FOREWORD

This summary report takes a look at progress of one avenue of research and information dissemination by the Southern Rural Development Center—the ten Functional Networks. The Network approach is relatively new to the work of the Center; this is the first composite report.

Functional Networks have begun at various times upon the recommendation of the SRDC Advisory Committee and approval of the SRDC Board of Directors, and as funds become available. Currently there are ten Networks in operation; three began in the quarter starting April 1. The first Network was funded July 1, 1975, with most Networks funded for a one-year duration.

The guidelines for the Functional Networks are found in the terms used: functional—practical and useful; and network—cooperation and communication. Members of the Network are researchers and educators charged with synthesizing available research knowledge in high-priority areas of rural development.

This summary is based on the quarterly reports submitted by the ten Center Associates who serve as leaders for each of the Networks.

William W. Linder
Director
Southern Rural Development Center

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SUMMARY OF QUARTERLY REPORTS

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FUNCTIONAL NETWORKS
SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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FUNCTIONAL NETWORKS  SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The concept of Functional Networks, original with the Southern Rural Development Center, puts into practice the goal of regional participation in research and information dissemination. The Networks involve professionals and educators throughout the region in the task of synthesizing past and ongoing research in ten high-priority areas of rural development. These experts will then be available for consultation, workshop teaching, and writing to make their findings available to practitioners throughout the South.

The Southern Rural Development Center has two main emphases: (1) to develop and provide knowledge essential to assist and support rural development in the region, and (2) to provide technical consultation and personnel development for the Research and Extension staffs to help them be more responsive to rural development needs and activities. To assist in accomplishing this task, the SRDC has selected key scientists and educators within the region to lead groups of professionals cooperating to surface and share research knowledge in a given problem area.
These groups are the Functional Networks. The scientist or educator selected to head a Functional Network is called a Center Associate.

The selection process begins with a proposal submitted to the Center to form a Network in one area or subarea of the four major concerns of rural development outlined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

Community Services and Facilities
People Building
Economic Improvement
Environmental Improvement.

With consultation from the SRDC Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors reviews proposals and then approves funding. Center Associates serve without pay; funds are used for research and clerical assistance, travel, and publication needs.

To date, seven SRDC Functional Networks are funded and in operation. Three additional Networks have been approved. Funding for two of these began April 1, the third, May 1.

The seven Networks currently being funded are:

--Land Use Issues
--Citizen Participation in Rural Development
--Evaluation of Research Literature in Rural Development
--Small Farm Operations
--Industrialization of Rural Areas
--Health Care and Rural Development
--Educational Needs Projection and Rural Development
The new Networks are:

--Research Results Relevant to the Impact of Governmental Transfer Payments on Human Resource Development

--Community Services (a) Solid Waste Disposal,
   (b) Financing

--Inventory and Review of Selected Recent Housing Research

Networks have different assignments but a common purpose—to catalog and evaluate the current state of research knowledge in their area. The SRDC assists in dissemination of research findings by means of workshops and publications (bibliographies, fact sheets, research reports) for rural development professionals and other audiences as appropriate.

The full scope of regional involvement in these ten Networks is evident: 94 professionals are involved, and all of the 13 Southern States are represented. Some 49 institutions are cooperating with support for Center Associates and Network Members: 23 are 1862 institutions and 19 are 1890 institutions. A total of 46 researchers and 31 Extension personnel has had a part in Network operations. To date, the Networks have conducted 15 meetings to further their work.
The Land Use Issues Network got under way July 1, 1975, with Dr. Burl F. Long as Center Associate. Dr. Long is Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Network members have convened twice. Their bibliography has been completed, and a workshop is tentatively scheduled for the Fall of 1976. The Land Use Issues Network plans to coordinate the workshop with meetings of other regional committees. All project objectives will be accomplished, to culminate in the workshop. Approximately 300 publications have been reviewed and evaluated. Most of these have been included in the annotated bibliography. Research projects in the region are being categorized in an additional undertaking. Results will be available in a separate publication, summarizing the findings. Major papers being prepared for the workshop may become part of this publication.

Work on the Citizen Participation in Rural Development Functional Network began mid-year in 1975. Dr. Donald E. Voth, Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, and Mr. William S. Bonner, Director of the Division of Community Affairs, both of the University of Arkansas, were appointed as Center Associates.
All or most of the objectives of this Network have been accomplished. To date, approximately 1,000 items have been obtained and classified into 36 subtopics. These subtopics have been assigned to Network members for synthesis. For example, research in the category "War on Poverty and Model Cities" has already been synthesized. In addition, a panel has been presented on the subject of citizen participation in rural development at the annual meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists in February. The bibliography is scheduled to be published in June of 1976. The Network will make a panel presentation to the 1976 Annual Meeting of the Community Development Society in Boise, Idaho, in the Fall. The workshop for regional dissemination of information will also take place in the Fall of 1976.

This Network came into existence at mid-year 1975. It was one of the first to be funded by the Center. Dr. Arthur G. Cosby, Associate Professor of the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A & M University, was appointed as Center Associate.

