environment by the suspicion and withdrawal caused by the descending upon a village of an interview team, and by the great difficulty in finding good interviewers in an area where interviewing is difficult and touchy at best.

2. Source: School of Agricultural, American University of Beirut. See also Stevens, Robert D. "A Farm Survey in Lebanon: Some Results and an Evaluation of Methods", *Middle East Economic Papers*, 1959, pp. 97-111

number of tractors, though small, is increasing. Such devices are still far beyond the means of the great majority of farmers. The pressing problem is lack of water, and such irrigation schemes as do exist are primitive and very wasteful.

c. *Type of land tenure.* Table 1 presents the percentages of farmers occupying each of the five categories of land tenure found in the Beka'a. It will be noted that fewer than one half of the farmers (48.3 percent) in the sample are engaged solely in the farming of their own land. The classification "land owner" represents, without exception in the sample, a man of considerable income who may or may not reside on his land year-round. The farm laborer, constituting 12.1 percent of the sample, is the man of real poverty in rural Lebanon. He earns on the average no more than L.L. 500 (approximately \$ 160) per year.

Table 1. Type of tenure

Type of tenure	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Farms own land only	196	48.3
Farms own and rented land	89	21.9
Farms by share or rents	57	14.0
Land owner (does not work land himself)	15	3.7
Farm Laborer	49	12.1

d. *Income.* Distribution of income may be seen from table 2. Approximately one third of the families receive an income of less than L.L. 1000 per year, two thirds less than L.L. 2000, or, respectively, under 25 and 50 U.S. dollars per month.¹

Table 2 Income distribution²

Income (Leb. Pounds)	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
1 - 600	34	8.4
600 - 999	104	25.6
1000 - 1999	134	33.0
2000 - 2999	75	18.5
3000 - 9,999	45	11.1
10,000 - 19,999	8	1.9
20,000 - and over	6	1.5

1. Approximately average daily exchange rate: L.L. 3.15 to the US dollar.

2. Forty-two percent of the households sampled received income from sources other than farming. This income is included in the totals. Such sources included gifts from relatives abroad, odd jobs, etc.

e. *Size of land holdings.* Land holdings are small, as table 3 indicates. Over a third of all households own no land or fewer than 20 dunums. Four-fifths of the farmers sampled own either no land or fewer than 100 dunums.

Table 3. Size of farms¹

Dunums of land farmed	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Less than one dunum or does not farm his or rented land	64	15.8
Under 20	86	21.2
20 - 50	90	22.2
50 - 100	84	20.7
100 - 200	36	8.9
200 - 500	24	5.9
500 - 1000	10	2.4
Over 1000	12	2.9

f. *Educational level.* Farmers in the Beka'a have received little formal education (see table 4). About one-third have had no formal schooling whatever, two-thirds less than three years. Only 2 percent have received ten years of schooling or more, all of them from the well-to-do landowner group. The literacy rate, 37.2 percent among the sampled farmers, reflects these findings.

Table 4. Educational level

Years of schooling	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
None	130	32.0
Less than 1 Year	61	15.0
1 - 3 years	75	18.5
4 - 6 years	73	18.0
7 - 10 years	59	14.5
Over 10 years	8	2.0

g. *Age distribution.* The age distribution of heads of households is presented in table 5. Fourteen and one tenth percent are 29 or under, 15.3 percent 60 or more years of age. Seventy and six-tenths

1. Four dunums equal approximately one acre.

percent of the farmer heads of households are between the ages of 30 and 59.

Table 5. Age distribution of male heads of households¹

Age	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Under 20	12	3.0
20 through 29	45	11.1
30 " 39	113	27.8
40 " 49	91	22.4
50 " 59	83	20.4
60 " 69	41	10.1
70 " 79	17	4.2
80 and over	4	1.0

h. *Length of residence in the village.* As table 6 will reveal, 90.1 percent of the farmers studied have resided in the villages where they now live, and in almost all cases in the same dwellings, all of their lives. Only 3 percent have lived in their present villages for less than 10 years. A similar number have travelled and resided for a time outside their villages, in some cases in neighboring countries and in a few cases in the United States. Trips to the United States among farmers sampled were in every instance for the purpose of extended visits to relatives who had migrated many years previously.

Table 6. Length of residence in the village.

Length of residence in village	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Entire life	366	90.1
Over 10 years but not entire life	16	3.9
Less than 10 years	12	3.0
Has had extended stay outside Lebanon	12	3.0

The preceding data provide a brief general background for the analyses which constitute the principal aim of the study: to elicit and interpret attitudes of Beka'a farmers toward particular aspects of their physical and social environments. These will include, specifically, attitudes toward their villages and farming as a way of life; opinions as to the quality of leadership in the village and the government and the govern-

1. There are several cases where the oldest male is not head of the house.

ment's extension service; attitudes toward education and cooperation, technical assistance and social change, and opinions as to the purpose and influence of the American University Farm.

II VILLAGE LIFE AND FARMING AS AN OCCUPATION

- a. *Question:* In general, how do you feel about living in this village – would you say that it is a very good village, fairly good, not very good or not at all good?

