British Farm Surveys
1941 to 1943
The National Farm Survey of England and Wales and the Agricultural Survey in Scotland
Reports and Statistical Analysis
edited by Oliver Finnegan and Catherine Glover, with an introduction by Richard W. Hoyle
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Introduction: the British farm surveys, 1941-43*

Governments do exceptional things in wartime. One of the lessons of the First World War was that Britain was vulnerable to the blockade of its Atlantic trade, and for that reason food imports could not be guaranteed. Nor was the transport of animal feedstuffs a good use of shipping in wartime. When war broke out again in 1939 the lessons of the First World War were acted on. The management of agriculture, which had been achieved late in the war, was re-introduced on the outbreak of renewed hostilities. The prompt institution of food rationing was another lesson learnt. The need to reduce dependency on imports a third. Deliberate steps were taken to shift agriculture onto a new footing to make the country more nearly self-sufficient: this meant a new concentration on grains and potatoes. Less importance was attached to either milk or meat production. The instrument by which this was to be achieved were the 61 County War Agricultural Executive Committees (CWAECs), again modelled on the arrangements which had emerged by the end of the previous war. The CWAECs would translate instructions from Westminster into practical action on the ground.¹ In 1940 the CWAECs conducted a survey of farming. In 1941 the government launched a more comprehensive survey of individual farms, which has come to be known as the National Farm Survey. It is aspects of this which concern us here.

In Scotland matters were arranged a little differently and, until a recent publication by Brian Short, had remained largely unexplored.² Agriculture had been devolved to the Scottish Board of Agriculture from 1911. In 1939 a reorganization of the government institutions in Scotland resulted in the powers of the Board being transferred to a department of the newly created Scottish Office. The writ of the Westminster government did not immediately run over the Scottish countryside. That said, the Scots established 39 county committees, ‘Agricultural Executive Committees’ or AECs, along the lines used in England and Wales, to manage wartime production. These were perhaps not called county committees because some counties were divided between committees and others joined under a single committee. They did not have the full powers of the CWAECs south of the border, some powers being retained centrally. However, the Scots set their face against an individual farm survey, holding that it would soon become out of date and was too great a call on limited staff and resources. Instead a sample survey was instituted with somewhat different preoccupations to the National Farm Survey in England and Wales. The report on the Agricultural Survey in Scotland is published in full for the first time in this volume from a copy in the National Archives.³ Maps of Scottish holdings, which served to give both boundary information and land use information, were made later in the war but under the terms of the Town and County Planning Acts of 1932 and 1943.⁴

The idea of a national farm survey was not a new one. The Ministry of Agriculture had considered the issue in 1938 and again in 1939 and prepared a long memorandum outlining its position:

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¹ For all matters concerning the National Farm Survey, one defers to the pioneering work of Brian Short. Brian Short, Charles Watkins, William Foot and Phil Kinsman, The National Farm Survey, 1941-1943. State surveillance and the countryside in England and Wales in the Second World War (2000); Brian Short, The battle of the fields. Rural community and authority in Britain in the Second World War (2014). The latter reached me too late to be fully taken into account here. Here we trace the ancestry of the documents presented in this volume: for a full account we refer the reader to Short’s work, especially Short et al., National Farm Survey.

² Short, Battle of fields, ch. 10.

³ MAF 38/217. In September 2014 the National Records of Scotland were unable to locate a copy of this report (or any fuller version). A version of the report was published as Agricultural survey of Scotland (1946).

⁴ They can be found in the National Records of Scotland, starting at RHP75001. There is a good introductory note on the NRS website which has been drawn on here.
Briefly the position is that while ad hoc surveys directed to specific and practical purposes are undertaken from time to time in connection with government policies, a comprehensive survey would only be needed and could only be justified if the government were to contemplate a measure of government control on Socialist or Germanic lines over the utilisation of agricultural land and the operations of individual farmers.5

What was at issue here was not the development of farming – national self-sufficiency was still thought a fantastical idea – so much as the managed release of farmland for development. War overthrew all the existing modes of thought. It involved the direction of the farmer along ‘Socialist or Germanic lines’, but first it was necessary to discover who he or she was. A survey carried out in the summer of 1940 by the CWAECs seems to have been judged to have not been a success if only because some counties never submitted their returns.6

The only farm-level data available to the Ministry at this time came from the farms which had volunteered to become part of the Farm Management Survey in 1936, the aim of which was to monitor the effectiveness of government policy by monitoring outputs, inputs and capital investment on some 2000 farms. It was intended to give the Ministry solid evidence with which to answer queries directed to it about the state of farming.7 (The survey continues to this day as the Farm Business Survey.) As a sample survey, it did not meet the need for a comprehensive survey which was identified in 1940, the need for which was very much to assess the ability of the individual farmer and his or her capacity to operate in more demanding conditions.

By the end of 1940 plans were afoot for a new and comprehensive survey of farming. M. G. Kendall of the Ministry set out the rationale for a survey in a memorandum of 16 September. A Farm Survey Committee was convened, which laid out in December what is recognisably the National Farm Survey. As its minutes said:

3. The Farm Survey now being carried out was initiated mainly to assist County Committees and the Government in carrying out the war-time food production campaign; and its primary purpose was thus mainly of a short-term character. In considering whether the scope of the Survey could profitably be extended the Committee have, however, felt it necessary to take a more longterm view. It has been pointed out that the Survey provides a valuable opportunity for collecting information which may be useful to the Government not only in conducting the food production campaign during war-time but in framing policy in later years. The Committee have, therefore, regarded it as within their province to consider the collection of information of a general character even though such information may not be required for immediate war purposes.

4. The committee therefore proceeded by considering the scope of what might be termed the ‘ideal’ survey, that is to say a survey providing very comprehensive information about farming of a kind which would be of both short-term and long-term use. They then considered how far it was practicable in present circumstances to fulfil this ideal; and in this way endeavoured to arrive at proposals which should be as near the ideal as possible within practical limitations.

5. The ideal survey would include a record for every farm of the following matters:
(a) crops, grass, livestock and machinery and labour employed.
(b) cartographic material, such as a map of the farm showing the lay out and utilisation of fields.
(c) Miscellaneous information, such as data about soil; ownership, rates and other land charges; condition of drainage, hedging, buildings and similar capital equipment; the stocking

6 Ibid., pp. 41-3. The ministry’s report on the 1940 survey may be found in MAF 38/209 (FSC 4) with elaborate tabulations.
of the farm and its general conditions; the standard of farming and farm management of the occupier; the occupier’s financial circumstances and so on.

