



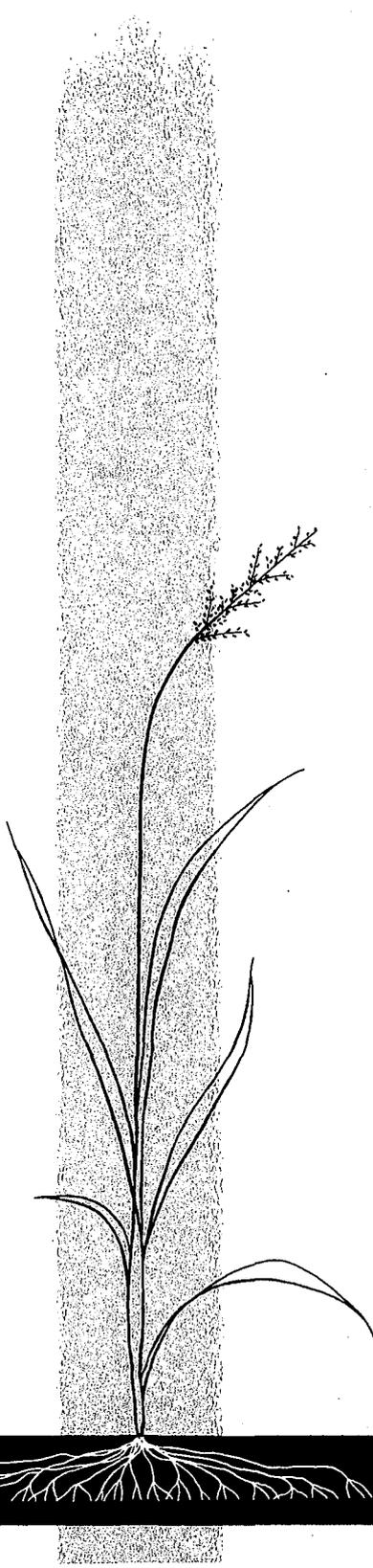
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The Cooperative Extension Service ...

TODAY



The Cooperative Extension Service is a saga of achievement in American education which grew from a unique partnership of local people and their organizations; county, state, and federal governments; and the land-grant colleges and universities. As the plant symbolizes, this partnership finds root in the needs of people at home and at work. It builds on a pooling of their common problems and the creative application of their own talents and resources. This statement is a product of the partnership, having taken form from the aspirations expressed in countless program planning efforts by people and their Extension workers across the countryside of America, the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities through the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, and the United States Department of Agriculture through the Federal Extension Service.

April 1958

The Cooperative Extension Service . . . *TODAY*

A Statement of Scope and Responsibility

Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics is a partnership undertaking between each state land-grant college and university and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with local governments and local people. Extension is a unique service of three levels of government permitting maximum flexibility and adaptation to local conditions and needs while carrying a hard core of purpose, objectives, and focus.

The major function of the Cooperative Extension Service, as stated in the Smith-Lever Act, is:

“ . . . To aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same . . . ”

This broad charter clearly identifies Extension's function as education. This is not education in the abstract, but education for

action. It is education of an informal and distinct type. It is education directed to helping people solve the various problems which they encounter from day to day in agriculture, home economics, and related subjects.

In performing this function, the Extension Service has always held high those objectives which help people attain:

- Greater ability in maintaining more efficient farms and better homes.
- Greater ability in acquiring higher incomes and levels of living on a continuing basis.
- Increased competency and willingness, by both adults and youth, to assume leadership and citizenship responsibilities.
- Increased ability and willingness to undertake organized group action when such will contribute effectively to improving their welfare.

In striving to attain these objectives, the guiding principle of all Extension workers has always been "helping people to help themselves."

In performing its function, Extension operates informally, in line with the most important local needs and opportunities, and with respect to both short-time and long-time matters of concern. It joins *with* people in helping them to:

- Identify their needs, problems, and opportunities.
- Study their resources.
- Become familiar with specific methods of overcoming problems.
- Analyze alternative solutions to their problems where alternatives exist.
- Arrive at the most promising course of action in light of their own desires, resources, and abilities.