Table 7. Attitude toward village in which respondent lives.

Attitude toward village	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Very good	2	0.5
Fairly good	51	12.6
Not very good	120	29.5
Not at all good	233	57.4

Eighty-six and nine-tenths percent of heads of households sampled expressed negative feelings toward their villages, 57.4 of them in strong terms. Only two persons (.5 percent) indicated to the interviewer that they possessed a very favorable attitude toward the village in which they are living. Both of them, incidentally, are from the lower-income groups, and neither has had more than three years of formal schooling. They reside in different villages.

- b. *Question:* Why do you feel this way? (Table 8).

Table 8 shows the replies to this question by the 353 respondents with negative feelings toward living in their villages.

Table 8. Reasons for negative attitude toward village

Reason for negative attitude	No.	Percent
Total	353	100.0
Poor natural conditions	239	67.7
Economic factors*	43	12.2
No available jobs	36	10.2
Poor village leadership, nothing being done	31	8.8
Other	4	1.1

* Marketing difficulties, inability to secure loans and credit, impossibility of saving.

Expediencies of coding have inevitably forced an unnatural categorization upon the tabulated replies to this question. Actually it appears from the responses that we are confronted with an inter-related com-

plex of thoughts and feelings which some farmers express in one way some in another. A common response would be, approximately, this: "The water situation is bad, and getting worse. Nothing much is being done and it is difficult to secure loans and credit and get ahead financially. Jobs are very difficult to find elsewhere without specific skills, so we do the best we can."

- c. *Question:* In general, do you think that life in the village has improved, become worse, or remained about the same since you have lived here? (Table 9).

Table 9. Opinion as to whether life in village has improved or become worse.

Opinion as to whether life in village has improved or become worse	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Improved	72	17.7
Become worse	283	69.7
Same	49	12.1
Undecided	2	0.5

As table 9 indicates, over two-thirds (69.7 percent) of the respondents expressed the feeling that "things have become worse", and in most cases this reaction was communicated to the interviewers with emphasis, resignation and discouragement.

- d. The reasons given for the responses to the above question are presented in table 10.

Table 10. Reasons expressed as to why village life has become better or worse

Reasons expressed for change	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Improving technology	63	15.5
More government interest	6	1.5
More outside jobs	3	0.7
<i>Life has become better – Total</i>	72	17.7
Natural conditions getting worse	203	50.0
Government negligence & indifference	76	18.7
Fewer non-farm jobs	4	1.0
<i>Life has become worse – Total</i>	283	69.7
Does not apply (Same or undecided)	51	12.6



Worsening of natural conditions almost always had reference to the increasing scarcity of water, a trend which has been discernible for many years.¹ Still, acute as this problem is, 18.7 percent of the respondents cited government negligence and indifference as the primary basis for their evaluation of change. The attitude of the government, or the inferred attitude of the government, and the water problem are not necessarily separable items. They may be regarded in most cases as opposite sides of the same coin in the sense that it is the problem of the water supply to which the respondents feel government efforts should be immediately directed. A few expressed the idea that government efforts such as the Litani River Project might be the basis for hope that something will be done about irrigation in the Central and North Beka'a.²

- e. *Question:* How satisfied are you with farming as an occupation? Would you say that you were very well satisfied, pretty well satisfied, not very well satisfied, or not at all satisfied? (Table 11).

Table 11. Attitudes toward farming as an occupation

Degree of satisfaction with farming	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Very well satisfied	45	11.1
Fairly well satisfied	144	35.4
Not very well satisfied	142	35.0
Not at all satisfied	75	18.5

It will be noted immediately that with respect to this more specific aspect of their lives a significantly higher proportion of respondents (46.5 percent) indicated a favorable attitude than when the more general question about village life was posed. The reasons expressed for their attitudes towards farming are various and overlapping and do not lend themselves to simple tabulation. They can best be summarized by verbatim quotes from the more articulate responses to this open end question. Reasons cited by those who favorably

1. The reference here is general, and includes drinking water, supply for irrigation and the basic problem of insufficient rainfall.

2. The Litani Project of South Lebanon, designed as a source of both power and irrigation, will be of little direct value to farmers on the Beka'a plain. Irrigation, which will take place below the dam, will be too far to the south to benefit Central and North Beka'a agriculture.

regard farming as an occupation: "Farming is a decent and honest way of life"; "Life in the village is preferable to life in Beirut or Tripoli"; "Farming itself could provide a steady profitable income with a little more help from the government"; "Farming is the most independent way of life". Unfavorable attitudes toward farming as an occupation were accounted for by the following examples of quotations: "It is feudalistic to many farmers... we are tied to someone else's land" "It is tedious, tiring work"; "It is too dependent upon weather and natural factors"; "It is all we can do, it is all we have learned. We have no choice".

- f. The general problem of the morale of village life was approached from still another dimension: opinion as to the suitability of the village for the futures of the young people. The following question was asked of each male head of household. "Do you think that there is much of a future for young people in this village so far as opportunities for making a living are concerned?" Table 12).

Table 12 Attitude toward the future for young people in the village so far as making a living is concerned.