It was seen as important not to ask for information which was already being gathered on the June agricultural census forms, and for that reason the June census became integrated into the National Farm Survey. It was also felt that supplementary data on labour, machinery and ownerships and tenancies could be gathered through a modified agricultural census form.\(^8\)

The idea for this survey did not, it would seem, originate with either the Ministry’s Statistical Branch or with the Advisory Economists based at the 11 regional Agricultural Advisory Centres. But once ministerial approval had been given, the Advisory Economists were brought on board in November and December 1940 and much of the practical work of implementation assigned to them. They were brought together in a conference to brief them in January 1941.\(^9\)

The CWAECs were warned that a new and comprehensive survey was envisaged in a circular of 17 December 1940.

The Minister is strongly of the opinion that the Farm Survey affords a unique opportunity of providing information about general farming conditions which would be useful not only for the purpose of the present food production campaign but in connection with the shaping of the agricultural policy for the post-war period. An informal committee has been sitting to consider this matter and further information and all necessary details will be sent to Committees early in 1941. It is intended that a uniform form of record shall be prepared from the information already obtained by Committees for every farm in the country: but in order to relieve Committees of the tabulation and clerical work involved, it is proposed to enlist the help of staffs of Advisory Economists, with whom the possibilities in this direction are now being discussed.\(^10\)

The new survey was formally announced by a circular of 26 April 1941.\(^11\) This, the National Farm Survey, was implemented over the following two years. It had two key elements. There was the Primary Farm Return, a double-sided form to be completed by a ‘crop reporter’ or ‘farm surveyor’ appointed by the appropriate CWAEC after an inspection of the farm, and a set of maps showing the outline of the farm. To the Primary Farm return was to be attached the June 1941 census return for the farm. Supplementary forms were used to capture information on the motive power available to the farmer, rents and length of occupation. A mass of information was collected which in normal years the government would never have sought – or have thought it necessary to seek. With this data, it was possible for the CWAECs to micro-manage the individual farmer to the point of telling him which fields to plough and what to grow in them. In fact we should note that the data comes from a longer period than the summer of 1941. Whilst the intention was to have the whole survey completed by the end of March 1942, some counties only started the process of farm visits in the winter of 1941: around five per cent of the Primary Returns were still incomplete in July 1943.\(^12\)

Whilst the NFS was justified by immediate wartime considerations, there was always a view that the material collected would form a permanent record of the state of agriculture and the rural economy at the beginning of the 1940s, albeit in the early years of the war. This could serve both as a snapshot of the state of farming but could also inform discussions of post-war policy. As early as November 1941 the Ministry was saying that the farm survey would be a record comparable with Domesday book but more detailed: ‘This record will be a mine of information for generations of historians’.\(^13\)

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\(^8\) Short et al., National Farm Survey, p. 54; MAF 38/207 (8), 14 Nov. 1940. A draft with slight variations is in /207 (2).

\(^9\) MAF 38/207 including (10), circular to Advisory Economics departments asking for estimates of cost; (14) minutes of the meeting 10 Jan. 1941; (16) M. G. Kendall to W. R. Black, 6 Feb. 1941 discussing costs.

\(^10\) MAF 38/207 (9).

\(^11\) Short et al., National Farm Survey, p. 56.

\(^12\) MAF 38/209, FSC 9: for progress by June 1942, FSC 14.

\(^13\) Short et al., National Farm Survey, p. 54.
Survey material’ in February 1942.¹⁴ He included amongst potential uses ‘wartime local administration’, the ‘protection of agricultural land’, ‘advisory work’ (which he saw most immediately as the identification of underperforming farmers) and ‘a permanent record of the main features of each farm’. He also saw the data as needing to be summarized to produce county and national totals, but that it deserved a deeper statistical analysis. For Kirk the NFS had a whole variety of uses, some short-term (managing wartime food planning), some medium-term (post-war planning and the expected post-war reorganization of the farming landscape) whilst the data would have a long term utility as a ‘permanent record’.

The fullest exposition of the survey’s purposes is found in a handout prepared for the press in December 1942.¹⁵ ‘Apart from the Doomsday [sic] Book object of the survey’, there were two other objectives.

[T]he survey has yielded much information of value to County Committees for their wartime administrative tasks. Wherever the Survey has disclosed faults and failures on the farm, it has been the duty of the surveyor to report back to his Committee. A considerable number of farms has [sic] been identified as requiring supervision, as there were obvious deficiencies in the technical knowledge or managerial capacity of the occupier, and many more have been reported in need of improved drainage, greater use of fertilisers and so on. ... Thus the Survey has directly contributed to upgrading the productive capacity of the farms during the last eighteen months and played a part in securing the abundant yields of 1942.

Secondly, the Farm Survey can be described as a blueprint for Post-war Agricultural Planning. Examples of the planning use that will be made of the farm record material can be found in the sections on cottages and on water and electricity supplies. The provision of a sufficient number of farm workers’ cottages in decent structural condition will be one of the most pressing post-war tasks and the Farm Survey will give a great deal of information on the inadequacy of numbers and condition of the present cottagers. The same applies to water and electricity supplies.

The maps, it was explained, would be of use in deciding ‘what agricultural land shall be reserved as such and protected from development ... it will be necessary to identify the better-class agricultural land in map-form’. This, then, was a throwback to the preoccupations of the pre-war months when a national farm survey seemed utopian – or Socialist. It seems however to be more in line with the work of Dudley Stamp than the data being gathered by the National Farm Survey. The maps produced for this end had, however, already brought one fact to light. It had been discovered that

the agricultural land of this country is excessively fragmented into pieces that do not form efficient management units. Thousands of so-called farms exist as mere parcels of land strung out amongst several parishes. This is bound to become one of the subjects of post-war land planning, but it is too early to forecast anything definite.

So, the National Farm Survey contained something for everyone. It was to be a driver of wartime production, a source of information for post-war planning and a reference datum against which future developments could be audited.

The historical value of the materials was a matter of comment in the summary account published in 1946. The Minister of Agriculture in the post-war government, Tom Williams wrote how ‘there was always a second purpose for the survey. We badly need a permanent record of all the facts and figures relating to our farming – a cross-section of the entire industry taken at a moment.’¹⁶ But by this time it was the published report – rather than the raw data contained in the forms – that was envisaged as the permanent record. As R. R. Enfield of the Ministry wrote in September 1945, the Summary Report was ‘not the “second Domesday book” which Mr Hudson [Minister of

¹⁴ MAF 38/212, FSC 10, ‘Notes on various uses of the Farm Survey material’.
¹⁵ For the following, MAF 38/212 (14), p. 2.
INTRODUCTION

Agriculture 1940-45] had in mind. That will consist of the complete records and maps which we ultimately intend to deposit with the Record Office'. The post-war analysis of the data was much more limited than was originally expected as the Ministry progressively came to see the data as confidential and declined requests for access. The possibilities of the analysis of the NFS were barely exploited at the time and largely remain to be exploited now, some twenty years after the raw data was opened to public inspection.

