

# THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interest of Agricultural Education in  
Minnesota Schools

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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

This issue of the Visitor is devoted largely to a summary of important activities of teachers in the state. The items are gleaned from letters received from teachers and should be interesting and suggestive to those who have a part in the development of the agricultural education program in Minnesota.

A. M. F.

## SECURING THE ENROLLMENT

"Enclosed is a story of an experience I had in obtaining students and getting generally acquainted with farmers on coming into a strange community.

"One of the best ways of getting acquainted with the farmers in a community and enrolling students in the agricultural classes is to meet them at the county fair. An exhibit of the work accomplished the last year is a great aid in selling your proposition to the farmers and their sons. This exhibit may well be placed in the building reserved for school exhibits, as parents of children in the rural schools which exhibit there, are sure to come to this building. A placard showing the labor record, financial record, and summary similar to the notebook work done by the student on his home project placed above the exhibit will help in describing the work done in the vocational agricultural course. Construction jobs in Farm Shop work that can be conveniently exhibited, might be included in the exhibit, labeled similarly to the field crop projects.

"A neatly printed sign advertising the opening of your classes, with an attractive slogan, will set off your exhibit. In addition to this a bulletin of your department with a foreword explaining the meaning of vocational agriculture and with a brief description of each course may be given out to prospective students.

"An exhibit of this sort was set up at the county fair at Redwood Falls last year. There being no space for an additional booth or show of any kind

other than those planned during the early part of the year, a double door which was never used was neatly covered with white wrapping paper and a broad shelf placed in front of it for a stand. Besides securing many names and becoming acquainted, the boys exhibiting farm shop projects won second premium in the high school group."

A. F. Dahlberg, Redwood Falls.

## THE CREAMERY AS AN EVENING SCHOOL CENTER

"It has been my experience that the co-operative creamery is an excellent center for the organization of an agricultural evening school. This is especially true if the community needs improvement in the dairy industry.

"As a first step the buttermaker must see that it is to his advantage to get the school into his community. It may be necessary for the agricultural instructor to "sell" the idea to him, but if he "buys" it he will work hard to enroll students for the evening school. As the buttermaker is acquainted with every farmer in his district he knows who will attend the school regularly and will apply the principles he learned there. The far-sighted buttermaker can also see that the evening school work will eventually increase the quality and quantity of the cream which he buys, so of necessity increasing the profits of both the farmer and the creamery. Furthermore, the buttermaker is soon convinced that the school will so benefit him that he can then give even better service to his customers."

H. E. Blesi, Fairmont

## BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB SHORT COURSE

"Most Smith-Hughes men do some club work in their communities. It is often a problem of how to get certain facts and instructions to the boys and girls at a time early in the year when it may be hard to get in touch with them owing to school work and condi-

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### STAFF

A. V. STORM  
A. M. FIELD  
D. D. MAYNE  
W. P. DYER  
F. W. LATHROP

SHERMAN DICKINSON  
V. E. NYLIN  
G. F. HOWARD  
T. A. ERICKSON  
GEORGINA L. LOMMEN

tions of the roads. At Bemidji these problems were solved through a boys' and girls' short course offered the first week in April, 1923. It was attended by 235 boys and girls for an entire week. It was not only an enjoyable and instructive week for the youngsters, but the business men pronounced it one of the big successful events staged in Bemidji during the year.

"The executive committee of the rural teachers in the county became interested after the plan had been presented to them by the vocational instructor and began to push it. Information concerning the short course was sent to each teacher of the county through the county superintendent's office, where the enrollment was also received.

"It took approximately \$800 to finance the course. The Civic and Commerce Association offered \$250 (increasing the amount to \$400 this year); a tag day netted \$180; a play open to the public added another \$70; and a fee of one dollar from each boy and girl was charged for the week.

"The boys were housed at the armory in a group. The girls were taken to private homes and hotels. A competent cook was in charge of the high school cafeteria where the meals were served.

Regular class work was conducted during the day. Each project was taken up in detail in order that the contestants might know how to proceed and to put into practice some of the knowledge obtained. Instructors were furnished by the Extension Division of the Minnesota College of Agriculture.

"An interesting feature of the course was an elementary study of journalism and news reporting conducted by a representative of the "Farmer's Wife"

magazine. Three or four reporters were appointed each day who prepared articles on various phases of the short course for the local papers.

"Singing, games, and athletic activities were indulged in freely and some form of entertainment was furnished each evening of the week.

"The venture met with such hearty approval everywhere that another course is being planned for this year."

H. A. Pflughoef, Bemidji.

### I. H. C. SHORT COURSE

The following indicates the activity of Allen D. Collette in securing and conducting the I. H. C. Short Course.

"I visited all the farmers' clubs adjacent to Warren, the commercial club, and woman's club, and secured signatures to petitions and aroused enough interest in the short course to secure it for Warren.

"By way of advertising we mailed out 600 letters to farmers. We asked each of the three banks and the two large general stores to buy rubber stamps and stamp all their monthly statements and other outgoing mail with an invitation to attend the programs. In this letter we enclosed a premium list of the corn, hay, and grain show. We used large window cards in the stores and along the country roads. The business men were solicited and donated \$63 for prizes for the exhibits. The commercial club financed the course. We arranged with the county superintendent of schools to have the rural schools visit the course one day. Seven of these rural schools, with their teachers, attended the first day in a body.

"We offered the basement halls of the school building to the business men for exhibits. They responded with some remarkably fine booths and displays. The exhibits were very fine both in quality and quantity. A total of 36 farmers had 105 exhibits of grains, corn, and hay. The domestic science department had a fine display. We used the agricultural department class room for the exhibits. We had rest rooms for men and women. The domestic science room, with its tables, was used for lunches. We furnished hot coffee, free of charge, to all visitors.