Attitude as to whether there is a future for young people	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Yes	38	9.3
No	362	89.2
Undecided	6	1.5

Overwhelmingly (89.2 percent) these farmers feel that there is no future for young people in their villages in this type of life as they have known and experienced it. Further analysis of the data reveals that the 9.3 percent giving a favorable response consists almost without exception of either persons in the high income brackets or farmers in the grape-growing areas who enjoy a level of living somewhat beyond mere subsistence. The reasons advanced for their attitudes by the 89.2 percent who believe that villages hold little promise for the future of young people have been reviewed in other contexts (see p. 8 para. b and p. 10 para. d).

III ATTITUDES TOWARD LEADERSHIP, GOVERNMENT AND THE EXTENSION SERVICE

- a. The following question was asked of each respondent: "In every village there are people who more or less take the lead when

something comes up that concerns the whole village, what about the leadership in this village -- would you say that there is very good leadership, fairly good leadership, fair leadership, or poor leadership, or no leadership of any kind?" (Table 13).

Table 13. Attitude toward leadership in the village

Attitude toward village leadership	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Very good leadership	20	4.9
Fairly good leadership	88	21.7
Fair leadership	104	25.6
Poor leadership	171	42.1
Little or no leadership of any kind	23	5.7

As will be seen in the table, a total of 47.8 percent of the household heads feel either that leadership is poor or non-existent. Possibly the favorable responses, however, should not be taken at face value. The "fair" category may represent an "out" or a safe and non-committal response, understandable in villages which are small, where the so-called "leaders" are met face-to-face daily and under circumstances where guarantees of anonymity may fail to be completely convincing.

- b. Again, tabulation of the reasons given for the negative feelings expressed above would merely be to enumerate differing ways of putting into words a general and complex attitude which could be typified by such quoted phrases as the following: "leadership is more concerned with status than with us"; "leaders like things the way they are -- they are satisfied and do not wish to risk action that might change this". Table 14 below shows the results of the following question: "When something has to be decided that concerns everybody in the village, do you feel that the ideas and interests of people like yourself are taken into consideration or do you feel that such things are decided the way just a few want them?"

Table 14. Opinion as to whether one's ideas are considered in matters concerning village.

Opinion as to whether ideas are considered	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Ideas and interest considered	166	40.9
A few people decide things	224	55.2
Undecided	16	3.9

Interpretation of these findings forces the distinction between leadership to "get ahead and improve" and leadership in an "emergency" as for example, fire, a misdemeanor or crime, an unusual medical emergency, etc. Many respondents hastened to point out that there was "considerable consultation all around" on matters such as the latter, but that the leadership in general was not overly receptive to suggestions for change or improvement that would break an established pattern.

- c. Findings indicate an even more general negative regard for the Lebanese government. Ninety-one and nine-tenths of the respondents expressed lack of satisfaction with the government, almost three fourths of them (72.7 percent) in the most definite categorical manner. The question: "How satisfied are you with the way government affairs are handled? Would you say you are very well satisfied, fairly well satisfied, not very well satisfied, or not at all satisfied?"

Table 15. Attitude toward the manner in which the affairs of the Lebanese Government are handled.

Degree of satisfaction with Lebanese government	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Very well satisfied	2	0.5
Fairly well satisfied	31	7.6
Not very well satisfied	78	19.2
Not at all satisfied	295	72.7

Table 16 (below) presents the reasons expressed by the 373 respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the way government affairs are handled.

Table 16. Reasons expressed for dissatisfaction with the Lebanese Government.

Reason for dissatisfaction with the government	No.	Percent
Total	373	100.0
They are doing nothing	311	83.4
They are doing very little	24	6.4
Doing nothing, but do not blame them	7	1.9
Corruption and nepotism. Personal interests	31	8.3

Rather than expressing distinct categories of reaction, these

responses are again ways of stating a general attitude toward the government, including the feeling that the government is pretty much run by individuals who do not have the interests of villagers at heart, and who are appointed to government posts on the basis of considerations of family and politics rather than training or interest. It is possible that some of the respondents felt that to state these attitudes rather strongly might result in triggering the government into greater action and concern. On the other hand it might be considered as doubtful that these farmers would make known their feelings with respect to the government to a relative stranger unless they ran fairly deep.

- d. Further insight into this problem may be gained by examining the relationship between the villagers and a specific arm of the government, namely, the Extension Service. Question: "Do you know what the Agricultural Extension Service is in Lebanon?" (Table 17). Only 39.9 percent of the heads of household interviewed apparently had any knowledge of the Extension Service. Fifty seven and one tenth percent were not acquainted with the Extension Service and 3.0 percent were not sure.

Table 17. Knowledge of the Agricultural Extension Service in Lebanon

Knowledge of the Extension Service	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Knows	162	39.9
Does not know	232	57.1
Not sure	12	3.0

Further, as table 18 will show, over three-quarters of those who have heard of the Agricultural Extension Service have never been in contact with it. Fourteen and four-tenths percent have contacted it or been approached by the Extension Service more than once.

Nine and two-tenths percent have been in contact with it once.

