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NEIGHBORHOOD
LEADERS
AND THEIR JO



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Agricultural Extension Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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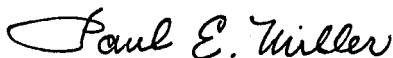
TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER

It is a pleasure to present you with your copy of the Neighborhood Leader Handbook for Minnesota. You have been selected for this important work in your neighborhood by your county and township extension committees. Your selection is a distinct honor for it is a mark of the esteem your neighbors have for your ability, your patriotism, and your spirit of service.

We are in an all-out war. Its magnitude and gravity are growing more and more apparent as each day unfolds some new and startling aspect. No other great undertaking in the history of our country has called for more united and effective cooperation from each and every family. Thus I need not emphasize the important opportunity your neighborhood leader job gives you to make an indispensable contribution to our war effort. In this neighborhood leader system we have a truly democratic principle at work. It provides for neighborhood participation and action based upon local discussion and decisions.

As you move into your duties as a neighborhood leader we want to assure you that the resources of the Agricultural Extension Service are squarely behind you to the end that your neighborhood may make its maximum contribution to the war effort.

Sincerely,



PAUL E. MILLER, Director
Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service

Neighborhood Leaders

THE PLAN IN BRIEF

WAR DEMANDS the utmost from Agriculture in output of food, fiber, and other products. This means that 6 million separate farms must increase, adjust, and coordinate their production efforts. At the same time these farms will have their individual problems which will be greatly multiplied by shortages and other effects of the war. Not only will this call for hard work and planning, but it will also be necessary that all farmers understand wartime needs and situations and that they have all the helpful information and suggestions they can get. Thus there must be some machinery by which every farm family can be kept in touch with the United States Department of Agriculture, which is directing the nation's wartime farm program, as well as with other sources of information. This is why 800,000 neighborhood leaders are being enlisted by the federal extension service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Minnesota alone will have more than 20,000 such leaders who have agreed to serve on a volunteer basis.

Reliance on volunteer leaders is not new to farm people for such leaders have rendered outstanding service in 4-H club work, in home demonstration projects, and in similar activities down through the years. The neighborhood leader system is merely an extension of the volunteer leader idea down to a neighborhood basis.

What Is a Neighborhood Leader?

In each neighborhood of 10 to 20 farm families, one man and one woman—a farmer and a farm homemaker chosen by a township committee—have been appointed to act as neighborhood leaders in seeing that all farm families in their neighborhood are kept informed regarding rapidly changing needs and conditions and ways in which they can contribute most to the war effort.

What Is the Neighborhood Leader's Job?

To keep himself or herself well posted on war-time programs and problems affecting local farm families and to relay this information to families throughout the neighborhood, to encourage cooperation in war efforts, and to help plan and carry through community war activities.

How Can the Neighborhood Leader Do His Job?

Most of the neighborhood leader's duties can be done in a neighborly way—by talking across the fence; seeing neighbors at the creamery, at the store, or at regular neighborhood doings and gatherings; or by visiting or telephoning farm homes. When necessary, special meetings may be called.

How Will Leaders Know What To Do?

Owing the war, problems of the farmer and the farm home will become more and more troublesome. New situations that call for sweeping changes are

developing right along. Through official communications, an attempt will be made to keep neighborhood leaders informed regarding important new developments, together with suggestions as to their bearing on local problems and situations. From time to time district or countywide meetings for leaders may be arranged. For local matters needing attention, leaders may well rely on their own judgment and on suggestions from neighbors.

How Will Township Committees Function?

In setting up the neighborhood leader plan, the township committee mapped the outlines of the various neighborhoods and assisted in selecting the two leaders for each. During the year the township committee will be available to help leaders iron out difficulties, secure special leaders when needed for certain topics, such as rural fire prevention or inflation control, and give counsel and assistance to county committees in regard to special educational programs being planned or carried out.

This is a fight between a slave world and a free world. The world must make its decision for a complete victory one way or the other.—VICE PRESIDENT HENRY A. WALLACE.



Our Farm Front Must Not Fail!

IN UNDERTAKING to produce the enormous supplies of food, fiber, fats, and oils needed by the United Nations in their all-out war against the dictators, America's farm families face a supreme test. They must meet this challenge.

In this great effort, Minnesota farmers have a most important part: first, because our state is a leader in the production of most of the needed products; second, since we consume only a fraction of this output here in Minnesota, a large part is available for use in the great manufacturing areas, for our armed forces, and for lend-lease shipment to our Allies.

