

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

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GREENER PASTURES IN MINNESOTA

Persons who are interested in the program for teaching agriculture in the secondary schools will find something to think about in the following remarks by Elmer Ziegenhagen at the annual conference for agriculture teachers. Mr. Ziegenhagen came to the University of Minnesota as a student with a very good background of practical experience in farming. He had four years of preparation in agriculture in the high school. He was a pioneer in the development of the FFA program in Minnesota. While a student in high school, he served as president of the local FFA chapter. In 1932, he was elected president of the State Association of Future Farmers of America and re-elected for a second year in 1933. After graduation from the University of Minnesota, he held the position as teacher of agriculture at North Branch, White Bear, and Worthington. During this time he continued his study as a graduate student and was awarded the Master of Science degree in 1941. In 1944 Mr. Ziegenhagen returned to the University as a member of the staff in Animal Husbandry. He plans to devote part of his time to study and research in the graduate school toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Animal Husbandry. His progress was made possible because he capitalized on his abilities by taking advantage of his opportunities for study and professional growth.

A.M.F.

Greener Pastures

ELMER ZIEGENHAGEN, University of Minnesota

When an individual gives up a certain type of work in favor of some other, it is often found that the change is made because "other pastures look greener." On first thought that would not seem to require any further explanation but actually there might be some point in analyzing, as it were, the viewpoint of persons leaving a profession such as that of teaching vocational agriculture. There are two reasons why I make this statement. First of all there are those who leave the profession because of certain dissatisfactions about the work. If it is true that the men who leave the profession because they are dissatisfied agree to any considerable extent as to the source of these dissatisfactions, it suggests that possibly there are things which might be improved, and that such improvements would bring about considerable benefits to the whole

program. One usually does not become dissatisfied about his work overnight. It is generally a cumulative type of thing which finally builds up to the point where it prompts some action. There can be no question that a person going through such a process of metamorphosis is handicapped in his work and his program suffers accordingly. I am not thinking so much about the fellow who becomes dissatisfied and soon leaves the profession and gets into some other field that is perhaps more to his liking. The bigger problem, as I see it, is that many of the men who stay in the profession for years are perhaps bothered by the same factors which eventually contribute to many another man choosing a different type of work. The "Old-timer" may be less susceptible to these irritations but just the same they do not contribute anything to his welfare or the quality of work he is doing. The point that I am trying to make here is that we might do well to try to discover what some of these "burs under the tail" are rather than take a passive attitude toward the situation. Stability within a profession contributes not only to the welfare of the profession itself, but also to each person who is engaged in the profession. I would suggest that more might be done in an effort to discover the reasons why teachers leave the profession. The results of such studies should be applied with the idea of making changes wherever possible so as to make the profession more attractive and thus contribute toward increased stability and pave the way to greater progress.

The second main reason why teachers voluntarily leave the profession is not that they are particularly dissatisfied with their work in vocational agriculture but rather that they see better opportunities elsewhere. It should go without saying that this is a healthy situation and certainly is to be encouraged. It would indeed be a sad situation if the caliber of vocational agriculture teachers in general were such that they were never sought by other fields. If you talk to the good agriculture teachers, who have been on the job for many years, you will find that they have all had a number of offers to go into other lines but have chosen to stay with their first love—teaching agriculture. Show me a man who is doing a real job of teaching agriculture, and I will show you a man who would do equally as good a job in most any other related field. Thus, even though top-notch men leaving the profession is in

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THE STAFF

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itself a weakening process, I believe that it is to the benefit of the profession to have a program which develops men who are good enough to find even better opportunities in other fields. Everything that can possibly be done should be done to encourage this.

I would like to enumerate some of the factors which are or might be contributing toward the development and improvement of teachers of agriculture to the extent where they are able to do a really effective job in teaching and also which contribute toward the opening up of other opportunities for what we will call advancement in other lines. This will also touch on those things which make for contentment and satisfaction of those who continue in the profession.

The problem must inevitably go back to the selection of high school graduates who are encouraged to go on in the field of agricultural education. I believe that generally the best teachers come up from the ranks as former vocational agriculture students and FFA members. That kind of experience is just as valuable for a prospective teacher as regular farm experience is for a boy who is going into farming. It follows then that, if we are going to have a continuous supply of men who are to join the profession and will be worthy additions, it is largely up to the present teachers to see that some of their best students, who have the prerequisite characteristics and abilities, get headed into the University training program in preparation for teaching agriculture. No matter what the administrators, or you as a professional organization do, you cannot get around the necessity of having good teacher material continually coming into the program.

