

THE VISITOR

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AGRICULTURE IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

F. G. Wells, of Big Falls, writes: "My work here is a little different, I believe, from that of most of the agricultural men. Besides teaching the agricultural classes in this school, part of my work consists in the preparation of material to be taught to pupils in the 7th and 8th grades of all the other schools in the district. And I am expected to visit these schools and see that the material is taught, get acquainted with the pupils, and hold a class myself. To date, I have visited thirty-two of these schools. You will need to come up to Koochiching County to visit some of these schools on the very edge of civilization—and some of them just a little off the edge—really to understand what traveling to them means, and what the teaching conditions are like. There is, however some very fine material to work with in many of these schools.

"For my first trip out, I have been carrying a microscope, removing the lower lens from the low-power objective for certain objects, and introducing the pupils to a new conception of the house-fly. It seems to be a good way to get acquainted, and is proving as amusing to me as it seems to be instructive to the youngsters.

"I am very much interested in the possibilities of the motion picture as an educational as well as an entertaining factor in schools. I have just been authorized to raise funds for the equipment of a motion picture truck to be used in the schools of this district that can be reached by such a vehicle."

Pupils' Interest in Fairs

Instructor Smith, of Melrose, believes that he arouses interest by taking his classes to county fairs to look over the prize winning exhibits. His boys won first and second places in the stock-judging contests at the county fair and eighth at the state fair.

EXPERIENCE OF VALUE

"Six young Chippewa County farmers had the privilege of attending the Junior Livestock show at South St. Paul on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week. They are making the trip because of their excellent work in the Boys' and Girls' Club work of the county, and are guests of their seniors who are interested in the development of the livestock industry. J. H. Lefforge of the local high school faculty accompanied the winners.

"This trip is rightly considered as a fitting climax of a profitable year of club work. To attend the show as guests of the Minnesota Livestock Breeders' association by whom the show is planned and financed, is an opportunity that comes to only a few boys and girls. In the calf club the two members who received the highest placing in their respective classes at the county fair are the only ones eligible to enter this show. No market pig was sent, as none was exhibited at the county fair.

"The judging work was carried on as a part of the animal husbandry course at the high school. Some judging was done at the fair and two judging trips per week have been taken since that time. Arthur Adamson and Paul McRoden are the judging team representing Chippewa county. The judging contest was held at University Farm Wednesday morning and the livestock show at South St. Paul. Here it was the duty of each club member to fit and show his own calf. Those who attended report that it was an impressive part of the work to see from 100 to 200 club members washing, grooming, and fitting their calves for the exhibition. Most of the calves were sold at auction after the show, as this large number of choice baby beeves attracts buyers who are willing to pay a premium for a fancy animal.

"Chippewa county was represented by a fine lot of calves and much credit is due the club members who fitted them. One calf has made the phenomenal gain of three pounds a day since the county fair.—The Montevideo News.

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VARIETY IN METHOD

The following suggestions for introducing variety in method and sustaining interest, as given to the teachers of agriculture in North Carolina, are worthy of particular notice:

1. Use the farm papers regularly. A number of the teachers plan for at least part of a period each week, individual reports and discussions of articles of particular interest in agricultural papers.
2. Put on the blackboard or chart the weekly market reports. A graphic market chart of some of the important products of the community, plotted in each week, lends considerable interest to the market study.
3. Let students report on new bulletins containing results of recent investigations.
4. Organize debates on agricultural or rural community topics.
5. Write letters, giving directions for the culture of some crop, for care of stock, for making handy farm devices, etc.
6. Let students prepare talks for the agricultural club.
7. Have them report the results of projects, giving interpretation of results, efficiency factors, things to do and not to do, gained from their experience.
8. Plan contests of various kinds.
9. Let the teacher subordinate himself and allow a student to plan and conduct a field trip on a subject of special interest to him.
10. Socialize the method in the classroom.—Texas Agricultural Education Monthly Letter.