The task that confronts agriculture in this emergency is doubly difficult because big increases and shifts in production must be accomplished in the midst of many serious handicaps. There will be shortages of labor, machinery, and power. There will be more work and worry, and fewer doctors to care for the sick. There will be more need to prevent farm fires because materials will not be available to replace buildings and equipment destroyed. There will be serious transportation problems. These are only a sample of a whole range of problems and difficulties that promise to bear more and more heavily on our farm producers as the war goes on.

The answers to these situations must be found if we are to keep pace with the increasing need for essential farm products. To assist in this effort new agencies have been created and are rendering helpful service, but a critical problem with all agencies is

how to give farm people the information and educational assistance they need to take their part effectively in all these efforts. That is the job which the Agricultural Extension Service through its various cooperative extension agents is especially equipped to do.

Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard has recognized extension work as having a most vital contribution to make at this particular time. "First of all," he says, "I am looking to the Extension Service to carry forward on every sector of the farm front the general educational work in agriculture and home economics essential to the success of the wartime job."

To the end that "no farmer or farm family in America is left in the dark as to the WHY and HOW of all public effort affecting rural welfare," added Secretary Wickard, "I am depending on Extension to train a much larger number of local volunteer leaders to help in carrying forward all phases of agriculture's wartime program." The neighborhood leader plan is a step in carrying out Secretary Wickard's request.

Accordingly in each Minnesota neighborhood, one man and one woman chosen by their own representatives have been appointed and have accepted the responsibility of serving as neighborhood leaders. Their job is an important one and the purpose of this manual is to outline the important place that the rural neighborhood will have in the war effort, the responsibilities we must assume, the part that the neighborhood leaders will play, and a brief statement of some of the important problems which neighborhoods themselves will very largely have to solve.

It is generally recognized that farm people will be too busy to attend many community or county-wide meetings. The rubber situation, labor shortage, and other factors will limit the use of the usual methods of discussing important problems. The neighborhood leader plan will make it possible to have someone in every neighborhood fully informed on the important aspects of immediate problems facing farmers in their war production efforts.

The neighborhood leader plan is another evidence that America's greatest emergency is going to be met in the democratic way—the American way of keeping everyone fully informed, giving each an opportunity to make his contribution in his own way and taking it for granted each will do his utmost because of his understanding and willingness to cooperate. To be part of such a plan is an honor of which each neighborhood leader may justly be proud.



This is the most momentous period in history. It is an attempt to help in creating an orderly, peaceful, and prosperous world. We will meet our challenge and measure up to our opportunities.—SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, CLAUDE R. WICKARD.

Our Rural Wartime Problems

THE ATTACK on Pearl Harbor reverberated immediately on the farm situation, bringing into relief many serious problems that threaten to grow more and more acute. As the war goes on, many new ones will have to be dealt with. Following are some problems that will call for attention:

Transportation

The Office of Defense Transportation has made it clear that transportation problems will increase rapidly. Auto driving will decrease as the tire shortage makes itself felt. New trucks will soon be off the market.

The whole transportation situation during war is one for which the only solution is to husband all available resources and use existing transportation carefully and effectively. This situation has profound implications for the rural neighborhood. It will eventually mean a program of cooperative action whereby one car going to town will do the errands for several neighbors instead of each family driving in to town for every need. Cooperative hauling of livestock, milk and cream, feed, and other supplies will be necessary. Working together in all ways in which transportation affects the farming operations of the community is a matter that will very largely have to be worked out within the neighborhood. Neighborhood leaders can well take the initiative in organizing local farm families to meet this problem of transportation.

Labor

The Federal Office of Employment with its regional and local offices is thoroughly organized to assist farm people in obtaining necessary farm labor. It is nevertheless apparent that during the busier seasons on the farm there will be an increasingly serious labor problem. As time goes on and more men leave the farms for Selective Service and employment in the war industries, this problem will become more acute. Very largely the farm work will have to be done within the labor resources left in the community. This may mean an exchange of work on a much larger scale than customary in recent years. The good neighbor policy will have to be put into effect if many farmers are to get their work done. Obviously this is a problem to which every rural neighborhood will give increasing consideration. The solution to farm labor shortages must be worked out largely in the neighborhood itself.

Farm Machinery

All reports indicate that there will be a growing scarcity of new farm machinery. Eventually repair parts may become difficult to get. However, there is sufficient farm machinery in most rural neighborhoods to adequately handle the farming operations if it is used to capacity and its use extended to other farms in the neighborhood where machinery is not available. If we are to accomplish our production job and meet the goals that have been set up for Minnesota farms, cooperative action of neighbors in a wider use of machinery may be of great assistance.