In so doing, Extension workers bring to people the pertinent research information available; interpret and demonstrate its application to the immediate situations involved; and, through the most effective methods known, encourage the application of such research in solving problems. At all times, the widespread participation of the people is stressed in both planning and conducting these informal educational efforts.

In recent years, Extension workers have assisted, with varying degrees of intensity, over 10 million families annually in over 3,000 counties. Of these, about two-fifths have been farm families—those having first claim on Extension's services and those who received the most intensive assistance. About

one-fifth have been urban families. This is an average of approximately 1,000 families per county Extension worker.

Among those assisted each year were over 2 million 4-H Club members in organized 4-H Clubs, over 1 million homemakers in organized groups, and over 5 million homemakers not in organized groups. In addition, Extension aided several thousand cooperatives, food retailers, firms handling farm supplies, and county and community organizations of various types.

This work load has been handled by an average of slightly over 3 Extension agents per county (both men and women). Aiding them were about 1.3 million unpaid local volunteer leaders, without whose assistance a program of this scope would not be possible.

County Extension agents are supported by the resources of their respective land-grant colleges and universities. This support is provided by state-headquartered technical and administrative Extension workers. Also available is the work, and to a limited degree the personnel, of the state experiment stations and resident teaching staffs. The technical information and resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture also are available and used to make the efforts of county Extension workers most productive.

The Cooperative Extension Service is, therefore, the informal educational arm of both the Department of Agriculture and the respective state land-grant colleges and universities. It takes to farm people the results of research and practical experience from all pertinent sources available, as well as information with respect to government programs directly affecting farm people, whether administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or by state and county governments.



The Rapidly Changing Scene...

One consistent characteristic of Extension work has been the necessity to shift programs and methods to meet ever-changing conditions and demands. Extension workers have been acutely aware of this need from the beginning. The tempo of such changes has been accelerated dramatically during the past decade. Every evidence points to an even faster acceleration in the decade ahead.

The following illustrates the degree and rapidity of such change:

I ADJUSTMENTS IN THE FAMILY FARM ECONOMY

Between 1950 and 1954, the average size of farms increased 12 per cent. With increasing mechanization and higher investments in equipment, and with slowly rising land values and prices in general, the value of productive assets on our farms increased over 21 per cent during this same period—and over 40 per cent per agricultural worker. Cash operating costs increased proportionately, as did farm families' need for credit. In addition, during the past decade there has been a veritable explosion in the technology of production and marketing.

Essential major adjustments in the total agricultural economy, arising from so-called surplus production and other factors, present comparable adjustment problems on individual farms which significantly affect income possibilities. An increasing number of farmers have found it necessary or desirable to

supplement their farming operations through off-farm employment.

These and other related factors emphasize the complexity of current-day farming and ranching. The higher financial risks make it necessary that each individual farm family become increasingly efficient in understanding and applying technology and sound management to farming in order to compete successfully and stay in business.

II OFF-FARM INFLUENCES

This complexity is further compounded by the many off-farm forces having a direct bearing on the management and operation of individual farms and ranches. Examples of these forces are "surplus" production and acreage controls; marketing agreements and orders; price supports; foreign trade policies; tax policies; social security; growing vertical integration in the production and marketing of some commodities; and many other factors.

These are influences which our farm population must not only understand, but must also evaluate in terms of their individual farming operations. They also must understand them in order to exercise their rights and responsibilities effectively in helping influence group decisions about these forces in the future. Moreover, as farming is increasingly related to a dynamic and growing economy, continual adjustments in resources devoted to agriculture must be identified, understood, and accomplished in the interest of national balance and efficiency.

III POPULATION CHANGES

Significant changes in our population patterns are taking place. Total population has been increasing rapidly and is expected to increase approximately another 15 per cent by 1975. Farm population, however, has been declining. This trend is expected to continue at a moderate rate, while the rural non-farm population will continue to increase. We are also facing significant trends in the age composition of our population. Increasing percentages fall in the two extreme age brackets—too old for normal full employment and too young to be employed.

Associated with these population trends are changing community patterns. More farm residents are finding employment in urban centers, with many of them farming on a part-time basis or not at all. Approximately one-third of farmers' total income now comes from non-farm sources. Many industrial workers are migrating to rural areas to establish their homes and rear their families, although continuing their urban employment. More homemakers, both farm and non-farm, are employed outside the home.

