

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Volume XXXII

April 1945

No. 3

TEACHING AGRICULTURE

A Message and a Challenge to Rural Boys

Right now, when all kinds of jobs are plentiful and easy to get, it may seem untimely to talk about the problem of choosing and preparing for the right occupation. But that old saying "History repeats itself" is a reminder that there may be serious unemployment problems ahead. Some day this war will be over. Some day the millions of returning servicemen, the millions of now employed war workers, and the millions of youth coming into maturity will be available for employment. How are they going to earn a living that will give them a satisfactory life? They cannot all be employed in factories or so-called "industry." It is not too early for the farm boys to begin to give serious consideration to the occupation they may wish to enter as adults. In addition to industry there are at least two other large areas of work that should be explored by rural youth. One is Agriculture, and the other is the service industries.

An analysis of the United States Census report shows that approximately 20 per cent of employed persons are in agriculture. Obviously not all farm boys are going to be absorbed by farming activities. The Census report also indicates that in the neighborhood of fifty per cent of the rural youth eventually go to urban centers for employment. Approximately 47 per cent of the employed persons are in service industries. Teachers are classed in the service group. Teaching is a profession and education is one of America's greatest professional enterprises. No other country in the world places so much value on education. A reason for that is because no other country accords equality of educational opportunity so important a phase in a democratic form of government.

One of the most important, as well as one of the best phases of the program of education in the United States, is the program of Agricultural Education provided for Rural Youth. That brings us to the main point we wanted to stress in this story. THERE IS GREAT NEED FOR GOOD TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE. The need is going to become even more critical because post-war planning points to a great increase in the number of secondary schools that plan to add a department of agriculture to the school offerings. The opportunities for employment as teachers of agriculture appears

very promising. Successful teachers of agriculture are frequently absorbed by other service activities in the field of agriculture. There are, no doubt, a number of farm boys in each community who might be interested in preparing to become teachers of agriculture.

What Teachers of Agriculture Do

The program of activities of the teachers of agriculture is designed to prepare present and prospective farmers for greater efficiency in farming. The total five point program includes the following areas of service:

- a. All-day instruction and guidance for high school students—

The course of study in agriculture usually provides three or four years, or high school units, of instruction. As a part of their work the students carry on a well balanced program of farm practice at home. An important part of the instruction is the work in farm mechanics. This includes fundamental tool operations, woodworking, metal work, care and repair of farm machinery, welding, rural electrification, motors, home conveniences, and numerous other activities in mechanics that arise on a farm.

- b. Part-time program—

In every community there are a number of out-of-school youth who are in need of leadership and guidance. For these young people the teacher of agriculture organizes special classes and group activities. The program includes instruction in agriculture for those who plan to become established as farmers. Many of the young people will not remain in the community. They must seek employment in cities. They need guidance in their study of occupational opportunities open to them when they leave home. Special classes and much individual help will also be needed for the returning servicemen. Many of these former farm boys will be interested in becoming established in farming.

- c. Evening schools—

When a teacher of agriculture joins the high school staff, Dad goes back to

VISITOR

Published quarterly during the calendar year in October, January, April, and July, by the Division of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota, University Farm, St. Paul 8, Minn.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at St. Paul, Minn., under the act of August 2, 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. M. FIELD G. F. EKSTROM L. H. HARDEN
A. M. FIELD, *Editor*

school. Evening schools are organized for adults who are already established in farming. In these classes the farmers study and discuss their problems under the guidance of the teachers of agriculture. The results from the class discussions carry over into actual practice on the home farm under the guidance of the teacher.

d. Future Farmers of America—

The teacher serves as adviser to the local FFA Chapter. The FFA is a national organization for boys who are enrolled for instruction in agriculture. The program is coordinated closely with the study of agriculture and the development of leaders for rural living.

e. Community service—

Teachers of agriculture are employed for twelve months. In addition to their teaching duties they carry on a broad program of cooperative activities with local organizations designed to improve the economic, civic, social, and educational opportunities in the community. Much individual help is given rural youth and adult farmers in planning improvement programs for the years that lie ahead.

