

BACKGROUND

REGIONAL/HISTORICAL SETTING

The Sioux Indians originally used Mower County as a hunting ground until February of 1853 when their interests in the land were purchased in accordance with the Mendota Treaty, opening the area to settlement.

Prior to the Mendota Treaty, Spain, England and France variously claimed the land. On April 30, 1803, France sold the land to the United States as part of the historic Louisiana Purchase.

Between 1803 and 1849, Mower County was part of eight different political jurisdictions. On March 3, 1849, it was included as part of the Minnesota territory. It first became part of Wabasha and then Rice Counties but on February 20, 1855, by an act of the State Legislature, Mower County was created.

Settlement began in Mower County during the 1850's, attributable to the County's rich agricultural soils. It grew dramatically between 1860 and 1870 with the continuation of agricultural activities and the introduction of the railroad. Railroads actually began to be developed as early as the 1850's but service to and throughout the County was not available until much later. During the railroad era, virtually every existing village, except Austin, was given birth by the railroads, which crisscrossed the County in every direction. Austin grew as a railroad division center, a major agricultural shipping point and a center for the lumber trade.

Villages also grew with the railroads as the centerpiece of their economies. Several of them were developed as railroad stations while others became small industrial hubs, reliant on railroad service. Throughout its history, Mower County has remained primarily an agricultural economy.

The County continued to grow until 1960, when it reached a population of 48,498. The townships continued to experience modest household growth during the period 1910 to 1960. From 1960 to 1990, township household size declined with virtually no countervailing increase in the number of households. From 1990 to 2000, most townships continued to see a decline in the number of households, but eight townships experienced household growth. Household size continued to decline.

The cities, on the other hand, have exhibited a different growth pattern. Austin's population grew in response to a growing economy, which included the founding of the George A. Hormel Company in 1891. The other cities as a group also continued to grow modestly until 1960. Since then their collective population has essentially remained stable, although a number have declined including Austin whose population fell from 27,908 in 1960 to 23,314 in 2000. However, data from the past decade begin to show a reversal of this trend, particularly with Austin's population increasing during that time.

Between 1960 and 1990, the populations of the County, and most of its sub-units, declined. Surprisingly, the small cities maintained a relatively stable population in spite of the loss of the railroads while the townships and the City of Austin declined substantially in population due, in large part, to the leveling off of employment growth and the loss of basic industry. This trend of population loss began to change in the 1990's into 2000. Since 1990 the population has increased, but the household size has continued to decrease. During that period Austin showed an increase in number of households and population, but household size declined.

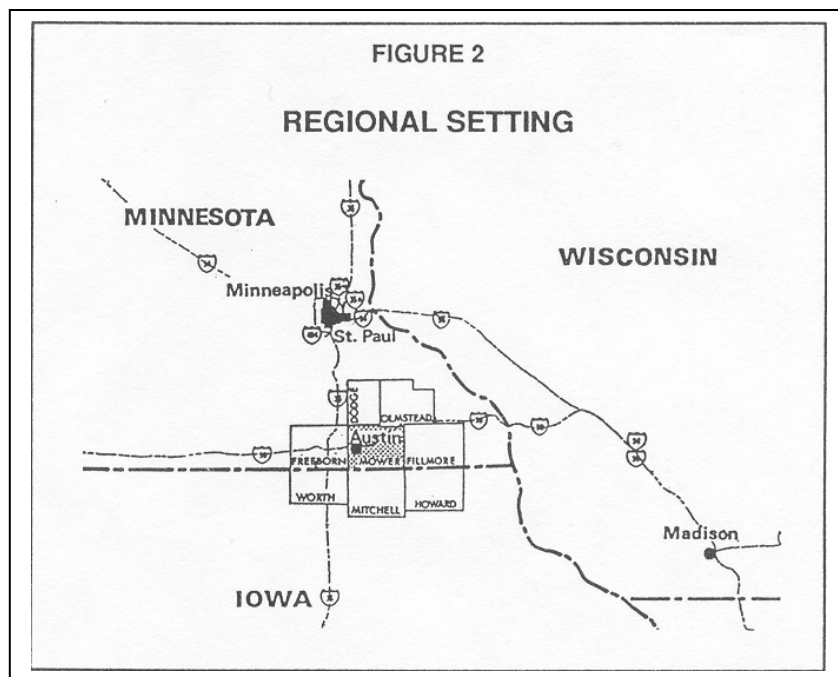
PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

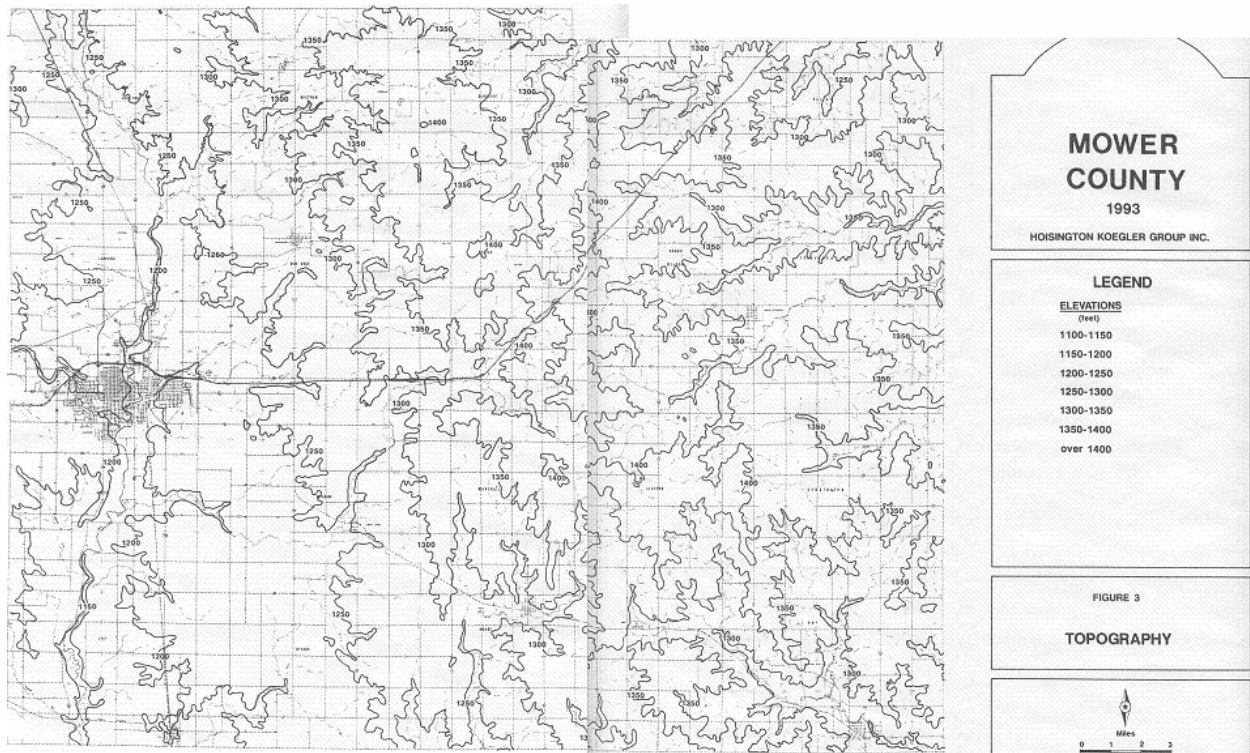
Topography

Mower County is classified within the Central Lowland physiographic province and is largely a broad, flat or slightly undulating, well-drained plain. The extreme northeastern section of the County lies in the Dissected Till Plains of the Central Lowlands. This area is characterized by rugged terrain and two streams, Deer and Bear Creeks, which are cutting into the soil and the underlying limestone bedrock, thereby forming deep valleys.

The dominant physiographic feature in the area is the deep Cedar River valley and the hummocky hills and poorly drained depressions of the Wisconsin terminal moraine located northwest of Austin.

The plateau upon which Mower County is situated rises over 1,400 feet above sea level and is the highest part of the upland surface. Elevations range from 1,435 feet above sea level in the east central section of the County near Dexter and Elkton to 1,160 feet at the Cedar River in the southwest corner of the County.



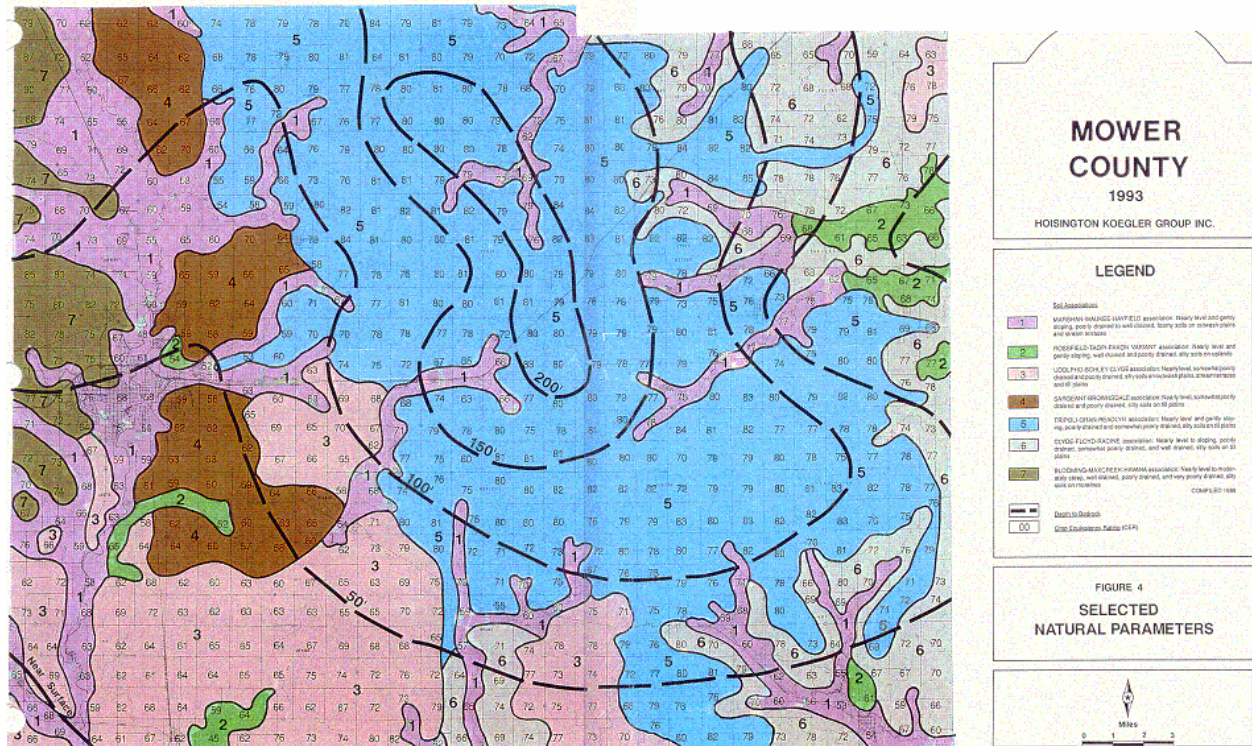


Soils

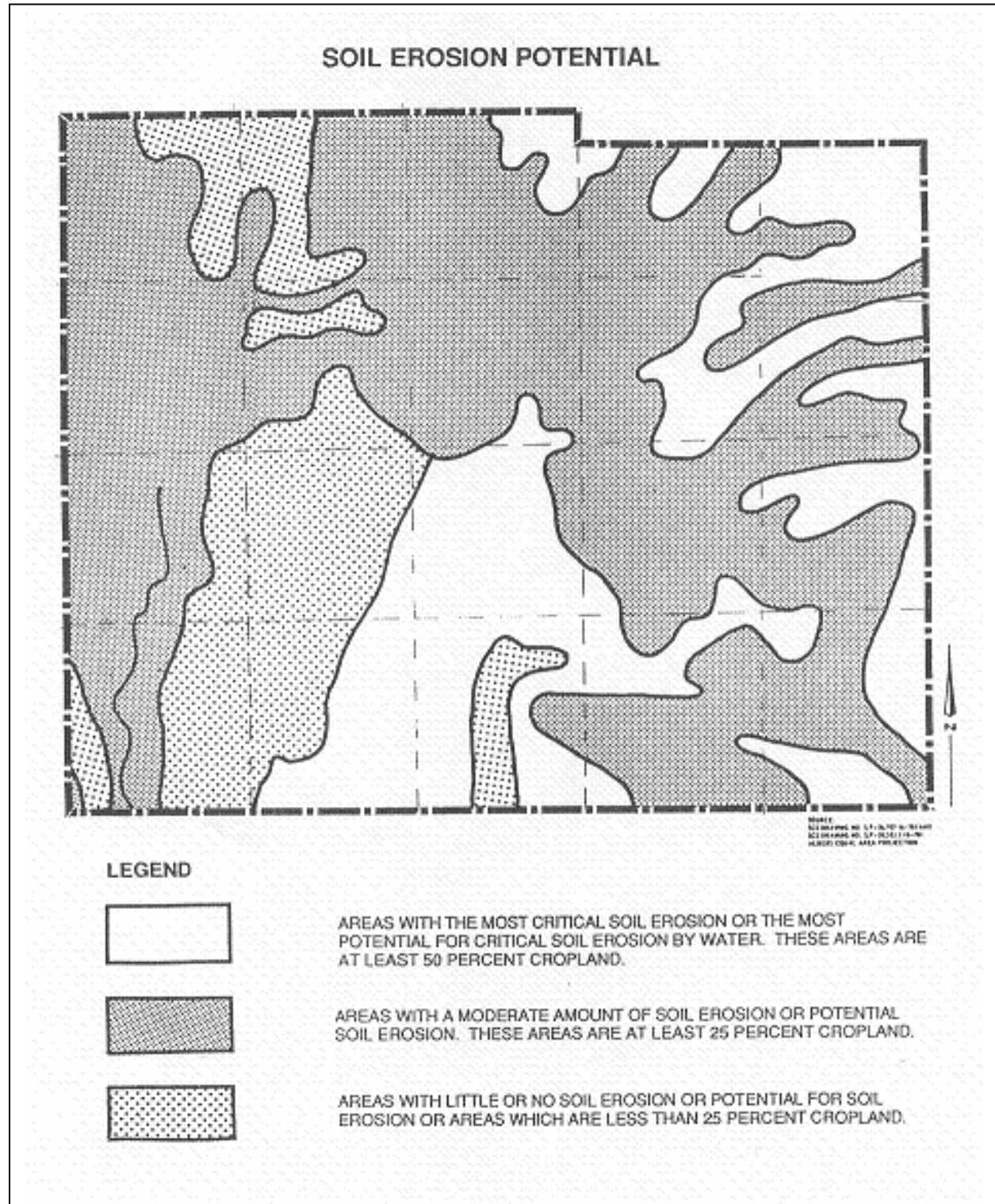
The county consists of some of the finest agricultural land in the United States attributable, in large part, to quality soils and a permissive climate.

