

Regional Farming in Seventeenth-Century Yorkshire

By W. HARWOOD LONG

THE study of regional agriculture in this country has been handicapped by the paucity of records on peasant farming, which nevertheless represented the typical husbandry of most districts of England until the Hanoverian enclosures. Manorial records relate mainly to the demesne, and although it is known that there were, for instance, concentrations of sheep on some coastal marshes, and that cattle raised on the Welsh hills were already fattened in the English midlands in the sixteenth century, the only source from which a quantitative assessment of differences in farming practice in different districts can be made is the probate inventories which many peasants left behind them with their wills.

Peasants' inventories relate to the period 1530 to 1830, but they were much more numerous in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than at any other time. Though they are best used in association with other sources of information for studying the farming of a district, they have the considerable advantage of being almost unlimited in numbers, so that they provide a fairer cross-section of the farming of a district than would be possible by any other means.

The amount of agricultural information contained in an inventory depends on the type of farm, the conscientiousness of the appraisers, and to some extent on the month in which the inventory was made, those made between seed-time and harvest usually providing useful information on cropping which those made at another time of the year necessarily lack. Although more of the inventory is invariably given up to valuing the household goods than the farm stock (which nevertheless usually represent a much larger proportion of the total), considerable information is usually provided under the headings of: Crops (in barn or granary, and growing), cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, poultry, bees, gear, sundries.

In the investigation of seventeenth-century farming which forms the subject of this essay nearly a thousand inventories were examined. Most of them were at the time housed in the Probate Office at York, but those relating to the Archdeaconry of Richmond were in the Leeds City Library. The records for the years 1688 and 1689 or thereabouts easily outnumber those of any other date, and mainly for this reason they were the years selected for study.

Two alternative ways of using these inventories in order to study the re-

gional characteristics of the farming suggested themselves. One was to group together those farms which appeared to show some similarity in system in order to see if they were mostly situated in one part of the county. The other was to group them on the basis of geographical features on the assumption that this would throw up contrasts in the systems. The latter is empirical and, in fact, on *a priori* grounds assumes the result that might be expected. Nevertheless, the physical features of the Yorkshire landscape vary so sharply that it would be surprising if any tendency towards regionalization were not associated with them. Moreover, the Board of Agriculture surveyors for the North and East Ridings, writing only a little more than a hundred years after the period of this study, used the physical features of the county as the basis for studying the farming systems.¹ Both these reasons seemed to justify adopting the same method as a first approach to the present problem, and the records were consequently divided into eight groups, as follows:

Dales. 116 farms. Pennine farms in the North Riding, or northern part of West Riding.

Craven. 95 farms. Farms in the Craven part of the West Riding between the Dales group and the Industrial West Riding group.

Cleveland. 31 farms. Mixed farms on low ground between the Cleveland hills and the river Tees.

North Yorks Moors. 49 Moorland farms between Cleveland and the Plains of York and Pickering.

Wolds. 38 farms on the hills in the East Riding between Holderness and the Plain of York.

Holderness. 79 farms between the Wolds and the sea.

West Riding Industrial. 33 farms in the hills of the industrial West Riding. These holdings were often occupied by weavers and clothiers in what is now the industrial West Riding.

Plain of York. 430 farms, all in the Plain of York.

In all, 997 inventories were extracted, but only 871 of them were suitable for grouping. Those rejected include 83 in which the total valuation was £12 or less. Even at the prices ruling at the end of the seventeenth century a total valuation of no more than £12 seems too low for a holding depending mainly on agriculture, and it was assumed that these were part-time holdings where farming was comparatively unimportant.

At the other end of the scale, some valuations were so high that to include them in a group average might have distorted it. A farm valuation of £400 was made the upper limit. Four farms had valuations that were higher than

¹ J. Tuke, *Agriculture of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, London, 1794, 1800; I. Leatham, *Agriculture of the East Riding of Yorkshire*, London, 1794.