START PROJECTS EARLY

The earlier we can get a boy started on a definite course of action the more effective will be the result in connection both with his project and with the teaching of agriculture. In the first place the teacher is handicapped in the presentation of his work if the pupils are undecided on their projects. Another reason for an early choice is that there are many things which a pupil should do in the fall. If he is to grow a crop he can not intelligently choose it and plan for it until he has decided on a suitable piece of ground. Likewise the later study in relation to fertilizer, lime, or tillage will be less effective if he has no definite field under consideration. The selection of seed in the fall is a most important matter. Many potato projects were given up last spring because the boys had failed to secure seed before the scarcity and high prices occurred.

If a pupil is going to conduct an animal project he will get much more from the classwork if he can work at the project and study at the same time. The most pertinent problems are anticipated problems long in advance of the beginning of the actual work.

There may be some situations in which it is impracticable for the boy to start work before spring, but there are very few cases in which it is not possible to persuade a pupil to do something in preparation earlier in the year. The important thing is for the boy to make a decision and if possible to strengthen that decision by the making of a lease or contract or the actual investment of money in some phase of his work.—New York State Agricultural Teachers Bulletin.

"Paw and Maw"

"One of the best features of the Smith-Hughes idea is the close relation that exists between instructor, parent, and pupil. No vocational teacher can do this work successfully until he has become acquainted with the parents and home conditions of every pupil in the class. Why not tie up the community interest by giving a reception for 'Paw and Maw' some thing along the Y.M.C.A. plan of 'Father and Son' evening? Arrange for a feed—'Maw' will help with that, but be sure that there is something on the program to get 'Paw' out as well."—Salem (Oregon) News-Item.

THE PROJECT

"But the basis of all agricultural work is the project. The boy of fourteen to eighteen summers delights as new life bursts in on him from every side, to look on something and say, 'that is mine'. We taught the boy the idea of pure breed, of how to feed, and how to care for animals, in the classroom, but it was when he went home at the end of the day and went out to care for the pigs, the sheep, the cow, the baby beef, or the colt, that his heart swelled with pride as he said, 'this is mine'. A new interest has come into his life in connection with school, something worth while for which to live. The project is everything. If it fails the teaching of agriculture has failed.

"The old system was to stick doggedly to the textbook. Under the new system, magazines, bulletins, and farm papers are used freely. The boy's horizon is broadened. He learns to gather information from every source. One period each week was taken for informal discussion of items gleaned from the above sources. Oftimes during these discussions the teacher was interrupted by the request, 'Let me talk next.' The boys bubbled over with enthusiasm."—N. C. Agricultural Monthly.

SHORT COURSE WORK

"My experience of the last winter has led me to feel that some short-course work is almost essential to any agricultural department which aims to be really efficient. I believe that a good short course is of value to the community, the agricultural department, and most important of all, the teacher himself. Such work acquaints the teacher with the vital problems of the community, leads him really to know the agriculture of his region, keeps him 'close to the ground,' so to speak, and as a result of all this assists him immensely in putting on a worth-while, practical course for his regular students. A good short course will bring together some of the best farmers of a given locality, and thus raise to a little higher level the farming business of that community. A short course properly conducted will secure for our departments the support of practical farmers, which we so much need if our regular course is to be successful."—The Monthly News Letter, Oklahoma.

A FARMERS' GET-TO-GETHER

The Visitor wishes to commend the enterprise of the local school authorities shown in the following account of a farmers' get-together at Bloomington, Minnesota.

"On Friday evening, November 26, the high school assembly room was the scene of as pleasant a social gathering as has ever been staged in Bloomington. Ninety-seven men, young and old, from every walk of life, set out in spite of a dreary evening' to attend their first, 'Get-together' and it was a real 'Get-together'.

"The hall was beautifully decorated in natural colors by Harry Johnson, our efficient engineer. The floral decorations, from Bergstrom's greenhouse, put the final touch to the beautiful array.

"First came the bounteous dinner—one of the kind that makes a man's spirits rise in proportion to the capacity of his stomach. The ladies of the Oak Grove church certainly deserve all the praise that men can bestow upon them for the splendid dinner, and the young ladies who served must also be praised for their work.