Table 18. Frequency of contact with the Agricultural Extension Service

Times Extension Service contacted	No.	Percent
Total	174	100.0
Never	133	76.4
Once	16	9.2
More than once	25	14.4

Reasons expressed to account for this lack of contact are shown in table 19 below, asked only of those 133 individuals who had heard of the Extension Service but had had no dealing with it.

Table 19. Reasons for lack of contact with the Extension Service

Reason for no contact	No.	Percent
Total	133	100.0
They do not serve the "likes of me"	64	48.1
Ignorance about it	8	6.0
They do not actually show us themselves	61	45.9

Every farmer interviewed, one hundred percent of the sample, expressed in one way or another a desire for an active and "concerned" Extension Service.

- e. Each respondent was asked to rank in order of need or importance a list of items toward which he felt government attention should be directed. Table 20 below will show the items which were checked and the number and percentages of farmers who ranked them first:¹

Table 20. Items on which it is felt the government should put emphasis

Items most needed	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Seed Supply	140	34.5
Loans and credit	112	27.6
Schools	51	12.5
Promise jobs	43	10.6
Medical aid	37	9.1
Insect and pest control	23	5.7

As can be seen from the table, the problems of credit and loans and of a good supply of seeds were regarded by the larger numbers of farmers as being particularly acute. Practically all of the respondents mentioned each of these two items even if they did not rank them first. These findings reflect, of course, the subsistence level of income pervading the Beka'a plain area, as well as a series of very bad crop years attributable largely to subnormal rainfall and depleted

1. Water was not included on the list on the assumption that it is generally regarded as the most pressing immediate problem. On the 50 case protest 96 percent of the respondents listed it first, thus lessening the opportunity to discover which additional factors were held important.

underground water reserves. This has resulted in harvests which have barely replaced the seed sown, if that much. Farmers have therefore needed seeds with which to sow their next crops in order to feed their families.

IV. MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE WILL OF ALLAH

No pretense will be made that the present study can shed ultimate light on the extent to which the inertia blocking the rapid adoption of more modern devices and scientific methods has its roots in religious beliefs and superstitions. This reluctance to change and the skepticism of modern devices has its roots in many factors, not the least of which is the sheer length of time which it takes to effectively demonstrate the efficacy of new techniques, and the prohibitive (apparently, on a short term basis) expense of many of these techniques. Nevertheless an attempt was made to discover something of the feelings of the sample farmers with respect to the effects of religious faith on attitudes toward change and improvement. The following question was asked: "Suppose the next year was a very bad crop year. Which of the following would you probably do? : seek technical aid or information about soil condition, fertilizer, insect control, or would you leave things up to the will of Allah?" (The interviewer made it plain that the answer "will of Allah" would connote the direct influence of the power of Allah on the natural condition influencing crops, and not through the use of modern techniques, thereby establishing a clear dichotomy in the question). The results are presented in table 21.

Table 21. Tendency to seek technical advice or the will of Allah

Preferred Source of Help	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Would seek technical advice	254	62.6
Seek will of Allah	137	33.7
Not sure	15	3.7

About a third (33.7 percent) of the respondents indicated that they would tend to look to the will of Allah directly, 66.6 percent that they would seek technical advice, and 3.7 percent were not sure.

The interpretation of these results presents many difficulties. The fact that the interviewer was obviously a person of education might in itself have introduced a bias favoring the response "technical advice." But if this were true it would carry the advantage of allowing us to attribute more validity to the finding that about one-third of all respondents still

gave the response "will of Allah". Further, it must be pointed out that a true appreciation of the benefits of modern scientific agricultural practices is not present. In other words, "technical advice" is at best a vague alternative. The respondent, then, brings to this question a tradition of supplication to an either active or fatalistic appeal to Allah which is not balanced by an even superficial knowledge of modern technology as applied to agriculture. In partial substantiation of this is the fact that not one of the 137 respondents, Christian or Moslem, was from the high income (over 10,000 L.L. per year) group or from those who come from the higher educational levels (over 10 years of school). Though each of these latter groups is too small for statistically significant conclusions, all of the farmers from these groups have had at least some familiarity and experience with advanced ideas of farming, and none of them indicated "will of Allah" as a source of help.

V. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY FARM

- a. The American University of Beirut Farm lies near eight of the villages included in the study. The Farm has been carrying on a pilot extension program of limited scope since 1957 in these eight villages. The School of Public Health of the American University conducted a survey of these villages in 1955 and 1956, and for a time maintained a field training program in thirteen villages in the Beka'a in the area near the Farm.¹ Three fairly typical villages outside of the immediate influence of either of these programs were chosen for the present study to function as a "control" in the analysis of the data. Data as to impressions of, and attitudes toward, the Farm were elicited with the use of the questions which follow and are compiled in the tables which accompany them.
- b. "What was your original idea as to the purpose of the American University Farm?" (Table 22)

Table 22. Original impression as to the purpose of the American University Farm. (established 1952.)