Figure 4 identifies seven broad soil associations and correlates them with depth to bedrock and crop equivalency ratings:

1. Marshan-Waukee-Hayfield Association: This association is nearly level to gently sloping with poorly drained to well drained soils. The association comprises 12% of the Mower County and offers slight to moderate limitations for urban development. Because this association is characterized by poorly drained soils, large acreages are needed to accommodate on-site utilities.
2. Rossfield-Taopi-Faxon Variant Association: These soils are nearly level to gently sloping and well too poorly drained. They cover only 2% of Mower County and are generally found in close correlation with creek systems. They offer considerable relief but generally have slight to moderate limitations for urban development.
3. Udolpho-Schley-Clyde Association: Nearly level and somewhat poorly to poorly drained these soils comprise 14% of the County and offer severe limitations for all kinds of urban development.
4. Sargeant-Brownsdale Association: These soils are nearly level and are somewhat poorly to poorly drained. They comprise only 4% of the County and offer severe limitations for building development.
5. Tripoli-Oran Readlyn Association: Nearly level and gently sloping, these soils are poorly to somewhat poorly drained. They comprise over half of the County's soils and represent some of the County's finest agricultural land. While they generally offer severe limitations for building development attributable to poor drainage, there are areas within this association that offer only moderate limitations for urban development.
6. Clyde-Floyd-Racine Association: Nearly level to sloping, these soils are poorly to somewhat poorly drained though some are well drained. They offer severe limitations for most urban development but represent excellent agricultural soils.
7. Blooming-Maxcreek-Havana Association: Nearly level to modestly steep, these soils are well to poorly drained. These are excellent soils for agricultural activities and, for the most part, offer severe limitations for urban development. There are areas within this association that offer slight to moderate limitations for development.



Soil erosion is also a potential problem throughout the County particularly in association with agricultural activities. Figure 5 identifies those areas of the County where erosion potential is greatest warranting exceptional soil conservation practices. The County has adopted a soil erosion ordinance.



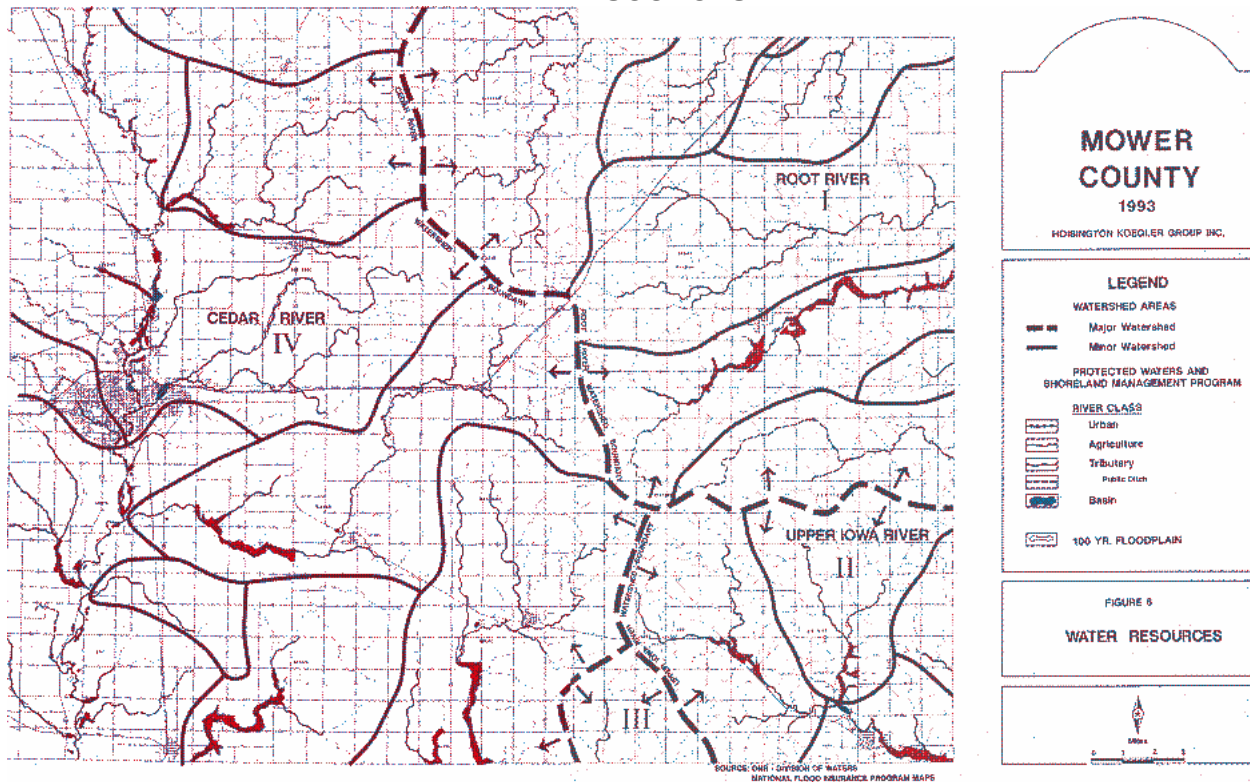
**TABLE 1
SOILS CHARACTERISTICS
MOWER COUNTY**

SOILS CHARACTERISTICS				LAND USE SUITABILITY							
ASSOCIATION	%COUNTY	DRAINAGE		BUILDING DEVELOPMENT	SEPTIC SYSTEMS	SANITARY LANDFILLS	SEWAGE LAGOONS	AGRICULTURE			
		CHARACTER	RELIEF					CER	LCC		
1 Marshan		Poor		Severe	Severe 2)	Severe 3)	Severe 2)	85	1) I		w
Waukee	12%	Well	Little	Slight/Moderate	Severe 4)	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	65-75			se
Hayfield		Well		Slight/Moderate	Severe 2)	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	65			se
2 Rossfield		Well		Slight	Slight	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	74-80			e
Taopi	2%	Well	20-75'	Moderate	Moderate	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	55-65			e
Faxon		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	80			w
3 Udolpho		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	60			w
Schley	14%	Somewhat Poor	10'	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	70			w
Clyde		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	80			w
4 Sargeant		Somewhat Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Slight	Severe 3)	60			w
Brownsdale	4%	Poor	30'	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	75			w
5 Tripoli		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	82			w
Oran	55%	Somewhat Poor	20-50'	Moderate/Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	75			w
Readlyn		Somewhat Poor		Moderate/Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	82			e
6 Clyde		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	80			w
Floyd	9%	Somewhat Poor	20-40'	Severe	Severe 2)	Severe 3)	Severe 3)	80			w
Racine		Well		Slight	Slight	Slight	Moderate 3)	70-82			e
7 Blooming		Well		Moderate	Slight	Slight	Moderate	80-90			e
Max Creek	4%	Poor	Little	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	85			w
Havana		Poor		Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	Severe 2)	75			w
1) If drained 3) Seepage e- erosion risk s- shallow, stony, prongty soils 2) Wetness 4) Poor Filter w- water interference in or on soil LCC- Land Capacity Class											
Source: Soil Survey of Mower County, Minnesota, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service											

Surficial Geology

Glacial drift of both Wisconsin and pre-Wisconsin age, ranging in depth from ten feet to 220 feet, covers most of the bedrock in Mower County. The greatest thickness of drift occurs near Dexter where well logs indicate the depth of the drift to be 220 feet. Where the drift is thin, particularly in the northeastern and southwestern sections of the County and along the Cedar River valley, outcrops of limestone can be found. Bedrock is evident very near the surface in much of the southwestern corner of Mower County.

WATER RESOURCES MAP



Geology

Over the past two million years, the landscape of Mower County was created by the deposition and erosive forces associated with glacial advances and retreats, rivers and streams, and wind. Those processes produced an almost continuous layer of sand, gravel, and fine-grained soil materials overlying bedrock as outlined in Figure 7 below. These deposited materials are the source of valuable sand and gravel resources throughout the County. The County is also home to several karst regions that are unique and extremely sensitive geological formations. A geological atlas is currently in the process of being prepared by the County, DNR, and the Minnesota Geological Survey that will identify these sensitive regions.

Sand and Gravel Resources. The County has several areas that have potential for sand and gravel resources. Sand and gravel resources are used for paved road bases, mixed for concrete and bituminous pavements, used for gravel roads, and used in general construction. The majority of sand and gravel resources are located near the many rivers, streams, and creeks that run through the County. The largest contiguous area of sand and gravel resources is located along the Cedar River that runs north-south through the City of Austin in the western portion of the County. Other larger deposits occur along Wolf Creek, Dobbins Creek, Rose Creek, Little Cedar River, Upper Iowa River, North and South Forks of Bear Creek, Robinson Creek, and Carey Creek. These areas contain over 100 gravel pit sites that are active, intermittently active, or inactive. The majority of the gravel pit sites are inactive. Active mining sites include, but are not limited to areas located north of Austin along the Cedar River, north of Racine near TH 63, northwest of Grand Meadow along the North Fork of Bear Creek, and West of LeRoy near the Upper Iowa River.

Karst Regions. Mower County contains karst areas. Karst is a limestone landscape that is characterized by sinkholes, disappearing/underground streams, caves, and cracks in the bedrock. The karst features formed in bedrock below these areas where the limestone is slightly soluble. As precipitation and ground water moved across and through the bedrock, the rock slowly dissolved in certain areas. Now, water quickly moves into the dissolved portions of the bedrock through underground streams to the ground water. The continued dissolving of the limestone bedrock is concentrated in the cracks and underground streams that now form a subsurface drainage system. Karst features and the active processes that form karst features can potentially have a significant impact on human activities and the County will need to address and plan for appropriate land uses in karst regions.

The most visible karst features are sinkholes. Over 125 sinkholes have been mapped in Le Roy Township, and field observations indicate that there are many more to be mapped. The sinkholes formed from soil piping, or “underground soil erosion.” The water that travels through the soil to the dissolving cracks in the bedrock can erode and carry soil particles into the bedrock and eventually produce a depression at the surface. The more rapid the soil-eroding water travels, the less time there is for the overlying soil to settle and, as a result, air-filled pockets form underground. As more water flows through the subsurface drainage system, the pockets become larger and eventually the overlying soil subsides and the sinkhole forms. If the process happens slowly, then a bowl-shape sinkhole will form. If it happens rapidly, then the soil will suddenly collapse and form a sinkhole. Many of the sinkholes have been modified by human activity or road construction and drain-tile have modified the hydrologic characteristics of sinkholes. Although humans have modified existing sinkholes, new ones are still forming. In 1994, a sinkhole formed in County Highway 12 south of Le Roy.