TABLE I
VALUATIONS PER FARM
Eight regional farming groups

	Dales	Craven	Cleveland	North Yorkshire Moors	Wolds	Holder- ness	West Riding Indus- trial	Plain of York
<i>No. of Records</i>	116	95	31	49	38	79	33	430
<i>Valuations per Farm</i>	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hay	4	3	2	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	3
Corn	1	7	16	4	54	19	10	$23\frac{1}{2}$
Cattle	20	$27\frac{1}{2}$	29	22	$22\frac{1}{2}$	$33\frac{1}{2}$	21	$24\frac{1}{2}$
Sheep	12	6	6	13	$17\frac{1}{2}$	10	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$
Horses	5	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$9\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$	13	$10\frac{1}{2}$	5	$8\frac{1}{2}$
Pigs, Poultry, Bees	—	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	3	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	1
Gear	$1\frac{1}{2}$	4	4	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{1}{2}$	4	5
Sundries	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	—	1	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	1
TOTAL:	45	55	67	47	119	$83\frac{1}{2}$	50	72
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
Hay	9.0	5.5	1.8	1.3	1.2	5.4	4.9	4.2
Corn	2.2	12.7	25.1	8.5	45.5	22.7	21.0	32.7
Cattle	44.3	50.0	42.8	46.5	19.1	40.1	42.2	34.0
Sheep	27.0	10.9	8.9	27.3	14.6	12.0	9.5	7.6
Horses	11.4	11.8	14.4	7.4	10.8	12.6	10.1	11.8
Pigs, Poultry, Bees	0.3	0.9	1.0	1.5	2.4	1.2	1.0	1.4
Gear	3.0	7.3	6.0	5.5	5.4	5.4	7.6	6.9
Sundries	2.8	0.9	neg.	2.0	1.0	0.6	3.7	1.4

£400, and they were all discarded. Finally, a few records were discarded for other reasons—usually lack of sufficient data.

The average sizes of the farms in four of the groups—Dales, Craven, North Yorks Moors, West Riding Industrial farms—were approximately the same at about £50 per farm. The Cleveland and Plain of York farms were larger, and the Holderness farms were larger still. But easily the largest farms were on the Wolds, with an average valuation of nearly £119.

The significance of the table so far as system of farming is concerned lies in the percentage distribution of the valuation rather than in its total amount. Every group, except the Wolds, had a larger percentage of its valuation in cattle than in any other item. The Wolds relied chiefly on corn, and in the Plain of York the valuation of corn was almost as high as cattle.

Most inventories gave the numbers as well as the value of the livestock. With some classes, this has made it possible to follow through the livestock

farming in more detail than can be done from the valuations only (Table II). Nearly all records gave sufficient particulars of cattle to compare the numbers of oxen, cows, and other cattle in each group. With horses, the detail was only sufficient to divide them into 'young' and 'old', and with sheep no classification of any sort was possible. Numbers of pigs and poultry were not sufficiently great to justify any attempt at classification.

TABLE II
AVERAGE NUMBERS OF LIVESTOCK PER FARM

	Dales	Craven	Cleveland	North Yorks Moors	Wolds	Holderness	West Riding Industrial	Plain of York
<i>Cattle</i>	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Cows	4.6	4.8	6.5	5.0	4.7	6.0	3.9	4.8
Oxen	0.2	1.5	1.5	2.1	2.8	1.9	1.5	2.2
Other Cattle	9.4	8.4	7.9	8.1	5.6	8.6	5.3	6.8
TOTAL:	14.2	14.7	15.9	15.2	13.1	16.5	10.7	13.8
<i>Sheep</i>	54.2	26.7	29.2	72.5	96.3	37.1	19.3	26.2
<i>Horses</i>								
Adult	1.9	2.1	2.4	1.3	4.7	2.9	1.7	2.9
Young	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.9
TOTAL:	2.6	2.9	3.5	2.0	5.4	3.5	1.9	3.8
Oxen and adult horses	2.1	3.6	3.9	3.4	7.5	4.8	3.2	5.1