The next step is to provide a good training program which will make available a constant supply of teachers that know what the job consists of and who will have the necessary abilities and experiences to be able to go out and do a good job without floundering around for several years in an effort to get their feet on the ground and find out what it is all about. There is no need for us to hesitate in saying that the training program has by no means been perfect in the past. It is encouraging to see that efforts

are continually being made to improve the training program. Most divisions recognize the importance of making adjustments in college courses which will better meet the needs of prospective teachers of vocational agriculture. If you, individually or as an organization, can contribute anything to the study that is being undertaken at the present time by the Department of Agricultural Education in an attempt to discover the strong points and deficiencies of the training program in the past with the thought of being ready to make such adjustments as might be necessary when we again get back to normal registration in the college, I am sure that you will be making a contribution which is very much worthwhile. Having had several years of experience with a practice teaching center, I might also add this comment that, in my opinion, one of the greatest deficiencies in the program in the past has been the fact that the supervised teaching experience program has been quite inadequate. That is no reflection on anyone in particular because it is no small job to set up a student teaching experience program that will tie in with the whole University curriculum and which will not interfere with the program in other divisions. Such changes come about rather slowly. I hope, however, that we are about at the stage where conditions are ripe for a change which will allow more time for this very important phase of the training program. In my opinion suggestions of a fifth year, which would be largely apprenticeship work, are not carrying the idea too far by any means. I feel confident that many good men have left the profession after one or two years of teaching simply because of the discouragements which resulted from lack of adequate preparation for the job, and which was caused by too short an apprenticeship teaching program while in college. Going back to the point I made earlier, all of us as teachers would have benefited by having these good men stay with the profession for a longer period of time than just a year or two.

Another point which I think adds immensely to the possibilities for growth and development of the individual and which keeps the door open to possibilities for advancement is following up on professional improvement work. Of course that is difficult in these times but in normal times I am convinced that the profession would benefit and so would also each individual if more teachers followed a systematic and well-planned program of graduate work. Not necessarily that the credits in themselves would mean so much but rather that a systematic program of study is definitely necessary to stimulate professional growth and to keep a person from going stale on the job.

The points which I have touched on thus far all deal more or less with problems which concern the individual teacher. I would like

to mention a few problems which pertain to you as an organization. I cannot visualize much progress being made as a profession if each individual teacher is left to feel that all that matters to him is what goes on in his own little sphere. The psychological effect of feeling that one belongs to a strong organization which is going places is of inestimable value. When you add to this the actual benefits which an organization can bring to its individual members, it appears to me to be one of the most effective forces of bringing about a sense of satisfaction about the work and of generating enthusiasm and promoting real progress.

Perhaps it is unfortunate that we have to depend on organizations to act more or less as pressure groups at times to bring about needed changes and adjustments. Fundamentally, though, I see no harm in pressure groups if they are rightly used. After all, they are a form of democracy in action. As such, I see the continued need for as strong an organization in this as in any other profession. If we keep an organization on sound principles and if we stay within the territory defined by our program, I do not think we need to be afraid of criticism. The fact remains that you men know your job better than anyone else. You must be strong enough individually, and as a group, to exert some influence in formulating policies in a truly democratic manner. I hope I am not misunderstood in that. My only plea is for you as an organization to keep your ear to the ground at all times and listen for rumblings which might, through misguided judgment on the part of some individual or some other group, lead to the relegating of your program to some back-seat position which is not commensurate with its importance. By being alert to such matters and by giving evidence that you do have a well formulated concept of what your program should be and where it should be heading, you will be demanding strong leadership. There can be no substitute for strong leadership. The blind cannot lead the blind. Neither can the blind lead those who have vision. All this, I insist, is possible through purely democratic processes which can function through the medium of a strong, sound organization in which every member has a part to play.

In closing may I very briefly summarize the points I have tried to make in this little recital which simply expresses some of the opinions of a "has-been" in the profession and which are given purely for what they may be worth. There are two main reasons why teachers voluntarily leave the profession; one is that they are dissatisfied with the work and the other is that they see greater opportunities elsewhere. As to the first of these, I have suggested that insofar as stability within the profession is to be desired, it would be well to attempt to discover the major sources of dissatisfaction

and study the possibilities of eliminating their causes. It is a healthy thing to have teachers advancing to better opportunities in other fields. It is desirable to encourage improvement and progress which might eventually lead to advancements even though they be in another field. However, in order to keep the profession strong it is necessary to continually recruit some of the best material available as a source supply of good teachers. Training programs need to be improved, and I might add here that more in-service training and assistance would seem also to be highly desirable. Continuous professional improvement work is necessary to bring about maximum progress. And finally, strong organization and loyalty of those engaged in the profession is indispensable.

Leaders in Agricultural Education

Greener pastures sometimes turn brown but we are certain that this does not apply to such men as Tom Raine, Gary Wiegand, and Elmer Ziegenhagen. They were good teachers, good leaders, and they will all continue to do effective work in their chosen fields of activity. As Mr. Ziegenhagen indicated in his remarks, it is a credit to a program to make it possible for workers to advance to other positions of trust and responsibility. That very idea brings into focus an important responsibility of all teachers of agriculture. Good men must be recruited and prepared to take the places of those who leave the ranks.