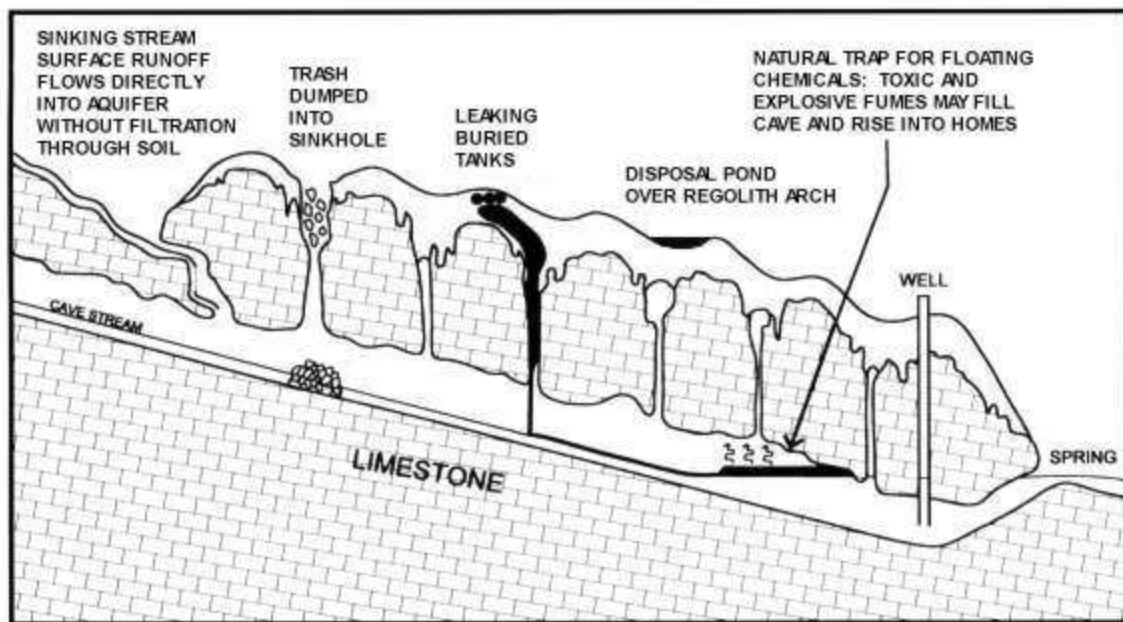
A vehicle was driving over the sinkhole as it formed, but luckily no one was injured. Proper land use planning is critical in karst regions to protect human's health and well-being as well as the naturally forming geological resources.

The second kind of karst features is disappearing streams. These surface streams end suddenly where all surface water flow sinks into the subsurface and flow through the subsurface drainage system. A disappearing stream may have more than one point where it disappears, which are called stream sinks. Two stream sinks have been identified in Le Roy Township south of the City of Le Roy at the Iowa border.

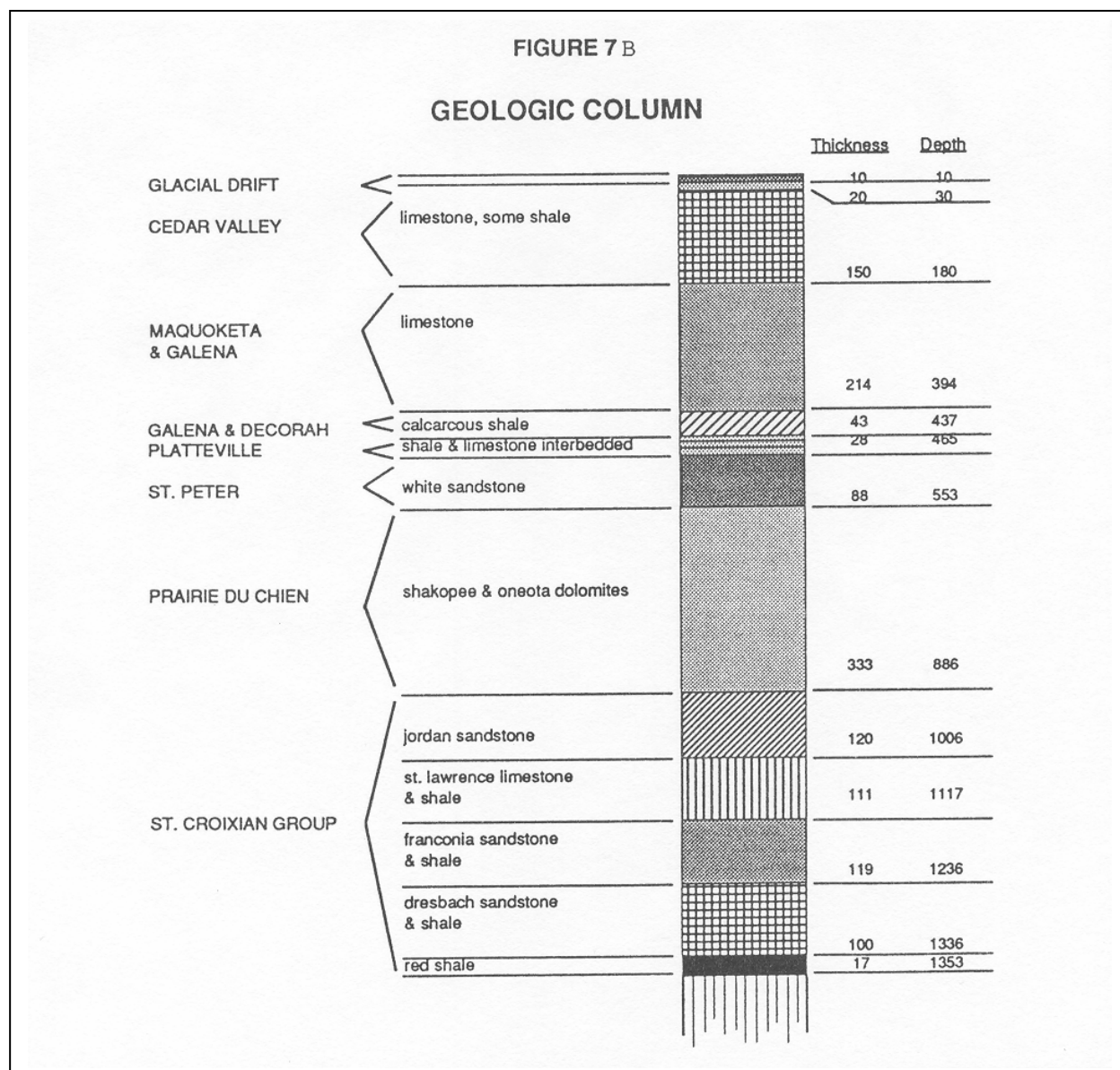
The third kind of karst features is springs and seeps. Karst springs and seeps are the points where ground water is naturally returned to the surface. Karst springs range in size and type (diffuse and conduit). The geologic inventories conducted by the County, DNR, and the Minnesota Geological Survey did not differentiate the types of karst springs and seeps, nor did they identify every spring in the County. However, the inventory shows that there are at least twelve springs surrounding the City of Le Roy.

Sensitivity of ground water to pollution. One of the key concerns with karst topography is the susceptibility to ground water pollution. Figure 7a below shows how contamination reaches the groundwater in karst areas.

Figure 7a



Profile view of karst aquifer showing sources of groundwater contamination



Vegetation

At one time, considerable amounts of hardwood timber were known to exist along the upper Iowa and Cedar Rivers. A considerable amount of vegetation still exists along these streams due to their inability to be easily adapted to farming. Upland hardwoods have, for the most part, been cleared in deference to agricultural activities. Prairie grasses generally comprise those areas that are not farmed.

Minerals Extraction

Limestone, sand and gravel is mined throughout Mower County. Limestone is found near the surface along the extreme eastern edge of the County and also along the Cedar River. Quarrying is carried on south of Austin, north of Leroy and in Frankford Township. Sand and gravel mining occurs in the terminal moraines north and west of Austin and in the outwash plains adjacent to the Cedar River.

Surface Waters/Wetlands

The County is divided by four major watersheds. As shown in Figure 6, they include the Cedar River, the Root River, the Upper Iowa River and the Wapsipinicon River watersheds. The major topographic divide, which separates the major watersheds (Root and Cedar), occurs in central Mower County. The largest watershed unit, the Cedar River, embraces most of western Mower County and contains 487.6 square miles. Its headwaters are located six miles northeast of Blooming Prairie and it drains south into the Iowa River, which in turn drains to the Mississippi River. The Cedar River has a fall of 145 feet over its 40 miles of length within Minnesota.

Mower County is very unusual in that it is laced with rivers, creeks and ditches but has only four man-made ponds and no natural lakes. Ponds include the Lake Louise Mill Pond, East Side Lake, Mill Pond in Austin and the Ramsey Mill Pond in Lansing Township. Figure 6 illustrates all of the surface waters that have been designated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) as protected waters.

Most of the rivers, creeks and ditches are categorized by the MDNR as tributary river segments for purposes of State mandated shoreland management. Only segments of the south branch of the Root River, Deer Creek, the north branch of the Root River, Deer Creek, the north branch of the Root River and the Cedar River are categorized as agricultural river segments. The Ramsey Mill Pond is classified as a natural environment lake. All are required to be regulated in accordance with the 1989 Minnesota Shoreland Management Rules and Regulations.

With the introduction of farm field tiling, many of the wetlands that originally existed in Mower County have been drained. Wetlands needing to be protected under the State's Wetland Management rules are still in the process of being identified and categorized.

Flooding is a fairly common occurrence along a number of the river segments in Mower County especially when spring snow melt and major rainfall s coincide. Generally speaking, runoff rates are rapid and the river is subject to peak flows only for short durations. As illustrated on Figure 6, areas susceptible to flooding are delineated and are regulated by the County's Shoreland Management and Floodplain Management Ordinances.

Groundwater

The glacial drift and Paleozoic limestones and sandstones are the chief waterbearing formations in Mower County. While shallow drift wells produce sufficient water supplies for farms and domestic use, municipal and industrial wells tap the St. Peter sandstone at depths of 400-700 feet. Water can also be found in the Dresbach sandstone formation at considerably greater depths.

The water table in the glacial drift generally parallels the topography at depths of between 30 and 60 feet. In the vicinity of Adams, the static head has been found at or near the ground surface. Static water levels in the Paleozoic bedrock range in depth between 10 feet below the surface at Austin to over 200 feet in the vicinity of Sargeant and Dexter.

While a number of studies have been completed in southeastern Minnesota, very limited information is available upon which to base conclusions regarding the extent of groundwater contamination associated with agricultural activities. While nitrates are generally high in glacial drift waters, there is no body of information that suggests that agricultural chemicals (Atrazine and Lasso in particular) have had a deleterious effect on groundwater resources. There is growing concern that groundwater supplies may be being impacted by agricultural activities and that damage already inflicted by chemical application will reach catastrophic proportions several years hence.

Climate

According to the 1989 Soils Survey of Mower County, Minnesota, the average temperature in winter is 15° F and the lowest temperature on record was -34° at Grand Meadow on January 30, 1951. In summer the average daily temperature is 68° F and the highest recorded temperature was 100° F on August 22, 1955 also at Grand Meadow.

Precipitation averages 31.6 inches per year with 23 inches or 70% falling between April and September. Thunderstorms occur on about 42 days each year and most of those occur during the summer. The average seasonal snowfall is 52 inches.

The sun shines 65% of the time during the summer and 40% of the time in the winter. Average relative humidity is approximately 65 % and the prevailing winds are from the south with average wind speed being the highest at 14 mph during the spring.

TABLE 2
TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION
(Recorded from 1951-1980 at Grand Meadow, MN)

TEMPERATURE							PRECIPITATION				
MONTH	AVERAGE DAILY MAX	AVERAGE DAILY MIN	AVERAGE	2 YEARS IN 10 WILL HAVE MAX< MIN>		AVERAGE # OF GROWING DEGREE DAYS*	AVERAGE	2 YEARS IN 10 LESS MORE THAN THAN		AVERAGE # OF DAYS 0.10 IN OR MORE	AVERAGE SNOW- FALL
	° F	° F	° F	° F	° F	Units	Inches	Inches	Inches		Inches
JAN	20	1.1	10.6	42	-27	0	0.95	0.29	1.48	3	13.10
FEB	26	6.4	16.2	46	-21	0	0.87	0.25	1.37	3	9.40
MAR	36.1	18.1	27.1	64	-11	0	2.08	0.93	3.05	5	11.80
APR	53.7	34	43.9	84	13	35	2.77	1.60	3.81	7	7.90
MAY	67.5	45.7	56.6	88	27	242	4.14	2.62	5.51	8	0.00
JUN	76.6	55.6	66.1	93	41	483	4.61	2.67	6.32	8	0.00
JUL	81	59.8	70.4	95	46	632	4.1	1.80	6.05	7	0.00
AUG	78.8	57	67.9	92	42	555	4.07	1.39	6.27	7	0.00
SEP	70.2	47.9	59.1	89	30	278	3.27	1.17	5.01	6	0.00
OCT	59.3	37.4	48.4	85	19	104	2.24	0.72	3.48	4	0.30
NOV	41.5	23.6	32.6	68	-5	0	1.51	0.36	2.42	4	4.40
DEC	26.7	10.2	18.5	53	-20	0	0.99	0.38	1.49	3	9.80
YEARLY:											
Average	53.1	33.1	43.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extreme	-	-	-	96	-28	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	2,329	31.60	24.98	37.6	65	51.7

* A growing degree-day is a unit of heat available for plant growth. It can be calculated by adding the maximum and minimum daily temperatures, dividing the sum by 2, and subtracting the temperature below which growth is minimal for the principal crops in the area (50 degrees F).

Source: Soil Survey of Mower county, MN, USDA, SCS.