The small variation in the total numbers of cattle per farm in each group is an interesting feature of Table II. Except for the small farms in the Industrial West Riding, the range was from 13.1 cattle per holding on the Wolds to 16.5 in Holderness. Large teams of working oxen were seldom encountered, and on most groups the average number of oxen was about two. The Dales group, with very little arable land, however, was very low in its numbers of working oxen; Craven, Cleveland, and the West Riding Industrial farms were all low, which is not surprising taking into consideration the small farms and the system of farming. On the other hand, the average numbers of oxen on the North Yorks Moors group was surprisingly high. The reason is not evident, but it is interesting to note that this was the only group on which the numbers of oxen exceeded the numbers of adult horses.

Since oxen and adult horses are to some extent complementary animals,

their combined numbers probably form the most satisfactory measurement of the strength of the plough teams group by group. This comparison shows larger variations than are revealed by the study of either horses or oxen separately, and indicates a fairly close correlation between power and size of holding (in terms of valuation).

Several groups had a ratio of cows to 'other' cattle of about 1 to 2 which suggests that they followed a system of rearing their own calves without any attempt at buying stores. On the Wolds, however, there were nearly as many cows as young stock.

Variations in the numbers of sheep per farm were much greater than in cattle. The big Wolds farms had the largest numbers, and they were followed by the North Yorkshire Moors group which exceeded the Dales by more than would have been expected from a comparison of the valuations. Compared with these groups there were very few sheep in the Plain of York in spite of its relatively large farms.

There were more horses on the Wolds than on any other group, but relatively little horse-rearing was done on them, judging by the low ratio of young horses. The Cleveland area, on the other hand, had a high ratio of young to old horses, and this suggests that horse-breeding was already a feature of Cleveland farming before the seventeenth century closed.

The only groups in which the valuation of pigs was at all important were the Plain of York, the Wolds, and Holderness (Table III). But even in them less than half the inventories included any pigs at all, or at any rate a sufficient number to justify including them in the valuation.

TABLE III
INVENTORIES SHOWING PIG-KEEPING ON A COMMERCIAL SCALE

Group	Records with:			No. of inventories with 4 and more pigs*	Per cent of total	No. of inventories with 10 or more pigs*	Per cent of total
	No pigs	Pigs	per cent				
Plain of York	292	139	32	39	9	6	1
Wolds	20	18	47	9	24	2	5
Holderness	42	37	47	9	11	3	4

* excluding sucking pigs

Poultry were not quite so unimportant as pigs in the Dales, Craven, and the West Riding Industrial area, but nevertheless only about one inventory in ten recorded any (Table IV). They occur in between about a quarter and a third of the inventories in the Plain of York and Cleveland, and in more than

half those on the North Yorkshire Moors, the Wolds, and in Holderness. The average valuation was about 5 shillings per farm. The maximum was £1, but most groups did not exceed 10 shillings. Except on the Plain of York and

TABLE IV
INVENTORIES SHOWING POULTRY-KEEPING ON A COMMERCIAL SCALE

Group	Records with:			Average valuation	Flocks valued at more than 6s.		Maximum valuation of poultry per farm		
	No poultry	Poultry	per cent		no.	per cent			
				s. d.			£	s.	d.
Dales	106	10	9	4 4	3	3		10	0
Craven	84	11	12	5 2	3	3		8	6
N. Yorks Moors	20	29	59	3 1	3	15		10	0
Cleveland	22	9	29	4 6	2	7		8	0
Wolds	16	22	58	4 8	4	10		12	0
Holderness	33	46	58	6 0	18	23	1	0	0
Plain of York	326	104	24	7 9	57	13	1	0	0
West Riding Industrial	29	4	12	4 7	1	3		10	0

in Holderness, there were practically no farms where poultry were kept on what could be regarded as a commercial scale.