Original impression of A.U.B. Farm	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Jewish institution or military "outpost" of Israel	184	45.3
American institution to implement foreign policy	30	7.4
Develop agriculture in the area	42	10.3
Academic training	14	3.5
Provide chances for work	13	3.2
Undecided	123	30.3

1. See footnote 1, page 1.

Only 13.8 percent of the respondents had at the outset correct impressions as to the purpose of the Farm: to develop agriculture in the area and to train students to that end. (Perhaps some might argue that the 7.4 percent who thought that the Farm was an "American institution to implement foreign policy" were not entirely in error.) The most striking figure in the table is the 45.4 percent of farmers who had the initial impression that the Farm, established in 1952, was in some way or other a Jewish institution or military outpost relating to Israel. This finding illustrates the degree of suspicion, misunderstanding and touchiness with respect to this problem in the Middle East and especially the role of the United States with respect to it. Also it points up very dramatically the need for thorough preparation and groundwork prior to the establishment of any foreign-sponsored project, in rural areas particularly. The fact that 30.3 percent were undecided adds further substance to this point. All in all a total of 86.2 percent of the farmers interviewed either did not know why the Farm was being established or were under seriously erroneous impressions as to its real purpose.

- c. It is interesting to review the expression of opinions as to the purpose of the Farm at the time of the interviews, eight years later (1960). The question as asked: "What is your present impression as to the purpose of the American University Farm?" (Table 23).

Table 23. Impression as to purpose of A.U.B. Farm at time of interview. (1960)

Present impression of A.U.B. Farm	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Jewish institution or military "outpost" of Israel	46	11.4
American institution to implement foreign policy	34	8.4
Develop agriculture in the area	61	15.0
Academic training	102	25.1
Provide chances for work	100	24.6
Undecided	63	15.5

Only 40 percent of the respondents believed, at the time of interview, that the Farm's purpose was either the improvement of agriculture in the area or to train students. Almost one-fourth (24.6) of the farmers sampled stated that it was their opinion that the

purpose of the Farm was to provide employment for local villagers,¹ and over one-fourth (26.9 percent) still apparently have no idea as to what the Farm is for or believe it to be some sort of military outpost having to do with Israel.

- d. Of the 406 farmers interviewed, one hundred and seventy-eight (43.9 percent) have contacted the A.U.B. Farm for information, advice or help. This figure, however, gives a false impression as to the effectiveness of the Farm's assistance so far as agriculture is concerned in that the great majority of these contacts were made for medical reasons by individuals who wished to avail themselves of the services of the health clinic operated by the Farm. (On the other hand these figures do not take into account the contacts made in some of the villages by the Farm's Extension Agent.) Villagers visit this clinic often, usually for minor ailments of the cut and bruise variety.² Table 24 indicates the number of persons who have contacted the Farm and the main reason.

Table 24. Number of farmers who have contacted A.U.B. Farm for various reasons.

Reason for contact	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Water	6	1.5
Medical	147	36.2
Pest and insect control	15	3.7
Poultry	6	1.5
Plants (seed supply and disease)	4	1.0
Have never contacted Farm	228	56.1

- e. Reasons for not contacting the Farm can be seen from table 25.

Table 25. Reasons given by farmers for not having contacted the American University Farm.

Reasons for not contacting Farm	No.	Percent
Total	228	100.0
Just did not bother	128	56.1
Did not know aid could be obtained there	84	36.9
Too far away	16	7.0

1. The A.U.B. farm employs about 60 workers from nearby villages.
2. They pay one Lebanese pound, or about 30 cents, for the first visit, and half a pound per visit thereafter.



None of the villages is sufficiently far from the Farm to render distance itself a crucial factor, and only 7.0 percent gave it as a reason. More significant is the fact that 36.9 percent stated that they did not think they could receive aid there. Fifty-six and one-tenth percent said, in one way or another, that they "just did not bother". This latter attitude may be variously accounted for, but the problem would again add up to more than just a lack of adequate public relations on the part of the Farm. Involved in the entire picture, of course, is the suspicion as to the purposes of a foreign institution, of being unused to the idea of an ordinary "unimportant person like myself" being given help gladly and without condescension or ulterior motive. Further, from between-the-line subtleties emerged the fact that many, if not most, of the farmers in the Beka'a are apt to think of aid in terms of gifts, money, use of equipment, and items which can be seen as "paying off" immediately and which require no investment.

- f. How satisfied with the the service or help given by the Farm are those who have had dealings with it? The question: "How satisfied were you with the service given by the Farm?"

Table 26. Degree of satisfaction with service and aid given by the Farm

Degree of satisfaction with Fram	No.	Percent
Total	182	100.0
Very well satisfied	64	35.2
Fairly well satisfied	19	10.4
Not very well satisfied	38	20.9
Not at all satisfied	61	33.5

Thirty-five and two-tenths percent were apparently very well satisfied with the service rendered, 10.4 percent fairly well satisfied, 20.9 percent not very well satisfied and 33.5 percent not at all satisfied. Over half of the respondents, then, were dissatisfied for one reason or another with their contact with the AUB Farm. The reasons expressed by the 99 farmers not satisfied are presented in table 27.

Table 27. Reasons expressed for lack of satisfaction with service given by AUB Farm.