TABLE 3
FREEZE DATES IN SPRING AND FALL
 (Recorded from 1951-1980 at Grand Meadow, MN)

PROBABILITY	TEMPERATURE		
	24° F or >	28° F or >	32° F or >
1 year in 10 later than--	Apr 25	May 5	May 20
2 years in 10 later than--	Apr 20	Apr 30	May 15
5 years in 10 later than--	Apr 10	Apr 21	May 6
First freezing temperature in fall:			
1 year in 10 earlier than--	Oct 15	Sep 29	Sep 22
2 years in 10 earlier than--	Oct 19	Oct 4	Sep 27
5 years in 10 earlier than--	Oct 29	Oct 13	Oct 6

TABLE 4
GROWING SEASON
 (Recorded from 1951 – 1980 at Grand Meadow, MN)

PROBABILITY	DAILY MINIMUM TEMPERATURE DURING GROWING SEASON		
	<24° F Days	<28° F Days	<32° F Days
9 years in 10	180	154	132
8 years in 10	187	161	139
5 years in 10	201	175	153
2 years in 10	214	188	166
1 year in 10	221	195	173

POPULATION

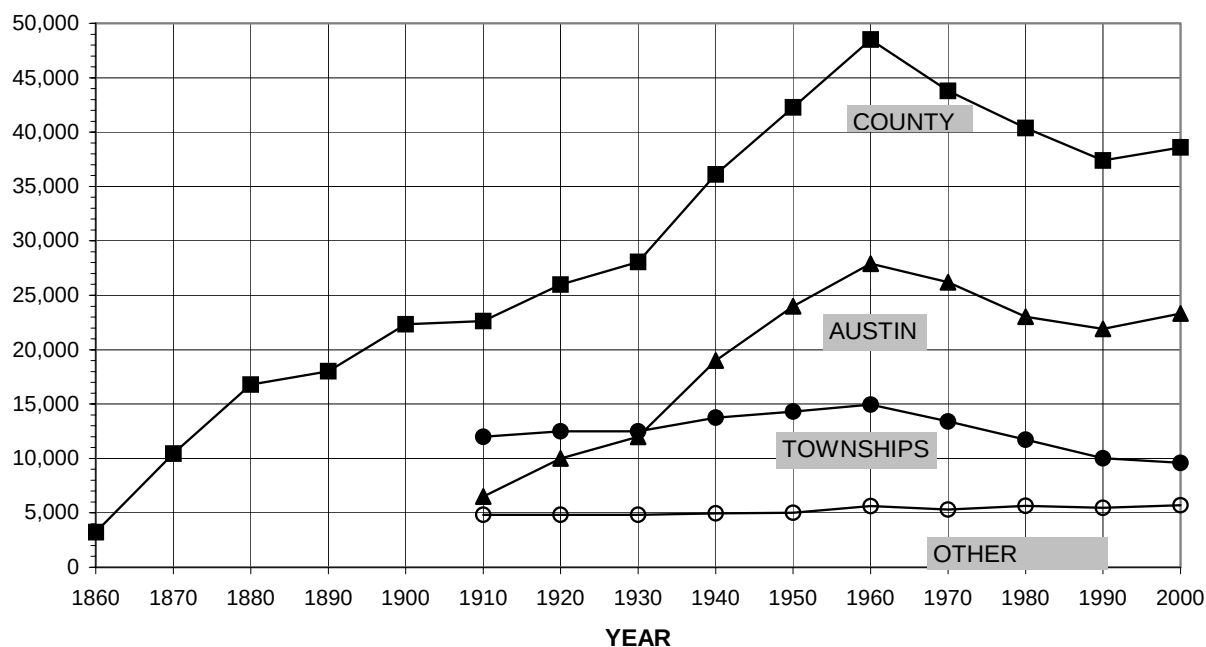
Population and Household Trends

Mower County's population grew steadily though erratically between 1860 and 1960 from 3,217 to 48,498 people in large part, because of the availability of jobs in and related to agriculture. Substantial population growth occurred between 1860 and 1880 attributable to the first major incursion of eastern farmers, the advent of the railroads and the growth of commerce related to both. The County's population continued to grow, but at a slower rate, between 1880 and 1930 as a result of more diversified farming practices, farm tiling and the growth of Austin as a railroad center. Between 1930 and 1960 growth again accelerated due to the coming of age of the George A. Hormel meat packing company that employed approximately 5,000 workers in Austin in the early 1940's.

After 1960, the County's population declined substantially until 1990 for a variety of reasons. Employment essentially stopped growing after 1950 and employment in manufacturing decreased precipitously. The railroads began to give way to the auto relatively early in the century and all but disappeared by the 1960's. Only Austin and Lyle are served by rail today. Since 1990, there has been resurgence in both employment and population.

A national trend has also had an affect on population trends, that being the general shrinking of household size attributable in part to lifestyle changes and, in rural areas, to declining employment opportunities. Mower County lost 23% of its population between 1960 and 1990 with a substantial part of that decline attributable to Austin. An increase in basic employment allowed the county to grow by 3.3% in the 1990's.

**FIGURE 8
MOWER COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS**



The number of households in Mower County increased very modestly by 59 during the 1980's. In spite of this growth, the population decreased by 3,005 due to shrinking household size. According to the 2000 Census the number of households in the County increased substantially between 1990 and 2000 by 554. The number of people per household declined from 2.65 in 1980 to 2.44 in 1990 and continued to decrease through 2000 to 2.42.

**TABLE 5
MOWER COUNTY POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS**

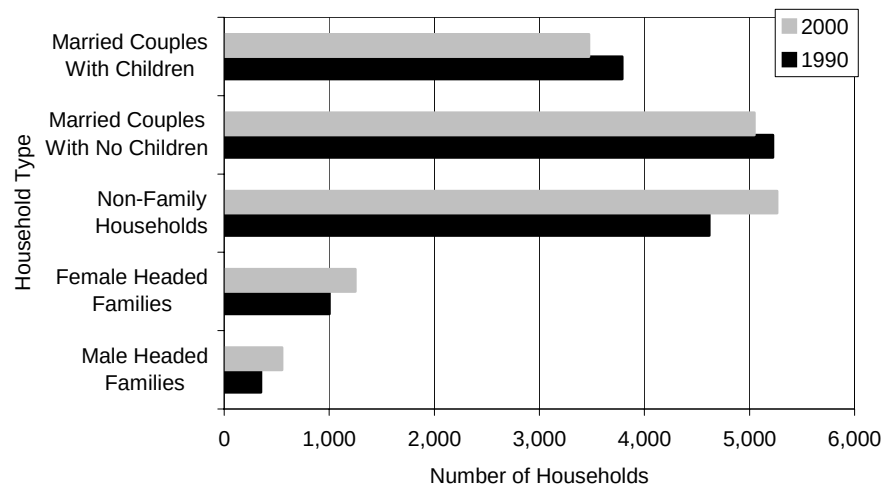
YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	GROUP *HOUSING	POPULATION IN HOUSEHOLDS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLD SIZE
1960	48,498	313	48,185	13,781	3.50
1970	43,783	524	43,259	13,417	3.22
1980	40,390	722	39,668	14,969	2.65
1990	37,385	724	36,661	15,028	2.44
2000	38,603		37,747	15,582	2.42

* Congregate Housing or Nursing Homes

Household Composition

Household composition has changed in the County with approximately an 8% decrease in married couples with children and a 14% increase in nonfamily households between 1990 and 2000. The most significant change during this time was a 57% increase in male headed households.

**FIGURE 9
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION**



Population and Household Distribution

The Township populations shrank steadily from 1960 to 1990. Only Frankford Township grew during the 1960's, Racine Township in the 1970's and the Townships of Racine and Clayton in the 1980's. In the 1990's the population of the Townships began to stabilize with population increases in 10 of the 20 Townships. Collectively, the Townships have lost 36% of their population since 1960 and they comprise just 24.8% (30.9% in 1960) of the County's population.

The Cities also declined in population between 1960 and 1990 but to a lesser degree (18.4%) than the Townships. The Cities began to stabilize in the 1990's with an increase of almost 1,650 persons, or 6.0%. Austin was the biggest loser in the 1990's accounting for virtually all of the Cities collective losses. In the 1990's only four of fourteen municipalities lost population. Cities now comprise 75.2% (69.1% in 1960) of the County's population. Every unit of government in the County had an appreciably smaller household size in 2000 than in 1960.

**TABLE 6
POPULATION OF MUNICIPALITIES IN MOWER COUNTY**

MUNICIPALITY	1960	1970	% CHANGE	1980	% CHANGE	1990	% CHANGE	2000	% CHANGE
Adams	806	771	-4.3	797	3.4	756	-5.2	800	5.8
Austin	27,908	26,210	-6.1	23,020	-8.2	21,907	-4.8	23,314	6.4
Brownsdale	622	625	0.5	691	10.6	695	0.6	718	3.3
Dexter	313	252	-19.5	279	10.7	303	8.6	333	9.9
Elkton	147	134	-8.8	139	3.7	142	2.2	149	4.9
Grand Meadow	837	869	3.8	965	11.0	967	0.2	945	-2.3
LeRoy	971	870	-10.4	930	6.9	904	-2.8	925	2.3
Lyle	607	522	-14.0	576	10.3	504	-12.5	566	12.3
Mapleview	381	328	-13.9	253	-22.9	206	-18.6	189	-8.3
Racine	180	197	9.4	285	44.7	288	1.1	355	23.3
Rose Creek	351	390	11.1	371	-4.9	363	-2.2	354	-2.5
Sargeant	113	85	-24.8	95	11.8	78	-17.9	76	-2.6
Taopi	92	59	-35.9	96	62.7	83	-13.5	93	12.0
Waltham	207	189	-8.7	176	-6.9	170	-3.4	196	15.3
TOTAL POP	33,535	31,501		28,673		27,366		29,013	
% TOT POP	69.1	70.1		71		27.366		75.2	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau									

TABLE 7
POPULATION OF TOWNSHIPS IN MOWER COUNTY

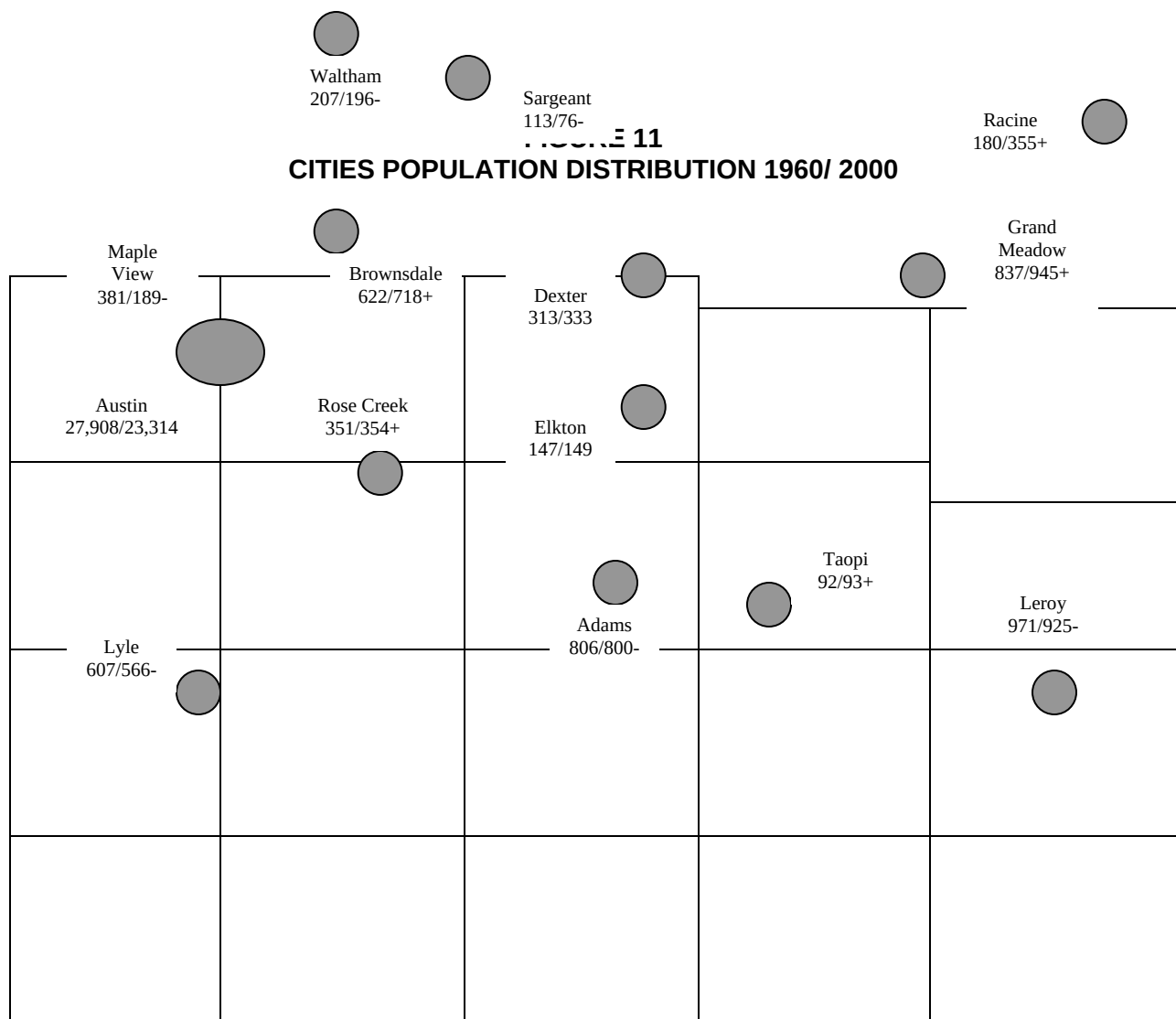
TOWNSHIP	1960	1970	% CHANGE	1980	% CHANGE	1990	% CHANGE	2000	% CHANGE
Adams	651	575	-11.7	514	-10.6	458	-10.9	475	3.7
Austin	3,052	2,777	-9.0	2,386	-14.1	1,779	-25.4	1,396	-21.5
Bennington	332	244	-26.5	209	-14.3	182	-12.9	178	-2.2
Clayton	328	275	-16.2	191	-30.5	192	0.5	178	-7.3
Dexter	530	417	-21.3	337	-19.2	285	-15.4	289	1.4
Frankford	425	482	13.4	359	-25.5	348	-3.1	358	2.9
Grand Meadow	549	490	-10.7	364	-25.7	338	-7.1	344	1.8
Lansing	2,101	1,828	-13.0	1,558	-14.8	1,270	-18.5	1,292	1.7
LeRoy	510	446	-12.5	422	-5.4	392	-7.1	396	1.0
Lodi	451	408	-9.5	309	-24.3	267	-13.6	249	-6.7
Lyle	584	511	-12.5	500	-2.2	419	-16.2	402	-4.1
Marshall	515	478	-7.2	411	-14.0	387	-5.8	382	-1.3
Nevada	557	482	-13.5	467	-3.1	391	-16.3	353	-9.7
Pleasant Valley	399	375	-6.0	328	-12.5	292	-11.0	308	5.5
Racine	521	383	-26.5	483	26.1	527	9.1	445	-15.6
Red Rock	1,019	968	-5.0	872	-9.9	754	-13.5	715	-5.2
Sargeant	461	402	-12.8	338	-15.9	271	-19.8	316	16.6
Udolpho	595	577	-3.0	535	-7.3	487	-9.0	458	-6.0
Waltham	626	553	-11.7	477	-13.7	391	-18.0	416	6.4
Windom	757	747	-1.3	657	-12.0	589	-10.4	640	8.7
TOTALS	14,963	13,418		11,717		10,019		9,590	
% TOT CP POP	30.9	29.9		29.0		26.8		24.8	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau									

