

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Vol. XIX

NOVEMBER, 1931

No. 3

Minnesota Boy Awarded "American Farmer" Degree*

Norman Goodwin, graduate of the Austin (Minnesota) High School, has the honor of being the first boy from Minnesota to be elected to the degree of "American Farmer" in the national organization of the Future Farmers of America.

In choosing candidates for the degree, state organizations may submit one candidate for each one thousand members in the state organization. Not more than seventy-five candidates may be elected to this degree annually.

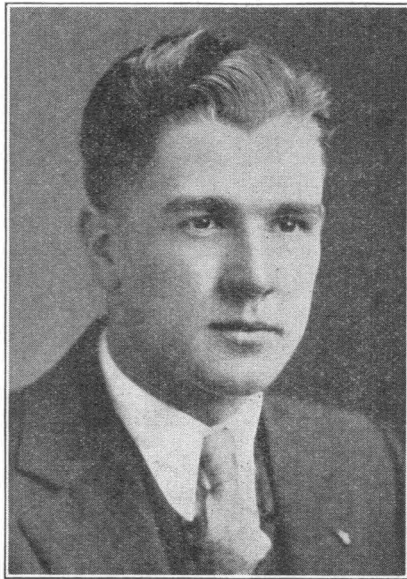
Through several years of vocational education in agriculture in school and on the farm, Norman Goodwin has attained successively his "Green Hand" rank, the rank of "Future Farmer," the degree of "State Farmer," and in a ceremony at Kansas City in November at the National meeting of the Future Farmers of America, he was awarded the "American Farmer" degree and was presented with a gold key insignia.

Norman has attained numerous honors in agricultural work. He placed first in the state high school judging contest of dairy cattle in 1929. As a result, he represented Minnesota at the national judging contest at St. Louis that year and won second place in judging Ayrshires and fourth in judging Holsteins. Because of his high scholastic standing, his leadership in responsible positions, and achievement under the supervision of W. G. Weigand of the Austin high school agriculture department, he was given the degree of "State Farmer" in 1930, and nominated as the Minnesota candidate for the degree of "American Farmer" at the 1931 annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America.

Under the direction of Mr. Weigand, Norman has had three years of vocational agriculture. During that time he was an active member in the high school agricultural club which existed before the local F. F. A. Chapter was organ-

ized, and held the office of secretary and treasurer during 1928 and 1929. Later a local F. F. A. chapter was organized and Norman became its president for the following year.

The close relationship between the father and son on a farm and the value of cooperation between them is recognized in the Chapter. During the year



NORMAN GOODWIN
Minnesota's "American Farmer"

of Norman's presidency the members of the Chapter gave two father-and-son banquets. Six boys competed in a local public speaking contest and the winner received a trip to the State Contest to represent the Austin F. F. A. Chapter. That same year the Chapter sponsored a booth which received first place at the Mower County fair. The chapter held "green hand" initiations in the high school gymnasium and at the home of a member where they featured an outdoor ceremony.

In his busy program of leadership and project work, Norman not only found

* This entire issue of the Visitor is devoted to a recognition of the achievements of Norman Goodwin, a student of agriculture in the high school, a member of the Future Farmers of America, and a real American farm boy.

THE VISITOR

Published monthly by the Division of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

Entered as second class matter at the post-office at St. Paul, Minn., under the act of August 24, 1912.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized August 2, 1918.

THE STAFF

A. V. STORM

A. M. FIELD

V. E. NYLIN

time to hold the presidency of the Austin 4-H Club for two years, but also to organize a 4-H Club in his community at Udolpho. At the present time he is president of the Junior Leaders Club of Mower county. These are all organizations for farm boys. In 1930 he was chosen as a member of the board of directors of the state association of Future Farmers of America to serve for three years, and last spring he was elected treasurer of this association. Through the merit of the work he had carried on up to this time, Norman was elected to the third degree, that of "State Farmer."

Besides his leadership in agricultural work, he served in his community church in the capacity of president of the Red Oak Grove Young People's Society. In the high school he was secretary of the Manual Arts Club.

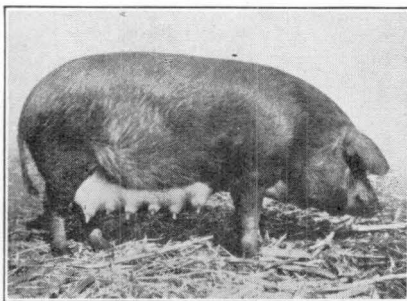
Practical results formed the important part of Norman's activities. In cooperation with his father, he has helped to place the home farm on a profitable basis and to improve the quality of their work. For a period of three years he tested his father's dairy herd, weeding out the poor producers, and finally, through a program of better feeding, increased the production of the herd over one hundred pounds of butterfat per cow. And what cow would not produce when her keeper raises fields of sweet clover for pasture and fragrant alfalfa for hay?