Having established that there are some grounds for grouping the farms according to region, it remains to consider whether the eight groups chosen do in fact represent eight different systems of farming or whether more than one of the eight regions followed the same system. Alternatively, do the regional averages conceal two or more systems of farming? Two very similar groups are the Dales and the North Yorkshire Moors. On *a priori* grounds the investigator acquainted with present-day conditions might expect to find a good deal of similarity in their systems, and from the information contained in the table it is apparent that in size and in the distribution of the capital in the inventories the systems were similar. In fact, the only items in which there was a significant variation were in gear and in the proportion of the crops in hay and corn respectively. Both these differences suggest that the greater emphasis on arable farming which is known to characterize the North Yorkshire Moors today was also a feature of farming there 300 years ago.

Two other groups which show a considerable degree of similarity in the distribution of their capital, though not in its total amount, are the Holderness group and the West Riding Industrial group. The Holderness group

relies rather more on crops, sheep, and horses; the West Riding group on cattle, gear, and sundries, but the differences are only slight. It is much less easy to reconcile oneself to the similarity in structure of these two groups than it is to the Dales and North Yorkshire Moors groups. Holderness is a low-lying, heavy land district, now regarded as one of the best in the whole country for arable farming. The West Riding Industrial district is, on the other hand, high-lying, hilly, with a climate which is less adapted for arable cropping than for grass. Today few districts show bigger contrasts than these two. Yet all the evidence in Table I, including the proportion of arable crops to hay in the records that provided this information (91 per cent on both), emphasizes the similarity in the structure of the farming of these two groups. Later tables take this subject further.

However, to study the structure of farming in a region in this way is an empirical approach, and in spite of any characteristics in the farming that it may throw up, it gives no assurance that the group averages are composed of farms each of which follows a system similar to the average, rather than a hotch-potch of farms following two or more systems, with the group average representing the actual farming of no farm (or only a very small proportion of the farms) in the group. When the individual records in each group were scrutinized from this point of view, it rapidly became evident that on most of them only a proportion of the farms exhibited a structure similar to the group average.

This is not altogether surprising. If the farms in a region today are grouped, it is always found that however homogeneous the region may appear to be, a considerable proportion of the farms follow systems which differ markedly from the average. Thus a recent investigation into the systems of farming in the Boroughbridge district of Yorkshire (selected as an area where the farming is as uniform as any in Yorkshire) showed that out of 339 holdings in 29 parishes, 103 are of less than 10 acres, and 18 exceed 350 acres. The number of holdings over 50 acres (178) was slightly greater than the number under 50 acres (161). The systems of farming were studied on the holdings over 50 acres. On 91 of them (51 per cent) the system was based on arable farming (including at least 10 per cent of cash roots), with feeding or rearing cattle, but no dairy herd. The remaining 49 per cent followed a variety of systems, including arable with a dairy herd; non-intensive arable; grass farms with a dairy herd; and grass farms with no dairy herd.¹ As this area had been selected for its relatively high degree of homogeneity, it will be appreciated that considerable variation from the group average on the part

¹ J. B. Butler, *Profits and Purpose in Farming; a Study of Farms and Smallholdings in part of the N. Riding*. Univ. of Leeds, Dept of Agriculture, Economics Section.

of individual holdings must be allowed before the possession of the characteristics of regional farming are denied it. Probably there are reasons for more and wider variations in the systems of farming within a region today than there were in the seventeenth century. The advantages of applied science can only be properly exploited when farming systems conform to the pattern which natural and economic factors dictate, and modern transport has made possible a degree of regional specialization which would often have grave risks for a self-subsisting community. Nevertheless, it would be unreal to insist on a high degree of homogeneity for the purposes of this study when present-day standards have to be so low. It must be admitted, too, that the system adopted for comparing the structure, i.e. relative percentages of the main items in the inventory, is one that is not altogether reliable. An individual farm may have a larger than usual investment in one relatively unimportant item, say, horses, which will upset the percentages of all the other items in that farm. Further, the total amount of the investment in some farms is so small that the difference between even one or two head of stock, or a few quarters of grain, will upset the pattern of farming constructed in this way. All this emphasizes the limitations of this method of study. They are limitations which can, however, be overcome by the use of large numbers of records and critical examination of each to see that it can be justifiably used to build up a group.

