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OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION IN THE INTEGRATED COURSE OF STUDY IN AGRICULTURE

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The following excerpt from an article in one of the prominent rural periodicals is suggestive of the challenge being made to rural agencies and educators to provide vocational guidance to rural youth.¹

"Through long experience, Future Farmer Chapters, 4-H Clubs and other agencies working with rural youth have become versed in the techniques of helping those who so desire, to become efficient farmers and homemakers and have become adept in methods of promoting a better understanding and appreciation of country life. But to what extent are they willing to adapt their programs so as to furnish guidance in other than agricultural and homemaking pursuits and to help those people who must leave the farms?" The author then poses these provocative questions: "Who is to furnish rural youth with the vocational information they deeply need and earnestly desire? Who is to apply scientific testing methods to determine which young people are best fitted to become farmers and which are the most likely to succeed in urban trades? To whom should the ambitious rural boy or girl go for guidance when he or she honestly wishes to decide what occupation other than farming would be congenial as a life work?"

The teacher of agriculture is accepting the challenge. He, as a vocational teacher, has among other responsibilities that of administering vocational guidance to the rural youth with whom he is in daily contact. While there can be no sharp line between the functions of instruction and guidance, until recent years in agriculture teaching, the latter has been rather intangibly sifted into the training and establishment of farm boys in farming. Today, the agriculture teacher, though his chief responsibility is the

training of boys for farming, is discovering that establishment in that occupation is a "much more acute problem than when free land of the west afforded most of the rural youth opportunity to establish homes and accumulate wealth."²

With the inclusion of a more tangible guidance in his program the teacher of agriculture has had to adjust somewhat his philosophy of teaching agriculture. He has had to recognize that emphasis is now, not upon the teaching of the subject of agriculture, but the training of the individual for life and the teaching of farming as a way of living. He no longer assumes that his responsibilities end with the teaching of manipulative approved practices in farming, but he develops in his students the realization that to farm successfully the farmer must have knowledge of social and economic problems as well.³ He no longer assumes that production alone is the key word to successful farming. He realizes that with the frontiers of expansion long since closed the farmer is now facing a world of great specialization and competition with accompanying economic and social problems. The teacher of agriculture discusses these problems with his students in his answer to their question as to what occupation to choose for a life work. He helps to analyze with them the qualifications and training an individual should have to be successful in farming. He determines with them the opportunities to become established in farming. He helps them to discover their aptitudes and abilities and to make full use of them. His approach is, as yet, mostly subjective. Some agriculture teachers are using the scientific testing methods mentioned in the above article, but in this field there is a crying need for much more research and study.

The teacher no longer assumes that all the boys in his agriculture classes will be able to become farmers, though he desires to give those best fitted for that

² Baker, O. E. *The Outlook for Rural Youth*. USDA Extension Service Circular. 1935.

³ Cline, R. W. *Some Implications of the Democratic Ideal for a Program of Agricultural Education*. Agricultural Education Magazine, February 1938.

¹ Exton, E. *Vocational Guidance: A Way Out for Rural Youth*. Rural America, November 1937. p. 7.

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occupation the kind of training that will enable them to be successful. He has long since faced the fact that many students will not be able to farm or own farms. He realizes that probably not more than one-half of the farm boys will be able to become established in farming; that at least half of them must find a livelihood in some vocation other than farming.⁴ He knows that his vocational training program in order to be efficient must be founded upon a program of vocational guidance. Indeed there is "grave question as to the validity of promoting a program of vocational training unless it is founded upon a program of vocational guidance."⁵

With guidance as an essential element in the program of vocational agriculture, the first year of agriculture must be broadly vocational. In the first year, the teacher orients the boy to the high school, gives him educational guidance, gives him intelligent counselling and provides an opportunity for him through the study of agriculture as a vocation to lay a foundation upon which he can make an intelligent educational and occupational choice for his second year. A choice of agriculture made on this basis is the best indication that here is the boy who has interest in farming, the necessary abilities and aptitudes and the opportunity and determination to become established in that occupation. Selection is the essence of an efficient program of vocational training. What an opportunity for the teacher, then, to develop such a group of selected boys to become the agricultural leaders in their respective communities!

