

families, had on at least one occasion visited a center in another community. That is, 70, or 29 percent, of the 239 farmers had used the services of the medical centers on at least one occasion.

One indicator of the health conditions of the farm families in the area is that 11 percent of the heads-of-families were disabled for health reasons from 1 to 5 days during 1970, 10 percent from 6 to 30 days, and 12 percent from 31 to 90 days.

Changes in Attitudes of Farmers

It is commonly thought that the attitudes of traditional farmers toward agriculture tend to be pessimistic or fatalistic, and that these attitudes should become more optimistic in order to achieve a continuous evolution of a traditional agriculture toward a modern one. It seems reasonable to assume that the attitudes of farmers toward agriculture are the result both of their cultural heritage and their own experiences as farmers. If they are to change these attitudes, one of the means might be to prove to themselves that new ideas or practices offer more advantages than the traditional ones.

The availability of a new maize technology in the Puebla area in 1968 offered farmers the opportunity to compare these new practices with traditional ones. Questions were asked in the 1970 survey to determine the extent to which farmers had found the new technology advantageous. Forty-four percent (104) of the 239 farmers interviewed in 1970 said that they had increased their maize production between 1967 and 1970. Of this 44 percent, 82 farmers, or 79 percent, attributed the increase either directly or indirectly to the use of the recommendations of the Puebla Project.

Of the 213 farmers on the credit lists who were interviewed in the 1970 survey, 154, or 72 percent, said they had increased their maize production during the previous three years. Ninety-three percent of these 154 farmers attributed the increase either directly or indirectly to the recommendations of the Puebla Project.

It is very probable that these increases in maize production have modified the expectations of the farmers with respect to agriculture. Such changes in the expectations of the farmers were estimated by asking the farmers what activity they would engage in were they suddenly to receive an amount of money greater than their total annual income. Of the 251 farmers interviewed in 1967, only 53 percent said that they would continue to farm and would buy more fertilizers. Seventy-three percent of the 239 farmers interviewed in the 1970 survey indicated that they would continue to farm and would improve their production methods. Eighty percent of the 213 farmers on credit lists who were interviewed in the 1970 survey stated that they would continue to farm and would improve their production methods. These results indicate that the number of farmers who feel that it is worth-while to make larger investments in agricultural production increased from 1967 to 1970.

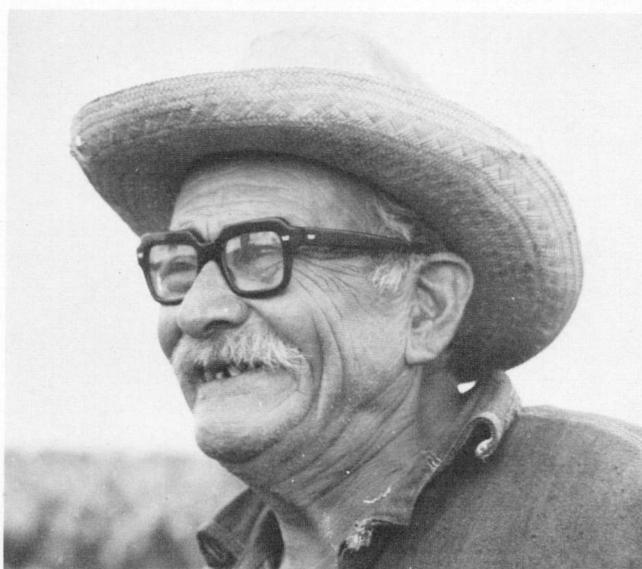
In addition to estimating the change in farmers' expectations with respect to farming, the change in their expectations with respect to progress was also estimated. A nine-level scale was developed in which the first level represented the living conditions of the poorest farmers in the area, with the ninth level representing the farmers with the best standard of living. When interviewed, the farmer was asked to select the level that best represented his present situation and the situation he expected to attain within five years. The results are shown in Table 10.5.

The percentage of farmers who located themselves in the lowest two levels decreased from 28.3 percent in 1967 to 22.2 percent in 1970. A similar reduction is noted in the percentage of farmers that expected to remain in the lowest two levels after a period of five years.

The change in expectations with respect to farming is larger than the change in expectations with respect to progress. This may be due to the fact that farmers, to date, have experienced mainly an increase in net income from crop production, thus, their attitudes toward farming have been most affected.

TABLE 10.5. The percentages of farmers whose living conditions, according to their own evaluations, corresponded to nine levels varying from the poorest (1) to the best (9) in the area.

Levels	1967 (N=251)		1970 (N=239)	
	Present situation	Situation within five years	Present situation	Situation within five years
1 and 2	28.3	13.6	22.2	7.5
3 and 4	33.0	19.6	39.7	21.7
5 and 6	25.9	24.3	25.5	31.0
7, 8 and 9	11.2	34.3	10.9	35.6



Farmers that have increased their production and net income through the use of the new maize technologies, have become more optimistic about the future. This change was reflected in the answers given by farmers when questioned in the 1967 and 1970 surveys.