By examining the individual records it became clear that each group (except the Wolds) contained a number of farms where the system differed markedly from the average. In some groups, however, the majority showed the characteristics of the average, and these groups have been refined by omitting the farms which did not conform to the popular pattern. Elsewhere it became evident that the groups were not representative of any widespread type of farming. Thus the Plain of York, Holderness, and Cleveland groups showed no signs of homogeneity, but some farms throughout these areas were found to be following similar systems. It was obvious that a considerable reconstitution of several groups was required.

The regrouping which was necessary to allow for the effect of those farms in each group which followed a 'minority' system resulted in the production of ten groups under three main headings, Highland farms, Lowland farms, and Others. The average inventories for each group, and their percentage composition, appear in Table V. The greater importance of corn on the lowland groups than elsewhere is very apparent, and the relatively higher valuation of corn on the larger than on the smaller farms suggests that corn-growing was a function of size. It is also likely that the state of drainage of the land affected the system of farming. Arthur Young found Holderness a very

TABLE V
VALUATIONS PER FARM: MAIN SYSTEMS IN EACH FARMING GROUP

No. of Records	North Yorks Moors				Wolds † 54	460 Lowland Farms			West Riding Industrial	
	Dales 55	Craven 44	Trend 21	Craven Trend 19		Mainly Corn 134	Mainly Cattle 212	Corn and Cattle 114	With Sheep 17	Without Sheep 16
Hay	£ 4½	£ 1½	£ 1	£ ½	£ 2½	£ 3½	£ 4	£ 4	£ 2½	£ 2½
Corn	½	5½	5	4	52½	53	13	23	11½	9
Cattle	20½	33½	23	27	22	23½	33	23	21½	20½
Sheep	21	3½	23	7½	17½	3½	7	5	9	—
Horses	7	6½	3½	4½	12	8	8½	8½	5	4½
Pigs*	neg.	½	½	1	2½	1½	1	1½	1	neg.
Gear	1½	4	3	3	7	6½	4	5	4½	3½
Sundries	1	neg.	1	1½	1½	1	½	½	2	1
TOTAL:	56	55	60	49	117½	100½	71	70½	57	41
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
Hay	8	2	2	1	2	4	5	5	5	5
Corn	1	10	9	8	45	53	19	33	20	22
Cattle	36	61	38	55	19	23	46	33	38	50
Sheep	38	7	38	16	15	4	10	7	16	—
Horses	12	12	6	9	10	8	12	12	9	11
Pigs*	neg.	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	—
Gear	3	7	5	6	6	6	6	7	8	9
Sundries	2	—	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	3
TOTAL:	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* includes also a small amount for poultry and bees.

† includes 16 "Plain of York" Wolds-type farms.

unproductive district at the end of the eighteenth century owing to its wetness. Yet in the Middle Ages numerous Acts of Parliament were passed for draining Holderness or for embanking it against the sea. These ceased abruptly in Henry VI's reign, and were not resumed until 1709. It is unlikely that no farmers or lords maintained the drainage on their holdings or estates, but evidently a large number paid little attention to it. This difference in management must have influenced the productive capacity of the land enormously, and may well have been the prime cause of the difference in the farming systems in Holderness in the seventeenth century.

But probably the outstanding feature of the farming is the importance of cattle in all groups. On five of them the valuation of cattle exceeded the

valuation of any other individual item, and on three others it was practically equal to the highest item. Only on the Wolds and the Mainly Corn Lowland group did cattle definitely take second place. Their importance in seventeenth-century farming is very well illustrated by the inventories, and it is probably not too much to say that cattle formed the backbone of the farming of the times.