The teacher of agriculture no longer assumes that vocational training can be

hammered into young heads without regard to the individual's maturation, background experiences and interest. He concedes that most farm boys fresh from the eighth grade, still tender in years, need some exploration before vocational training can be fully efficient. He recognizes individual differences and finds that it is natural for young people to wish to be informed concerning their intelligence, personality, aptitudes, physical traits and manual skills. And from this exploration many of his students will select farming as the occupation most nearly fitting their aptitudes, interests and abilities, and plan toward establishment as farmers. They will complete their high school course in agriculture and continue to increase their knowledge and experiences in the part-time and evening school; others will gain an understanding of agricultural occupations related to farming where their interests and background of farm experience and training will be valuable assets in placement in such occupations and will look forward to and train for service as county agents, teachers of agriculture, agronomists, land bank officers, corn breeders, livestock specialists, farm machinery dealers or for similar services. They too will complete their high school agriculture training, many going on to an agricultural college. Others in the first year of agriculture will crystallize the realization that their interests and abilities may be better utilized in occupations not related to agriculture. These boys may find the commercial, manual arts or academic high school courses better suited to their plans; their experience in agriculture serving the valuable role of elimination of a possible unwise occupational choice and the development of appreciation of the dignity, wholesomeness and importance of agriculture and the interpenetration of rural and urban interests. With such a program the teacher of agriculture has taken the first step toward the fulfillment of his responsibility for vocational guidance, the "process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter upon it and progress in it."⁶

Occupational information is incorporated in various ways into the course of study by the teacher of agriculture. Some excellent suggestions are made by H. M. Byram in "Occupations for the Agriculturally Trained."⁷

⁴ Merritt, Eugene. *The Opportunity in Agriculture for the Farm Boy*. Ext. Circ. No. 264. USDA, Washington, D.C.

⁵ Report of Advisory Committee on Vocational Education, U. S. Gov't. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1938.

⁶ Ross, W. A. "Guidance in Vocational Agriculture." *Agricultural Educ. Magazine*, August 1939.

⁷ Byram, H. M. "Occupations for the Agriculturally Trained." *Collegiate Press*, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. 1936.

The integrated course of study in agriculture as developed by A. M. Field⁸ is admirably suited to the incorporation of occupational information, predicated upon the assumption that all farm boys in high school would be enrolled in Agriculture I (ninth grade). In the integrated course of study the work in agriculture is regarded as continuous, extending over the four years of high school. The organization permits the development of a program of instruction based upon the needs, abilities, interests and experience of the boy as he progresses in high school work. Thus opportunity is afforded to integrate all the enterprises on the farm as well as other subject matter fields and activities. The plan also lends itself to individualized instruction and fosters creative abilities on the part of the students. Agriculture I includes in addition to the study of farming enterprises, introduction to the broad importance and interdependence of agriculture, and an appreciation of the opportunities in farming and related occupations. Thus, attention is given to occupational information, orientation and occupational study and counselling. The practice activities carried on in connection with the class-room work provide actual vocational experience, which is essential to any well-founded program of occupational guidance. The student in the second year of agriculture is selected, then, on the basis of interests and ability. He is ready now to go ahead with a more intensive vocational training in agriculture. Agriculture III and IV are continuations of Agriculture I and II, except that the content and problems are more complex and the work more individualized in training in the selected field and adaptation to home conditions. Intelligent counselling and guidance, however, will continue throughout the entire course in accordance with the needs of the students.

Occupational Information References

One of the problems connected with vocational guidance is that of finding information about occupations. This is especially true in the field of agricultural occupations, though some excellent material has recently been prepared. Some of the information is in books, but an important part of it exists in the form of pamphlets and monographs. The following list of references includes some of the more recent publications. Much

of the material would be of value to the school library and the agricultural library should contain a representative sampling of it. One may well raise the question as to the breadth of occupational information in the agriculture course. It is the belief of the author that in the study of occupations the agriculture course of study should deal primarily with those related to agriculture. Although conceivably a farm boy may become a doctor, merchant or bricklayer, he may well first analyze the occupational opportunities and requirements wherein his background of farm experience would be an asset. Here the knowledge and experience of the teacher of agriculture provides intelligent guidance, definitely within his field of training. Other curricular offerings in high school, such as manual arts, business training and academic courses, may provide occupational information within their fields. The following list of references, therefore, is confined to agricultural occupations. Most of the references on specific occupations include the importance of the occupation, qualifications necessary, education needed, earning, miscellaneous information and bibliographies.

Books

- Baker, Gladys. *The County Agent*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago Ill. 1939.
- Bennett, M. E. *Building Your Life*. McGraw-Hill Co., New York. 1935.
- Bennett, G. V. and Older, F. E. *Occupational Orientation*. Society for Occupational Research, Los Angeles. 1931.
- Bjur, George. *Choosing a Career*. Farrar and Rinehart, New York. 1934.
- Boss, Wilson and Petersen. *American Farming*. Agr. I. Webb Book Publishing Co., St. Paul. 1939.
- Chapman, Paul. *Occupational Guidance*. Turner-Smith Co., Atlanta, Ga. 1937.
- DeKruif, Paul. *Microbe Hunters*. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York. 1932.
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- Ivans and Winship. *Fifty Famous Farmers*. The Macmillan Co., New York. 1925.

⁸ Field, A. M. *The Type of Farming Set-Up for Teaching Agriculture*. Dept. of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota.

