

APPENDIX 14.—CASES RECEIVING SURPLUS COMMODITIES ONLY, OCTOBER 1940

Methodology

The method of determining the number of cases receiving surplus commodities only is based on a measurement of differences between (a) cases receiving general relief and the special assistances, as reported to the Social Security Board, and (b) cases receiving surplus commodities as reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration. In order to determine the sum of these differences, a tabulation was made for those States in which the number of general-relief and special-assistance cases receiving commodities (both through direct distribution and the food-stamp plan), as reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration, was in excess of the number of cases actually receiving general-relief or special-assistance payments, as reported to the Social Security Board. Because a similar comparison in connection with the Federal work programs and the Farm Security Administration indicated that in no State did the number of cases reported from these programs as receiving commodities exceed the number of persons who were actually employed or were receiving grants, these programs were eliminated as not providing any identifiable evidence of

cases receiving commodities but not wages or grants. Therefore the "excess of cases" given in the following table represents such excesses in the programs of general relief, old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, and aid to the blind in those States where there occurred an excess of cases receiving commodities over those receiving some type of assistance.

The sum of these differences was then added to those cases known by definition to be receiving surplus commodities only. These cases were reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration by State welfare agencies as "commodity only" cases in the food-stamp plan and as "borderline relief" and "borderline nonrelief" cases in the direct-distribution plan. The Surplus Marketing Administration defined the "borderline" cases as follows: "Borderline relief cases are those which have been certified for relief within a specified category by the State or local certifying agency, but which actually receive no assistance other than surplus commodities. Borderline nonrelief cases are those cases which have some small amount of income, insufficient to provide for the needs of the family. These cases do not receive assistance payments from any

TABLE 1.—Number of cases receiving surplus commodities, by types of public aid for which certified, and estimated number of cases receiving surplus commodities only, by socio-economic region, October 1940

Cases receiving surplus commodities	United States	Socio-economic region ¹					
		Northeast	Middle States	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Far West
General relief:							
Cases receiving commodities:							
Total	1,058,263	413,014	348,467	47,813	116,469	56,508	75,992
Direct distribution	815,868	356,456	241,094	37,072	104,782	46,629	29,835
Stamp plan	242,395	56,558	107,373	10,741	11,687	9,879	46,157
Excess of cases receiving commodities over general-relief caseload	110,183	7,541		1,385	64,562	34,302	2,393
Old-age assistance:							
Cases receiving commodities:							
Total	660,245	91,313	169,241	71,449	196,503	63,686	68,053
Direct distribution	514,383	82,176	141,198	55,440	170,925	45,448	19,196
Stamp plan	145,862	9,137	28,043	16,009	25,578	18,238	48,857
Excess of cases receiving commodities over old-age assistance caseload	12				12		
Aid to the blind:							
Cases receiving commodities:							
Total	19,148	2,033	4,305	1,890	7,148	1,105	2,667
Direct distribution	13,929	1,680	3,507	1,565	5,950	673	554
Stamp plan	5,219	353	798	325	1,198	432	2,113
Excess of cases receiving commodities over aid-to-the-blind caseload	307				307		
Aid to dependent children:							
Cases receiving commodities:							
Total	214,631	68,940	45,890	22,673	50,968	13,107	13,023
Direct distribution	168,147	59,655	37,128	17,473	40,168	8,645	5,078
Stamp plan	46,484	9,285	8,762	5,200	10,800	4,462	7,945
Excess of cases receiving commodities over aid-to-dependent-children caseload	1,387				1,387		
Cases reported as receiving surplus commodities only:							
Total	561,379	59,486	52,952	13,569	365,730	66,648	2,994
Direct distribution	497,083	59,486	52,334	12,495	329,798	40,173	2,797
Stamp plan	64,296		618	1,074	35,932	26,475	197
Total cases estimated to be receiving surplus commodities only	673,268	67,027	52,952	14,954	431,998	100,950	5,387
Excess of cases receiving commodities over general-relief and special-assistance caseloads	111,889	7,541		1,385	66,268	34,302	2,393
Cases reported as receiving commodities only	561,379	59,486	52,952	13,569	365,730	66,648	2,994
Percentage distribution, by region, of cases estimated to be receiving surplus commodities only	100.0	10.0	7.8	2.2	64.2	15.0	0.8

Source: Adapted from information (corrected to Feb. 21, 1941) prepared by the Surplus Marketing Administration. Data on caseloads from Work Projects Administration, Division of Statistics, *WPA Statistical Bulletin, December 1940*, Washington, 1940, p. 12, table 10.

¹ For States included in these regions, see appendix 12.

State or local funds, but are certified by local agencies as eligible to receive surplus commodities." (Letter dated January 11, 1941, from Distribution and Purchase Division, Surplus Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.)

Such a definition would seem to indicate that all persons not receiving some form of assistance would be reported as "borderline" or "commodity only" cases. However, an examination of the data reveals that in some instances the number of cases certified for surplus commodities by the State agency from an assistance program was in excess of the number of recipients of that program as reported to the Social Security Board. A further analysis of the data indicates that there was no uniformity in the way in which State agencies reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration. Some States showed a relatively large number of persons certified from the general-relief program for surplus commodities in excess of the caseload of persons actually being assisted by the program as reported to the Social Security Board, with a corresponding lower proportion of persons certified in the "borderline" group. In other States, the opposite situation prevailed. While there were fewer instances where the number of cases certified for commodities from the special assistances was in excess of those receiving such assistance, as reported to the Social Security Board,

the fact that such an excess did exist in some States suggests that persons on waiting lists for assistance may have been included in these groups. This again raises the question as to the composition of the two groups, as reported to the two Federal agencies, without giving any clue as to the degree to which they might differ.

These factors indicate that it is not possible to ascertain how many of the cases receiving surplus commodities, reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration by the kind of program of which they are beneficiaries, were actually receiving assistance under that program. In other words, it is not possible to determine to what extent the two groups as reported to the Social Security Board and to the Surplus Marketing Administration represented identical cases. This difficulty is most apparent in the case of the general-relief program, where the number of general-relief cases reported as receiving surplus commodities was, in the largest number of instances, in excess of the number of recipients of general relief as reported to the Social Security Board. It is assumed, therefore, that some States reported to the Surplus Marketing Administration as general-relief cases those which might be eligible for general relief but were not actually receiving it.