Scientific methods of increasing grain production were employed—the soil was tested for acidity and seed was inoculated before seeding. Norman also tried new varieties of seed grain and introduced the practice of treating grain for smut.

Tumble-down orchards, however picturesque they may be when in bloom, cannot compare with the heavy harvest yield of apples after Norman pruned and cared for the apple trees.

The hogs on the Goodwin farm have "gone modern" and now live in a remodeled hog house with cement feeding

floors and arrangements for sanitation. Vitamins and calories are highly important in their diet. The Goodwins enrolled in a pork production contest and Norman kept a complete "hog diary" for the pigs and fed them a balanced ration. In 1929, Norman raised as one of his farm projects, a ton-litter of ten pigs weighing 2443 pounds at 180 days, and sold them at a net profit of \$84.67. He also put in a three-acre plot of alfalfa for pasture for the pigs. The following year he purchased a purebred sow and



Norman selected a good sow as foundation stock for the swine herd.

raised a breeding litter, and of this litter and sow he now has twenty-eight pigs, aside from those sold. In all, he raised a ton-litter and also a fall litter which together brought a net income of \$114.71.

His project for 1931 was the raising of pigs from his purebred sow as foundation stock, and this spring he raised thirty-two pigs. Of this sow and three gilts he has sold five barrows and two boars bringing him \$94.12. He says he is going to sell the rest of the gilts for breeding stock.

The dairy barn became a cheery and efficient place in which to work when, in the farm-improvement program, they added a few more windows, a cement floor, and steel stanchions. He purchased a dairy cow for \$80 which produced 454.9 pounds of butterfat in a year, bringing him \$157.29. The cost of her feed was \$72.62, leaving him a profit of \$84.67. Within the first year, then, his cow had more than paid for herself.

As in all well organized and well operated institutions, a complete set of records is kept of the farm. Costs and profits are definite, not vague approximations. Comparisons can be made from year to year, and progress noted or unprofitable methods remedied.

In an experiment with five acres of wheat and flax and a plot of canning

peas, Norman obtained good results. As a farm project, he raised alfalfa and a seed corn plot of five acres in 1928. To obtain the best possible results, they used commercial fertilizer for corn. Plans were made for a definite five year crop rotation on the Goodwin farm—red clover in 1931; flax, or corn in 1932; corn in 1933; grain in 1934, and grain in 1935.

The poultry received its share of the benefits in the remodeling and increased production program. A straw loft was placed in the poultry house, as well as in the hog house, and Norman culled the poultry flock.

In the matter of thrift, he has carried out another aim of the organization. His careful selection and breeding of livestock has resulted in real profits. According to his own evaluation, he now has three purebred Duroc Jersey brood-sows which are valued at \$90, thirty-two hogs at \$383, a self hog feeder at \$25, one Holstein cow at \$80 and a calf valued at \$25 which amounts to a total of \$604 that he has in farm investments, plus the cash surrender value of a life insurance policy which is \$288.12 and \$207.72 which he has on deposit in the bank. The sum total makes his net valuation \$1099.84.

Norman's scholarship in high school did not suffer from his heavy program of farm practice and project work, and his extra curricular activities. In a graduation class of 154, his standing placed him in the upper one-fourth of the class with an average scholarship grade of 87.53 for the four years.

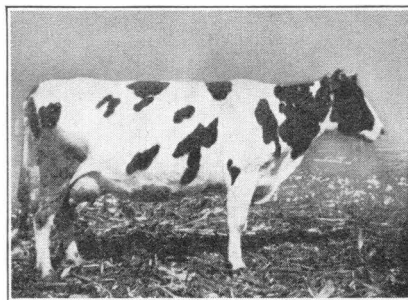
Having achieved in a measure the objectives of the F. F. A. organization by carrying on an extensive program of farm improvement, by stimulating in himself, his family, and fellow-workers a love of country life and a greater respect for an occupation which has suffered from neglect, and having met the standards set up for the fourth degree, Norman Goodwin has set an example for all Future Farmers whose purpose it is to overcome ignorance, selfishness, waste, and isolation.

The insignia which Norman will wear mounted on a key indicative of his fourth degree, is made up of four symbols: a cross section of an ear of corn, representing common agricultural interests since corn is native to America and is grown in every state; the owl, representing wisdom; the plow, representing tillage of the soil, the basis of all agriculture; and the rising sun, representing progress.