The Job Outlook for Teachers of Agriculture

Young men can enter the profession of teaching agriculture as a career with the assurance that they are not going into a field that is overcrowded. Right now there is a great shortage of qualified teachers of agriculture. During the last quarter of a century there has never been an oversupply of teachers of agriculture. Indications are that the demand will be even greater in the future. The salaries are among the highest paid to teachers in the school system where a department of agriculture is a part of the school program. The teacher of agriculture is not in competition with women teachers. Security and permanency of tenure has never been a problem.

Personal Qualities for Teachers of Agriculture

To be successful in an occupation, the worker must possess the qualities of merit that are essential for success in the occupation. Teaching agriculture is no exception. Although no simple formula can be given to indicate who will be a successful teacher of agriculture, experience seems to indicate that the following are important factors to consider:

- BETTER THAN AVERAGE SCHOLARSHIP
- GOOD BACKGROUND OF FARM EXPERIENCE
- GOOD PERSONALITY
- GOOD HEALTH
- GENUINE INTEREST IN TEACHING
- INTEREST IN FARMING AND RURAL LIFE
- SOCIAL PROFICIENCY AND EMOTIONAL STABILITY

How to Become a Teacher of Agriculture

A teacher of agriculture must be a graduate from a Land Grant College of Agriculture. The preparatory program includes a good background in science and the humanities, a broad preparation in technical agriculture and farm mechanics and a basic knowledge of the problems of teaching. Like most successful professional men, the teachers of agriculture find that study and planning in their special field must continue on the job. Research and experience in agriculture are constantly developing new ideas that the teacher of agriculture must know. Professional growth is achieved through experience, reading, and from the in-service training program provided for teachers. Farm boys were not born good teachers but many "live-wire" boys can learn to become good teachers if they really want to make the effort.

Securing a Position

Teachers of agriculture usually receive their positions through the Bureau of Recommendation that is maintained by the department of agricultural education in cooperation with the state supervisor for agricultural education. Personal contacts with school people and personal friends are helpful. About the best recommendation is the quality of scholarship and general all-around impression the student makes in all phases of his college activities. Personal guidance and counselling from members of the teacher-training staff is helpful to students in making appropriate personal adjustments that become valuable assets when seeking employment as teachers of agriculture.

A. M. Field

OUR JOB

To teach a better, fuller life
For all us rural folks
To help our sense of humor
With a few well chosen jokes.

To add a bit to living
Which was not there before
To create techniques of farming
From scientific lore.

To conserve our greatest resource
A fertile rich black loam
To improve upon surroundings
For the family in the home.

To recognize the dignity
Of every human life
To adopt the term "Homemaker"
And discard the name "Housewife."

To turn to education
For the knowledge we must gain
To solve our future problems
Not with brawn, but brain.

To understand our neighbors
And live as best we can
To develop christian people
Who love their fellow man.

To leave a greater heritage
As posterity's award
And be guided by the teachings
Of our Savior Christ the Lord.

Maynard A. Speece*

TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE AWARDED THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

It is always a pleasure to announce through the pages of the VISITOR that teachers of agriculture are seriously interested in professional improvement. During the present school year, fourteen teachers have been enroled in the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota. These men work on special problems that have to do with the improvement of their activities as teachers and community leaders.

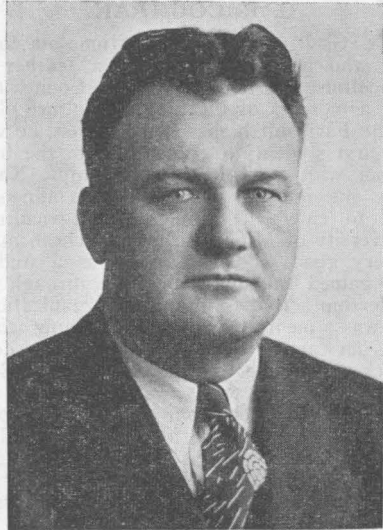
The following is a brief account of the experience and professional contributions of Mr. R. H. Hoberg and Mr. Raymond Cochran who have recently been awarded the Master of Science Degree by the Graduate Faculty of the University of Minnesota.