FIGURE 10
TOWNSHIPS POPULATION DISTRIBUTION 1960/ 2000 *

UDOLPHO 595 / 458	WALTHAM 626 / 416	SARGEANT 461 / 316	PLEASANT VALLEY 399 / 308	RACINE 521 / 445
LANSING 2,101 / 1,292	RED ROCK 1,019 / 715	DEXTER 530 / 289	GRAND MEADOW 549 / 344	FRANKFORD 425 / 358
AUSTIN 3,052 / 1,396	WINDOM 757 / 640	MARSHALL 515 / 382	CLAYTON 328 / 178	BENNINGTON 332 / 178
LYLE 584 / 402	NEVADA 557 / 353	ADAMS 651 / 475	LODI 451 / 249	LEROY 510 / 396

* Excluding Municipalities

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau



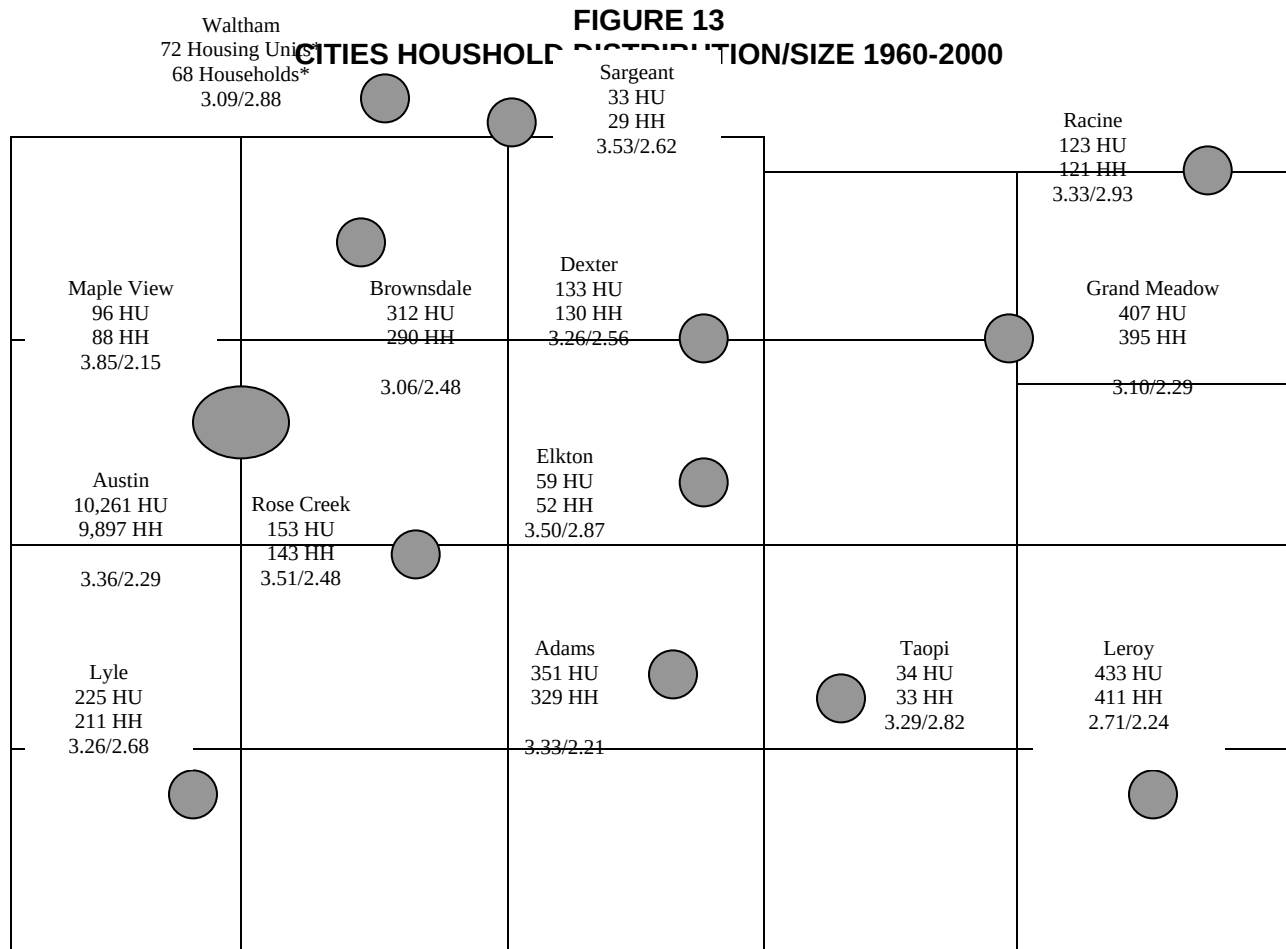
Source: US Census Bureau

FIGURE 12
TOWNSHIPS HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION/SIZE 1960/2000

173 Housing Units* 163 Households * UDOLPHO 3.84/2.81  /HH	150 HU 146 HH WALTHAM 3.68/2.85  /HH	101 HU 97 HH SARGEANT 4.23/2.68  /HH	104 HU 100 HH PLEASANT VALLEY 4.16/3.08  /HH	175 HU 165 HH RACINE 3.70/2.70  /HH
514 HU 488 HH LANSING 3.80/2.58  /HH	286 HU 271 HH RED ROCK 4.00/2.64  /HH	105 HU 100 HH DEXTER 4.05/2.89  /HH	118 HU 109 HH GRAND MEADOW 4.13/3.16  /HH	131 HU 125 HH FRANKFORD 3.73/2.86  /HH
527 HU 507 HH AUSTIN 3.90/2.68  /HH	237 HU 224 HH WINDOM 3.98/2.86  /HH	126 HU 122 HH MARSHALL 4.15/3.13  /HH	61 HU 56 HH CLAYTON 4.00/3.18  /HH	66 HU 64 HH BENNINGTON 3.77/2.78  /HH
157 HU 146 HH LYLE 3.84/2.75  /HH	139 HU 124 HH NEVADA 3.95/2.85  /HH	155 HU 151 HH ADAMS 4.52/3.15  /HH	85 HU 85 HH LODI 4.42/2.93  /HH	149 HU 142 HH LEROY 3.86/2.79  /HH

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
and Household Data is for 2000

* All Housing Unit



Source: U.S. Census Bureau
and Household Data is for 2000

* All Housing Unit

Age Trends and Distribution

The County's population has aged consistent with national trends. It had a median age of 27.9 years in 1950 and has aged by over eleven years since then. Median age represents the age above and below which 50% of the population falls.

The age distribution has also changed rather significantly since 1970 when 29.6% of the County's population was between five and 17 years of age. In 1990 and 2000, only 19.0% of the population fell in that age group.

TABLE 8 MOWER COUNTY MEDIAN AGE	
1950	27.9
1960	27.4
1970	29.3
1980	33.9
1990	37.4
2000	38.9
Source: U.S. Census Bureau	

The 25 to 44 age group decreased from 26.6% to 25.7% attributable to the aging of the baby boom generation. What was not expected was the decrease in the 65 and over age group.

Generally speaking, Cities have a much higher percentage of their population in the over 65 age group (20.1%) than the Townships (13.2%) while the Townships have a somewhat higher percentage of their population in the 45 to 54 age group (14.0%) than the Cities (11.2%).

TABLE 9 AGE DISTRUBITUTION 1970, 1980, 1990 & 2000									
AGE	1970			1980		1990		2000	
Under 5	3,384	7.7%	2,812	7.0%	2,441	6.5%	2,364	6.1%	
5 – 17	12,977	29.6%	8,362	20.7%	7,114	19.0%	7,326	19.0%	
18 – 24	3,745	8.6%	4,363	10.8%	2,770	7.4%	3,165	8.2%	
25 – 44	8,936	20.4%	8,952	22.2%	9,948	26.6%	9,922	25.7%	
45 – 54	5,509	12.6%	4,599	11.4%	3,546	9.5%	4,874	12.6%	
55 – 64	4,418	10.1%	4,935	12.2%	4,039	10.8%	3,405	8.8%	
65+	4,814	11.0%	6,367	15.8%	7,527	20.1%	7,547	19.6%	
TOTALS	43,783	100.0%	40,390	100.1%	37,385	100.1%	38,603	100.0%	
Household Size	3.22		2.65		2.44		2.42		
# Households	13,417		14,969		15,028		15,582		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau									

TABLE 10 AGE DISTRIBUTION 2000								
AGE	MOWER		AUSTIN		TOWNSHIPS		SMALL CITIES	
Under 5	2,364	6.1%	1,482	6.4%	524	5.5%	358	6.3%
5-17	7,326	19.0%	3,955	17.0%	2,238	23.3%	1,133	19.9%
18-24	3,165	8.2%	2,028	8.7%	684	7.1%	453	7.9%
25-44	9,922	25.7%	5848	25.0%	2,548	26.6%	1,526	26.8%
45-54	4,874	12.6%	2,889	12.4%	1,345	14.0%	640	11.2%
55-64	3,405	8.8%	1,974	8.5%	986	10.3%	445	7.8%
65+	7,547	19.6%	5,138	22.0%	1,265	13.2%	1,144	20.1%
TOTALS	38,603	100.0%	23,314	100.0%	9,590	100.0%	5,699	100.0%

Births, Deaths and Migration

Mower County experienced a fairly steady decrease in the rate of live births per 1,000 populations between 1966 (16.0) and 1990 (12.0). On the other hand, the rate of deaths per 1,000 populations remained constant during this same period at approximately 9.5. All other factors aside, this would suggest a modestly growing population of approximately 170 persons per year during that period.

The factor that is responsible for the decline in population between 1960 and 1990 is out-migration comprising those who are departing the County. The County's net out-migration averaged approximately 530 persons annually between 1966 and 1989.

