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A Sermonette to Agriculture Teachers

The above title is not a football signal but a reminder that fall is the season of the year when Minnesota's army of boys and girls turn to the thoughts of school. Some naturally think of starting school as the end of a pleasant summer vacation, while others think of it as the beginning of another year of opportunities. Whatever the new school year will mean to these young people depends upon the teachers. The old saying "as is the teacher so is the school" holds true for teachers of agriculture as well as for teachers in other fields. Let each teacher, therefore, resolve now to make this the best year in the history of his experience and in the experience of the young people enrolled for instruction in agriculture.

To make 1933-34 the banner year means better planning, longer or more intensive hours of work, more thorough daily preparation, more time on creative thinking, more sympathetic understanding of individual student needs, and more co-operation with contributing agencies interested in the better education of rural youth.

Just more *hard work*, however, is no assurance that greater success will be achieved in teaching. There must be an intelligent application of sound principles and improved practices. Teachers must put their *heads* as well as their hearts into the activities of teaching. To be a better teacher, one must think better teaching. But merely thinking about better teaching is not sufficient. There must be an avenue for appropriate expression of the new and improved ideas. Teachers are what they are because they experience what they think about teaching.

And what a teacher thinks about the problems of teaching is an all important element of success in teaching. A teacher's thoughts may be the steps on the ladder he climbs to the pinnacle of success, or they may be the skids on which he slips to pedagogical oblivion. Therefore, it might be said that whether a teacher is going up or coming down depends on the quality of his thought and the set of his mental gears. Ability to keep going up the long, steep grade to successful teaching depends on the moral courage,

the mental power, and the quality of the ideas that guide the course. As a teacher thinketh, so is he and so is his school.

An important factor that will contribute to the value of the school year for the students is, therefore, the quality of the teaching that is done in each school.

Selection of Materials for Study

A properly conceived and rightly administered school system provides a broad and well balanced program of education for its students. The phase of education in which teachers of agriculture are most specifically interested is that part which aims to more adequately prepare young people to live a happy, useful and satisfying life in the country. Farming is a complex occupation that reaches into practically every social and economic activity experienced by human beings. To include and attempt to teach or study all the available information and all the known experiences a farm boy needs in order to become even a moderately successful farmer would be an impossible undertaking. The problem for the teacher is to select and teach thoroughly those materials and experiences which are of most value to the individual students. The usual basis for making selection of teaching content has been farm surveys, bulletins, books, personal experiences, and course of study outlines. This procedure naturally packed the courses with production materials. The present agricultural situation rather forcibly brings to our attention the fact that a shift in emphasis is desirable and necessary. During this adjustment period it appears that teachers might well put more emphasis on human values and less on material things. With this point of view in mind, there should be less time and attention given to the objectives that have to do with making a living and more time given to the objectives that concern the processes of living a life in the country. In other words a shift should be made so as to place less emphasis on economic values and more on social values.

The period that agriculture as a mode of life is passing through seems to give

cial groups. The F. F. A. furnishes this long-felt need in communities where a department of vocational agriculture is maintained in the high school.

Membership

The state constitution of the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America makes provision for membership of boys who are enrolled for instruction in agriculture in the all-day schools or in the part-time classes. Former students are eligible to active memberships any time during the three years after they complete the high school work in agriculture. Former agriculture students who have not been enrolled in agriculture classes during the past three years are eligible to associate membership.

According to the national constitution, girls are not eligible to membership. Chapters of the F. F. A. cannot be organized in schools where a department of vocational agriculture is not maintained.

Working Equipment

Local chapters should be provided with the equipment and materials necessary to carry on the F. F. A. work with efficiency and dignity. Several copies of the official manual should be available for the local chapter officers. The manuals can be secured from the Farm Journal, Philadelphia, Pa. The price is fifteen cents per copy. A copy of the Proceedings of the Fifth National Convention of the Future Farmers of America may be secured by writing to W. A. Ross, Executive Secretary, Future Farmers of America, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C.

H. C. Groseclose, Treasurer of the National Association of the F. F. A., has prepared a handy guide for use in organizing and conducting chapters of the Future Farmers of America. The Handbook should be a valuable help to advisers and officers of local chapters. It contains detailed information on organizing chapters and planning chapter activities. The handbook can be secured from the French-Bray Printing Company, Washington, D.C. The price is twenty-five cents.

Other helpful materials such as emblem stickers, buttons, banners, letterheads, membership cards, uniforms and official jewelry may be secured from the following sources. Teachers should write to each of these companies for a list of the materials they have available for the F. F. A. chapters.

Sources of materials for F. F. A. :
L. G. Balfour Company, Attleboro, Mass.
Beverley Mfg. Co., Staunton, Va.
St. Louis Button Co., St. Louis, Mo.
Pool Manufacturing Co., Sherman, Tex.
The French-Bray Printing Co., Washington, D.C.

NEW DEPARTMENTS

Those who fear that agriculture is at the end of the trail will be interested to know that the program for instruction in agriculture in the high school is still on the highway of progress. In spite of the many discouraging situations confronting the farmers the idea prevails that education is an important factor in gaining recovery. To this end, six new departments are added to the 1933-34 list for Minnesota.

