REPORT OF EXTENSION ACTIVITIES
for the
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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Economic information is vital, and gathering, interpreting and disseminating such information has become one of the primary functions of Extension Workers in Agricultural Economics. The economic phase of extension work here in Wisconsin has received much emphasis during the recent years. We now have nearly the full time of one man on land zoning and land use. The full time of one man and one-half time of another on outlook interpreting and disseminating economic information especially in regard to the AAA action programs. The extension work in marketing requires the full time of one man and one-half time of two others. The farm record and farm management phase requires the full time of 2 men and three-fourths time of another. Besides these, there are several occasions where other members of the department are speaking at meetings which if an extension men took the assignment, it would be called extension.

The objective of economic extension work is to bring before farmers either in groups or individually a solution to their problems. The farm management phase is to help the farmer make a higher labor income. It proposes to help the individual farmer to apply the business principles in farming to his own farm. It aids the farmer in the organization and management of the farm enterprise for the purpose of securing the greatest continuous profit. Extension work in farm management deals with the farm as a unit and considers the welfare of the operator of this unit the important part. Successful farming demands an understanding of business organization and management for the efficient use of capital, labor, livestock and equipment.

Long ages of experience and a generation of scientific research have resulted in a fund of popular knowledge on how to raise crops and care for livestock. But there is less background of tradition concerning business methods on the farm. The success of the individual farmer is as much dependent on the application of business principles as it is on crop yields and production of animals.

The surest way to find out what methods of farm organization and management pay best is to study the methods now used, showing profits secured on large numbers of farms and determine how the more successful ones differ from the others. The charts shown brought out these differences in labor income.

The economic extension specialist and the work he does are generally regarded as being attached to some section of the agricultural department such as marketing, land economics and farm management. The subject matter used by the Extension Specialist usually originated in the respective departments. However, there is a great deal of extension work done which does not readily attach itself to any particular section, such as outlook, rural discussion work, credit, taxes, etc.

The present policy of the College is for the extension work within a county to be carried on with the cooperation of and through the County Agent. This is the most desirable way to administer the various extension projects in order to correlate the extension activities of a county. During the past few years, action programs of the A.A.A. have demanded large proportions of the County Agents with the result that some of the extension projects of the department have not been too active.
It now looks as though these action programs will result in new emphasis on more thorough planning. This will require more coordination of the various agricultural activities of the county and all different available agricultural extension activities which contribute to the solution of the county agricultural problems.

The results and effectiveness of some of the recognized extension activities in the Agricultural Economics Department cannot be measured by any of the usual standards. Some phases of marketing extension work consists of service to cooperatives. A careful study of the problems and the situation is required before a picture of the problem can be presented to the local committee but action taken by this committee may affect the financial status of several hundred farmers. Yet the report shows only one factory visited. Much work in outlook and interpretation and dissemination of economic information is difficult to show in a satisfactory way.

EXTENSION WORK NOW BEING CARRIED ON BY THE DEPARTMENT

I. FARM MANAGEMENT

The farm management work, which centers around farm incomes, has been carried out not only in connection with County Agent activities, but also with vocational agriculture pupils, 4-H Club members, youth vocation guidance groups, and with agencies loaning money to farmers.

The types of work done in this field may be classed as follows:

1. Farm business record keeping. A simplified farm record book is used by farmer cooperators in keeping a record of the farm transactions and facts which directly affect their business. These records are sent to the College where they are summarized and analyzed, after which a summary containing helpful suggestions is returned to the cooperating farmer. The summaries form a basis for general meetings throughout the areas from which they were obtained.

2. Farm management surveys. Surveys are useful in those areas where there are not enough farm record books to justify summarizing separately. The Extension specialist can well use 100 to 150 farm business records yearly from each of the more distinctive farming type areas of the state. These records are put to the same use as those taken from the farm record books.

3. Outlook information. Outlook information has been published in the "Economic Information to Farmers" and in the "Dairy Herd Improvement News Letter". In the past, outlook meetings have been held with farmer groups, and the economic situation has been presented over the radio. This information is useful to farmers in planning their operations.

4. Farm Program Building for counties. Several counties have asked for help in planning the farm programs for their counties, and some work along this line is now being done in these counties.

5. Credit needs of farmers. Work in cooperation with such agencies as the Farm Credit Administration has attempted to show the need for credit among farmers and the conditions under which farmers might well use additional credit.

The personnel is: I.F. Hell, full time; A.O. Follett, full time; and R. E. McNell, three-fourths time.
II. MARKETING

The demand for extension work in marketing has been along many lines, most of which can be classed under the following activities:

1. Operating problems of cooperatives or other marketing groups.
2. Consolidation of cooperatives and integration of marketing functions.
3. Organization of new cooperatives and other marketing ventures.
4. General extension in marketing and in cooperation, with special emphasis on marketing problems.
5. Miscellaneous activities, such as talks over the radio and before meetings and rural discussion groups, together with correspondence and conferences, dealing with phases of marketing or cooperation.

The division of work among members of the staff is largely, though not wholly, upon a commodity basis, such as 1, dairying, 2, livestock and 3, cash crops. Purchasing associations form a notable exception.

Personnel: P.K. Froker, half time; H.H. Erdmen, full time; H.H. Bakken, half time.