"Among the speakers were Professor A. M. Field of the College of Agriculture, L. G. Klefsaas, Agriculture Instructor, and Superintendent T. C. Engum. A committee of three was chosen to make plans for a similar meeting at some future date.

"Never has a jollier group of men left a gathering of any kind, than departed for their respective homes that evening. Everyone was thoroly satisfied and happy. Such expressions were heard as, 'When are you going to have the next one?', 'Be sure to call me up for the next Get-to-Gether, I have had the best time of my life'. The ladies of the community said that they were happy over the fact that their husbands had such a splendid time and hoped that they might have the privilege of another such occasion."—Bloomington Community Service.

"WHOA"

"The race has been held back a lot
By those who think we lack a lot
Of patience and of prudence if we let
the wagon go,

Who only seem to sit and grasp
The tail-board, in a fit, and gasp
Out warnings against progress in the
exclamation, 'Whoa!'"

Journal of Education. October 14, 1920

A CORN PROJECT

A pupil in the Alexandria high school has given the following account of his corn project:

"I agreed to raise at least five acres of corn, take care of it, and keep records. The seed corn that I was to plant was tested in school previous to planting, and I also studied about corn during the winter. On the first of April all the agricultural classes were let out to begin their project work. Manure had been applied during the winter and finished during the early spring months, making an average of fourteen (seventy-bushel manure spreader) loads to the acre. The land was plowed in the spring as soon as the ground was dry enough to work, at an average depth of seven inches. Later the land was disked and gone over with a spring-tooth harrow and once with a smoothing harrow to conserve moisture. The seeding was done at the time the land was disked and harrowed. The corn was checked in at the rate of three kernels to each hill, and for the whole field it took three-fourths of a bushel of Minnesota No. 13 seed corn.

The corn was cultivated three times lengthwise and two times across, which makes a total of five cultivations. It was cultivated the first time before the corn was up and then, as soon as it was two weeks old, it was cross-cultivated as close to the hills as possible without injuring the roots. The corn land was cultivated with a two-horse riding cultivator with six shovels, three on each side of the corn row. The corn was harvested with a corn binder that ties in bundles, and is similar to a grain binder. The corn shocks contained twenty bundles to each shock. There were one hundred and thirty shocks of corn to the whole field. About the first of September I started to select seed corn, which was a slow but interesting job, because I could make good use of what I had learned in school about judging and selecting the best ears of corn. I picked during three days fifteen hundred ears, which made about ten bushels. The corn was selected before cutting.

"The best method of drying seed corn is in a well ventilated room with windows open and plenty of air. The room in the house that I stored my seed corn in is large enough to hold fifteen bushels of corn and there is room enough to move around without any trouble. All the seed corn that I picked was tied on lines that run

across the whole room and fastened to the wall by staples on screws. I left the husks on the ears so as to make it more convenient for tying. The purpose of stringing the seed corn on these lines is to prevent the rats from eating and injuring the corn."

GETTING STARTED

H. J. Olin, of Rochester, Minn., writes: "We are just starting project work here. Just now we are visiting such farms as Mayowood, Graham-holm, and Haling. The first two have dairy stock and the last Poland China pigs. The pupils have animal husbandry, dairying, poultry, horticulture, shop work, English, mathematics, penmanship, spelling, and gymnasium. We receive nothing but encouragement here. All boys who care to work for board and room are located in excellent places. We have the coöperation of the county superintendent, senior and junior high school principals, secretaries of civic and commerce associations, and Child Welfare League, W. C. T. U., Y. M. C. A., and rural pastors.

THE LOCAL PAPER

The Visitor wishes to commend the suggestion, made in a news item of this issue, that the agricultural instructor should use the local paper to advance the cause of agricultural education in the community. Some of the features which he may include in his contributions to the press are as follows: Project results and stories, club activities, field trips, lists of new bulletins and books, original discussions of local farm problems, rural meetings properly recorded, school-room events, examples of coöperation between farm homes of former pupils, progress in local farming conditions and results noted, editorials of a "boosting" spirit on farmers' coöperative organizations, rural recreation, good roads, consolidation of schools, etc.