These significant population trends create both a greater total demand and a constantly broadening demand for Extension help.

IV RISING EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

The people of the United States increasingly become better educated. From 1940 to 1950, the median years of formal education of all adults increased from 8.6 median years to 9.3. Comparable figures for the rural farm population 25 years of age or older were 7.7 median years in 1940 as compared with 8.4 median years in 1950. In

1950, there were 67 per cent more adults 25 years of age or older who had completed high school than there were in 1940, and 55 per cent more who had completed college.

In addition, the educational work of the Extension Service has in itself contributed significantly to raising the educational level of our rural people, to broadening their range of interests, and to intensifying their demands for additional counsel and information.

These advances in education result in more calls, and more diverse calls, on the Extension Service for assistance. At the same time, advancing technology is intensifying the need for Extension work as more complex problems become identified and understood.

V CHANGES INFLUENCING FAMILY LIVING—RURAL AND URBAN

Conspicuous differences in the mode of living of rural and urban people are fast disappearing. Better transportation and communication facilities, greater mixing of rural and urban families—by virtue of both residence and common opportunities in social activities—and rising educational levels—all have contributed. As a result, we find families having greater average cash expenditures for services; higher standards for food, shelter, clothing, conveniences, and housing; plus shorter working hours and more leisure time.

At the same time, with a rapid increase in the number of both farm and urban women employed outside the home, the need arises for a greater sharing of responsibilities in the home by all family members. Families also feel a greater need for training in the more effective management of both time and resources. As adjustments occur between agri-

culture and other sectors of the economy, social and economic problems in family living demand careful study and action.

VI INCREASED DEMANDS ON OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

All these, and other trends that could be cited, are interrelated. In one way or another, they all contribute to increasing demands upon our natural resources. These resources are essential to maintain a healthy agriculture and a good living for our total population.

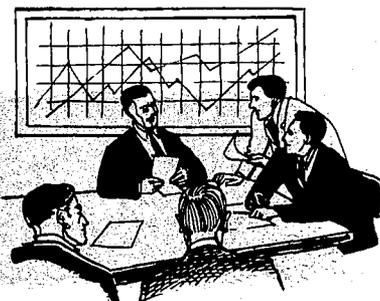
Even though our agricultural production now exceeds our optimum needs, this situation will not continue indefinitely. Recently, about 1 million acres have been removed from agricultural production each year because of suburban housing developments, new and expanded highways and other non-agricultural uses. Much of the land still in

cultivation is not managed so as to insure its continued or improved productivity.

Likewise, the demand on our water resources is increasing at a striking rate for agricultural, industrial, and domestic uses. Already many urban areas are experiencing serious water supply problems or will face them soon. At the same time, farmers and ranchers are investing heavily in irrigation installations without assurance of their legal claim on the water supply; without assurance of long-time, adequate supplies for all uses; and without assurance of the economic soundness of their investments. These are crucial problems. They deserve and should command much more widespread and intensive educational efforts by the Extension Service.

In reference to our forest resources, more than half of our forest acreage is found in farm woodlots where sustained yields are hard to maintain.

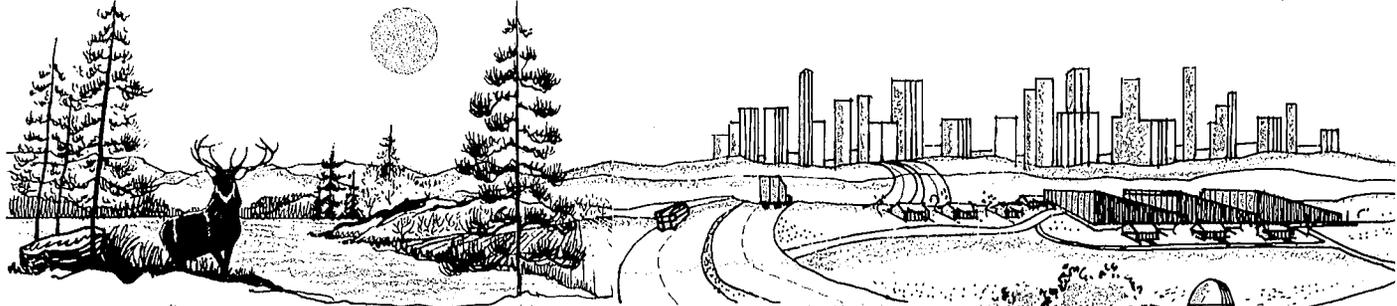
Significance to Extension



All such significant trends reemphasize the fact that the Extension Service must have a dynamic program — one constantly being modernized to keep pace with the ever-changing conditions facing the people it serves. Programs and procedures appropriate and adequate yesterday are likely to be inappropriate today—and obsolete tomorrow.