III. LAND ECONOMICS

The development of a satisfactory land use program is the goal of this work. The contribution of the extension specialist toward this goal has been in working with local committees of the county boards which have before them the practical problem of administering county lands as well as the regulation and control of development on private lands. Such committees consist of county zoning committees, county forestry committees, county land committees, county agricultural committees, county planning committees, county tax delinquency committees, and county park commissions.

Before any program can be worked out with a county board, special studies and surveys are made of the potential and developed resources of the county. These studies and surveys involve the participation by many departments of the state and are based upon what previous research has shown to the necessary criteria in developing land programs.

More than five million acres have been closed to agricultural development and legal settlement under the county zoning ordinances now in existence. Most of the land now closed to agricultural development is already inside the boundary of a federal, state, county, or private forest, Indian Reservation, game area or recreation district.

Much of the time of the extension specialist has been given to committees in developing policies for local administration of zoning ordinances and management of forest lands.

Personnel: W.A. Rowlends, nearly full time.

IV. OUTLOOK AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

The purpose of the Outlook and Economic information work may be outlined as follows:

1. To supply information for farmers which will be of assistance in planning their farm organization (See Farm Management Section)
2. To supply necessary information and analysis for farmers and other people of the state to determine the merits of proposals affecting public policy.

3. To supply practical information necessary for an intelligent discussion of topics of an economic nature. This leads ultimately to the exercise of better judgment in matters of a public, cooperative, or individual nature.

4. To meet current demands of organized groups for material to be used as a basis for discussing various economic subjects affecting agriculture.

The methods used in disseminating this type of information are printed circulars ("Economic Information" and "Dairy Herd Improvement News Letter", radio talks and meetings.)

Personnel: Don S. Anderson, half time; I.R. Hedges, full time

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO FUTURE WORK AND PERSONNEL

I. FARM MANAGEMENT:

1. Farm Program Building within the county. More time be given to supply information to the county agricultural committees and other county groups which have responsibilities with reference to the agricultural planning of the county of their agricultural position, trends, and problems. This work, if done effectively, will reach more farmers and will be more useful to them through their organized projects than an equal amount of effort expended in general extension activities. No additional personnel requested.

2. Farm management surveys. Farm management surveys to be made in those areas where farm management extension work is requested and where there are not enough farm record books being kept in cooperation with the College to show the relationship of the important factors contributing to net income. Separate funds and personnel will be required for this work.

3. Farm credit. Credit requirements and needs of farmers cannot be discussed satisfactorily in general farm management meetings. The conditions under which farmers can use credit effectively, and the amount as well as the type of credit they can be expected to use satisfactorily, should be presented to farmers of the state by special meetings for this purpose. Half time of one man can be used upon this work at the present time.

4. Outlook Information. The work in farm management requires not only the preparation and publication of timely outlook data, but it also requires a series of meetings each winter at which outlook data in its relation to the organization of the farm will be discussed.

II. MARKETING

a. That the extension work insofar as reasonably possible be conducted on a problem-solving basis including the "trouble-shooting" type of extension.

b. That the problems directed to the extension specialists of the College are becoming increasingly more technical and will often demand special analysis.

c. That the extension specialists in marketing need to have their work deeply involved in research if they are to meet present day demands.
d. That the extension specialists in marketing feel that there has not been full understanding and recognition of the problems peculiar to this type of extension work.

e. That the yardsticks for measuring results now used often fit poorly the work of marketing extension specialists and frequently leads to false impressions.

f. That there are several fields of work in marketing that are not now being serviced as fully as the opportunity and the conditions seem to warrant,—such as consolidations that should take place among the dairy plants in the state, to purchasing end service associations, and to a general improvement in business operations of cooperatives.

III. LAND ECONOMICS.

Many changes in local government, in consolidation of schools and of school districts, and adjustments in taxes on land in the restricted forestry districts are logical and must inevitably follow the enactment of rural zoning ordinances in order, therefore, that the full benefit of land utilization plans and rural zoning ordinances be achieved, it is important that the extension specialist in land economics continue to devote a considerable amount of his time working with county boards, county committees, and state departments in order that these worthwhile adjustments be made. Since changes in the land pattern and in local government organization can only be brought about gradually and as a result of adequate public discussion, it will take a major part of the time of the specialist in land economics for the next decade to bring about these desirable and necessary adjustments.

IV. OUTLOOK AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

The publication of economic information of pertinent interest to Wisconsin farmers should be continued, and arrangements should be made for the presentation of this information at meetings held throughout the state. This work should form a part of the farm program building work for the respective counties.

V. DISCUSSION GROUPS OF YOUNG MEN.

These discussion groups apparently constitute a part of the larger field of vocational guidance. If there is a project on vocational guidance, administrative procedure would suggest a rather close association of this work with that project.

At the present time most of the subject matter which serves as a basis for this series of discussions is derived from the field of agricultural economics, although in the present development of the work it is not limited to subjects within the department. During the past few months, requests have been made by individuals within the various groups for discussions of topics involving the natural sciences. The specific subjects for which information is desired include the feeding and management of livestock, types of crops to produce and best methods of production, soil testing, fertilization and management and measures for disease control in plants and animals.

The work has reached a state where it can be carried on to best advantage only with the full time of a specialist. The committee recommends that the organization and administration of this work be placed in the hands of someone so situated as to handle the enlarged project.