The following is a roll of the enterprising communities that have recognized the right of rural youth to a thorough, practical education in the field of their major interest by adding the opportunities furnished by a department of vocational agriculture to their school offerings:

Community	Teacher of Agriculture
Alango (P.O. Angora)	Leo Fenske
Big Fork	R. B. Widdifield
Carlton	Ralph Backstrom
Clara City	Enock Bjuge
Crosby-Ironton	R. C. Roth
Howard Lake	Erwin Draheim

The Visitor is pleased to note a steady increase in the interest shown by educators and school patrons in the development of appropriate educational opportunities for rural folk. Agriculture is the dominant industry in Minnesota. Therefore vocational education in agriculture should be accorded a prominent place in the program of education for Minnesota's rural youth. Being born and reared in the country is no assurance that a person will become a successful farmer. Good farms may be inherited but good farming techniques must be learned. Schools are maintained to the end that young people may have an opportunity to learn something that will be useful in living a life and making a living. Agriculture in the high school is designed to provide the kind of education considered appropriate for those who plan to enter farming or one of its related occupations. During the past year there were 2,956 rural boys and girls enrolled for instruction in agriculture in Minnesota high schools. These young people were working under the direction of well trained

teachers of agriculture who specialize in the education and leadership of rural boys and girls. But the number of rural youth who are receiving this all-year guidance from teachers of agriculture is only a fraction of those who should have this leadership brought to them. Those who are interested in rural youth are hopeful that the near future will make it possible for all the Minnesota boys and girls who are interested in agriculture to have the leadership and sympathetic guidance of a teacher whose speciality is agriculture. It is encouraging, therefore, to note the increase in the number of schools that are giving recognition to the practical educational needs of the group it serves.

IMPROVED HOUSEKEEPING

Among the striking changes noted by the writer on his visits to many agriculture departments during the summer are the marked improvements in the appearance of the agriculture rooms. The old idea of cluttering up the walls with poorly prepared, dried up samples of weeds, grain, and grasses has given way to the plan of using a few good pictures. Commercial charts and gaudy commercial pictures have been catalogued and filed away for use when needed. Seed corn racks, seed testers, incubators, model barns, miniature self feeders, and similar equipment materials are stored and are brought into the class rooms only when they are needed for teaching purposes. This is a change that is much appreciated by the superintendents as well as the students. One of the boys we visited said with a great deal of pride, "You ought to see our agriculture room. It has been cleaned and the tables have been varnished and it looks swell." The old idea of attempting to give the room an agricultural atmosphere by cluttering it up with "agricultural stuff" has given way to the idea of making the room a pleasant and restful place in which to do intellectual work. The environment in which students work is a far reaching, silent character-building agency too frequently overlooked by teachers.

There is no reason why the agriculture room should not be as well "tailored" as any room in the school. Perhaps the twenty-one points listed in the January, 1932, issue of *The Visitor* have been helpful in making the improvements. At any rate, the teachers are to be congratulated on the new deal for the boys and girls who are taking agriculture this year.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Agricultural and Business Law for the Farmer is the title of the new booklet prepared and published by V. O. Braun, 210 Matthews Building, Owosso, Michigan. The booklet contains much interesting and valuable legal information that should be helpful to those who wish to become better informed regarding the essential legal problems relating to farm and its operations. The price is twenty-five cents.

Mowers, by C. O. Reed. A complete treatise on the care, adjustment and use of mowers. This is the first of a series of modern studies in agriculture that can be secured by writing to C. O. Reed, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. The price is 40 cents.

Farm Poultry Production, L. E. Card and Melvin Henderson. This is a well written and valuable handbook for students who are interested in better poultry production. The Interstate Printing Co., 132 N. Walnut St., Danville, Ill. Price, \$1.60.

Handbook on Teaching Vocational Agriculture. L. Cook. A new and up-to-date book on methods of teaching agriculture that should be helpful to teachers. The Interstate Printing Co., Danville, Ill. Price, \$3.00.

Work-Units in Horticulture, by L. R. Stanley, A. L. Knoblauch, and L. N. Rosecrans. A helpful guide in teaching with emphasis on the unit method of instruction. This is a book written by teachers of agriculture. J. B. Lippincott Co., Chicago.

Work-Units in Farm Crops and Soils, by B. A. Walpole. A book written from the standpoint of the problems involved in developing an intelligent attitude toward producing and managing crop plants. J. B. Lippincott Co., Chicago.

Prices, by G. F. Warren and F. A. Pearson. Students, teachers, and farmers will find many interesting and stimulating materials in the revised edition of *Prices*. At least one copy should be in each department. Published by John Wiley and Sons, New York. The cost per copy is \$3.90.

Profitable Farming, Hover and Pittman. Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago. \$1.00.

Forestry and School Studies, E. V. Jotter. University of Michigan Press. Inquiries should be mailed to either the Extension Division or to the School of Forestry and Conservation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.