Extension must be ever alert, therefore, to adjust its programs, focus, and methods to insure that its resources are used most

efficiently and in keeping with the ever-changing problems of the people demanding services of it. And even here, change is quite apparent. For reasons referred to briefly above, Extension is being requested to provide educational services to both more people and a wider variety of interest groups. However, Extension's resources are not unlimited. Hence, there is constantly the necessity for continuous focusing on essential — though shifting—areas of need.



Areas of Program Emphasis

It is apparent that for the present and the years immediately ahead, there are several major areas of program emphasis which should be receiving high-priority attention by the Extension Service. These constitute the hard core of an adequate program of informal education of nation-wide significance.

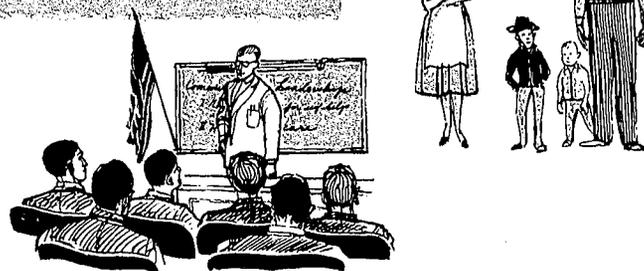
Although the degree of emphasis with respect to each of these areas may vary from one county or one state to another, the total effort of Extension work in the United States should fully recognize these areas of program emphasis.

EFFICIENCY IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Agriculture today operates more than ever before in a cash economy and in a period of fast-changing technology. Economic or technological mistakes which increase costs or lower efficiency can prove fatal to the success of individual farm families.

Bringing farm families (and agencies and firms providing them materials and services) all the pertinent research available, and helping them to interpret and apply the findings, must be high on any priority list of Extension responsibilities. With such facts, families can better decide:

- The adequacy of their current farming or ranching unit.



- Ways they can apply new technology to improve their efficiency.
- Ways they can reduce their cash operating costs and financial risks without reducing their efficiency.

Individual farming units, as any other business units, must be efficient if they are to survive. This is the very essence of the American way. This is largely the reason why our agriculture has been able to produce an abundance of high-quality food and fiber products and to release manpower to other lines of production which make possible our high level of living.

Further progress in the direction of improved efficiency in agricultural production is not only necessary but mandatory in the years ahead. Extension should in the future, as it has in the past, recognize this as a high-priority responsibility with even better-organized and more intensive efforts directed on this front. Moreover, emphasis on efficiency in agricultural production is directly related to national economic growth. Therefore, Extension assistance should be realistically geared to helping rural people find their

most productive place in the American economy.

II EFFICIENCY IN MARKETING, DISTRIBUTION, AND UTILIZATION

Paralleling efficiency in production is the necessity for developing the maximum practicable efficiency in the marketing, distribution, and utilization (including the consumption) of agricultural products. Herein lies a challenge and a responsibility for Extension to contribute to the welfare of the producer, the handler, and the general public simultaneously.

Expanded Extension efforts are needed to:

- Create greater efficiencies in processing, handling, and distribution through the application of new technology and improved marketing practices.
- Expand the market for farm products through consumer information programs and by helping producers, processors, and handlers develop new products and adopt new marketing practices found through research.
- Guide those performing marketing services in developing the most efficient market organization and facilities.
- Develop greater understanding by consumers of the importance of timely buying and the adaptability and suitability of various products for different uses.
- Get rapid adjustment by farmers, consumers, and marketing firms to changes in technology, supply, and demand through improved understanding and communication.

III CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A continuing need exists to bring about a fuller understanding of the relationship of wisely managed natural resources to both the general public welfare and the continuing welfare of persons managing such resources. Abundant evidence clearly indicates that our national resources of soil, water, forests, grasslands, fish, and wildlife are being depleted. Greater attention is essential to measures, both private and public, which will contribute to the wise use of such resources so that they may be conserved and further developed and, at the same time, contribute the maximum to both individual family welfare and the national interest.

The Extension Service has both a unique opportunity and a responsibility to help develop a realistic appreciation of the necessity for and practical value of the wise and non-depleting uses of such resources. Such resources have real value only to the degree they may be used to contribute to human welfare and betterment on a continuing and practical basis.

To insure such effective use, the Extension Service should aggressively give leadership to and participate in the development and conduct of programs directed to effective resource management and use. It should strive to develop an understanding, on the part of direct users of such resources, of the economic soundness of conserving-type uses in their own personal interest as well as the public interest. It should encourage improved management of these resources on the farm and elsewhere and aid farm operators to incorporate sound conservation measures into their own farm operations. It should also develop a wider appreciation of both the

economic and recreational values of our natural resources and the inherent values they offer to all.

IV MANAGEMENT ON THE FARM AND IN THE HOME

A major strength of American agriculture lies in the fact that it is predominantly a family-farm type of operation. Each family is free to make its own plans, arrive at its own decisions, and exercise its ingenuity to the fullest. This puts a premium on the ability of the individual family to make wise management decisions.

This premium on management ability is becoming even more obvious as agriculture grows more complex, specialized, and interdependent with other economic sectors. It is further emphasized by the fact that on our farms, the challenges associated with the efficient management of the farm and the home are inseparable. Frequent decisions must be made with respect to competition between the farm and the home for money or time resources.

Herein lies a major educational challenge to the Extension Service. That is to provide those educational experiences for farm families which will enable them better to:

- ☐ Appraise their resources.
- ☐ Identify problems to be overcome.
- ☐ Analyze different ways to meet these problems.
- ☐ Weigh alternatives in terms of possible results.
- ☐ Understand the technological, credit and other aids they may use.

- ☐ Choose and follow the most promising courses of action. Through these experiences, farm families are able to derive incomes and greater satisfactions from their opportunities.

This is the course of action being intensified in the "unit approach" to farm families' problems. Excellent progress is being made in these more intensive educational efforts, but even more effort on a continuing basis is mandatory.

V FAMILY LIVING

Fast changing patterns of living of modern-day families create many problems.

New outside employment for homemakers emphasizes the need for management adjustments within the home, increased understanding and cooperation among members of the family, and recognition that there may be less opportunity for such homemakers to participate in the development of community services and activities. Therefore, planning and management of family resources, and family life education take on added significance. Planning for the availability and use of services such as health, education, and recreation also becomes more pertinent.

While the gradual trend is toward the family as a consuming unit, particularly in fields relating to food, clothing, and shelter, most families still use many of the homemaking skills to provide a standard of living above that which income alone could provide. Both adults and youth continue to need certain of the basic homemaking skills, as well as the skills of good management, human relationships, and group participation which take on added significance at this time.

The wide scope of choices available to families varies from those relating to basic family decisions, such as whether the homemaker shall work, to those involving wise selection of goods from the market. The process of decision-making and principles of good management therefore become increasingly significant in planning the use of time, money, and energy. The increasing proportion of families in either the very young or older family groups calls for special adjustments in the Extension Service to provide them with appropriate assistance.

VI YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The rapidly increasing number of youth living on farms and in rural and suburban areas calls for specially oriented programs for these young people and for the volunteer leaders who will assist them. The Extension youth program should provide learning opportunities and practical experience in real-life situations. These opportunities should be sufficiently challenging at advancing maturity levels so that youth are prepared for economic, social, and leadership responsibilities as adults.

Useful work experience, ownership and management of property, marketing, practical records, and reporting of achievements are all important in youth development. Skills, competencies, and desirable character traits learned in 4-H Club work should carry over not only for agriculture and homemaking but for other vocations and life experiences. It is essential that youth be assisted in exploring different types of careers in order to make wise decisions. Extension should supplement any career counseling services available as it works with rural youth.

Youth can be assisted in their growing-up period by direct on-the-farm and in-the-home contacts. Others may be helped through mass media programs. Older youth and young adults will require a wide range of methods and subject matter to service their interests and needs.