Fire Protection

Building materials are becoming scarce. Many hardware items are disappearing from the market. Applications for building permits are being rigidly scrutinized. For all of these reasons it is highly important that the existing farm structures be protected in all possible ways from loss by fire. Added to this is the increased value of farm crops, livestock, and farm equipment, all of which need adequate fire protection. Farm fires result in enormous losses each year. Removal of fire hazards and cooperative action in fighting fires will reduce these losses. There is an urgent need in every rural neighborhood to thoroughly organize for rural fire prevention and fire fighting.

Inflation

The dangers of inflation are real. The disasters of a period of inflation are well known to farm people who lived through the inflationary period of World War I and the depression which followed it. Every effort should be made to inform all people on the causes of inflation, its dangers, and how it can be avoided. Farm people with heavy investments in the livestock and equipment needed to operate Minnesota farms and with obligations that may extend into the post war period are directly concerned with the government's efforts to hold down the cost of living and in the campaign to prevent undue inflation. This message must be explained to every rural family in such a manner that they have a clear understanding of its implications. It is an educational job of no small size. The local neighborhood group,

meeting together, can well afford to seriously consider this danger. Neighborhood leaders will be given every possible assistance in making this message effective.

Farm Family Food Supply

The importance of the production and preservation of home produced foods is now fully recognized. Many food items will be off the market in their customary form or be extremely limited and high in price. The needs of the armed forces will absorb much of the commercial packs of salmon, corn, peas, tomatoes, and other foods. More and more it will be necessary to rely upon home produced foods. Fortunately, Minnesota produces a wide variety of essential foods. The canning and storage of those foods that must be preserved is a matter of concern both to the individual family and to the neighborhood. Some families do not have vegetable cellars that will keep fruits and vegetables for use all winter and spring, while others have more space than they need. Some do not have adequate equipment, such as sprayers for garden insects, pressure cookers for canning, or smoke houses for hams and bacon. Some gardens will show a surplus of certain products and a shortage of others. In many cases, neighborhood cooperation may be the answer to such situations.

Health and Safety

One third of all the doctors, two thirds of those under 45, will be needed for the armed services, according to present estimates. This but adds emphasis

to the need of developing all possible protections against sickness or injury. Health and strength are important at any time. During wartime it is doubly important that every individual should keep strong and well. This means that correct food habits should be well understood, that safety practices and protective methods are universally practiced. In this connection it is well to remember that farm machinery will present greater hazards than usual because of inexperienced operators.

Credit

Fortunately, Minnesota is well served with credit facilities. Farmers who have demonstrated their ability are usually able to secure all the credit they need. But therein lies a danger. Money may be borrowed too freely, or, what is essentially the same, debts may be continued that ought to be paid. For a farmer's own financial safety, as well as for assistance in the national program of controlling inflation, the increased wartime incomes should be used to reduce debts and buy war bonds, rather than to increase indebtedness through the purchase of more land. Money put into war bonds will build up a reserve of purchasing power to use when consumer goods are available. This is the type of a question that lends itself well to community discussions.

Production

Over the years, farm people have accumulated an immense reservoir of experience and knowledge. This is one of the greatest assets farmers have, rank-

ing in importance with their land and equipment. Yet this knowledge is not fully used; one man uses one idea, another uses another. If all the accumulated experience and ability of a neighborhood were to be put into action the total production of our farms could be immensely expanded. There are things that slow down production—animal diseases, insects, weeds, poor seed, and many other hindrances. For some of these things there is no easy remedy; for others there are good remedies which need only to be applied. While neighborhood leaders are not to be charged with the full responsibility of arousing interest and getting action in all these fields, still they may well assist in making people conscious of their opportunity and responsibility in such matters. Particularly, where there are limiting factors which community cooperation could correct, it is the opportunity for the neighborhood leader to discover and suggest the remedy. Sharing of machinery and power, of labor, of food preservation facilities, of storage space for food or crops, of livestock breeding arrangements and the like may be possible.

Saving Soil

Under wartime necessity, farmers are justified in drawing freely on the accumulated reserves of fertility in the soil but we dare not destroy the soil structure itself. In recent years farmers have learned practical ways of managing the land to keep it from being eroded by wind or water or being ruined by noxious weeds. With large scale shifts taking place in crop production there is a danger that these lessons may be forgotten and the soil neglected to the

point of serious damage. Soil management in the sense of protecting against erosion losses or weed damage is almost always a neighborhood problem. It is important that people be on the alert to guard against situations that may easily get out of control.

