A definition is a declaration of the meaning of a word or group of words. The definition may refer to the meaning of ordinary acceptance or it may refer to some special meaning which the word or phrase may have attached to it in a particular field of knowledge. Many of the technical terms used in science and engineering have been developed by taking some word from the body of language and giving it a special, precise definition. There are many examples of such terms currently used in pedagogical literature: for example, soil, profile, horizon, texture, and Prairie. During the period of formulation of these precise definitions there is bound to be a certain amount of confusion and disagreement, especially in the case of a "border-line" subject such as land utilization.

The systematic and thorough study of land utilization by scientists is a comparatively recent development even though the matter has been widely discussed by people generally for some time. As a result, a great many loosely defined expressions are in current use. To the extent, however, that land utilization studies are placed on a scientific basis these expressions must, by common consent, by precisely defined. In some cases the precedents are such that any one of two or more definitions are equally logical according to the present state of our knowledge, and a selection is largely arbitrary. Finally, the choice of definition and its particular form will be conditioned by the problems and experience of the one proposing the definition.

It is realized by the authors that the definitions herein proposed leave much to be desired. Many of them lack in preciseness; others may have been too closely limited; while some are more or less arbitrary selections from several alternatives. Attention has been directed toward those terms presently in wide use and no attempt has been made to coin new expressions. It is only hoped that these may serve as a basis for discussion. At another annual meeting some real progress toward their improvement should be possible.

ABANDONED FARM - A former farm operating unit, which through cessation of operations, no longer has an operator and is no longer a farm or part of a farm under the Census definition of a farm. It includes former farm operating units on which the land is no longer operated, although the farmstead is occupied for residence only. It does not include former operating units that have been consolidated with other operating units of which they are now a part. It is preferable to regard former operating units which have no operator, but which are in part operated as part of another farm, as partially operated farms rather than abandoned farms otherwise the part not operated should be regarded as in abandoned farms.

ABANDONED OPEN FARM LAND - Idle open land (land not in forest) on abandoned farms. Does not include idle land on operated farms or land on abandoned farms regularly used for pasture, as such is really part of some operated farm.

AGRICULTURAL LAND - Land used in agricultural production. Includes all the land devoted to the enterprise; i.e., the farmstead, roadways, drainage and irrigation ditches, water supply, crop land, and grazing land of every kind. It should not be used as synonymous with land in farms, crop land, pasture land, land suitable for crops or land suitable for farming. The term nonagricultural land should not be used in the sense of land not suited to crops. Such terms as non-plowable, non-arable, land not in farms, and land unsuited to crops, to suit the case, are preferable.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION - Includes that production which comes wholly or partly from land in farms.

ARABLE LAND - Land which, in its present condition, is suitable without further substantial improvement for the production of crops requiring tillage.

CROP LAND - Land regularly used for crops. Crop land will thus include rotation pasture, cultivated summer fallow, or other land ordinarily used for crops, but temporarily idle.

FOREST LAND - Land not in farms bearing a stand of trees of any age or stature, including seedlings (reproduction) but of species attaining a minimum average height of 6 feet at maturity, or land from which such a stand has been removed, and is now restocking and no other use has been substituted. It is best not to use this term in the sense of land suitable only for forest or in the sense of land best suited to forest. If it is desirable to indicate land best suited to

1 It is obvious that abandoned farms thus defined could not be mapped consistently because abandoned farms soon lose their identity as farms and can rarely be identified, as a whole, in the field.