With the work of Brian Short, who has pioneered the study of the NFS, the historiography of the National Farm Survey has developed in two particular directions. The first is the reconstruction of farm layouts and farming landscapes by matching up the acreages under crops given in the Primary Farm Returns NFS survey and the July 4 census forms for 1941 which are appended to them, with the NFS maps. The second direction is the ‘state direction’ of farming in wartime, and its post-war continuation under the direction of the CWAECs and their successors. The CWAECs were set targets for ploughing up which they passed on to individual farmers. And it is well known, if not actually notorious, that the Primary Farm Return asked the assessor to grade the capacity of the farmer on a scale from A to C and to make a short comment in justification of his grade if it was a ‘B’ or a ‘C’. ‘C’ grade farmers could be evicted if they were judged not to have improved their game, but a small number of farmers of all grades attracted the attention of the CWAECs and were sanctioned by them for failing to implement or even querying the directions they received. As we shall see, the classification of farmers remained a sensitive subject even after the war.

The statistical analysis of the NFS at both county and national level has attracted much less attention. As we noted, an account of the state of farming as revealed by the NFS was published soon after the war. The National Farm Survey of England and Wales: a summary report (1946) has attracted less attention than it might. As a departmental paper rather than a Parliamentary Paper, it is now hard to find and has escaped inclusion in the on-line House of Commons Papers: for this reason we have reproduced it here in facsimile together with a key section which was omitted from the published version. (We explain why later.) The more detailed county returns have remained largely unnoticed and certainly unexploited in the National Archives. It seems likely that their existence was never really admitted to at the time. They will be discussed in greater detail below, and this introduction seeks to explain how and why they were produced. They are reproduced in this publication and made readily available for the first time.

II

The history of the analysis of the NFS data can be pieced together from the files in the National Archives, but not all the relevant files have been selected for preservation and some points remain obscure. Certainly this account could be enlarged upon, particularly if the surviving papers of the agricultural economists were drawn on.

Whilst the idea of a national farm survey seems not to have originated with them, once they were invited to be involved, the provincial agricultural economists in the eleven Agricultural Advisory centres (all based in university agriculture departments or agricultural colleges) saw their

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17 MAF 38/216, minute, 3 Sept. 1945.
opportunity and seized it.\textsuperscript{20} There would have been no possibility of a national survey of farms and farmers in peacetime, but what we might take to be the long-term aspiration of the professional community to describe and analyse English and Welsh agriculture could be implemented in wartime as a by-product of the larger need to manage agriculture. Professor Ashby said in 1940 that the farm survey was the sort of thing for which they had been ‘agitating’ for years.\textsuperscript{21}

That some analysis of the data would take place seems to have been envisaged from the very start. Dr Frank Yates of Rothamsted presented a paper at the first meeting of the ‘Farm Survey Supervisory Committee’ when it met at the Ministry on 27 May 1941.\textsuperscript{22} Yates proposed to seize the ‘unique opportunity’ presented by the National Farm Survey. He advocated a sampling strategy which would provide information of immediate use to the war effort. What he appears to have envisaged was a sample of 6,000 farms drawn from the survey. The analysis of these farms would allow an immediate declaration to be made about the state of English and Welsh farming but the panel would then be surveyed repeatedly (and so would be akin to the pool of farms used by the Farm Management Survey) to provide up to date current data on problems of interest to government, for instance fertilizer use. For many purposes, he argued, a sample of 1,000 to 2,000 farms would be adequate but this would be too small to enable accurate comparisons to be made between areas. That the panel of 6,000 farms was seen as a sample that would be returned to repeatedly may be seen in Yates’s caution:

It is to be anticipated that the employment of a farm for the purpose of enquiries of this nature will itself tend to improve the standard of farming on that farm. Consequently the sample will tend to become less and less representative of the whole of the farms of the country. To guard against this it is considered desirable that the sample should not be a permanent one. Instead some regular change should be introduced and it is suggested that one third of the farms should be eliminated each year and replaced by a new sample. This will then enable the changes from year to year to be determined more accurately that if a totally new sample is taken each year, and will at the same time (over a period of years) give some indication how far farming is actually improved owing to the incidental advice that the farmers obtain from the advisory offices.

Yates then turned to the need to have the cooperation of the farmers included in the sample when their inclusion might place a burden on them.\textsuperscript{23} This was something very different from what was to emerge over the following year.

As it happened, the Supervisory Committee, when it came to consider Yates’s paper, was less than enthusiastic. The chairman thought that there was no urgency about bringing forwards a preliminary report on the Farm Survey and for him the question was how much work would be made for the County Committees at a time when they were extremely busy. Yates replied to this by saying that he now accepted that the sample should be larger – 10,000 farms or about 3 per cent of the national whole. He thought that the needs of the survey could be made to fit in with the timetable of the County Committees and this was seconded by Professor Scott Watson. Mr Rayns took the view that the County Committees were over-burdened and that to give them additional work in the form of a survey would generate resentment, which might ‘prejudice the success of the main farm survey’. As there was plainly no consensus, the committee’s chairman brought this aspect

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Short \textit{et al.}, \textit{National Farm Survey}, p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{22} There is no real sense in which the ‘Supervisory Committee’ supervised the farm survey. Rather it was a group of experts that the ministry used as a sounding board to confirm decisions substantially already made.
\item \textsuperscript{23} MAF 38/209, FSC 5, 5 May 1941.
\end{itemize}
of the committee’s business to a rather precipitate close. In fact it seems to have been Sir Donald Fergusson, the Permanent Secretary, who brought the plans for a panel analysis to an end, holding that it was too much of a burden to lay on the CWAECS.

The Supervisory Committee did not meet again until 5 March 1942, by which time ideas about the basis of the survey had advanced a great deal. The survey itself was well under way, and experience had thrown up a whole range of problems. The committee received a paper (FSC 9) on progress. It began by reviewing what had to be done. First the field work had to be undertaken by the CWAECS. Second, the primary record had to be copied and checked and the June return had also to be copied and checked. Both had to be checked for consistency including arithmetical errors. Then, third, the survey records and the 1941 returns for a single farm had to be matched and brought together. Experience had shown that this was not as straightforward as had been envisaged. Next the sample had to be chosen along lines outlined in a further paper (FSC 10); and finally the matched records for the selected farms had to be copied onto record sheets before the data they contained could be entered onto punched cards. The survey was taking much longer had been envisaged. No counties were complete. Only Cheshire amongst the English counties had started the survey work promptly and as a result was the only county likely to make the projected completion date of 31 March 1942. Other counties had started as late as the winter of 1941-2 and were correspondingly behind.

The same meeting received J. H. Kirk’s memorandum dated 24 February 1942 (FSC 10) and an accompanying paper (FSC 11, to which Yates put his name together with Kirk and H. Whitby of the Ministry). Together they show how far thinking within the ministry had developed by this time, but also how tentative it remained. The first paper (FSC 10) identified two statistical approaches, the first of which was to use the NFS as a simple census from which figures for acreage etc could be drawn at both county and national levels, ‘e.g. the proportion of occupiers who are tenants, number of full time farmers, number of farms with piped water supply and so forth’. This could lead to the publication of an interim report which could be achieved fairly quickly ‘without awaiting the results of more elaborate cross-classifications, much of which would be of interest to the specialist rather than the layman’.