Home Life

More and more, women and children will be called on to help with the farm work. In addition to this outside work, the problems of the home will still rest on the farm homemaker. She must still think in terms of feeding and clothing her family, of keeping the house clean and comfortable and wholesome, of maintaining the family health and morale. Yet she will have less time to devote to homemaking, and in addition will have a whole new set of problems to deal with. Clothing and supplies will be harder to buy, more of the year-round food supply must be provided from the farm, home labor-saving devices will be difficult to buy or to renew. Health must be guarded at all costs. Every woman, every home will be confronted with some situation of this kind. So far as is humanly possible each neighborhood will want to make a common study of its local difficulties and work out practical ways of meeting special problems.

U.S.D.A. War Board

BECAUSE of the important part they will take in agriculture's wartime program, neighborhood leaders should be familiar with the make-up and functions of the U.S.D.A. War Boards. The state and county United States Department of Agriculture war boards (first known as "defense boards") were created to coordinate the administration of the Department's defense and war activities in each state and county.

The state war board is made up of the head officers of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Agricultural Extension Service, Farm Security Administration, Forest Service, Rural Electrification Administration, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Surplus Marketing Administration, Agricultural Marketing Service, and Farm Credit Administration.

The county war boards are made up of the heads of all the above agencies that have representatives in the county. The duties of the boards are:

- 1. To expedite and coordinate in the field, administration of the activities of the Department that involve the war effort, and**
- 2. To coordinate the Departmental activities with activities of other defense agencies in the field.**

War boards are functioning in all counties and are constantly being given added duties as the Department's war effort goes forward. Each agency continues to function separately in carrying out its individual program, and the war boards may and do assign various tasks to the agency best fitted to carry out each specific job. General educational work is assigned to the Agricultural Extension Service.

The Extension Service

THE AGRICULTURAL Extension Service was set up to bring to farm people the results of scientific research and to assist rural people in working out their problems and improving conditions of everyday farming, homemaking, and community life. It is a cooperative service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the State Agricultural College, and of county government.

Program Is Primarily Educational

The program of the Extension Service is primarily one of education. The county program is set up under the guidance of local people and is carried out through the cooperative action of county extension agents with individuals and community organizations.

Serving its 87 counties as of July 1, 1942, Minnesota has 131 full time agents—91 agricultural agents, 29 home demonstration agents, and 11 full time 4-H club agents.

Through the state agricultural extension staff, headed by the state director and with a staff of specialists and supervisors, county workers are able to draw on the accumulated results of scientific research and resources of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and of the state agricultural college and experiment station. Thus the Extension Service is in a position to give technical assistance on all phases of agricultural production and marketing, homemaking, and rural life. There is an increased demand for

technical information on all these matters due to the pressure of war production and rapidly shifting situations. Extension workers are following these changes closely in order to help farmers and home-makers in making needed adjustments.

Local Leader Use Not New

The local leader method of spreading information is not new either to farm people or to the Extension Service. Many educational programs have depended almost entirely on local leaders—sincere men and women who believe in their communities and have faith and confidence in their neighbors. The 4-H club program, now enrolling upwards of 50,000 farm boys and girls, is based on voluntary leadership. For more than 20 years, home demonstration work has been built around volunteer leaders as illustrated by the present nutrition program. The neighborhood leader program is merely a further organization and extension of a method that has been used and found effective.



*War demands universal sacrifice.
We civilians cannot have all we want
if our soldiers and sailors are to have
all they need.*—PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D.
ROOSEVELT.

Farm Organizations Have Vital Role

THE NATIONAL farm organizations which have served farm people so effectively during peace times are of even greater importance during war times. Every rural family can benefit from affiliation with one or another of the great national farm organizations. Strong local units are the foundation upon which national farm organizations are built and this strength should be maintained.

By working through local farm organization units, neighborhood leaders not only will be taking advantage of one of the most convenient and effective means of reaching their rural families, but at the same time will be contributing to the upbuilding of the organization itself.

War Difficulties Hit Business

This is total war and business concerns as well as farmers are doing their best to adjust their affairs to an all-out war program. Stores, banks, implement firms, filling stations, newspapers, professional men, every field of activity represented in city and village life, is affected by war conditions. Scarcities, priorities, price ceilings, and increased costs are affecting trade; the armed forces and war industries are taking increasing numbers of men; transportation problems, labor shortages, and other situations affecting farmers reach through and affect business also.

