ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 TO SEPTEMBER 1, 1940.

by

MILO K. SWANTON

This report is compiled to give a summary of the activities of the Wisconsin Council of Agriculture for the period that is identical with the Council's fiscal year (September 1, 1939 - September 1, 1940). Incidentally, this period corresponds with the first year of the present world war.

During this period one organization, the Richland Co-operative Creamery, was admitted to membership, and the Wisconsin Council of Agriculture became an affiliate member of the National Council of Farmer Co-operatives.

STATE LEGISLATION

The last annual report included a summary of legislation which the Council initiated, supported, or opposed. The first six weeks of this period were taken up largely by activities in connection with the final days of the 1939 legislative session. During these final weeks of the session, many bills came up either for final action in the Senate and Assembly or for disposition by the Governor. This legislative period was the most crucial of the long 1939 session.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER CONFERENCE

The 1939 farm conference at the Loraine Hotel in Madison November 2, 3, and 4, was one of the most successful ever held. The central theme for discussion was, "Problems of Agriculture Beyond the Farm." Attention was also focused upon problems that might arise out of the new world conflict. The interests of farm youth were considered, and a farm women's luncheon was included in the program.

FARM CONFERENCE EXPOSITION

An exposition was held in conjunction with the eleventh Farmers' Get-Together Conference at Madison November 2, 3, and 4, which was arranged and managed by the Council itself. All exhibit space was filled in the halls and side rooms of the hotel, and all available space on the street in front of the hotel and extending to the capital square was occupied with heavy farm machinery.

FIRST FARM PRODUCTS COOKING SCHOOL

An added feature of the conference was the cooking school also sponsored by the Council with the co-operation of the State Department of Agriculture and the National Livestock and Meat Board. Only genuine meat, dairy, and other farm products were used in the menu. Member organizations of the Council furnished the prizes which consisted of genuine farm products.

OPPOSED MINIMUM AND UNIFORM RATES FOR CONTRACT HAULERS

Beginning December 12, 1939, and carrying through May 14, 1940, the State Public Service Commission held hearings for the purpose of
establishing rigid rates above a certain minimum to be charged by contract truckers hauling farm produce as well as other commodities. I appeared before the Commission at two separate hearings in opposition to this proposal pointing out that contract carrier services, such as hauling milk, dairy products, livestock, tobacco, fruit, wool, feeds, materials, and supplies, are at present closely adapted to the needs of farmers. These services are rendered under a wide variety of conditions. I pointed out that the suggested program would raise hauling costs and interfere with these well-adapted farm services.

OPPOSED LOWER FREIGHT RATES FOR OLEOMARGARINE THAN FOR BUTTER

At a hearing in Chicago before the Railroads Consolidated Classification Committee, I appeared in opposition to the oleomargarine interests who were requesting freight rates on oleomargarine that would average 37% less than the rates on butter. I showed that the two products are highly competitive, about equal in weight and bulk, and similar as to transportation hazards.

The Committee ruled against the request of the oleomargarine interests for reclassification and also in the Western Trunk Line Territory and the states of Michigan, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin established some specific rates to Chicago and Peoria, which give butter a slight advantage over oleomargarine.

JOINT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON FORESTRY PROBLEMS

I submitted testimony before the Joint Congressional Hearing on Forestry stressing:

1. The same program for settler relocation under Wisconsin's plan of land zoning.

2. The need of developing a realization of the importance of the farm woodlot and its management by expanding extension aid in forestry.

3. The need for expanding a wood research program.

4. The dangers in the Walsh-Fulmer Bill which provides for government control of private woodlots.

COUNCIL ACTIVE IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

During the past year federal legislation and policies were given much attention by the Council.

1. FEDERAL PRISON LABOR LEGISLATION - Bill S. 3550 preventing the interstate shipment of prison-made goods was fought by our Council with the hope of completely blocking passage or of gaining amendments providing exemption for binder twine and farm machinery. We won the support of all Wisconsin Congressmen and Senators for our position. However, the bill passed both Houses. Our efforts to get the President's veto failed and the bill became law exempting only farm machinery parts.
2. FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION TRANSFER - We vigorously opposed making the Farm Credit Administration a dependent of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. We supported the bill to make the Farm Credit Administration an independent agency.

3. THE WALSH-FULMER FORESTRY BILL, which offered a federal program of government management and control of private woodlots and forest lands implying a taxation and indebtedness burden to be carried ultimately by the owner over which he would have no control, was opposed by the Council of Agriculture.

4. DAIRY PRODUCTS UNDER THE A.A.A. - I attended conferences called by other farm groups relative to the question of including dairy products as a basic commodity in the A.A.A. program, and at the request of U. S. Senator La Follette, I conferred with him on this proposal.

5. FEDERAL RESEARCH LABORATORY ON CATTLE BREEDING - The Council has given support to having the Federal Regional Research Laboratory in cattle breeding established in Madison.

6. FEDERAL WAGE-HOUR ACT - I have kept in touch with Congressmen and United States Senators urging clarification of the Wage-Hour Act and asking exemption for agricultural production and processing.

7. FEDERAL TAXATION OF CO-OPERATIVE RESERVES was opposed by the Council by taking a stand in support of co-operatives involved and by making known to government officials that agricultural co-operatives in particular could not endure such a handicap.

8. BITUMINOUS COAL RATES - The Council took a firm stand in protesting the matter of discrimination in the price charged for soft coal at the mine when shipped by rail.

9. PARTICIPATION IN MID-WEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE - I presented the non-partisan position of the Wisconsin Council of Agriculture on federal policies affecting agriculture when I attended the Mid-West Agricultural Conference called by Governor Wilson at Des Moines, Iowa, on August 5.