The information on regional farming in Table V gives the average valuations of farming groups, each of which consisted of farms following the same system. Generally, however, the number of holdings smaller than the average was greater than those which exceeded the average. The modal farm in each group would, therefore, be one smaller in size than the average appearing in Table VI. Frequency distributions have been plotted in order to show what,

TABLE VI
NUMBERS OF LIVESTOCK AND DEADSTOCK AND QUANTITIES OF PRODUCE
on "model" farm in each of Ten Farming Groups

	Dales Craven		North Yorks Moors		Wolds	Lowland			West Riding	
	no.	no.	no.	no.		Corn	Cattle	Corn and Cattle	With Sheep	Without Sheep
<i>Cattle</i>										
Cows	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	4	3	4
Oxen	—	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Others	8	9	8	10	5	5	8	7	4	5
TOTAL:	12	16	14	17	11	10	15	13	9	10
Sheep	90	30	70	40	*	20	20	20	40	—
<i>Horses</i>										
Working	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	1
Young	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pigs	1	1	1	1	Sow	1	1	1	1	1
Hens	—	—	12	12	9	6	6	6	—	—
Wains	—	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	—	—
Coups	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
Ploughs	—	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1
Harrows	—	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1
Hay Stack	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	1
Wheat qrs	—	—	—	—	30	8	—	10	—	—
Barley qrs	—	—	—	—		5	5	5	—	—
Oats qrs	—	5	5	5		5	—	5	12	8
TOTAL	£44	£42	£45	£45	£61 or £89	£57	£47	£55	£41	£30
VALUATION:										

* Wolds farms were equally likely to have about 30 or 150 sheep.

in fact, was the most usual occurrence, and from them a 'model' has been constructed for each group to show the sort of farm which would be most representative. This information is presented for all groups in Table VI.

The total number of cattle varied from nine per farm on the West Riding farms with sheep to 17 in Craven, and was usually made up of a pair of oxen and nearly twice as many young cattle as cows.

Numbers of sheep varied more widely than cattle but only three groups were likely to have more than 40 sheep on the representative farm.

The number of horses was influenced by the size of farm and the importance of corn, but it was unusual to find more than two working horses except on the Wolds.

Most farms were likely to have a pig, but few had more than one, and a dozen hens was usually the maximum number of poultry.

Equipment was usually very simple, and seldom exceeded a wain or coup, a plough, and one or two pairs of harrows, with a variety of hand tools and dairy utensils.

The amount of crops on hand varied, of course, during the year, and the quantities which appear in Table VI are no more than an attempt to indicate the relative amounts of the different groups.

As already indicated, the total valuation of the model farm was less than the average on each group. It just exceeded £60 on the Wolds—on the Wold farms with larger sheep flocks it could easily be half as much again—but on most groups it was less than £50.

This investigation shows quite clearly that farming in seventeenth-century Yorkshire varied according to district. It is equally evident, however, that other important factors influenced it. In such districts as the Plain of York and Holderness the type of farming even in those days varied widely, and it seems probable that drainage, or the lack of it, was the main cause of the difference. But it is easy to exaggerate the variations in farming, for present-day experience shows no more homogeneity in districts which had been picked for this factor.

The highland districts of Yorkshire relied more on cattle and sheep, while the lowland districts grew more corn. The importance of cattle, however, was considerable on all farms, and cattle can be regarded as the backbone of seventeenth-century Yorkshire farming, almost irrespective of district.