It is urgent that farm people understand so far as possible how the war is affecting business. Farming and business have grown up together. What affects one to a certain extent affects the other. While, to a large extent, each group must work out the solutions to its own problems, yet each should know in general what the other is going through.

How Leaders Will Serve

Keep Yourself Posted

The basic purpose of neighborhood leaders is to stimulate and assist neighborhood action toward maximum results in the war efforts. You are the channel through which suggestions and information will flow to your neighborhood. Letters and other material reaching you will contain the information which you and your neighbors will need—facts about production needs and methods, ideas that can be translated into action, many kinds of pertinent suggestions. As a means of keeping yourself constantly effective, read the letters carefully, study each item, and consider how this or that piece of information may best be used by the people of your neighborhood.

The letter or other special information sent you will have a definite purpose not covered by your regular sources of information—newspapers, radio, farm papers, magazines, farm and home bulletins, and other usual sources of information. It is expected that you will use these as always, for general and specific information. The letter is not designed to displace any of them, nor to be a repetition of them, but rather to suggest ways in which such information may be applied, based on official war facts and needs.

In case of particularly important situations, meetings or other special means may be used to provide you with further information. Whether meetings will be called will depend to a large extent on whether the leaders themselves feel the need of such assistance.

Study Your Neighborhood

Doubtless you will already be well acquainted with the families in the neighborhood you represent, but it will help you plan your leader job to take stock of some factors bearing on means of reaching them and giving out information.

1. List all the families and their communication facilities such as telephone, car, radio and newspapers, whether they have children in school or in 4-H clubs, farm organizations they belong to, and other useful facts.
2. Perhaps it will help to get or draw a map of your neighborhood showing roads and distances. Facts noted above (point 1) could be shown on the map by means of key letters or symbols.
3. Make a list of teachers, ministers, 4-H leaders, home demonstration leaders, officers of farm clubs and units, and others who head up groups or organizations in your neighborhood, as these people can be of great help to you in getting out information and putting across special jobs.

Plan With Other Leader

Every neighborhood will have two leaders—a man and a woman. How will the two of you plan to share the work? Make your plans together and be ready for whatever needs arise. Consider carefully the problem of informing young people in your neighborhood. Will you rely on the parents to relay your information to them or should there be announce-

ments and discussions at school and at 4-H club or young people's meetings? Decide whether you will divide the families and each take about half or whether you prefer to divide the work according to subject, leaving some topics entirely to the man leader and others entirely to the woman leader. Perhaps both will work together on some matters and divide the job on others. Having a clear understanding and keeping in close touch is the important thing.

Explain Plans to Neighbors

When your arrangements have been agreed on, let the neighbors know what's planned so they will be expecting to hear from you as need arises. Perhaps you can have some understanding with each neighbor as to the best means of getting in contact. Following are some of the methods you will doubtless find most useful:

1. Seeing neighbors informally at the creamery, store, church, and regular meetings, and neighborhood events wherever folks get together.
2. Telephone calls.
3. Farm and home visits.
4. Announcements or discussions at regular meetings of community organizations, or in some cases at special called meetings.
5. Messages through school children or 4-H club members.

Making the Right Approach

YOUR EFFECTIVENESS as a neighborhood leader will depend so much on your attitude and manner of approach that it will pay to give this matter careful attention. Probably the most important thing of all in dealing with people is to put yourself in the other fellow's place and try to see things from his point of view. Your neighbor is as much interested in winning the war as you are and probably will respond readily to any suggestions which you may show him will help defeat the Axis. He will be interested in maintaining our free institutions, in guarding the health of his family, in conserving his land, buildings, and equipment, in preserving his markets, in protecting his income now and in the future. Try always to think and speak in terms of the other fellow's interests and your message will be more certain to click.

What you say will be more welcome and have more effect if you are careful to suit your contacts as much as possible to the time and convenience of your neighbors. Above all you do not want to make anyone feel that you are trying to exercise authority or that you are criticizing or intruding.

Study each idea or announcement that you feel should be passed along to your neighbors and decide how you can reach each one to the best advantage. Be sure you help people understand the significance of a movement or an announcement. In some cases merely informing the neighbors on some point is sufficient; they will understand what it means. Locations of rationing boards, coming shortages in sup-

plies, needs for increased or decreased production in certain lines are examples. In other cases the main value will be lost unless the matter is explained and discussed. In such cases it may be more important that a few people in the neighborhood thoroughly understand a point than that everybody just hears about it. It may help your own understanding of significant announcements if you discuss them rather thoroughly with one or more of your neighbors. Examples: Why is it so urgent that inflation be controlled? Why are certain methods being used rather than others?