For him, as well as for other F. F. A. members, farming is on the way to the ideal—a profession in which degrees are earned through achievement—modern science and progressive thought applied to an age-old occupation. To him it is not the haphazard, hit-or-miss vocation to be thought of in connection with "boors, peasants, and those men fitted for nothing else." He brings to farming a mind alert to progressive methods and trained to handle farming problems just as men in professions are trained in their particular fields.

Living up to the Creed of the Future Farmers, Norman Goodwin believes "in the future of farming, with a faith born not of words but of deeds"—he believes in his "own ability to work efficiently and think clearly and in the ability of organized farmers to serve our own and the public interest in marketing the product of our toil in the promise of better days through better ways" for the farmer. His belief has resulted in activities, his activities in practical results.

The Future Farmers of America is an organization officered, operated, and controlled by farm boys for farm boys. It is a non-profit corporation designed to recognize and to encourage the natural instinctive tendencies of boys to organize them-



This cow returned her original cost plus 5.83 per cent interest the first year.

selves into gangs or groups. The purpose of the organization is to promote the study of vocational agriculture and to encourage the boys to improve the quality of their work both in school and at home; to create more interest in the intelligent choice of farming occupations; to create and nurture a love of country life; to provide recreational and educational entertainment for Future Farmers of America; to promote thrift by membership through the establishment of savings accounts, and investments in

agricultural enterprises; to afford a medium of co-operative buying and selling; to establish the confidence of the farm boy in himself and his work; to promote scholarship, and to develop local leadership.

There are four possible degrees of achievement for the boys who become members of the Future Farmers of America. In general, the various degrees are awarded for achievement in scholarship, thrift, leadership, accomplishment in farm practice, moral character, and community service. "Green Hand," the first degree, is conferred upon the boys as part of the initiatory ceremonies for membership. These "Green Hands" are told in their ceremony that "The first farmer was the first man and all historic nobility rests on possession and use of lands."

When a boy has been a member of the F. F. A. for one year and has accomplished the goals set up for the second degree, he may be voted a Future Farmer by the local chapter. The third degree, Minnesota Farmer, is conferred by the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America when the boys have met the standards of achievement set up for the third degree. The fourth degree, American Farmer, is conferred by the National Association at the time of the annual convention of the National Congress of Future Farmers of America.

The candidate for the American Farmer degree must have accomplished successfully a rather broad program of activities. He must complete at least two years of agricultural work in high school; he must be an active member and leader in the local Future Farmers of America Chapter; he must have attained the degree of state farmer; he must have carried on a broad farm practice program; he must expect to follow agriculture as a vocation and be vitally interested in its future; he must have earned and deposited in a bank or otherwise productively invested at least \$500; he must have maintained good morals and must show a good scholastic record in high school.

The plan of organization for the Future Farmers of America includes a local chapter for each high school where vocational agriculture is taught. The local chapters operate under a state charter and a state constitution. The various state organizations operate under a national charter, thus giving the entire program the dignity, scope, and stability it needs to assure its success. At the

present time, forty-six states in the United States and the Territory of Hawaii have organized associations affiliated with the American Association of the Future Farmers of America. There are 2,500 local chapters with a total membership of over 50,000 boys.

The Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America has at the present time twenty-six local chapters scattered throughout the state, each in an enterprising community where a department of vocational agriculture is maintained in the high school.

The Future Farmers of America organization has many of the merits of the 4-H club movement, which is doing such effective work in making rural life more interesting and meaningful to boys and girls. It has likewise many of the characteristics of the Boy Scout work. In fact, the Future Farmers of America, if carefully developed, will do for the farm boys what the Boy Scout movement is doing for the urban boys.

The organization, if functioning properly, will afford an excellent opportunity to teach vocational students some of the fundamental principles of group leadership. Boys are taught how to conduct their own meetings in a businesslike manner and how to organize their activities so that definite worthwhile results may be achieved.

As a group, farm folk have been relatively slow to recognize the value of instruction in agriculture as a sound basis for progress in modern scientific farming techniques. The idea of learning how to farm in classrooms or from books has not met with the wholehearted approval of farmers in the past. Skillful doctors, efficient lawyers, and competent business men are products of school preparation and there is no reason why successful farmers cannot be prepared as a result of school experiences.

The pioneer farmers naturally had to learn to farm through the slow and wasteful trial and error method. In the days of grandfather, there was very little reliable information available about the science and art of farming. Years of cumulative practical experiences enriched by results from scientific investigations have made available an abundance of information that was unknown a few years ago. Boys who study agriculture in the high school have the opportunity to know at twenty what farmers of the past learned over a period of forty years in the school of experience. The Future Farmers of America are getting off to a good start.