Reason for Dissatisfaction	No.	Percent
Total	99	100.0
The information received was of no value	16	16.2
The information was not made clear	20	20.2
Felt no real interest on the part of the Farm personnel	52	52.5
There was too much delay	11	11.1

Several interpretations suggest themselves. Beka'a farmers have indicated a tendency to think of help in terms of the producing of immediate or perhaps even dramatic results. Help of the sort which might require a considerable period of time (e.g. higher yields through crop rotation) would probably be dismissed as valueless by an individual expecting immediate results. Also, it is very difficult to make clear an idea or technique to someone who is simply not accustomed to think in terms of improvement through scientific farming and the kinds of approaches inherent in it. This is particularly true when the technological innovation recommended requires an investment, even a minimal one, which cannot be guaranteed to pay immediate dividends. Further, the idea is usually translated to the farmer by an individual who is not educated in the subject and who is therefore not acquainted with the Arabic equivalents for technical terms or concepts.

However, it is very difficult to "explain away" the fact that more than fifty percent of the individuals who contacted the A. U. B. Farm expressed the feeling that those with whom they dealt had no real interest in the problem presented. Such an inference might be the result of an actual lack of concern on the part of some Farm staff members or it could result from the fact that the Farm personnel, busy with research and heavy teaching loads, were interrupted at inopportune times or during what are regarded as "off" or "leisure" hours. Cultural differences in traditional definitions of "hospitality" undoubtedly play a part: coffee is always offered the visitor in even the poorest Arab household, the "let us get down to business" approach of the Westerner, circumventing the invitation to the home and serving of something to eat and drink, may be interpreted by the Arab farmer as failing to fulfill the basic rudiments of welcome and hospitality. Whatever the reason, it would appear that the Farm has given an impression of something less than genuine concern for problems of individual farmers who seek advice and help. Many of the heads of households interviewed volunteered the suggestion that the relationship between the Farm and the villagers could be greatly improved by more visits of inspection to the villages by Farm personnel. For this, of course, there is insufficient time under the present arrangement.

- g. As in the case of government's Extension Service each farmer was asked to rank in order of importance items concerning which the Farm might be of help. Again water, assumed to be the overriding problem,

was not listed. Table 28 presents the tabulation of the percentages of respondents indicating areas of help most needed and with which it was assumed the Farm could be of aid.

Table 28. Number of respondents indicating items concerning which the A.U.B. Farm should help.

Items where Farm should provide aid	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Seeds	171	42.1
Loan and credit	113	29.1
Medical	37	9.1
Provide employment	32	7.9
Pest and insect control	28	6.9
Schools	20	4.9

Clearly, supply of seeds and loans and credit are foremost in the minds of the respondents in the greater number of instances, being mentioned as most pressing by 42.1 percent and 29.1 percent respectively, (in almost every questionnaire these two items were ranked among the first three in order of importance). A significant but relatively small number of respondents rated medical aid and insect control as items where the Farm should provide help. Obviously these findings give further evidence of a widespread misunderstanding as to the purposes of the A.U.B. Farm - particularly the suggestion that the Farm might function as a source of monetary help through loans - which is clearly outside the scope and purpose of an educational and research institution.

VI. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF COOPERATION

There have been many and concerted attempts to organize cooperatives among farmers of Lebanon, so far with relatively little success.¹ One of the many factors responsible for these failures, and the one with which we are most concerned in the present study, is the extent to which the idea or concept of cooperation is recognized and accepted as a facet of inter-personal and social life. It would require a probing wider and deeper than the scope and purpose of this study before basic conclu-

1. There are 128 registered cooperatives in Lebanon. Of these, 11 are functioning at the present time and only one (Abadiyeh) can be regarded as first rate and as fulfilling, at least in part, the principles of a true cooperative.

sions with respects to this point could be safely made. Nevertheless, some illumination and at least tentative hypotheses may be forthcoming from the findings constituting responses to the following question:

- a. Question: "At the present time are you engaged in any organized cooperative plan with any other farmers in connection with any aspect of your farming work?" Three hundred and ninety-five respondents (97.3 percent) replied to this question negatively, leaving only eleven (2.7 percent) who are engaged in any type of a formal organized cooperative effort. Table 29.

Table 29. Number of farmers engaged in an organized cooperative plan.

Participation in Cooperative plan	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Engaged in organized cooperative plan	11	2.7
Not engaged in organized cooperative plan	395	97.3

- b. The question was then asked, "Would you be interested in joining such a cooperative effort working with other farmers with respect to some of the following items or would you prefer to work as an individual?" (The respondent had the choice of selecting possible items he would be interested in joining cooperative efforts to attain, suggesting items of his own, or stating a preference for working as an individual). The results are presented in table 30.

Table 30. Number of farmers interested in organized cooperative effort, and choice of goal.

Reference with respect to cooperative effort	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Purchase of seeds	102	25.1
Heavy equipment	49	12.1
Insect control	22	5.4
Borrowing money for farm production	21	5.2
Marketing	16	3.9
Prefer to work as individual	196	48.3

Table 31 shows the two principal reasons, and the percentages of individuals expressing them, for the preference to work "as an individual".