The secondary statistical analysis was altogether a more ‘formidable subject’. Kirk assumed that the data would be transferred onto punched cards and was confident that the Treasury would make available the necessary computing power. However, he acknowledged that only selective data could be included or else more cards would be needed than the Treasury could be expected to sanction. The accompanying paper (FSC 11) shows that a great deal of thought had gone into what data could be included – and what omitted – in the analysis, although to a degree this depended on which company’s proprietary calculating machines were adopted for the work. Kirk asked whether an analysis of farm tenancy was needed so that the farm survey might become a ‘survey of landed estates; which would allow the performance of estates as well as farmers to be considered? One advisor had urged that this should be done. Yates thought it would be difficult and the information needed might not have been universally gathered: he therefore gave it a low priority. It had been suggested that the task could be eased by omitting holdings under 25 acres but this idea did not find favour. It was recognized that some farm data would simply not be usable, whether through inconsistency or incompleteness (or a lack of cooperation on the part of farmers). Kirk also acknowledged that some data which might usefully have been gathered had not been requested, including data on farm type, and any analysis by farming area would be hard to achieve. Finally he recognized the extreme inflexibility of the system. What was included on the punched cards

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24 [Minutes of] the Farm Survey Supervisory Committee, 27 May 1941.
25 MAF 38/207 (31).
26 MAF 38/209, FSC 9.
27 Copies of all three can be found in MAF 38/209 and 212.
28 MAF 38/209, FSC 10, para. 22. This was further discussed at the meeting on 5 March and further problems identified. MAF 38/209, Minutes, meeting 5 Mar. 1942, para. 14.
determined the questions that could be asked, but the coding would have to be devised without knowing how well it would serve. In effect there was no room for second thoughts.

Ideas had also developed about the sampling process. Kirk explained that the analysis was to be based on a 10 per cent stratified sample, but any analysis by the provincial economists should, it was suggested, use a 20 per cent sample. By stratified, it was proposed to include 3.33 per cent of holdings of 5-25 acres, rising by size category of 50 per cent of holdings of 300-700 acres, and all holdings of more than 700 acres. The implications of this were spelt out at length in the paper prepared by Yates, Kirk and Whitby (FSC 11), notably the way in which the choice of which farms would go forwards into the sample would require a process of selection by the staff of the advisory economics departments.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March contain the record of an animated discussion on a number of points.29 There was discussion of a questionnaire used to gather information for the Primary Record in Montgomeryshire: the Ministry said it did not favour the tactic but accepted it with reluctance. Discussion then turned to the A-B-C categorization. From an early moment there had been a realization that the advice given to the CWAECS on this was inadequate and the grading was being handled very unevenly. It was reported to the committee that some counties were excessively over generous with their use of the A-category, one district of Devon having assessed 98 per cent of its farmers as 'A'.30 It was suggested that figures could be compiled of the proportion given and circulated back to the county committees for their information, so see whether their grading was consistent with other counties. It was argued that this would be a mistake as it might encourage arbitrary and retrospective adjustments to the grades already given. It was suggested that the grading might be more nuanced with the use of B+ and B- and it was argued that the farm as well as the farmer should have been offered a grade. But it was concluded that it was too late to change anything. If the counties used B+ and B-, they would still have to be treated as B in the analysis. It was too late to grade farms; but most importantly it was decided not to circulate counties with figures of the proportions at which farms were graded, but to return to counties forms where the grading seemed implausible.

Kirk had already suggested that the technical aspects of the analysis of the survey should be considered by a sub-committee specially convened for the purpose and this was agreed. Nonetheless the committee did discuss some aspects of the paper including the possible duplication of work with the provincial economists, the regrouping of holdings and, at Dudley Stamp’s behest, the NFS maps.

By the time the subcommittee met on 1 July, the Ministry had refined its ideas following discussions with the Hollerith mechanical tabulating machine company.31 Whilst much of their discussion had turned on the presentation of the data on the cards, the Ministry now estimated that punching the cards would take ten weeks and sorting and tabulation 35 to 40 weeks. It had also been decided to increase the sample size from 33,000 to 42,000 records by increasing the number of smaller holdings in the sample: so the number of holdings of 5-25 acres was increased from 3,000 to 4,500, and from 3.33 per cent of the sample to 5 per cent.

A strategy had also evolved of undertaking a dry run on the records for Kent where the fieldwork was known to be nearly completed. The Advisory Economist in Kent, Mr Wyllie, had promised his cooperation, but even he was rather pessimistic about how long it would take to draw a reasonable sample from the Kent forms. There had also been some contact with Harwood Long in Leeds about the possibility of a North Riding pilot. The question remained unresolved though whether these pilot samples would be analysed by hand or by machine: it was acknowledged that machine processing would give valuable experience.

The remaining business of the sub-committee meeting (a discussion of the type of farm, of the definition of the size of a farm and the return of labour and machinery) does not greatly concern us here: indeed the minutes suggest that it was the discussion of machine analysis that took up the

29 MAF 38/209, Minutes, meeting 5 Mar. 1942.
30 Ibid., para. 5.
31 MAF 39/209, RSC 1.
larger part of the meeting. After the inevitable discussion of the maps initiated by Dudley Stamp, Edgar Thomas from Reading University (who had been drafted onto the committee) argued that an elaborate analysis of the data could not be justified given its nature and the lack of uniformity with which it was being gathered. Hence he argued that simple summation was sufficient, with particular attention being paid to the factual material and less to the more qualitative material such as the A-B-C categorization. He was far from convinced by the sampling strategy developed by Yates. Why ‘make size of farm the cornerstone of the analysis?’ Yates defended his strategy, arguing that the use of punched cards gave more freedom than Thomas allowed provided that the material was on the cards, and he thought that in reality the scheme of analysis proposed was not so far removed from Thomas’s ideas. Yates acknowledged that some Advisory Economists favoured a straight random sample, but he argued that to secure the accuracy that he expected his strategy would achieve, the sample would need to be about 120,000 records, or about four times bigger than what was being proposed. Nonetheless he thought that no final decisions about the sampling strategy should be taken until the results of the pilot counties were available.