It is likely that certain programs will call for special leaders when special educational work is needed on some particular phase of farming or home-making, such as dairying, poultry, or clothing. Neighborhood leaders will find many ways of helping these project leaders in arranging meetings or other means for giving the necessary instruction or information.



*The dictators fear the grapevine.
In a democracy the word-of-mouth
method can become the greatest
means of wartime education.—M. L.
WILSON, Director of Agricultural Ex-
tension, Washington, D.C.*

Do Not Overlook the Young Folks

Some of the most effective rural education has been accomplished through farm boys and girls. In their schools, 4-H clubs, and youth groups, young people make numerous contacts and they can perform many useful services. It is important that the neighborhood leaders work out an effective plan for keeping them fully informed on emergency problems and opportunities for war service.

Consider the possibility of arranging for a neighborhood youth leader—some young person, perhaps 16 to 25 years old, who will help you contact all of the youth in your area. An arrangement of this sort might be of great help with such things as the salvage campaigns where young people play so important a part.

Be a Two-Way Pipeline

WHATEVER you may be doing, remember to be a good listener. Be on the lookout for such things as:

1. What serious difficulties prevent your neighbors from making their greatest contribution to the wartime effort?
2. What suggestions do they have for correcting these difficulties, or otherwise assisting in agriculture's wartime program?

Pass worthwhile ideas back up the line to your township and county committees or county extension agent, who will transmit them to the authorities having responsibility for the respective problems.

Bulletins on Wartime Problems

NEIGHBORHOOD leaders will find much of the information they need in folders and bulletins obtainable from county extension agents. Tell other interested farmers and homemakers about these publications. Following are only a few of those available. Leaders may obtain a complete up-to-date list at any time on request.

Extension Pamphlets

- 103 Inflation Breeds Farm Distress
- 94 America Needs More Milk
- 93 Know Your Food Needs
- 99 Three Meals a Day the Minnesota Way
- 95 Good Health from the Farm
- 91 Garden for Victory
- 101 For Health This Winter, Store Vegetables
- 102 Preserve Garden Products by Drying, Waxing,
and Brining
- 96 Costs of Tractor and Machine Use
- 90 Reach Your Goal with Stronger Chicks

Extension Folders

- 98 The Food We Eat
- 103 Feed Makes Eggs
- 99 Tomatoes, Minnesota's Health Food
- 100 Home Canning Fruits and Vegetables
- 111 Freezing Fruits and Vegetables
- 90 Care and Feeding of Brood Sows
- 109 Wool Production
- 106 Produce Quality Milk

Extension Bulletins

- 219 War and the Farmer
- 174 Vegetable Gardening
- 218 Feeding the Dairy Herd
- 226 Home Vegetable Storage
- 236 Hog Yard Equipment

Neighborhood Leaders—Democracy's Answer

In a democracy it is the people who make the decisions, individually or through their elected representatives. Unless those decisions are generally the right ones, democracy cannot succeed. Thus, in America, public education has been accepted as the cornerstone on which democracy rests.

But formal education is not enough. Education is a continuous process extending from the cradle to the grave. For adults, learning is an individual matter, although the opportunities may be greatly extended and strengthened through various agencies. One of these, the Agricultural Extension Service, has had a marked effect on farming, homemaking, and rural community life. That effect has been greatly heightened through the use of local leaders for, after all, on them and the local people with whom they work, the effectiveness of local participation depends.

A democracy receives its greatest test in a war of survival. At that time wrong decisions or half-hearted cooperation may prove tragic. It is not because the people do not want to make the right decisions, but a lack of adequate and accurate information sometimes retards the war effort.

All of us know that agriculture is playing an important part in the present conflict. Every farm family must do its share. It follows then that the essential information must reach every farm family. Secretary of Agriculture Wickard believes the most effective way is through neighborhood leaders—a man and a woman for every ten to twenty farm families. I urge the assistance and cooperation of every one of the 200,000 farm families in Minnesota to the end that, through this local educational enterprise, the strength of our democratic nation will be mobilized for its maximum effectiveness in our struggle against our enemies.

Sincerely,



W. C. COFFEY, President
University of Minnesota

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



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