By building 'models' the structure of the 'representative' farm of each group has been studied, and the amount of variation between the districts judged, by comparing the numbers of stock and the amounts of corn and hay on representative farms group by group. On the ten types of farming groups the total valuation varied considerably—from £30 on the West Riding In-

dustrial farms without sheep to £61 on the Wolds (or £89 if the larger sheep-flocks are taken as typical of the Wolds), although no less than six groups had models of just over £40 total valuation—which provides little scope for showing wide variations in type of farming. Nevertheless the variations which appear in the models, as well as those in the larger groups of Table I, provide an individuality to each group which reflects very clearly the influence of region on the system of farming in the seventeenth century.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (*continued from page 102*)

situation of the Society was satisfactory and the balance brought forward had risen from £229 to £347.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee held later in the day, Mr W. Harwood Long was elected Chairman.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The One-Day Joint Conference with the Association of Agriculture will be held in the Institute of Education, University of London, on Saturday, 3 December, when papers will be read by Mr Michael Havinden on Agricultural Progress in Open-Field Oxfordshire and Mr John Saville on Public Opinion and Agricultural Depression, 1880-1900. It is hoped that the chair will be taken by the President.

The Annual General Meeting and Conference for 1961 will be held at Seale Hayne Agricultural College, Newton Abbot, Devon, from 5 to 7 April. Among those giving papers will be Professor B. H. Slicher van Bath of the Department of Rural History at the Agricultural University of Wageningen and Mr J. Z. Titow. Mr S. T. Morris of the Department of Agricultural Economics, 1 Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot, will act as local secretary.

EXHIBITIONS ON AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

There have been three recent museum exhibitions of interest to agricultural historians. The first was opened at the Castle Museum, Norwich, on 25 June by the Minister of Agriculture and is entitled 'Four Thousand Years of

Norfolk Farming'. In choosing this challenging title the staff of Norwich City Museums have set themselves a stimulating and difficult task, which they have carried through with very creditable success. In addition to the exhibition itself, the Museum has published an eighty-page illustrated catalogue which not only describes exhibits, but at the same time provides a short history of Norfolk farming. The exhibition closes on 2 October.

In connection with the meeting at Reading University this summer of the International Grassland Congress, the Museum of English Rural Life arranged a documentary exhibition of Grassland Husbandry in the last Two Hundred Years. It opened on 5 July and will close on 30 October. There is no published catalogue, but as an introduction to the exhibition the Museum has published an essay called 'Grassland Husbandry in the last Two Hundred Years' by Professor H. Cecil Pawson.

Under the auspices of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, an exhibition of agricultural implements and techniques has been opened at the Museum Gallery, 18 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. It comprises a number of sections dealing with various aspects of agriculture, some obsolete, some from current practice. The main feature is the section devoted to the history of the plough in Scotland. The organizers intend to hold a similar exhibition every summer, and they appeal for fresh materials from farmers, crofters, and

rural handicraftsmen, so that the present sections may be changed or enlarged from time to time.

ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY
CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of the Economic History Society will be held at the University of the South-West, Exeter, from April 7th to

April 9th, 1961. The theme will be Transport and Inland Trade. It has been arranged that the British Agricultural History Society Conference shall conclude at lunchtime on April 7th in order that members wishing to attend both conferences may have time to travel from Newton Abbot to Exeter for the beginning of the Economic History Society Conference.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

A. S. Thomas, B.Sc.(Hort.), M.Sc., D.Sc., formerly in the Colonial agricultural service, is now recording changes in vegetation for the Nature Conservancy. He has published many papers on ecological subjects in the *Journal of Ecology* and elsewhere.

G. R. J. Jones, M.A., lecturer in geography in the University of Leeds, is engaged on a full-scale study of the relationship between settlement patterns and land tenure in Wales.

Gordon Donaldson, M.A., D.Litt. (Edinburgh), Ph.D. (London), was an Assistant Keeper of the Scottish Records from 1938 to

1947, and is now Reader in Scottish History in the University of Edinburgh. In addition to several volumes edited for the Scottish Historical Society, he has published books on *The Scottish Reformation* and *Shetland Life under Earl Patrick*.

Miss H. M. Clark is a research scholar in the department of English local history, University of Leicester.

W. Harwood Long, M.A., is Provincial Agricultural Economist in the University of Leeds department of agriculture.