The problem, though, was that this was all planning and far removed from progress in the counties, where the gathering, collating, checking and finally preparing records for the sample continued. A paper of September giving the position around mid-July identified only 13 English counties that were expected to have completed the first two stages by the end of September. A further 16 would only have finished the fieldwork stage by then. Another 16 counties would have finished the fieldwork stage by the end of 1942, but three were expected to continue into 1943. The Welsh counties were reportedly very much behind. The hope was that two samples would be available to the Ministry for analysis by the end of September and that by February 1943 the samples for about 12 counties would be ready for analysis. The consequence was a cost overrun. In October R. R. Enfield prepared a note outlining the escalating costs and Kirk expected that the project would be curtailed in some way. If it was, then it is not clear how, but there was plainly a black moment in the autumn of 1942 when doubts set in. In fact the answer was the public announcement of the Survey in December after which the abandonment of the project would have involved not just the saving of money but the loss of face. It was not until June 1943 that it was thought worth calling a further meeting of the Farm Survey Supervisory Committee’s Research subcommittee which suggests that the Kent sample had only recently been completed. It seems likely that when this had been received. Kirk felt confident enough to canvass support for the national analysis for which Kent was merely a dry run, arguing the convenience of it being carried out at Rothamsted.

At this meeting on 8 June the report on the Kent sample was warmly received and praised for its arrangement and clear presentation. There was some interest though in how far the material could be fed back to the CWAECs to help them manage food production. Mr Thomas of Reading thought that a series of county reports should be produced with a division down to the level of the CWAEC districts and this was seconded by Major Jeans of the Wiltshire CWAEC who felt that his county could simply be divided into two sections, the chalk down and clay vale. Yates replied that whilst the Hollerith machine gave tabulations at the county level, sub-division into districts was impractical. For one thing the sampling was intended to work at county level and subdivision into districts would introduce too great a risk of error. Nonetheless he agreed to run off reports for the Kent districts to see whether any significant distinctions were revealed.

Kirk then intervened to explain the Ministry’s intentions towards the data. There was to be an official report:
which in the main would be confined to results for the whole county although some of the more interesting inter-relationships and a selection of data for each county might also be included. The danger at the moment with the publication of county data was that invidious comparisons might well stir up ill-feeling between counties with detrimental effects on the food production campaign.

This was a rather hollow argument: by the time the report appeared, the war had ended and any rivalries had surely passed. Kirk continued to make a more pressing point: that there were insufficient staff to prepare a succession of county reports, and some counties were, in any case, probably not interested. Later on, he expected that the main summary report would be supplemented by specialist reports (on tenure, farm equipment, management, water and electricity and so on) but these would be for internal ministry circulation only. Whitby thought that the summary data for each county might be sent to that county alone so it could compare its results with the national result it would be unable to make ‘the more contentious inter-county comparisons’. The final significant point was made by Thomas. He asked whether the reports could move away from averages to give a more nuanced approach. ‘It was just as important to know the number of farms without tractors; or the number of farms growing various acreages of wheat or sugar beet, as it was to know the aggregate numbers and acreages of these items.’ Yates agreed that this was now possible whereas in the past ‘the kind of treatment suggested by Mr Thomas had not been possible because of the enormous amount of hand labour required’. Finally it was agreed that the Kent analysis would form the basis of the other county reports, which in turn would form the basis of the national report.

The Supervisory Committee was convened and met a few weeks later on 26 July 1943, and received a comprehensive paper covering the progress of fieldwork (now about 95 per cent complete), the processes employed to generate the data and maps, the selection of the farms to be included in the sample and the coding, the practical problems encountered in the mechanical tabulation of the data sample farms.38 Finally the paper came to the preparation of the report and outlined intentions much along the lines that Kirk had announced to the subcommittee: a national summary report was envisaged which would have county appendices which could be forwarded to the County Committees if they asked for them. There would a series of technical reports to be written by economists yet to be appointed, but it had not been decided if any of these reports would be published. Finally it was expected that Rothamsted would undertake its own research work on the data, and it was known that seven of the Advisory Economists had their own plans for research projects.

Even before this meeting a proposal had been drafted in the Ministry ‘for certain analytical work to be carried out at Rothamsted’.39 In effect this was for the computation of a sample of the NFS – now a 15 per cent sample – the farms to be submitted were to be selected by the provincial economists from the Primary Returns and Census forms in their possession. The data on the forms was to be entered onto coding sheets and sent to Rothamsted to be punched onto cards. It was agreed that the costs would be paid from the Ministry’s discretionary fund so that Treasury consent need not be sought. The Agricultural Research Council offered no objection and so the work was contracted to Rothamsted, who had staff with the appropriate experience. Two Hollerith machines were procured and lent to them for the duration of the work.40

Meanwhile the provincial agricultural economists, whose staff were doing much of the mundane work of matching the documents into farm sets and undertaking the coding, were developing their

38 MAF 208/37 (59), FSC 15.
39 Copy in MAF 33/332.
40 MAF 33/332, Black to Havelock, 28 June 1943; Black to Sir John Russell, 1 July 1943.
own projects to use the NFS returns.\textsuperscript{41} The only question raised by Kirk’s paper of February 1942 was one of cost whilst at the meeting on 5 March there was some debate over avoiding duplication between the national and local efforts.\textsuperscript{42} In the summer of 1942 the Ministry invited proposals from the economists as to the research projects they would like to base on the NFS records.\textsuperscript{43} In fact fairly few of these seem to have come to fruition as the ministry’s attitude to the dissemination of the NFS data hardened. Kirk penned a memorandum about the problems that could arise from piecemeal publication of the results in August 1942.\textsuperscript{44} At first there was an agreement that the provincial economists would not publish their analyses in advance of the Ministry’s own so there was no danger of conflicting opinions which might prove awkward for the minister, but with the passage of time it came to be held that the ministry’s own publication would be the single, definitive statement. In fact the Ministry had been forced to consider the question of access to the data as early as mid-1943.\textsuperscript{45} This noted that an expectation had grown that a range of official and semi-official bodies and some even some private individuals would be granted access to the material. Whilst the Ministry was sympathetic to such requests it felt that the data had been secured from farmers ‘under the seal of confidence’. But they also acknowledged that it was impossible for anyone to have access to the forms without them seeing the assessments of farmers and their (A) to (C) categorization, and they were concerned that the leakage of this information would leave the Ministry exposed to actions for libel. Hence it was decided that the records would be available to government departments but ‘no disclosure to private individuals can be allowed, unless it would clearly be advantageous to the public interest’. Semi-official bodies would not have direct access but might be supplied with extracts of less sensitive information. However, this would be hard to organize and one of the electricity companies had already had a request for information declined on the grounds of the labour involved in extracting the data.

There was sympathy within the Ministry for the fact that the provincial agricultural economists had undertaken much of the ‘drudgery’ for promises which were not honoured.\textsuperscript{46} It may be seen how far the provincial economists had advanced with their independent analyses when the draft of the summary report was circulated to them. A number came back pointing to discrepancies between their calculations based on the NFS and the calculations made from the national sample for particular counties.\textsuperscript{47} The Summary Report acknowledged that only a small part of the data in the NFS had been analysed and presented in the report, and continued to say that ‘requests for access to this material for research purposes will be sympathetically considered’.\textsuperscript{48} In fact almost all requests were declined. Even though the forms remained with the economists until the late 1950s, when they were reclaimed by the Ministry, the Survey it was, for most purposes, a closed archive from before the end of the war. On the rare occasions requests for access were granted, the rules pertaining to agricultural census data – that nothing would be said that allowed the identification of an individual farm or farmer – were applied.\textsuperscript{49} It is for this reason that the NFS did not result in a profusion of research studies after the war although, to all appearances, the research and computation had often been done both on the Ministry’s behalf at Rothamsted and by the Advisory Economists at the provincial centres.