The fundamental purpose of instruction in agriculture is usually stated as designed "to prepare young men for successful establishment in farming." However that does not imply that all rural youth should be headed for farming as a life occupation. There probably would not be farms for all of them. Many of the students in the agriculture classes are by mental ability, personality, interest and experience well qualified to develop into effective rural life leaders. These young men might well be encouraged to continue their education and experiences on a college level with the idea of preparing to become teachers of agriculture.

Right now there is a devastating scarcity of teachers of agriculture and of trainees who plan to become teachers of agriculture. In many communities there are promising young men who should be informed as to the opportunities in agricultural education. Servicemen who are returning to civilian life are looking for opportunities to select, prepare for, and to enter upon worthwhile occupations. Teachers of agriculture, FFA members, extension agents, and other leaders should be prepared to give council and advice to persons in the community who are seeking a way to employment and useful service. Let us keep the opportunities as agriculture teachers before them.

THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA

State FFA Officers 1944-45

At the annual meeting of the Minnesota association of Future Farmers of America, the following officers were elected to serve for 1944-45:

PRESIDENT: Sigvald Sandberg, Ortonville

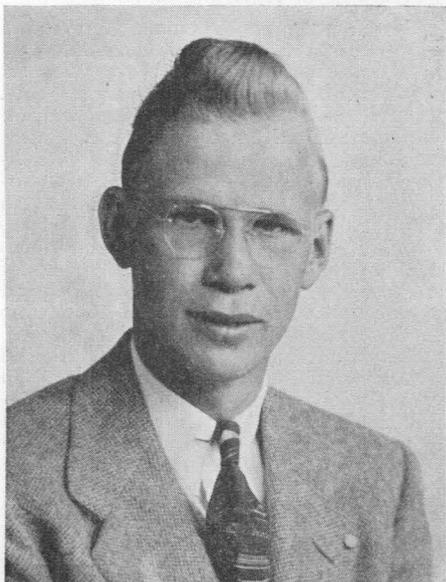
VICE PRESIDENT: John Cronemiller, Bemidji

SECRETARY: Donald Sikkink, Harmony

TREASURER: Albert Wiens, Mountain Lake

REPORTER: Colmer Strand, Blooming Prairie

The President



SIGVALD SANDBERG

As it should be, the president elect of the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America is a representative Minnesota farm boy. Sigvald Sandberg was born April 20, 1924 in Big Stone County where his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Glen E. Sandberg, are successful operators of a typical Minnesota farm. He has lived on the parental farm since that time. In the fall of 1930, Mr. Sandberg entered first grade in a small rural school that his father had previously attended in his youth. He graduated from grade school in 1938 as the second highest student graduating that year.

During the following summer, Mr. Hoberg, Director of the Agriculture Depart-

ment, Ortonville High School, visited Mr. Sandberg several times, and by fall, Mr. Sandberg entered high school as a student in the agriculture course. For his first farm practice venture, he purchased a steer to feed that year only to meet a loss because of bloat. This did not discourage him as he purchased a dairy calf for \$70. In the fall he showed this heifer at the County Fair in open competition and received the "Junior Award" from the Guernsey Cattle Club.

Mr. Sandberg became an FFA member during his first year in high school and he was elected chapter reporter during his first year in high school as well as a member of the dairy judging team. As for studies, he received a straight "A" in five subjects.

During his third year of high school, Mr. Sandberg was elected FFA secretary and treasurer and a member of the livestock judging team. His farming program was widened by a barrow, steer, and crops. Since then his farming program has grown to include 30 purebred Chester White pigs of Lila Farm breeding; a herd of Cherub Guernseys of Boulder Bridge Farm breeding; equipment amounting to \$225; a car valued at \$275; and 80 acres of crops. His senior year in high school was a busy year. Mr. Sandberg was FFA secretary and treasurer; chairman of the dairy team; took fourth place in a dairy judging contest at the State Fair; was toastmaster of the Chapter banquet; was public speaking champion; and graduated thirteenth in a class of sixty-five students with an average of 90.8. The following fall, Mr. Sandberg entered the University of Minnesota and registered with a major in Agricultural Education. However, because of the shortage of help on his father's farm, he was unable to attend the University after the fall quarter. He has, however, found time for something besides farming. He has given 139 speeches at various meetings since a freshman; he has held over 40 different offices in church, 4-H, FFA and school. The highest of these offices being that of State President of the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America.

After VICTORY is ours and the world again settles back to normal, Mr. Sandberg plans to return to the University of Minnesota to complete his training in Agricultural Education. His plan is to prepare for effective leadership in rural life activities. Although his ultimate goal is successful establishment in farming, he is not unmindful of the urgent need for aggressive leadership in the social phases of rural life as well as in the economic aspects of farming. *The Visitor* extends congratulations to Mr. Sandberg on the fine program to which he has dedicated his talents.