VII LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

One of Extension's major contributions has been the development of leadership ability in persons it has served. In a democracy, progress is largely predetermined by the quality of leadership available and developed within the mass of the population. Agriculture has been fortunate in this respect and has contributed its share of public leadership. It has also profited materially from the fact that within its own ranks it has been able to enlist competent and alert leaders—men, women, and youth—who have served ably in leadership roles in matters of group concern—all the way from the local community to the national scene.

Extension can be justly proud of its part in helping to identify and provide training and experience opportunities for this leadership. Such contributions from Extension will be even more important in the future.

VIII COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

As the family is a basic unit in our society, the local community is a basic multiple-family unit. But the size, structure, institutions, and essential human services of the American community are rapidly changing. The Extension Service has a responsibility to render appropriate educational assistance in helping people to understand such matters as:

- Adequate standards for community services.
- Efficient methods of providing such services.
- Methods of orderly planning.
- Competitive uses of land and the relationship to proper community growth.
- Solution of problems found in special community areas within metropolitan areas, such as the rural-urban fringe and the rural slum.
- Joint concerns and the responsibilities of rural and urban people for community problems which occur where city and country meet.
- Methods of improving conditions and available services provided by health, education, recreation, religious, and other governmental and private institutions.

In addition to such work on a local community basis, Extension has a responsibility to provide educational and leadership assistance to people on a county-wide or area basis in developing organized programs of benefit to both farm and non-farm residents. Extension has had long experience in helping people organize for group action. It can successfully provide the stimulus and guidance that will enable local people to develop and carry through area-wide improvement programs to strengthen the local economy, and otherwise enhance the level of well-being of the people in the area.

Extension can and should cooperate with local people, other public agencies, and lay organizations in efforts to improve agriculture, promote non-farm employment opportunities, strengthen community services and

institutions, and in other ways encourage the optimum development and utilization of all local resources. Extension is now engaged in organized cooperative activities that encourage such joint action between rural and urban residents and between farmers, industrialists, other businessmen, and public officials. Such efforts are resulting in the improved welfare of both farm and urban residents, and should be expanded as widely and as rapidly as is feasible.

IX PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Extension programs grow out of the expressed wants and carefully analyzed needs of local people. The increasingly complex interdependence of agriculture and other segments of our economy is causing rural people to have a greater and more definitive concern with public affairs issues that bear directly upon their welfare. They are turning to the Extension Service, as a readily available informal educational service, for help in acquiring facts and for methods of analyzing and appraising such facts. Thus, they may exercise their responsibilities as citizens in a better-informed way.

Extension has an important obligation in this area and a responsibility to help farm people understand issues affecting them. In so doing, however, it should be crystal-clear that Extension's function is not policy determination. Rather, its function is to equip better the people it serves, through educational processes, to analyze issues involved on the basis of all available facts. It is the prerogative and responsibility of people themselves, individually or collectively, to make their own decisions on policy issues and express them as they see fit.



The Smith-Lever Act, in stating the purpose of Cooperative Extension work, refers to "the people of the United States." This Act grew out of a recognized need for an informal educational service which would take the results of research "on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics" to people who could apply these results in improving their welfare. Although farm families were unquestionably envisaged as a major audience, the legislative history and the Act itself specifically recognized a broader audience to include rural non-farm residents. This includes the residents of villages, towns, and cities of less than 2,500 people. Over the years, however, Extension has been called upon to provide educational assistance to a much broader audience, fairly adequately encompassed in these general groups:

Farm families

Non-farm rural residents

Urban residents

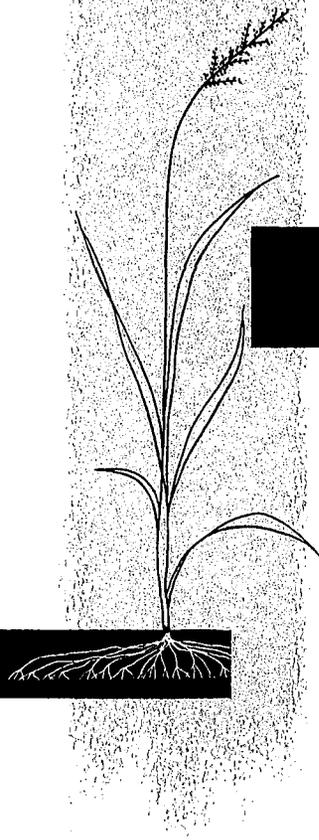
Farm, commodity, and related organizations

Individuals, firms, and organizations which purchase, process, and distribute farm produce, and which provide farm people with essential services and supplies such as credit, fertilizers, feed, and many others.

