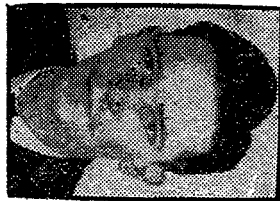


9 to 4:30

# FSA Struggling to Aid Farm Families Ousted Thru Defense Program



By RICHARD SCHOLZ

Farm Security Administration, by throwing its entire organization into overdrive speed, is struggling to cope with problems arising from the displacement of between 5000 and 8000 low-income farm families, pushed from their homes by an expanding defense program.

Some of FSA's solutions are temporary, stepping in to help where no other agency can; other solutions are along more permanent lines, growing out of the program FSA has been developing since its inception. All in all, FSA has been given a job only it is qualified to do.

Both military and industrial projects under the defense heading are displacing farm families. Between 150,000 and 200,000 acres are being purchased for factory sites—powder factories, shell-loading plants and munitions concerns of all kinds. This land, for the most part, has been concentrated in the corn belt: Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio. Some of the best farming land in the country has been purchased for this purpose.

## MOST FAMILIES NEED ASSISTANCE

On top of this acreage, between 600,000 and 700,000 acres are being purchased for military purposes: ammunition storage; proving grounds; anti-aircraft, bombing and artillery practice ranges.

The large proportion of families being displaced by these vast Government purchases are in the low-income groups, FSA has found, and need assistance in finding new locations. Particularly needy are tenants, hired laborers and farm owners with little equity in their property, who cannot therefore purchase new land with the small sums due them from Uncle Sam's purchases.

FSA has classified its problems into three types:

1. Areas in which large-scale purchases are under way, where farm families are being displaced and there are no employment opportunities to absorb this labor force.
2. Areas in which only few families are being displaced, but where extensive employment opportunities exist and there is an influx of population.
3. Areas in which many farm families are being displaced but where there are considerable employment opportunities in defense jobs in the same area.

## NO EMPLOYMENT POSSIBLE

Largest example of the first and worst problem is Hinesville, Ga., where 360,000 acres are being purchased in five counties and between 1200 and 1500 families ousted. Their displacement is immediate and permanent. No job boom makes possible even temporary employment. Most urgent situation facing FSA is finding dwellings for those legally evicted, and store places for their

possessions—equipment and livestock. Eighty prefabricated houses have been put up to alleviate the immediate problem.

FSA is making subsistence grants, enabling these farmers to keep their goods together until suitable locations can be found for them. Land Purchase Associations are being established—made up of many displaced homesteaders who then purchase large tracts of land and divide them up into family-size farms.

At first the Army didn't give any notice to other Government agencies; just started displacing farm tenants when the title was cleared. Many hardships resulted. Now, however, FSA is given some notice and makes loans against anticipated revenue from Uncle Sam's purchases or makes regular, five-year rehabilitation loans if those displaced locate farms in an outside area.

Funds held by FSA for other purposes, or previously earmarked, have been released to take care of this sudden and terrific contingency in 20 to 25 areas. When FSA receives notice of an Army land purchase, it makes a rapid survey thru its field offices and those of the Extension Service, then can determine on what basis to proceed.

## PROBLEM OF ANOTHER VARIETY

An example of the second type of problem facing FSA is Radford, Va., where orders have gone thru for building 200 homes. Altho there is some displacement of farmers, it is small and worst fear is that farmers will abandon voluntarily their crops and go to work in the Hercules powder factory, now under construction. Eventually, the industrial employment may vanish.

However, FSA has played it smart. A survey of the area has brought out this fact: that 100 homes can be erected on farms in the vicinity to be occupied by industrial workers, while the farmers continue their own work. After the emergency, these 100 homes will be purchased by the farmers, replacing old and deteriorating structures now inhabited. More than 100 farmers have agreed to this procedure. The other 100 homes will be built in Radford itself, replacing sub-standard homes. By the time the powder plant is ready, so will the housing facilities.

The third type of problem, where both displacement and increased employment fit into the picture, is the least worry. The two tend to cancel each other. Secondary displacement is part of this, too.

It's the low-income groups that worry FSA most. Even where Uncle Sam has dealt generously with them in his purchases, owners—and the more numerous tenants and laborers—can't compete in the land or rent markets with higher-paid munitions workers. Altho never given the job, specifically, FSA has the county personnel and experience to do the best job of all in relocating distressed farm families—and it has thrown its entire resources into the current situation.