Table 31. Reasons expressed for preferring to work "as an individual"

Reasons for preferring to work alone	No.	Percent
Total	196	100.0
Safer to work alone - can't trust others	121	61.7
will not work - people don't grasp the idea	75	38.3

Again, of course, this sort of tabulation represents an oversimplification of the responses. Most of the respondents mentioned both of the above reasons, but indicated one as being the more basic. These ideas were never stated clearly or in the same way, and fumbling attempts to put them into words are mirrored in the statements in the table. To clarify the reasons for the prevalence of individualism, with its concomitants of distrust and lack of grasp and experience with the concept of cooperation, would constitute as interesting and worthwhile study in itself. Relevant here, of course, is the particular historical picture of the Middle East, the typical independence of rural people and villages everywhere, the sharp competitive struggle for survival in this and other food-short areas, and the politico-religious strife and frictions so long a fact of life in the Beka'a plain area.¹

Further, as table 32 below will indicate, the majority of the respondents (55.7 percent) expressed the opinion that there is less cooperation now than in the past.²

Table 32. Opinions as to whether there is more or less cooperation among farmers now than in the past.

Opinion as to change in extent of cooperation	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
More now	146	36.0
The same	20	4.9
More previously (less now)	226	55.7
Undecided	14	3.4

It is difficult to arrive at an adequate interpretation of this particular finding. Possibly recent political difficulties in the country have

1. It would be a mistake to assume that the basic feeling of desiring to work as an individual was lacking in those who state a wish to see some cooperative effort. It appears that despite a general ingrained leaning toward individualism many are beginning to see the necessities for, and possibilities in, some cooperative effort.

2. The respondent was allowed to bring his own definition to the word "past"

been a not inconsiderable factor, and of course adequate standards of comparison are lacking. We are dealing with impressions only.

VII. ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

- a. Most of the heads of households interviewed (94.3 percent) stated that they believed education to be very important for both boys and girls. The question was worded as follows: "How important do you think it is that the children have at least a few years of school?"

For boys: very important - fairly important - not important -

For girls: very important - fairly important - not important -

Table 33. Opinions as to the importance of education for boys and for girls.

Degree of felt importance of education	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Very important for both boys and girls	383	94.3
Very important for boys, fairly important for girls	7	1.7
Very important for boys, not important for girls	16	4.0
Fairly important for both	0	0.0
Fairly important for boys, not necessary for girls	0	0.0
Not necessary for either	0	0.0

Only 4.0 percent stated that they felt education is important for boys but *not* for girls. (half of this 4.0 percent are Moslems, half Christians). This finding apparently contradicts the often heard statement that the so-called secondary status of the woman in rural Arab society has as one of its manifestations a belief that education for women is not important. On the other hand there may be some unavoidable contamination in the responses to this question, as the interviewer, obviously educated, might be thought of as strongly favoring education of both sexes. Many respondents made the point that, while education is ideally important for both sexes, it is not economically possible in most cases and of course the male has preference. Churchill, for example, found that almost three times as many females as males have received little or no schooling.¹

- b. When asked what kind of training the schools in the community should emphasize, almost all respondents (94.1 percent) said reading and writing and only 5.9 percent "practical" training, the latter always

1. Churchill, op.cit. appendix C table 5.

carefully defined by the interviewer as training oriented toward either farming or toward a particular trade. See table 34.

Table 34. Percentage of respondents favoring reading and writing or "practical" education.

Type of training most desired	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Mostly reading, writing	382	94.1
Practical training	24	5.9
Language (foreign)	0	0.0

- c. Each head of household was asked whether or not he would be interested in some kind of an adult education program. The respondent was given to understand that such a program would be centered in his village, require a night or two a week for classes. The results are shown in table 35.

Table 35. The number of farmers indicating interest in adult education.

Interest in adult education	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Yes	243	59.9
No	134	33.0
Undecided	29	7.1

If the responses itemized in table 35 may be taken at face value, then, nearly two-thirds of the farmers (59.9 percent) would welcome and support night classes in adult education. Interestingly enough, an open end inquiry as to the preferred nature of the content of such classes indicated an almost unanimous desire for an orientation toward reading and writing rather than vocational or "practical" training. And though the point was specifically brought to the attention of each farmer, there seemed very little interest in adult education of a practical sort directed toward ways and means of improving farming or understanding of newer techniques.

These data with respect to attitudes toward education appear entirely consistent with findings in the study so far. They fit in with previously reported opinions as to possibilities for the future of the village and the pursuit of agriculture for young people, and for farming in general as a way of life. Many of the respondents

made the point, unsolicited specifically, that reading and writing skills constitute a necessary first step to a position representing betterment over farming and marginal existence. Usually this relationship was neither specifically traced nor conceived in concrete terms. These statements appear to reflect an intangible but very real feeling that somehow education was the key and prerequisite to a better and more rewarding kind of an existence, and a better future for children away from the rural village and subsistence farming.