We believe no one can legitimately question that Extension's first responsibility is to farm families. However, others cannot be ignored. In differing degrees, and for somewhat different types of problems, they are interested in the results of research from our public research laboratories. At the same time, knowledge of this research and the application of findings by all groups, in addition to farm families, can be and should be of direct benefit.

If we accept the principle that Extension's responsibilities are to farm families first, but not to them alone, then a major operational problem of Extension is how to allocate its time and resources so that the highest priority needs of those other than farm people are given appropriate attention. Because of the diversity of economic and population patterns throughout the nation, this allocation of Extension resources necessarily must be determined within each state, and to a large degree, within each county.

It is important that the breadth of this responsibility, and the opportunity and responsibility for Extension to render service on all appropriate fronts, be recognized by all. However, within this broad responsibility, care must be exercised by Extension and the people it serves that problems of major importance at any given time are given priority.



In Conclusion

The facts outlined above, and the interpretations of the significance of these facts to Extension and those it serves, constitute a most significant challenge to all directly concerned. Extension, as a public agency, needs to examine these facts carefully, objectively, and conscientiously—with a determination to insure that its efforts today and tomorrow are carefully attuned to these most conspicuous needs. Extension needs today—perhaps more than ever before—to define and to agree on a hard core of its educational responsibilities that has fairly universal application. It needs to agree on the major elements comprising that hard core—and it needs to dedicate itself firmly, consciously, and aggressively to conducting effective educational efforts with respect thereto.

This does not imply that the emphasis and the methodology need to be or should be uniform in every state and in every county.

Such would be in direct contradiction to one of the most important principles of Cooperative Extension work. However, it does mean that in the interest of maximizing its contributions to those whom it is or should be serving, with whatever resources may be available to it at any given time, Extension collectively, and in every state and county, should be appraising its efforts in light of the type of an analysis outlined above, and should be dedicating itself collectively to the attainment of a record of productive and efficient service on these respective fronts.

Therefore, your subcommittee, in submitting this report to the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, recommends that this parent committee take such steps as it deems feasible to:

- Develop, or instigate the development of, an understanding on the part of all Extension workers of the implications of this subcommittee's report in terms of Extension work in the future.
- Develop an appraisal of the adequacy of Extension efforts today with respect to each of the areas of program emphasis outlined in this report.
- Develop as united a front as possible on the part of all Extension workers in giving adequate educational service with respect to each of these areas of program emphasis.

**1957 EXTENSION COMMITTEE ON
ORGANIZATION AND POLICY**

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DOROTHY SIMMONS, Minnesota
LYDIA TARRANT, Pennsylvania
C. A. VINES, Arkansas
G. M. WORRILOW, Delaware

The Subcommittee . . .

wishes to indicate that it has been a stimulating and valuable experience to its members to have the opportunity and responsibility of making this analysis and submitting this report. It would humbly observe, however, that such an effort is only the first step in the direction of attaining a completely modernized Extension program to which all can subscribe and give their support.

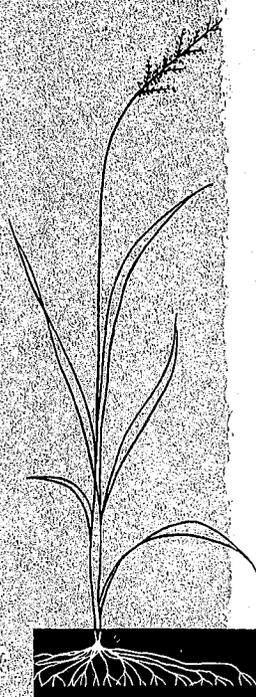
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



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The Objective . . .

“... the development of people themselves to the end that they, through their own initiative, may effectively identify and solve the various problems directly affecting their welfare.”

JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
EXTENSION PROGRAMS POLICIES AND GOALS
AUGUST 1948