Seasonal labor finds additional employment. Tourists look for restaurants serving crawfish. Local merchants benefit from the sale of equipment and supplies. An added together the crawfish has become an expanding business as well as a tasty dish.

The agricultural production of crawfish in south Louisiana is expected to double next year.

"This means an even greater impact on the economic development of rural areas," said H. B. Martin, state conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service.

Last year there were some three thousand acres in a three-parish area producing crawfish for the market. It is estimated that one-half million pounds of the crustacean were harvested, sold and served in Louisiana.

"Next year we are estimating there will be nearly six thousand acres in a rice-crawfish rotation and another three thousand acres of swamps in production," said Carl H. Thomas, Soil Conservation Service biologist who has worked closely with crawfish farmers. "If expansion continues the business could easily reach a million dollars in total sales."

Last season Don's Crawfish Ranch in the Grand Coteau Ridge Soil Conservation District harvested 178,000 pounds of crawfish from 250 acres of water. By 1965 they will have another 200 acres in production. They used all their crop in their own restaurants, and had to buy from other local producers to meet the demand last year. They employ as many as fifteen people in the processing sheds, and twenty trappers working the fields. They also employ a full-time racecoon trapper, as the "coons are too anxious to help with the harvesting and don't pay for their meals.

Wade Burdin, of St. Martin parish, has recently installed a seven hundred acre producing area. With engineering assistance from the Soil Conservation Service he has built levees and pumping facilities to flood the area. Recent research indicates that flooding in the winter season also helps the growth of swamp hardwood trees, which may serve as an additional crop from the land.

Crawfish fields produce up to a thousand pounds of the product per acre, and they sell for about 20c per pound at the processor. Some producers employ as many as thirty people. Rice farmers find it a profitable off-season crop. Producers of swamp crawfish see it as multiple use of woodlands.

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