TABLE 11					
MOWER COUNTY BIRTHS AND DEATHS 1966 – 1990					
YEAR	POPULATION	BIRTHS	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 POP	DEATHS	DEATH RATE PER 1,000 POP
1966	46,032	736	16.0	392	8.5
1967	45,385	674	14.9	431	9.5
1968	44,625	632	14.2	415	9.3
1969	45,033	672	14.9	404	9.0
1970	43,783	657	15.0	442	10.1
1971	43,513	658	15.1	403	9.3
1972	43,093	581	13.5	391	9.1
1973	42,276	552	13.1	399	9.4
1974	44,205	549	12.4	415	9.4
1975	42,905	544	12.7	400	9.3
1976	43,208	588	13.6	409	9.5
1977	42,904	583	13.6	413	9.6
1978	41,301	547	13.2	406	9.8
1979	41,204	629	15.3	383	9.3
1980	40,390	589	14.6	374	9.3
1981	40,111	577	14.4	402	10.0
1982	39,785	546	13.7	401	10.1
1983	39,816	554	13.9	392	9.8
1984	39,624	574	14.5	406	10.2
1985	39,589	515	13.0	421	10.6
1986	39,243	479	12.2	417	10.6
1987	38,890	490	12.6	375	9.6
1988	38,860	453	11.7	435	11.2
1989	37,741	454	12.0	363	9.6
1990	37,385				
Source: Minnesota Department of Health					

HOUSING

Housing Mix and Tenure Trends

According to 1990 Census data, housing in Mower County (excluding Austin) is predominantly single-family with 93.6% of the stock consisting of single-family and mobile homes. Only 250 or 4.2% are classified as multi-family units having between three and 19 units with virtually all of these being located in cities.

Housing is predominantly owner occupied with 84.5% of occupied units outside of Austin being so classified in 1990. More than 70% of the renter occupied housing stock outside of Austin consists of single-family homes.

TABLE 12 MOWER COUNTY HOUSING UNIT MIX (excluding Austin)		
HOUSING TYPE	NUMBER UNITS	PERCENT
1 Unit Detached	5,309	88.00
1 Unit Attached	28	0.50
2 Units	77	1.30
3 or 4 Units	70	1.20
5 to 9 Units	59	1.00
10 to 19 Units	121	2.00
Mobile Home	309	5.10
Other	60	1.00
TOTALS	6,033	100.10
Source: 1990 U.S. Census		

Housing Vacancies

The overall housing vacancy rate is about average at 4.1% but there are rather substantial vacancies in excess of 10% in several of the Townships and smaller Cities. This is attributable to an agricultural economy that is under stress and/or farming of more acres utilizing less manpower.

Housing Values

1990 housing values show a markedly higher percentage of the housing stock in the below \$25,000 category in areas outside Austin than those inside. This is offset by a lower percentage of homes in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 range outside Austin. Approximately 65% of the housing stock is below \$50,000 in both the City of Austin and the remainder of the County.

**TABLE 13
HOUSEHOLD TENURE/VACANCY – 2000**

JURISDICTION	OWNER OCCUPIED		RENTER OCCUPIED		VACANT	
	#	% 1)	#	% 1)	#	% 2)
Mower County	12,183	78.2	3,399	21.8	669	4.1
Austin City	7,304	73.8	2,593	26.2	364	3.5
Mower Minus Austin	4,879	85.8	806	14.2	305	5.1
Adams City	244	74.2	85	25.8	22	6.3
Adams Township	136	90.1	15	9.9	4	2.6
Austin Township	445	87.8	62	12.2	20	3.8
Bennington Township	54	84.4	10	15.6	2	3.0
Brownsdale City	235	81.0	55	19.0	22	7.1
Clayton Township	47	83.9	9	16.1	5	8.2
Dexter City	105	80.8	25	19.2	3	2.3
Dexter Township	91	91.0	9	9.0	5	4.8
Elkton City	48	92.3	4	7.7	7	11.9
Frankford Township	111	88.8	14	11.2	6	4.6
Grand Meadow City	315	79.7	80	20.3	12	2.9
Grand Meadow Township	99	90.8	10	9.2	9	7.6
Lansing Township	424	86.9	64	13.1	26	5.1
LeRoy City	330	80.3	81	19.7	22	5.1
LeRoy Township	126	88.7	16	11.3	7	4.7
Lodi Township	79	92.9	6	7.1	0	0.0
Lyle City	172	81.5	39	18.5	14	6.2
Lyle Township	126	86.3	20	13.7	11	7.0
Mapleview City	71	80.7	17	19.3	8	8.3
Marshall Township	108	88.5	14	11.5	4	3.2
Nevada Township	112	90.3	12	9.7	15	10.8
Pleasant Valley Township	91	91.0	9	9.0	4	3.8
Racine City	108	89.3	13	10.7	2	1.6
Racine Township	143	86.7	22	13.3	10	5.7
Red Rock Township	252	93.0	19	7.0	15	5.2
Rose Creek City	119	83.2	24	16.8	10	6.5
Sargeant City	28	96.9	1	3.4	4	12.1
Sargeant Township	83	85.6	14	14.4	4	4.0
Taopi City	32	97.0	1	3.0	1	2.9
Udolpho Township	145	89.0	18	11.0	10	5.8
Waltham City	67	98.5	1	1.5	4	5.6
Waltham Township	131	89.7	15	10.3	4	2.7
Windom Township	202	90.2	22	9.8	13	5.5

1) % Occupied Housing Units

2) % Total Housing Units

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

TABLE 14
MOWER COUNTY HOUSING VALUE - OWNER OCCUPIED

VALUES	MOWER		AUSTIN		MOWER MINUS AUSTIN	
Less than \$25,000	1,332	15.0%	755	12.5%	577	20.4%
25,000-49,999	4,387	49.5%	3,115	51.6%	1,272	44.9%
50,000-74,000	2,117	23.9%	1,444	23.9%	673	23.8%
75,000-99,999	646	7.3%	437	7.2%	209	7.4%
100,000-124,999	208	2.3%	147	2.4%	61	2.2%
125,000-149,999	91	1.0%	72	1.2%	19	0.70%
150,000-199,999	64	0.7%	51	0.8%	13	0.40%
\$2,00,000+	26	0.3%	19	0.3%	7	0.20%
TOTALS	8,871	100.0%	6,040	99.9%	2,831	100.0%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Housing Condition

The condition of housing is generally good throughout rural Mower County, however, higher vacancy rates in a few Townships may signal the presence of derelict structures that are not able to be rented and/or are too costly to repair. A total of 14 Mower County housing units were classified by the 1990 Census as boarded up, excluding Austin where seven were so categorized. Eleven of these are probably abandoned Township farm residences. Since the land continues to be farmed anyway, the major problem with abandoned housing is that it provides an opportunity for the illegal dumping of wastes.

Other housing problems encountered in Mower County, as elsewhere, include the generally poorer maintenance of multi-family housing and garbage housing and garbage houses, both of which warrant consideration by the County of maintenance code remedies.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Employment Trends

Mower County's total employment grew rapidly until 1950 in large part paralleling the growth of the George A. Hormel Company, which comprised a substantial proportion of the total labor force in 1943 (perhaps as much as 40%). As the Company expanded geographically, beginning in the 1940's, slowing employment growth in Austin, total County employment leveled off at around 16,600 jobs where it has remained through 1990 since 1960. Hormel comprised just 14% of the work force in 1980 and 11% in 1990. On the other hand, Quality Pork (QPP) began to operate in a portion of the Hormel plant in 1989 and has grown to approximately 700 employees since.

Manufacturing employment continued to grow but very slowly between 1960 and 1970 while agricultural employment declined significantly. Between 1970 and 1980, manufacturing employment declined while agriculture remained stable. From 1980 to 1990, both manufacturing and agricultural employment decreased in number and percent of total employment. The primary areas of employment growth from 1960 to 1990 were services, wholesale and retail sales. These employment categories, some of which are lower paying, have just been able to maintain overall 1990 employment at approximately 1950's levels. It is substantially because of the erosion in basic industrial employment that the population of Mower County decreased from 1960 to 2000.

Table 15 evidences a County that, in 1990, was just able to maintain a 1950's level of employment by offsetting manufacturing and agricultural employment with service jobs. Table 17 illustrates changes in employment participation from 1970 to 1990 indicating that while overall participation remained approximately the same between 1980 and 1990, female participation grew while male participation decreased.

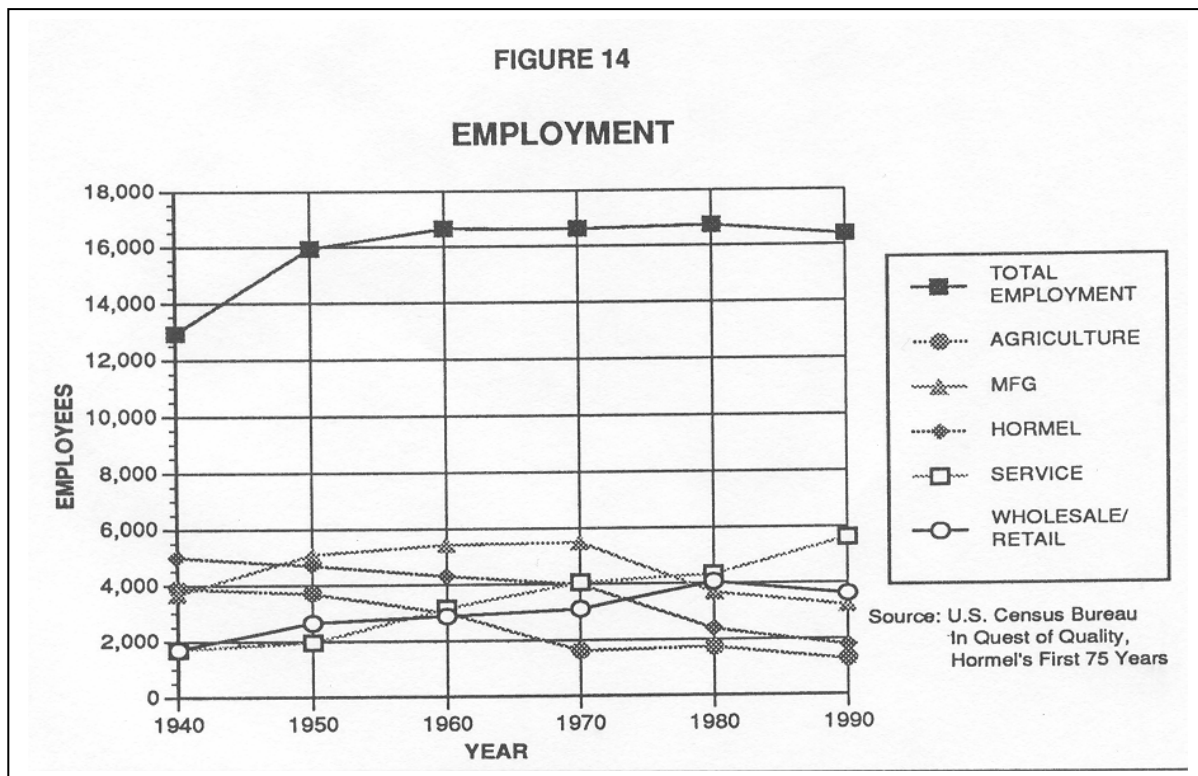


TABLE 15 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY GROUP						
	1940*	1950*	1960	1970	1980	1990
Agriculture	3,899 30.2%	3,697 23.2%	2,979 17.9%	1,618 9.7%	1,721 10.3%	1,278 7.8%
Construction & Mining	555 4.30%	845 5.30%	637 3.80%	821 4.90%	940 5.60%	725 4.40%
Manufacturing	3,667 28.4%	5,100 32.0%	5,436 32.7%	5,503 33.1%	3,667 21.9%	3,199 19.5%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	749 5.8%	765 4.8%	723 4.3%	630 3.8%	962 5.8%	960 5.9%
Wholesale/Retail Trade	1,691 13.1%	2,645 16.6%	2,871 7.3%	3,103 18.7%	4,055 24.3%	3,602 22.0%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	180 1.4%	255 1.6%	334 2.0%	495 3.0%	559 3.3%	692 4.2%
Services - Business, Professional & Personal	1704 13.2%	1944 12.2%	3144 18.9%	4053 24.4%	4329 25.9%	5613 34.2%
Government/ Public Administration	258 2.0%	335 2.1%	504 3.2%	381 2.3%	487 2.9%	322 2.0%
Other	208 1.6%	350 2.2%	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	12,911	15,936	16,628	16,604	16,720	16,391
* Numbers were computed by using percentages and are not exact.						
Source: U.S. Census Bureau						

TABLE 16
EMPLOYMENT CHANGES 1940 – 1990

	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1940-50
Agriculture	-207	-922	-1,361	103	-443
Construction & Mining	283	-201	184	119	-215
Manufacturing	1,427	339	67	-1,836	-468
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	116	-37	-93	332	-2
Wholesale/Retail Trade	948	229	232	952	-453
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	85	74	161	64	133
Services-Business, Professional & Personal	239	1,080	909	276	1,284
Government	85	170	-123	106	-165
TOTALS	+3,025 *	+692*	-24	+116	-329

* Totals do not sum.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Upper Midwest Economic Study, Vogt, Sage & Pflum, October 1970

TABLE 17 MOWER COUNTY EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION RATES			
STATUS	1970	1980	1990
Males 16 & over	13,778	14,842	13,651
# in Labor Force	10,802	10,717	9,355
% of Total	78.4	72.2	68.5
% Unemployed	3.7	6.9	5.3
Females 16 & over	17,336	16,145	15,161
# in Labor Force	6,536	7,174	7,813
% of Total	37.7	44.4	51.5
% Unemployed	6.2	5.9	3.2
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Austin Comprehensive Plan			

TABLE 18 MINNESOTA EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION RATES			
STATUS	1970	1980	1990
Males 16 & over	1,295,059	1,478,149	1,605,702
# in Labor Force	951,869	1,140,182	1,243,045
% of Total	73.5	77.1	77.4
% Unemployed	4.1	6.3	6.0
Females 16 & over	1,392,478	1,584,274	1,715,713
# in Labor Force	582,056	856,246	1,071,930
% of Total	41.8	54.0	62.5
% Unemployed	4.4	4.2	4.2
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Austin Comprehensive Plan			

Income

Like most, if not all of greater Minnesota, household income for Mower County lagged behind that of the State in 1989.