One might note at this point that there were two fundamental problems with the structure of the National Farm Survey. The first was the decision to make the Primary Record a supplement to the June 1941 census so that no information was duplicated. This seemed sensible at the time, but

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} For the projects being developed in mid-1943, see Short \textit{et al.}, \textit{National Farm Survey}, pp. 89-90 and in general pp. 87-91.
\item \textsuperscript{42} MAF 38/209, FSC 10, minutes of meeting 5 Mar. 1992.
\item \textsuperscript{43} MAF 38/472, Circular letter of 29 Aug. 1942 to the circle of provincial agricultural economists seeking proposals for the sort of research that the NFS could support; proposals for research projects, autumn 1942, appendix 1, ‘Programme of provincial analysis at Economic Advisory Centres’.
\item \textsuperscript{44} MAF 38/472.
\item \textsuperscript{45} MAF 208/37 (59), FSC 15, ‘Farm survey progress report’, 26 July 1943, para. 28-30.
\item \textsuperscript{46} For ‘drudgery’, Kirk in 1943, Short \textit{et al.}, \textit{National Farm Survey}, p. 91
\item \textsuperscript{47} Correspondence in MAF/472 and 473.
\item \textsuperscript{48} \textit{Summary Report}, para 15.
\item \textsuperscript{49} For the closure of the archive, Short \textit{et al.}, \textit{National Farm Survey}, pp. 104-06.
\end{itemize}
matching data collected at two moments, even if only months apart, seems to have been a major chore. Uniting the forms and checking them for consistency seems to have been a much larger job than was envisaged and it made for considerable delays and unanticipated expenditure.\textsuperscript{50} It would, as it turned out, have been better to have used one form or gathered some of the data twice.

The second flaw was the decision to mix quantitative data with a qualitative assessment of the farmer’s ability, but this was a function of wartime conditions. This problem was identified early on in the process, but it was too late to do anything about it.\textsuperscript{51} The immediate need was to know whether the farmer could up his game in emergency conditions, but the danger of farmers discovering their grade, and objecting to it, and claiming partiality on the part of the assessors was so great that the whole form had to be, in effect, suppressed. In retrospect it might have been better if the assessment of the farmer had been on a separate form, or a detachable page which could have been destroyed, for the inclusion of this data undermined the whole enterprise as the Ministry became fearful of the individual assessments leaking out. Hence the forms were embargoed largely because of this one element within them. As we shall see, when it came to the publication of the \textit{Summary Report}, the categorization of farmers was omitted because even when treated in gross, it was thought that it still had the power to wound. In retrospect the wide variations in the application in the three-fold categorization suggest that it was barely worth the trouble.\textsuperscript{52}

It seems likely that the work of Rothamsted on the county tables was finished by late 1944 or the early months of 1945 at the latest. Yates was seeking further funding to keep the National Farm Survey team together a little longer to undertake some further research on the NFS materials at the end of 1944, and he secured funding through to the end of September 1945.\textsuperscript{53} The county returns were added to the EF series of the Ministry’s files in August 1948 and this perhaps marks the moment at which the National Farm Survey was finally wound up and any materials remaining at Rothamsted reclaimed by the Ministry.\textsuperscript{54}

III

This account serves to explain the documents that are reproduced in this volume. The analysis of the NFS survey proceeded county by county as the samples were received from the provincial economists. The county tables were generated as a stage in the process of tabulation of the sampled NFS data. But they were not considered suitable for publication for variety of reasons, and the data they contained was combined (in stages that are concealed from us) to produce the national data which was published in the \textit{Summary Report} of 1946. It seems likely that the tables were circulated within the community of provincial Agricultural Economists as they were prepared. C. V. Dawe of the Agricultural Advisory Office at the University of Bristol wrote on 1 February 1944 apologizing for not having acknowledged the receipt of the summary results for Worcestershire, Wiltshire and Herefordshire. He went on to say that he and his colleagues were waiting to know whether the Ministry would be writing county reports on the data: Whitby of the Ministry was quick to write back to say not, and to add that any reports that were prepared centrally would be thematic, for instance dairy farming in England and Wales.\textsuperscript{55} Later in the year the sample results were sent to A. W. Ashby at Aberystwyth who wrote to Kirk pointing to discrepancies between the locally produced calculations and those made at Rothamsted. Ashby expressed himself dissatisfied with sample data. He pointed out that the purposes of his unit at Aberystwyth were not the same as the Ministry’s and he asked for a complete analysis of the data rather than simply an analysis based on a sample.

\textsuperscript{50} It appears that the June census return was separated into pages and sent to different organizations, the first page to the CWAECs, the second to the Ministry’s Statistical Branch and the third direct to the Advisory Economists, who had to unite the three pages when they were received. This is explained in FSC 15, para. 8.

\textsuperscript{51} See the comments of A. C. Baker of April 1941: Short \textit{et al.}, \textit{National Farm Survey}, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{52} Short, \textit{Battle of the fields}, pp. 120-1, 172, table 23

\textsuperscript{53} MAF 33/332.

\textsuperscript{54} The files were numbered EF 1249-60 and then, on transfer to the National Archives, MAF 38/852-63. Short. \textit{Battle of the fields}, p. 125, says that the material was "assembled in 1948-9", but all the indications are that it was prepared in 1944-5 but not filed until 1948.

\textsuperscript{55} MAF 38/472, Dawe to Whitby, 1 Feb. 1944, Whitby to Dawe, 2 Feb. 1944.
INTRODUCTION

Ashby’s letter and the accompanying tables were referred to Rothamsted who went through his results and finally pronounced themselves satisfied with the sample and sampling procedure. Ashby’s correspondence and his requests for further detailed information provoked a rather cryptic exchange within the Ministry. Kirk was all in favour of giving Ashby the Welsh figures but sought approval first. It had, he explained, been a long-standing understanding within the Ministry that the results of the NFS would not be issued piecemeal, and Kirk wondered whether giving the figures to Ashby would amount to publication. After all, to do so would set a precedent for the English data. Kirk suggested a printed publication on the lines of Agricultural Statistics in which the county data could be presented with minimal commentary. Kirk’s minute was referred upwards by R. R. Enfield and approved by Sir Donald Ferguson, and by the Minister in November. Ferguson commented that ‘the need for withholding county figures is now, I think, past’. Hence he saw no objection in supplying Professor Ashby with the data he requested. So it seems that Kirk secured permission for the publication of the county data in November 1944. In the following weeks he made enquiries about the form that publication might take. What is never made quite clear is whether he was thinking of the full county data reproduced here (on the CD-ROM) or a volume containing some data by county, as the Summary Report does.