An aggressive search for sources of information has been completed and the interim bibliography will be ready for limited distribution within the month. The document includes
over 600 references. Preparation of the final annotated bibliography is underway. It will contain 500 of the most significant sources. Three papers have been prepared and circulated which discuss the philosophy and concept of evaluation, alternative modes of evaluation, and research responsibilities of the evaluator. Because of the volume of regional interest in the Network topic, the members have prepared a newsletter, quarterly distributed to about 800 persons per mailing. The newsletter has fostered ties between researchers and practitioners both at the state and national levels. Another manuscript will be prepared on "criterion setting" to parallel and complement the four manuscripts already prepared.

Funded early in 1976, the Network on Small Farm Operations began with Dr. W. Arden Colette as Center Associate. Dr. Colette is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Florida.

Network members have been selected to balance participation by Extension, Research, 1890 and 1862 institutions, and geographic location. A preliminary workshop was held in May for Network members. Screening of the literature related to innovation and adoption of technology has already begun to identify researchers who have made major
contributions in this area. This screening has revealed that a great deal more research has been accomplished than originally believed.

"Industrialization of Rural Areas" got off the ground in January 1976. Dr. Eldon D. Smith was made Center Associate. Dr. Smith is Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Kentucky.

The first quarter's report reveals that a bibliography of more than 800 items has been assembled in card index form with annotations for approximately half of the entries. Contact with Community Resource Development specialists and administrators throughout the country has been made. Network members have all been recruited and the first meeting held. In addition, data have been collected that will provide a more reliable basis for selection among types of industries in recruitment programs. General plans for an experimental Extension program in implementing effective self-study efforts by community leaders are also underway and have been approved by local leadership.

An agreement was made on February 1, 1976, to begin a Network related to "Health Care and Rural Development." Dr. R. David Mustian became the Center Associate. Dr. Mustian is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at North Carolina State University.
The first job of the Network was to review major project reports in health care. From this study, it was determined that an eclectic, rather than just an economic, perspective would produce the most meaningful results. Also, a search for literature from relevant studies got under way. Eight hundred published works have been identified to date. Two students have been engaged to work on the project with recruitment of members of the Network continuing. Key findings thus far indicate that systems initiated by responsible and financially solvent community groups are enjoying the greatest success. Recruitment of physicians rests on: (1) desire for partnership or group practice, (2) spouse satisfaction, and (3) return to home community. Recruitment of other health personnel depends on whether the individual feels that he/she can put training to use. The defining of "health" needs to have uniformity; yet the findings revealed a positive attitude among the general public toward middle-level health professionals and health maintenance organizations and systems.

The Functional Network on Educational Needs and Rural Development began February 9, 1976. Dr. Gerald C. Wheelock, Associate Professor of Agribusiness Education at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, was appointed as Center Associate.
A library media specialist has been employed on a half-time basis. A research associate in Agribusiness Education is also assisting with Network activities. The Network composition has been finalized at 10 members, with the first meeting having been held in May. The first issue of a quarterly newsletter, with a circulation of 600, was published in April. Retrievals have been specified and ordered from ERIC files at Auburn, Dissertation Abstracts Internal, CRIS, SSIE, and the Congressional Research Service. To date, results have been relatively unproductive. Further work will require an extensive hand search approach.

A new Network began on April 1, 1976, which will relate to Governmental Transfer Payments and Their Impact on Human Resource Development. Dr. E. Evan Brown serves as Center Associate. He is Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Georgia.

This type of inventory and synopsis of research has never been attempted before. Calculating the benefits and problems of these assistance programs should provide valuable information to government agencies and other organizations.

On April 1, 1976 a new Functional Network began. Dr. Michael S. Salkin of Oklahoma State University serves as Center Associate to the "Community Services: Solid Waste Disposal and Financing" Network. Dr. Salkin is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University.
The research effort will be implemented through five components. These are: Network formation and workshop, literature review, synthesis and idea generation, workshop, and finally publication of a bibliography.

A Network titled "Inventory and Review of Selected Recent Housing Research" was funded May 24, 1976, with Dr. Savannah S. Day as the Center Associate. Dr. Day is with the School of Home Economics at Florida State University at Tallahassee, Florida.

The work of this Network was begun during the past year as a research project. Funding for a Functional Network comes at this date to assist in completing a project that would be applicable to the whole of the Southern Region. As a Network, it will function for only a 5-month period. Its primary objective is to develop a model to inventory, review, and synthesize housing research relating to rural development.
The SRDC is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation. It coordinates cooperation between the Research (Experiment Station) and Extension (Cooperative Extension Service) staffs at land-grant institutions in the South to provide technical consultation, research, training, and evaluation services for rural development. This publication is one of several published by the Center on various needs, program thrusts, and research efforts in rural development. For more information about SRDC activities and publications, write to the Director.

Southern Rural Development Center
Box 5406
Mississippi State, MS 39762

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