Two important factors have been responsible for pushing a consideration of pastures to the foreground in land-use planning. The first is the surplus crop production which has characterized our agriculture in recent years and the second is the conservation of soils and other natural resources. The first of these factors began to make itself felt in a tangible way in the depression of 1920 and 1921 and became acute with the present depression, culminating in the Government program to reduce surpluses of the crops in which the problem was most acute, and to adjust the acreage of crops and the number of livestock and the volume of the output of livestock products into a rational relationship with the existing and potential demand. The second of these factors we have had with us for many years, but it has been singularly overlooked in popular attention until the present administration embodied it in its comprehensive program of conservation and adjustment.

These two factors give ample justification for the importance which the pasture question has assumed. The issue, on first consideration, seems reasonably clear. We should shift substantial portions of land from erosive crops to grass, refit the organization of farms to this adjusted use of farm land, and achieve the double objective of reducing the total farm output of crops and livestock to a volume which corresponds to the demand for their use, and at the same time conserve in perpetuity our nature-given agricultural resources.

Unfortunately this solution meets with other forces which involve serious difficulties and make it much more difficult than it appears upon the surface. One of these forces is the pressure of people on farm land, induced by the large amount of unemployment in nonagricultural industries, which has been occasioned by the depression. Not only has there been a stopping of the normal flow of population from agriculture to industry, but there has developed a back flow of people from industry to agriculture which constitutes a resistance to the proposed program, the significance of which seems as yet only partly realized. More people on the land usually means more intensive use, whereas a greater dominance of pasture tends to mean less intensive use. There is the further factor of the individual farmer’s interest in the proposal to place a larger proportion of land in pasture, and of his reaction to this proposal. Whatever the program, it must be worked out in the light of these two factors.

Finding the best ultimate place of pastures in the planning for agriculture must be worked out through a program that will reconcile these two sets of opposing forces. Such reconciliation will be extremely