- Kitson, Harry D. *I Find My Vocation*. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. 1931.
- Lord, Russel. *Men of Earth*. Longmans, Green and Co., New York. 1931.
- Myers, George. *Planning Your Future*. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. 1934.
- Peattie, Donald C. *Green Laurels: The Lives and Achievements of the Great Naturalists*. Simon and Schuster, New York. 1936.
- Rosengarten, William. *Choosing Your Life Work*. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. 1936.
- Schmidt, Sarah L. *New Land*. Robert M. McBride and Co., New York. 1933. (Fiction).
- Teaching (Wisconsin)
Growing, Marketing and Processing Corn (Nebraska)
- Occupational Monographs. Science Research Association, 600 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.
- Jobs in Rural Journalism
Specialized Agriculture
- Occupations, 551 Fifth Ave., New York. Reprints. 10 cents each.
- Opportunities for the Farm Reared Boy—H. M. Byram
- The Veterinarian—Anonymous
- Vocational Guidance—Before and After College—Hattson
- What Farming Has To Offer American Youth—Chapman
- Teachers and Supply and Demand—Townsend
- Opportunities in Journalism—Hoppock
- Occupational Pamphlets. Occupational Index, Inc., New York University, Washington Square E., New York. 25 cents each, 15 cents for ten or more copies.
- Farming Teaching
Veterinarian Industrial Chemist
Landscape Gardening

Pamphlets and Bulletins

- Commonwealth Vocational Guidance Monographs. Commonwealth Book Co., 80 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill. Single copies \$1.00.
- No. 4, Market Gardening and Truck Farming
- No. 8, Stock Raising
- No. 12, Landscape Gardening and Tree Surgery
- No. 13, Nursery and Flower Growing
- No. 17, Poultry Raising
- No. 18, Beekeeping
- No. 19, Dairying
- Freeman, E. M. *Before and After College*. College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics, St. Paul, Minn. Free.
- Institute for Research, 537 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 75 cents each.
- No. 1, Selecting a Career
- No. 3, Biological Work as a Career
- No. 13, Landscape Architecture as a Career
- No. 16, Chemistry as a Career
- No. 19, Journalism as a Career
- No. 20, General Agriculture as a Career
- No. 21, Horticulture as a Career
- No. 22, Animal Husbandry as a Career
- No. 23, Forestry as a Career
- No. 45, Statistical Work as a Career
- No. 50, Recreational Leadership as a Career
- No. 52, Teaching as a Career
- No. 53, Farm Management as a Career
- No. 58, Careers in Government Service
- No. 59, Careers in the Florist Industry
- No. 71, Veterinary Medicine as a Career
- No. 79, Dairy Farming as a Career
- No. 80, Careers in the Dairy Products Industry
- National Youth Administration, 1734 New York St., N. W., New York. Free.
- Butter Industry (Wisconsin)
- Cheese Industry (Wisconsin)
- Dairying (Wisconsin)
- Farming (Illinois)
- Forestry (Wisconsin)
- Ice Cream Manufacturing (Wisconsin)
- Landscape (Wisconsin)
- Meat Packing (Illinois)
- Plant Pathology (Georgia)
- Soil Science (Georgia)
- Success Vocational Guidance Monographs. Morgan-Dillon Co., 5154 Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Vocational Information Series. 30 cents single copies.
- Biological Work Journalism
Civil Service Landscape Gardening
Dairying Market Gardening
Farming and Truck
Floristry Farming
Forestry Stock Raising
Industrial Chemistry
- U. S. Office of Education, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.
- Bulletin 167, "The Earning Ability of Farmers Who Have Received Vocational Training"
- Bulletin 188, "Young Men in Farming"
- Guidance Leaflets: Forestry, Journalism and Veterinary Medicine
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
- Misc. Publication, No. 249 "Careers in Forestry"
- Extension Circular No. 223 "The Outlook for Rural Youth"
- Extension Service Circular 224 "Farming as a Life Work"

Periodicals

- Christie, Harold E. "Vocations Allied to Agriculture." *Epsworth Herald*, Chicago, Ill. May 20, 1939. 6 cents. (Including landscaping, research, sales, forest, plant and animal conservation.)
- Peattie, Donald C. "Careers in Nature." *Readers Digest*, Pleasantville, New York. November, 1938. 25 cents. Careers in botany and related occupations.
- "The Farming Future." *Your Future*, Columbus, Ohio. March 3, 1939. Farming conditions with special reference to income; advantages and disadvantages. 5 cents.
- Vocational Trends*, Chicago, Ill. 25 cents.
- "Farming Takes up Chemistry." January, 1939—opportunities in soilless Chemistry.
- "In Veterinary Medicine." March, 1939—supply, demand, earnings, training, schools. Admission requirements.
- "The Farmer Has a Son." April, 1939—problems facing rural youth; opportunities in occupations related to agriculture; solution to "hard sledding" lies in becoming above average in chosen field.
- "Living on Milk." May, 1937—duties, difficulties and training of dairymen.
- "Farming Is a Way of Life." June, 1939—satisfaction of farming despite small profits.