VIII. WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN IMPROVEMENT

- a. The following question was asked of each respondent: "Would you be willing to pay a small and reasonable assessment in order to bring about improvement in the items you previously mentioned as being especially important?" The distribution of responses is given in table 36 below.

Table 36. Percentage of farmers willing to pay a small assessment to help in agricultural improvement.

Willingness to pay assessment	No.	Percent
Total	406	100.0
Yes	222	54.7
No	73	18.0
Possibly (conditional)	111	27.3

As the table indicates, only 18 percent of the respondents indicated an unwillingness to pay such an assessment. Twenty-seven and three-tenths percent replied "possibly" or "on condition", and 54.7 percent answered in the affirmative. The attitude behind these affirmative responses would probably be more accurately interpreted by assuming an implied "condition" or "provided we were convinced it would bring results."

- b. Each male household head was given the opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to respond in his own words to the following open end inquiry: "What in your opinion are the main obstacles to the adoption of more modern agricultural methods and technology by farmers here in Lebanon?" The subjective answers to this question do not lend themselves to categorical tabulation and, indeed, to do so would be to rob these responses of the meaning and spontaneity inherent in the wording of each individual statement. The responses

as given provide insightful and illuminating quotations and reveal what farmers themselves believe to be the principal difficulties standing in the way of greater modernization of agriculture. Following are some of the verbatim translations which summarize the overwhelming majority of clusters of opinions:

"My land holdings are too small to justify the required investment."

"The initial costs, even though they may seem small, are too great for us."

"Modern techniques are just not suited to our small farms."

"You cannot expect us to invest time and money in something we are not convinced will work here."

"It has not been clearly demonstrated just what techniques will work in the Beka'a. Until it is we would only stand to waste our money."

"It is an economic problem. Anyone will invest in a new idea or method if he is convinced that it will yield tangible results in a short period of time."

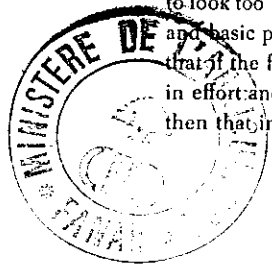
"It is useless to talk about adoption of more modern technology and methods of farming unless the government sets up a system of credit and loans for us."

"Let the government help us with the water problem and we can get along."

"You have to believe in your work in order to want to invest and improve... most of us dislike farming and wish it were possible to leave."

"It is a problem of morale and economics. We have not the know-how or the means or the will to invest in changes."

Undoubtedly subtle psychological, sociological and historico-traditional factors play a part in resistance to change everywhere. Yet the above statements and the very widely-shared (not often as clearly put) attitudes which they summarize suggest that it may be possible to look too far for complicated answers to what may be a more simple and basic problem of economics. It would appear from the evidence that of the farmers in this sample were convinced that an investment in effort and money would bring certain tangible economic rewards then that investment would be made.



IX. SUMMARY

On the part of the farmer heads of households studied there is strong evidence of a general attitude ranging from discouragement to bitterness with respect to village life in the Beka'a plain and the pursuit of agriculture under present natural and socio-economic circumstances. Further, it is felt that conditions are becoming worse and that there is no future in the villages for young people so far as making a living is concerned.

There is widespread and deeply felt dissatisfaction with village and more especially national leadership relative to efforts to help the ordinary farmer. There is little real knowledge of the government Extension Service and a feeling that it has no interest in the small landholder.

Attitudes toward the American University Farm provide insights into the kinds of misunderstandings and criticisms which can accompany the establishment of foreign-aid institutions in underdeveloped areas. Differing cultural mores of hospitality and inter-personal dealing lead to erroneous inferences as to sincerity and interest. Translations of technical terms into Arabic by interpreters who are not highly trained are hazy at best and often meaningless.

Many of the farmers interviewed tend to equate aid with outright gifts, financial loans, free use of equipment or suggested practices which will bear substantial immediate return, and such expectations inevitably set the stage for the farmer's evaluation of the institution as failing to be helpful.

Data indicate that education is valued very highly for children and adults and there is evidence of considerable interest in classes for adults. But the value is placed on fundamentals such as reading and writing - skills seen as leading to more rewarding kinds of occupations - rather than on vocational or practical training. Education is regarded as a means of escape from agriculture rather than as an instrument for its improvement.

Belief in individualism and independent action generally characteristic of rural people is reflected in the attitudes of the farmers sampled. In the Beka'a these attitudes appear to be reinforced by deep-seated feelings of suspicion and distrust which further handicap efforts to encourage systematic cooperative effort.

There is evidence of willingness to pay an assessment or tax toward the improvement of agriculture, but it is conditional upon a guaranteed or demonstrated certainty that such an investment will bring immediate eco-

conomic gain. Many farmers feel that no such certainty exists at the present time, that most Western technology is neither relevant to their small holdings nor possible at their low economic level.

Four crucial factors in the motivating of farmers in the area studied toward experimentation with new technology and practice appear to be: (1) convincing demonstrations of relevant and feasible methods for expanding farm output; (2) wide dissemination of information in clear and understandable terms; (3) a government sponsored system of loans and credit; (4) predictable and dependable markets which pay reasonable prices for products resulting from the investments in equipment and production supplies.

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