R. H. HOBERG

R. H. Hoberg was reared on a farm in Chippewa County, Minnesota. He received his high school preparation at Montevideo,

* Maynard A. Speece, a former student in Agricultural Education, is County Agent in Anoka County.

where he made a good record as a student, and decided to continue his education on the college level. His interest in agriculture and rural education induced him to enter the College of Agriculture at Brookings, South Dakota. Along with his scholastic responsibilities, Mr. Hoberg found time to take an active part in extra curricular activities. He was a member of several judging teams and took an active part in inter-college contests. He was an active member of Alpha Zeta, The Blue Key, and served as the agriculture representative of the Student's Council. In his spare time he played four years of football, three years of basketball, three years on the track team, and held a place on the baseball team. During the senior year, Mr. Hoberg served as captain of the football team. Then, just to keep in trim, he ended his college activities with the title of heavy-weight champion boxer.



R. H. HOBERG

After graduation, Mr. Hoberg taught agriculture at Sandstone, Minnesota for one year and then moved to Ortonville where he is employed at the present time as teacher of agriculture and community leader. He is a member of the Farm and Town Club, The Rod and Gun Club, the Kiwanis Club, Chairman of the Minnesota-Dakota District Committee on Agriculture, District FFA Advisor, local Chairman of the 4-H Boys and Girls Club program, and President of the Big Stone County 4-H Club Council. Recently he was awarded a certificate for fourteen years of service as 4-H Club leader. And just to keep busy, he is a member of the Farm Security Board of the FCA and a member of the County Board which will

act on Veteran FCA loans. He is also a member of the County Advisory Board for returning servicemen.

Mr. Hoberg has a good record in the FFA activities. To date thirty-two of his agriculture boys have been awarded the State Farmer Degree and four boys have won the American Farmer Degree, the highest honor conferred by the National Organization of the Future Farmers of America. Sigvald Sandberg, one of his boys, is at present State President and First National Vice President of the FFA.

Mr. Hoberg knows what he is talking about, when he works with farm boys on their home farms, because he owns and operates a 320 acre farm a few miles east of Ortonville. His interest in the plan of preparing town boys for work on farms to relieve the labor shortage created the basis for his Plan B Research Problem.

G. R. COCHRAN

Mr. G. R. Cochran is a Minnesota farm boy who has made good as a teacher of agriculture. He hails from Rice County and was a member of the first agriculture class in the Faribault high school. In fact, he was the first student to graduate from the high school with agriculture as a major. Naturally his interest in agriculture influenced him to enter the College of Agriculture, University of Minnesota. Mr. Cochran made a very good scholastic record as a student and gained valuable experience through his leadership activities in student organizations. He was a member of livestock judging teams and an active member of Alpha Zeta, Block and Bridle, and the Agricultural Education Club.

After graduation from college, Mr. Cochran taught agriculture for two and one-half years at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota and two years at Lancaster, Wisconsin. In 1929 he evidently became homesick so he returned to Minnesota to accept the position as teacher of agriculture and community leader at New Richland. Mr. Cochran has developed a very good program for the youth and adults in the New Richland area. The average enrolment in the high school agriculture department has increased from fifteen in 1929 to sixty at the present time. New Richland had the State Champion Dairy Judging team in 1933 and the State and the National Champion Poultry judging team in 1937. Mr. Cochran has organized and conducted a part-time class or an evening school class every year of his teaching experience. That is a creditable record.

The life of a teacher of agriculture is a busy one and Mr. Cochran is no exception.

But throughout the busy years he did not neglect his professional improvement opportunities. He attended summer school when-



G. R. COCHRAN

ever possible and enrolled for graduate courses on the problem basis during the regular school year. He was awarded the Master of Science Degree at the March 1945 graduation exercises. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for his degree, Mr. Cochran presented a research study entitled "A Course of Study in Farm Mechanics for the New Richland, Minnesota High School."

THE VISITOR is pleased to extend congratulations to these men. May each find a rich measure of personal satisfaction as a reward for his achievement. These men are good teachers and good community leaders. The graduate work has been of value to them because it has kept them at work on problems that have to do with good teaching. It has been helpful to them in maintaining an abiding interest in professional improvement. The studies that these men have undertaken have been of practical value to them in planning and putting into operation effective programs for the department and also for individual farm boys. Winning the higher degree will add prestige to their work as teachers and a great deal of personal satisfaction to themselves and their families.