The file then goes dead until September 1945 when Kirk submitted the revised draft of the Summary Report for approval. Whether deliberately or unintentionally he maintained that permission for publication had been given in the previous November, but the permission given then seems to have been for the publication of county-level data. Kirk may have thought that the permission he had secured for the one covered the other, but if a comprehensive publication of the county data had ever been envisaged, it disappeared from sight.

IV

There had, throughout the whole, frequently troubled, history of the National Farm Survey, been an aspiration that its key findings should be made available. In the summer of 1943 Kirk had spoken of the intention to produce a national report but containing little or no county material. By June 1945 a draft survey had been prepared (largely written by H. Whitby of the Ministry) which was circulated to the Advisory Economists and the Farm Survey Supervisory Committee with a request that any amendments or suggestions should be returned by 1 August. A number of the Ministry’s correspondents took the invitation seriously and supplied suggestions. Some, notably D. H. Dinsdale of Kings College Newcastle, in a fearsomely critical letter, offered comparisons between their calculations and those contained in the Ministry’s report. In a more cordial correspondence with J. Morgan Jones of the Welsh Department in Aberystwyth, Kirk explained some of the thinking behind the report. Through shortages of both paper and labour, the report had had to be curtailed and only tables ‘likely to be in general demand and in which we feel some confidence as to accuracy’ were included. Other tables could be supplied in manuscript. Some tables did not contain county-level data because they felt no one would want it, but other tables omitted it because ‘we are anxious not to provide material for inter-county comparisons which turn out to rest on no more than different standards of judgement’. Other issues were being treated to three ‘yellow books’, on ‘Condition of land and management’, ‘Occupation and tenure’ and ‘Water and electricity’. Kirk did not know whether they would be published: ‘certainly they would have to be expurgated first’.

56 MAF 38/472, Ashby to Kirk with enclosures, 19 Sept. 1944: correspondence through to Ashby to Kirk, 2 Nov. 1944.
57 For the following, see the minutes in MAF38/216.
58 The following is largely based on MAF 38/473, which includes the draft report and the correspondence received when it was circulated in June 1945.
59 MAF 38/212, FSC 14.
60 Kirk identifies Whitby as the lead author in a minute of 3 Sept. 1945. MAF 38/216. Whitby also wrote and published under his own name a short account of the National Farm Survey, ‘National Farm Survey of England and Wales’, Agriculture 53 (1946), pp. 335-40.
61 MAF 38/473; J. Morgan Jones to Kirk, 27 July, Kirk to Morgan Jones, 1 Aug.
62 Of the three, only the study of farm water supplied and electrification is known to have been completed. It appears to have been drafted by mid-1944 when it was circulated within the profession for comment. It was then reproduced as Farm Survey Report no 1, and then revised and printed in 1945 as Reports on the economic position of agriculture no. 23, Farm water and electricity supplies. This was,
The Summary Report was revised during August (although not to take into account Dinsdale’s more substantive objections). By the beginning of September it was ready to be circulated inside the Ministry. Kirk commented that it stuck to the presentation of the facts rather than offering any commentary: it was a ‘rather austere document’. R. R. Enfield, commending the report, did draw attention to three points where he had reservations. The first was that he thought that the foreword was too fulsome in praise of R. S. Hudson, the past Minister of Agriculture who had, in effect, sponsored the Survey. Second, he thought that some of the more dismal findings might prompt questions about what the Ministry was going to do to about them. His chief point however was that he thought that the comments on the A-C categorization of farmers were ill-advised. He thought that this still had the power to cause offence and that as it was done for wartime purposes, it was of ‘transient interest’. But his real fear was that it might prompt adverse comment in the press or from the National Union of Farmers. He was happy for it to be acknowledged that the grading had taken place but felt that less discussion of it would be advisable. He proposed the deletion of five paragraphs and three tables. The Permanent Secretary, Sir Donald Vandepeer, who had succeeded Fergusson in the summer, agreed that it be might be picked up by the ‘sensational’ press and overshadow the ‘more important and less debateable information in the rest of the Report’. The Secretary of State, Tom Williams, finally held that two paragraphs, numbered 94 and 95 and a single Table should be excised, and this was done. This excised text is reproduced for the first time in an appendix to this introduction: as may be seen, it is, at a distance of 75 years, mild enough, but is a last remainder of just how sensitive a matter the grading of farmers remained.

The report was finally published on 19 August 1946. It was the subject of discussions in The Times on 19, 20 and 26 August: remarkably, it sold well. The Summary Report, at less than 120 pages, may seem to be a small reward for the efforts of so many people, from the multitude of farm surveyors to the provincial advisory economists to the Rothamsted team under Frank Yates who did the body of the computing. In fact their monument has yet to be erected: it will come from the multitude of bricks in MAF 32 where the individual farm forms have come to rest and the maps in MAF 73.

IV

The county-level tables were added to the Ministry’s EF series of files in 1948. They do not contain any introductory matter explaining what they are or how they formed part of a larger scheme of computation for the National Farm Survey. It is evident that these are the first stage of the computation undertaken at Rothamsted in 1944. It is also clear that these are working documents in a far from final state. They were compiled by taking a duplicated template (of which there were two versions) and then typing the figures onto it. A large number of the pages in the files are actually carbons, not top copies. Some have heavy amendments where figures have been scored out and new figures substituted. In some cases data is missing and in a few cases data is lost where the edges of pages have frayed away (see the notes on pp. 134–6 below). Table 31 (‘Type of holding’) was computed for some counties but not others: where it was not computed, ‘No Information’ was typed into the table. A table of ‘rough grazing by size of farm’ numbered Table 24 in some counties has been crossed out on most occasions probably because rough grazing gave the survey a great deal of trouble and the figures were probably judged to be too unreliable. The tables have been renumbered in most of the counties.

It was our original intention to present the text as facsimile but the combination of wartime paper, poor typescript and intermittent but occasionally heavy correction made this impossible. The alternative strategy was to type the contents into a template devised for the purpose, and this task was undertaken by Oliver Finnegan during the summer of 2014 working from digital images collated against the originals. In short, what we have tried to do is present the tables for each county in the however, for internal Ministry use only and it has not been possible to locate copies outside the National Archives. MAF 38/475, 476, a clean copy dated Sept. 1945 in /695.

63 Short et al., National Farm Survey, p. 93 give figures.
form that we assume that Yates, Kirk and Whitby would have wanted them if a decision had been made to proceed to publication. We have made every endeavour to check the numbers in the form against the originals, but it is possible that errors have crept in, and we would recommend that any wildly aberrant figures are checked against the typescript in the National Archives before being accepted. Our purpose in preparing this volume has been not only to make this data both more familiar and readily accessible, but also to preserve it. As so often, publication is the best form of conservation.