10. THE RURAL-URBAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE held in Madison following a similar national conference called by Secretary Wallace was attended by me as a resource man.

Mrs. Swanton and Mrs. Dan McCarthy of Sun Prairie, who represented the Council in the conference, took the position that a conference of this kind should be devoted to a frank, honest discussion of the contributing influence and responsibility of government, as well as agriculture, labor/industry, in our present economic and social situation, and that such a conference should not be devoted to propaganda for any particular purpose, party, group or economic theory.

11. CO-OPERATED IN NATIONAL DEFENSE PROGRAM - I attended two mid-west conferences in Chicago called to discuss the position of agriculture in relation to preparedness and national defense. I was appointed as the agricultural representative to the Wisconsin Council of National Defense.
AID TO DROWNED FARMERS

The attention of the Council was called to the plight of many hundreds of farmers whose lands were flooded for two years without compensation because of the deepening of the Mississippi river channel by the Federal Government. The Council, jointly with the State Department of Agriculture, investigated the situation. I made surveys as to soil productivity, valuations, and I made estimates of separability damages. I brought the State Geologist into the problem and gained the support and assistance of university soils experts. I arranged conferences with attorneys, a meeting with affected property owners, attended hearings, and testified before the Federal Commissioners, in an effort to crack the high-handed arrogance and indifference of the U. S. Army engineers and appraisers and to dispel the feeling of hopelessness among the farmers whose land is involved. The Council is still helping in these cases for the purpose of getting adequate compensations and fair consideration for damaged property owners.

COUNCIL TOOK ACTIVE PART IN NATIONAL DAIRY PROMOTION

During February, March, and April, a major part of my time was devoted to the activities of the Wisconsin Dairy Industries Association. I spoke at 25 meetings held in connection with the dairy advertising program. I attended many conferences and meetings and boosted the advertising campaign when speaking at farm institutes, civic clubs, and farm organization meetings. I traveled more than 5,000 miles and took part in several radio broadcasts while working on this campaign.

CO-OPERATIVE WEEK

The Wisconsin Council of Agriculture assisted the State Department of Agriculture in planning for state-wide Co-operative Week. I arranged for the governor's proclamation and spoke over the radio on the subject of co-operation. I prepared and produced a half hour dramatic presentation of Grange history over stations WHA and WLBL during Co-operative Week.

RURAL LEADERS CONFERENCE

The Council was represented on the general Arrangements Committee of the 1940 Rural Leaders Conference, and Mrs. Swanton was Chairman of the Program Committee.

NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DAIRY CENTENNIAL

The Council, with the Department of Agriculture, planned and carried out the program for observance of the first co-operative cheese factory established 100 years ago near Lake Mills. This celebration took place at Lake Mills, July 20, 21, and 22. It included a three day program of music, entertainment, and speaking. An exposition, parade, and broadcast of the National Farm and Home Hour were other features of this celebration.

TAXATION STUDY

Because the farmer pays out a higher proportion of his income in taxes than any other individual, the Council decided to make a study of
taxation problems, sources of revenue, ways of equalizing tax burdens, and the public services that should be given first consideration from the standpoint of farm welfare and general public interest. The Executive Board met with members of the university faculty and a representative of The Taxpayers Alliance. Because the problem is intricate and far-reaching, the study is being continued with the idea of submitting basic suggestions to the Board of Directors of the Council which may serve as a guide in meeting such problems of taxation as may arise in the 1941 legislative session.

STATE FAIR

The year covered by this report ended with the completion of the Wisconsin State Fair. The Council arranged two tents which included an area 60 x 100 feet. This housed the exhibits of member organizations and served as a headquarters for farm co-operatives. During the fair the Council showed moving pictures of the various co-operative activities of its member groups.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

RADIO - The Council arranged for regular Saturday broadcasts under the title, "Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Quarter Hour" over station WLBL at Stevens Point, which many of our member organizations have used. The Council has maintained the regular monthly broadcasts over both state stations.

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH - The Council assisted in setting up a Dairy Month Observance Committee for the state, arranging for dairy publicity and contacting every service club in the state, for the purpose of arranging programs in observance of National Dairy Month.

CONTACTS WITH CIVIC AND EDUCATIONAL GROUPS - During the year I appeared before several Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. I served on a Vocational Guidance Committee at the University of Wisconsin. I met with Future Farmer groups and talked to student organizations at the University.

FARM INSTITUTES - I spoke at 11 farm institutes on such subjects as farm organization activities, co-operation, and dairy promotion.

CO-OPERATION AND CONTACTS WITH FARM ORGANIZATIONS

I spoke at the annual meeting of 16 different farm organizations. I made the district meetings of the Equity Livestock Sales Association, acted as Chairman of a Committee of Producers and Dealers in an effort to iron out difficulties on the Madison market, and served as chairman of a committee appointed to review the set-up and activities of the Pure Milk Products Co-operative with a view to recommending changes, improvements, and consolidation with Central Grade A.

CO-OPERATION WITH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

During the year the Council co-operated with the Department of Agriculture, College of Agriculture, State Board of Vocational and Adult Education, and with County Agents.
STATISTICAL SUMMARY

TRAVEL
Driving my own car (Mileage from home to office not included.) .............. 8,567 miles
Riding with others ..................................................... 3,515 miles
By train and bus ....................................................... 2,260 miles
By plane ................................................................. 145 miles
Total distance traveled ............................................. 14,487 miles

CONFERENCES
Total of 64.

TALKS
Total of 55.

RADIO BROADCASTS
Total of 29.

MISCELLANEOUS
Preparation of reports, papers, and articles.
Research on general economic problems, agriculture, transportation, et cetera.
Issuing news letters, general correspondence, holding interviews, and making appraisals.

Respectfully submitted,

Milo K. Swanton
Executive Secretary