TABLE 19 HOUSEHOLD INCOME - 1989				
INCOME	MINNESOTA HOUSEHOLDS	%	MOWER COUNTY HOUSEHOLDS	%
Less than \$5,000	72,190	4.4	778	5.2
5,000-9,999	155,847	9.5	1,694	11.3
10,000-14,999	141,255	8.6	2,065	13.8
15,000-24,999	289,134	17.5	3,342	22.3
25,000-34,999	273,729	16.6	2,715	18.1
35,000-49,999	325,530	19.7	2,525	16.9
50,000-74,999	256,771	15.6	1,305	8.7
75,000-99,999	74,782	4.5	351	2.3
100,000-149,999	38,185	2.3	134	0.9
150,000 or More	21,402	1.3	75	0.5
Total Households	1,648,825	100.0	14,984	100.0
Median Household Income	\$30,909		\$23,763	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau				

Retail Sales

In 1990, the City of Austin had a customer equivalent (C.E.) or pull factor ratio of 1.09 which means that retail in Austin is drawing only slightly more than the equivalent of its own customer base (23,875 C.E.). A pull factor of less than 1.0 would mean the City was not capturing the equivalent of the number of customers within its own boundaries.

While Austin has a positive total pull factor (exceeding 1.0), it is not pulling anything approaching the equivalent of the County's total customer base (37,385). The County is, therefore, losing customer equivalents/retail sales to Albert Lea and Rochester. Table 20 illustrates the categorical changes in pull factors that occurred from 1980 to 1990. While the factors for general merchandise, food and auto retail improved, those for apparel, furniture and miscellaneous retail declined. Furthermore, the population declined during the same period that suggests that a 1.09 pull factor represented more customers in 1980 than in 1990.

TABLE 20 RETAIL SALES			
RETAIL CATEGORY	1980	1985	1990
Lumber/Hardware	0.77	0.6	0.62
General Merchandise	0.65	0.47	0.96
Food Stores	1.54	1.89	1.93
Auto Dealers/Stations	0.94	0.86	0.98
Apparel Stores	1.30	1.41	0.96
Furniture Stores	1.13	1.40	0.77
Eating/Drinking Establishments	1.46	1.39	1.37
Miscellaneous Retail	1.16	1.31	0.85
TOTAL	1.09	1.13	1.09

AGRICULTURE

Since the European settlement days, agriculture has been a predominant land use in Mower County. Although the county has seen some rural development along with urban expansion, agriculture is still the predominant land use in Mower County. In 1987 404,238 acres, or about 90% of its total land area, was in a farm. While it represented only 7.8% of all jobs in 1990, agriculture is the heart of the past, present and future economy.

Generally speaking, the average number of farms in Minnesota has been declining while the average size of farms has been increasing. In 1981, there were approximately 104,000 farms with an average size of 292 acres. In 1997, there were 73,367 farms averaging 354 acres in size. From 1987 to 1997, the amount of agricultural land in Minnesota diminished by 579,198 acres, a 2.2% loss.

The average farm size in 1987 was 288 acres compared to 360 acres in 1997, as shown in Table 21. Corollary to this, the total number of farms decreased during the same period from 1,341 to 1,123. This is consistent with statewide trends of fewer and larger farms. In 1987, the amount of land occupied by farms larger than 2,000 acres was 11,867. In 1997 that grew to 57,986.

**TABLE 21
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS
MOWER COUNTY
1987-1997**

Agricultural Statistic	1987	1992	1997	1987 - 1997	
				Change	% Change
Number of Farms	1,341	1,214	1,123	-218	-16%
Farms Under 10 acres	87	96	77	-10	-11%
Farms 10 to 49 acres	160	159	157	-3	-2%
Farms 50 to 170 acres	405	306	317	-88	-22%
Farms 180 to 499 acres	456	413	313	-143	-31%
Farms 500 to 999 acres	180	163	171	-9	-5%
Farms 1,000 acres or more	53	77	88	35	40%
Average Size of Farm (acres)	288	323	360	72	25%
Land in farms (acres)	385,648	392,615	404,238	18,590	5%
Cropland harvested (acres)	280,686	331,257	360,159	79,473	28%
Individual or family farms (#)	1,183	1,056	973	-210	-18%
Individual or family farms (acres)	320,317	317,729	326,875	6,658	2%

Source: 1997 US Census of Agriculture

The nature of farms and farmers has also changed. There are increasingly fewer family or individual farms, but these too are getting larger. Although the number of family or individual farms fell by nearly 18% from 1,183 to 973, the amount of land in family farms increased 2% during the same period from 320,317 acres to 326,875 acres. The average age of farmers has rose from 48 years old in 1987 to 50 in 1997.

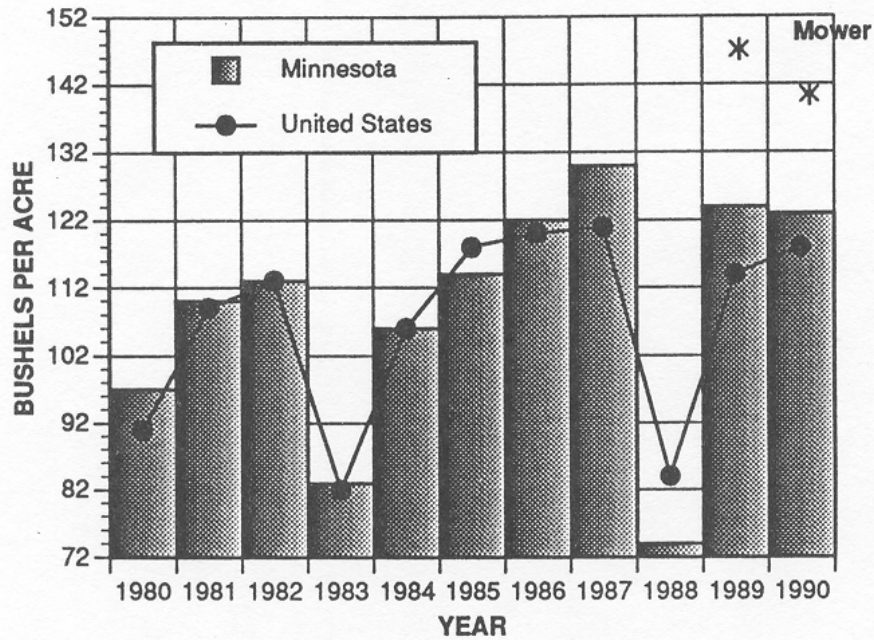
The following Table 22 illustrates the different types of crops grown in Mower County. Corn and soybeans are the predominant crops grown. The number of acres used to grow corn, soybeans, barley and sunflowers has increased from 1987 to 1997, while the numbers of acres of wheat, barley, oats and hay/alfalfa have seen decreases in acreage during this time period. Although still a very small percentage of Mower County's crops, sunflower crops were non-existent in 1987 but grew to 378 acres in 1997. In 1999, Mower County ranked 10th in the state in overall corn production and 13th in soybeans.

**TABLE 22
CROPS GROWN
MOWER COUNTY
1987-1997**

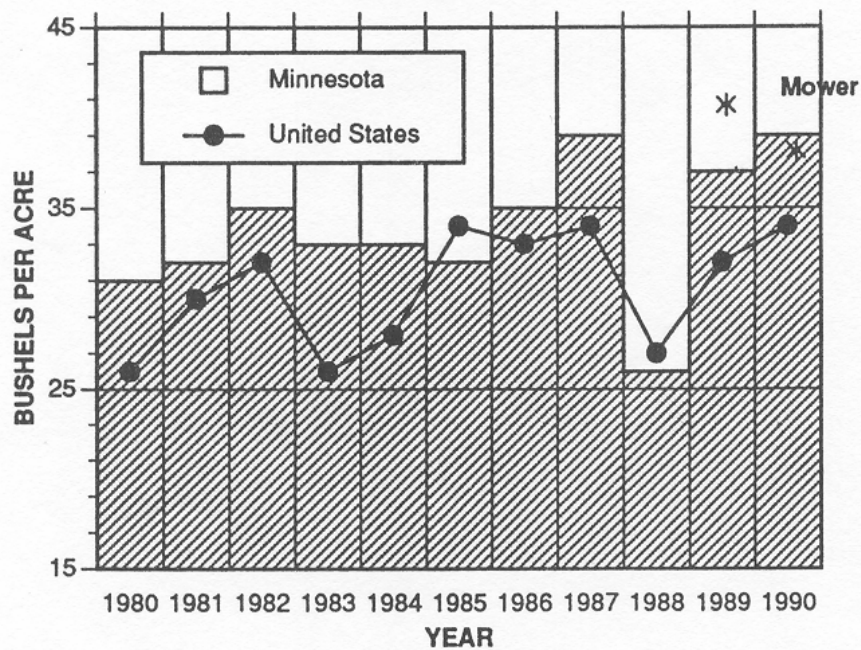
Crop (Acres)	1987	1992	1997	1987 - 1997	
				Change	Percent Change
Corn for grain or seed	123,664	169,180	169,284	45,620	37%
Wheat for grain	1,531	455	764	-767	50%
Barley for grain	246	50	495	249	101%
Oats for grain	10,680	5,247	3,229	-7,451	70%
Sunflower	0	0	378	378	N/A
Soybeans for beans	118,202	134,570	163,771	45,569	39%
Hay, Alfalfa	18,738	11,186	11,535	-7,203	38%

Source: 1997 US Census of Agriculture

**FIGURE 15
CORN YIELDS**



**FIGURE 16
SOYBEAN YIELDS**



Only a very small number of acres (approximately 1,712 5,000) have been issued permits for irrigation are irrigated. Generally, except in drought periods, irrigation is unnecessary due to favorable climatic conditions.

Table 23 illustrates the overall decline in the number of livestock farms from 1987 to 1997. In each animal category, a decline was seen during those years. The most drastic decline (-50 percent) was seen in dairy cows, dropping from 177 farms in 1987 to 89 farms in 1997. The number of livestock declined in every category for which information is available as well, except hogs and pigs. In each of these categories except sheep and lambs, the number of livestock fell at a lesser rate than the number of operations, which still indicates a trend toward larger farms. Although there was a 42% decrease in the number of hog and pig operations, the number of livestock increased 22%, indicating a significant trend toward larger and fewer operators in this livestock industry. Mower County ranked 14th in the state for overall hog and pig production.

**TABLE 23
LIVESTOCK FARMS
MOWER COUNTY
1987-1997**

Livestock	Number of Farms			1987 - 1997	
	1987	1992	1997	Change	% Change
Beef Cows					
Number of Farms	166	143	149	-17	-10%
Number of Livestock	2,796	2,629	2,590	-206	-7%
Milk Cows					
Number of Farms	177	116	89	-88	-50%
Number of Livestock	7,191	5,774	5,821	-1,370	-19%
Hogs and Pigs					
Number of Farms	388	339	226	-162	-42%
Number of Livestock	135,284	155,831	164,745	29,461	22%
Sheep and Lambs					
Number of Farms	79	66	42	-37	-47%
Number of Livestock	5,750	3,783	2,072	-3,678	-64%
Layers & Pullets 13 weeks old and older					
Number of Farms	52	24	27	-25	-48%
Number of Livestock	220,569	29,090	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broilers & Other Meat-Type Chickens					
Number of Farms	9	4	7	-2	-22%
Number of Livestock	697	492	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total					
Number of Farms	871	692	540	-331	-38%
Number of Livestock	372,287	197,599	175,228	-197,059	-53%

Source: 1997 US Census of Agriculture

In 1987, crop sales accounted for about 52 percent of the market value of agricultural products sold while livestock sales accounted for approximately 48 percent of the market value. In 1997 this shifted significantly, with about 62 percent of the market value of agricultural products sold coming from crop sales and 38 percent from livestock sales. It ranked 10th in total crop cash receipts in the state in 1999.

From 1987 to 1997, the average per farm market value of agricultural products sold increased 90 percent from \$76,456 to \$144,955. Table 24 illustrates the market value, production costs and net cash return of agricultural products from 1987 to 1997. The average net cash return per farm from agricultural sales rose 144% percent, or an average of 14 percent per year. This indicates that farms in Mower County have continued to increase profitability.