One county is included in printed form in this volume so that the reader can readily see what the data looks like. The data for all the English and Welsh counties (and here one should note that Lincolnshire was treated in ridings, and Suffolk and Sussex were both divided between West and East, and the Soke of Peterborough and the Isles of Ely and Wight were treated as counties) is presented on the CD in both county and table order, in PDF format and Comma-Separated Value (CSV) files that can be imported into a spreadsheet or database application. The manipulation of the data into these formats is the work of Catherine Glover.

Although some scepticism was expressed at the time about the final reliability of the data, there is a great deal to be learnt from it. We have gone some distance in explaining how it was compiled – the procedures used, the sampling strategy – but the reader needs to be aware of potential biases in the data. It is obvious enough that farms with full records were chosen over farms whose records were incomplete at the time the sample was drawn or internally inconsistent. Two points can be made here. The first is plainly that there is likely to be a similar error across all counties; the second is that the essentially quantitative evidence is likely to be more securely based than the qualitative. That was recognized at the time. The data on farmers’ management skills (Table 26) is probably more interesting for what it tells us about how different counties handled the problem of grading farmers than any light it sheds on farmers’ ability. But one ends by noting that all historical records are imperfect to a greater or lesser degree, and that these, despite their evident weaknesses, have a remarkable potential for exploration. After all, there will never be anything like it again – short of a new war.

It is possible to look at the National Farm Survey of England and Wales and make a whole succession of criticisms of it. The research design was flawed. It did not always collect the right material; it suffered from the poor definition of holdings, it included a qualitative assessment which nearly derailed the whole enterprise. Early aspirations were not met and the survey cost far more than was envisaged and took much longer. It was never fully published and so far as one can see, it contributed little to either wartime or post-war planning. It was, of course, also a magnificent and bold enterprise which suffered from the fact that it had a pioneering quality. Unfortunately any lessons learnt from it were of no value to government as there was never any inclination to repeat the exercise.

In this light the Scottish Advisory Council might be judged to have been correct to have gone for a light-touch Agricultural Survey, and one which concentrated on the quality of the land and its potential for improvement rather than asking questions about the quality of the farmer.

Less needs to be said about the Scottish report, in part because it is self-contained, in part because, apart from Short’s recent discussion, little seems to be known about the survey north of the border: the report printed here is one of the chief sources. From the beginning the survey was a sample of farms, in all about 15 per cent of the whole, chosen in a stratified fashion on the lines of Yates’s sample of the National Farm Survey of England and Wales. Deer Forests were excluded. The report explains how the forms consisted of two parts, of which Part A dealt with arable land and Part B with mountain and heath land. When crop production in June 1941 was judged to have fallen

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64 The advisory economists were sceptical of its quality in 1943 and they were in a position to know: Short et al., *National Farm Survey*, p. 141 (citing MAF 38/207 (64)).

65 It is not clear, for instance, whether the original farm returns have survived.
short of the maximum possible, the surveyors were to record whether the shortfall arose from lack of drainage or lack of fertilizer and whether the lack of buildings and landlord’s capital was a contributory factor, or lack of tenants’ capital or other reasons. The latter category did allow for critical comments to be made about individual farmers. It was also possible to note a lack of labour.

Information was not gathered about many of the aspects which concerned the Ministry of Agriculture. Hence there is nothing to be learnt about landownership, or rentals, or the adoption of utilities by farmers (electricity, piped water). It therefore offers a much less comprehensive account of the state of agriculture than the report for England and Wales. And even though there was a much clearer attempt to train the field officers in what was required and the approaches they should take than in England, the report remains pessimistic about how far uniformity of treatment was achieved. It remains, however, a key statement of the state of and prospects for Scottish agriculture in the early 1940s, and for that reason it deserves to be both better known and more fully exploited by historians.
Appendix: Text omitted from the *Summary Report*

The following text is included in the typescript of the report in TNA MAF 38/473, pp. 72–74, but was omitted from the printed report. It belongs between items 93 and 94 on page 53 of the report (page 59 of this edition).

89. Where an occupier was graded B or C, the field recorder was required to state the reasons for his grading. The main reasons have been classified under twelve headings in table 34, but a brief explanation is necessary for some of them.

**Lack of Interest or Ambition** referred to cases where the occupier did not display sufficient interest in farming, or if interested had not enough energy or ambition to pursue his interest.

**Divided Interests** referred mainly to occupiers with other interests, such as retailing their own produce, or running another business which took up their time to the detriment of their farming. It also included the special case of an occupier who, perhaps because of the war, had taken on more land than he could properly manage.

**Lack of Technical Knowledge** included all cases where an occupier had an insufficient knowledge of modern farming technique.

**Lack of Experience.** Except where an occupier lacked experience in arable farming but, nevertheless, had to make his contribution to the ploughing campaign, lack of experience was only given as the reason when an occupier had not been long in occupation.

**Innate Conservatism.** The occupier showed no inclination to apply up-to-date farming methods, although within his limits he might be regarded as a “good” farmer. It referred especially to cases where the occupier obstinately refused to adapt his methods to suit war-time conditions.

**Acute Shortage of Labour or Landlords’ Capital** was used in exceptional cases, (e.g. where holdings were actually short of labour owing to their inaccessible position), as generally it was not a valid reason, the intention being that the grade of the occupier should be [p. 73] determined by the efficiency of this management of available resources.

**Reason Obscure owing to Change of Tenure.** Where there had been a recent change of tenure, field recorders either graded the previous occupier if the capabilities of the newcomer were insufficiently known, or they left them blank. In the latter case, the most appropriate grade, A, B or C was judged by the grading given to the other “condition” items on the survey record. The position was, however, often obscure where there had been a recent change of occupancy, which explains the inclusion of this category.

90. Some of the above reasons tend to overlap or merge one with another, e.g., lack of technical knowledge and lack of expertise, lack of interest or ambition and divided interests. For this reason, and also because of the inherent difficulty that field recorders had in making what amounted in some cases to a ‘snap’ judgment on a matter which sometimes required a much more thorough and extensive diagnosis, the figures given in table 34 are capable only of showing a very broad picture of the reasons for grading the occupier B or C.
Table 34. Reasons for Grading Occupiers B or C, England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for B or C</th>
<th>Proportion of Occupiers</th>
<th>Proportion of total cultivated area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health and other physical disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Interest or Ambition</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided interests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of technical knowledge</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of practical farming experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innate conservatism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of business ability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of tenant’s capital</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute shortage of labour or landlord’s capital</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason obscure owing to change of tenure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other reason or lack of information</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of most interest perhaps are the figures for old age and ill health for these are reasons which admit of little or no doubt and are easily ascertainable. For the rest, the reasons mostly take the form of personal (although not of course culpable) failings, with the exception of shortages of labour and capital.