**TABLE 24
AGRICULTURAL SALES INFORMATION
MOWER COUNTY
1987 TO 1997**

	1987	1992	1997
Market value of ag products sold	102,528	114,032	162,784
Market value of ag products sold-crops	53,699	63,622	100,864
Market value of ag products sold-livestock	48,829	50,411	61,921
Average market value of ag products sold per farm	76,456	93,931	144,955
Average total farm production expenses per farm	58,186	77,868	103,359
Average net cash return per farm from ag sales	17,108	16,329	41,718

Source: Mn Department of Agriculture

FIGURE 17

MINNESOTA CASH FARM RECEIPTS

Geographic Distribution

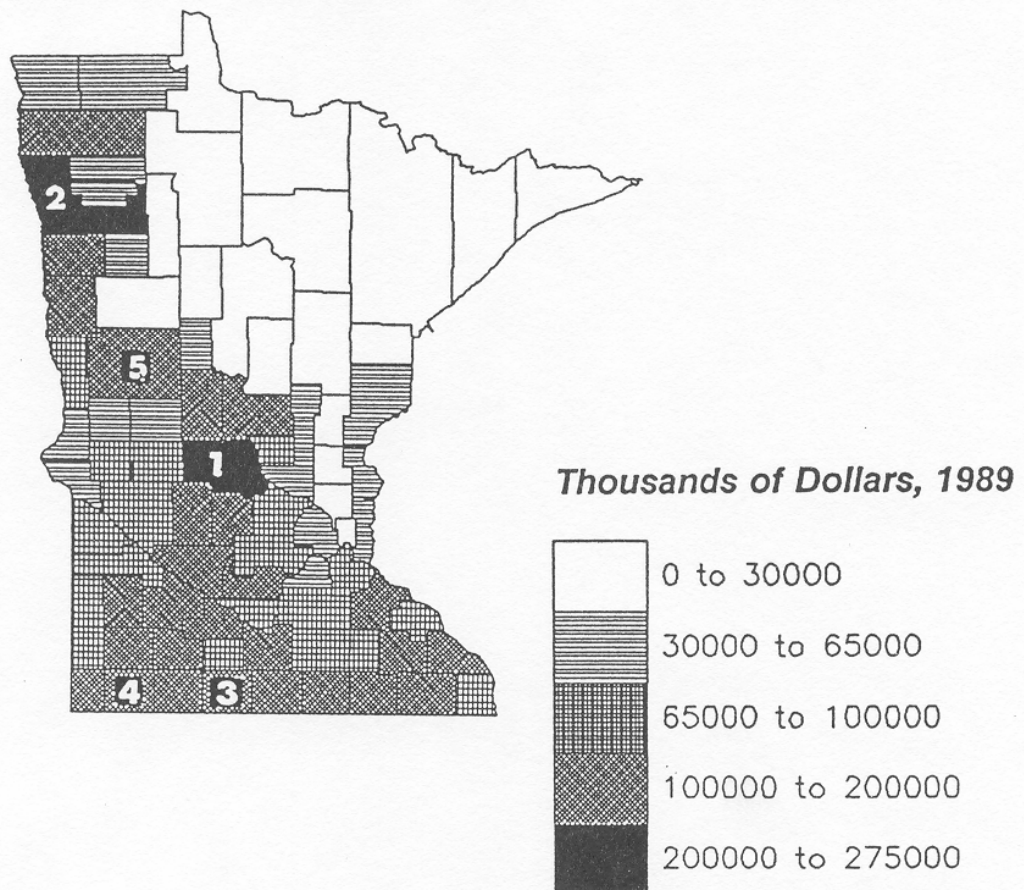
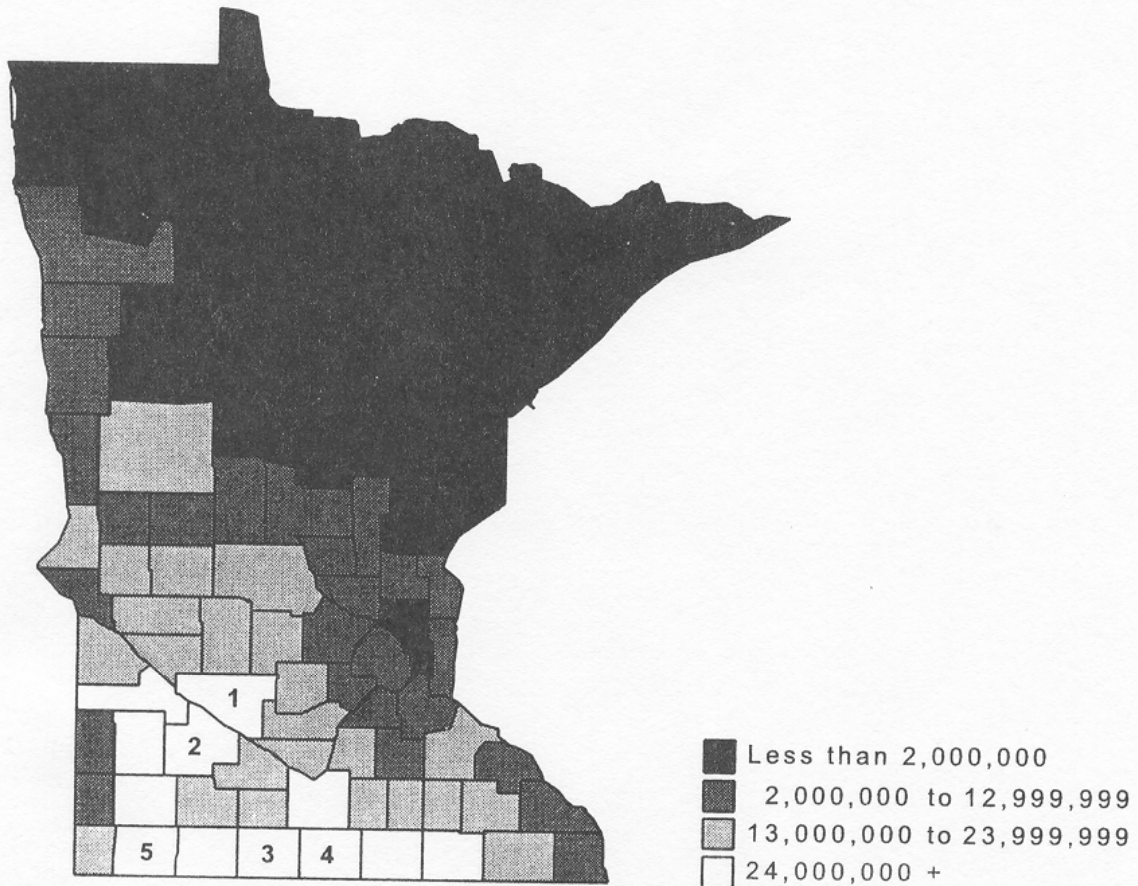


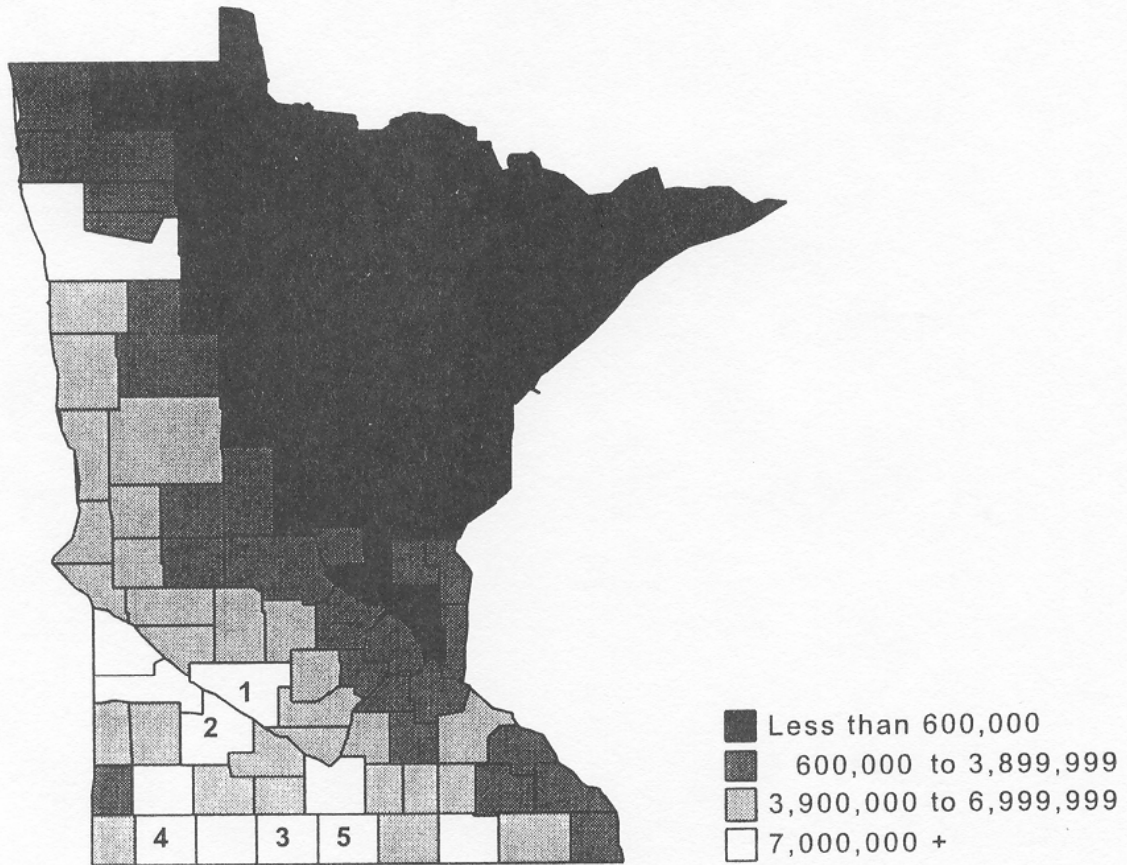
FIGURE 18
CORN BUSHELS PRODUCED
IN 2000



Top Five
 Production
 Counties
 For 2000

- 1-Renville
- 2-Redwood
- 3-Martin
- 4-Faribault
- 5-Nobles

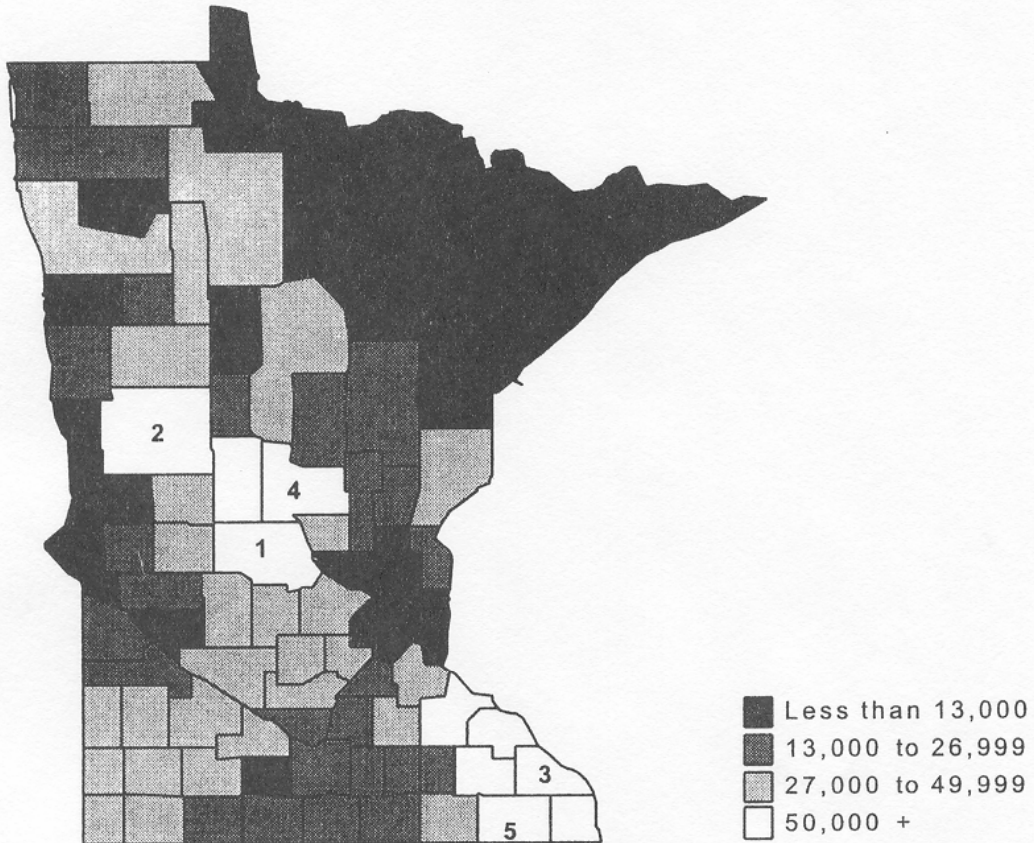
FIGURE 19
SOYBEAN BUSHEL PRODUCTION
IN 2000



Top Five
 Production
 Counties
 For 2000

1-Renville
 2-Redwood
 3-Martin
 4-Nobles
 5-Faribault

FIGURE 20
ALL CATTLE & CALVES
NUMBER OF HEAD 2001



Top Five
 All Cattle
 & Calves
 Counties
 For 2000

1-Stearns
 2-Otter Tail
 3-Winona
 4-Morrison
 5-Fillmore

**FIGURE 21
ALL HOGS
NUMBER OF HEAD 2000**