"We worked out the program using the I. H. C. speakers, local talent, and workers from the Crookston school.

"I feel that the course was a success. The gymnasium of the high school was

not large enough to accommodate the crowds. At this time of year things get pretty dull up here. There was a fine spirit in evidence at all times. If the people had learned nothing about better farming, I feel that the course was worth while just because we got all interests of the community together to sing, visit, and forget their troubles for a little while.

"All the sessions were well attended. The auditorium could not hold all that wanted to attend the evening sessions. The attendance for the entire six sessions was approximately 3000.

"Another project that was of value to the community was the livestock judging school conducted for the farmers' clubs in preparation for the farmers' club judging contest at the winter show at Crookston. A schedule was worked out whereby we met four afternoons each week. The members of the club teams met at 2:30 on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday and we went to the nearby farms, where good stock could be had. This school lasted one month."

Allen D. Collette, Warren

### AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

"There are certain outstanding things which so often determine the success or failure of a project. There is no single factor more important to me than the sincere friendship of the boy's parent. This is especially true when the boy selects an improvement project such as alfalfa. I am convinced that considerable time should be spent on the home farm. It is of much benefit to know the home farm well. A farm survey may help us to determine community projects but let it be a personal survey of all farms represented by boys in your classes.

"The agriculture teacher must be looked upon as the adviser of all farm projects. You should work in close harmony with your county agent, but if a boy in your class has problems to solve your relation to his parents should be such that they will have a large number of these problems for their boy to solve under your direction.

"This is not extension work. It is real vocational agriculture. If ever I have found an opportunity to develop lasting interest it is with just such problems. First, the boy and his parents must know that you are willing to help them with their farm problems.

Second, tact and diplomacy must be used in performing such duties or services. Let me cite a particular example to illustrate what I mean. Contagious abortion got into the dairy herd on the B. H. Lightly farm. His boy was a member of the field crops class. This boy had selected his alfalfa project and almost completed his project plan. Nevertheless, he came and asked what they might do with the herd to prevent it from spreading. One of his aims in the project was to get better feed for their dairy cows. I maintain that it was of inestimable importance to him although this would come in the animal husbandry subject.

"It is not sufficient to have a boy take just one project. It is difficult and probably unwise to expect a detailed record of more than one project. Whenever I have been able to enlist the father's co-operation I have had no trouble in getting the boy to take additional projects. It makes the boy feel that project work involves a real business of farming.

"The size of the project is many times an unfair measure of success. Likewise the profit made on projects can not be taken as a measure of its real benefits. One boy in my class selected for his project a 3-acre seed corn plot. He has procured certified Murdock seed corn. He is going to join the "Minnesota Crop Improvement Association." This boy has a worth while aim but a rather small project. Last year I had a boy who was interested in good corn. He selected one of his father's 30-acre fields and kept a cost of production record. His father fed the corn. The boy handed in a good record and his project showed considerable profit. The interest, the attitude, and the results in these two projects are very different. The 3-acre project will not be completed until next fall but to this time I have evaluated his project much greater than the larger project. It seems to be contrary to a boy's opinion to choose projects that are already provided on the farm. If the project involves a change and brings something new it leaves a stamp of worthwhileness on that farm. If a boy can have a financial interest or get a share of the profits, he will take much more interest. I feel that our first responsibility rests with the boys in our classes, that we must help them carry on projects, not a project. Any prob-

lems left unsolved on the boy's farm may diminish the degree of success possibly more than that attained in his project."

W. G. Wiegand, Austin

### Observation Tours

"Observation tours have an important place in supplementing the work in the classroom. To see better farm practices as they are actually done and to talk with the farmer himself concerning them is interesting and instructive to students and gives a type of instruction that the textbook and the classroom can not give.

"In the summer of 1922 my class and I visited a small nursery, a model poultry plant, and a high-class dairy farm. This trip was definitely planned in advance by personal interviews with the owners of these farms. The trip was made by auto on Saturday afternoon and evening. In each case the farm owners gladly gave us their time while at the farms and answered many questions in regard to their special line of work. Space does not permit me to go into the details of these three visits, but as a type of education it is well worth trying."

J. H. Lefforge, Long Prairie

### THE BLACKBOARD AS AN EYE-OPENER

"Pupils coming into the classroom usually need an eye-opener to arouse interest in the problems at hand. The skillful teacher uses many devices to add this stimulus. Illustrative material if properly used is one of the big aids in accomplishing it.

"After having had a little practical experience, I look back over the visual instruction work and see that perhaps the most useful and handy illustrative aid to teaching has been largely overlooked. It seems to be taken for granted that the prospective teacher already knows how to use the blackboard. Permanent and ready-made charts are a luxury and not a necessity in the room that has a good blackboard.<sup>1</sup>

"In speaking of blackboard work I am not thinking of the paper stencil

<sup>1</sup> The Visitor does not agree entirely with the last statement. Some permanent charts are valuable as time savers. For example, charts showing certain forms of statistical data, or drawings in which a high degree of accuracy is necessary can well be kept in permanent form.

A.M.F.

to be traced, but the free-hand work. This of course is copied from some reliable picture or drawing. You will immediately say that all the teachers are not artists and therefore could not put the job across. However, chalk is cheap, the eraser is easy to clean, so there is no excuse for not giving yourself a chance. You will be convinced after a little practice that it is not such a hard job after all.

"Blackboard charts present several advantages that place chart work within the reach of every teacher. They may not be the best but have the following merits in their favor:

1. **Materials Are on Hand.** A piece of chalk and a fairly good board and the proper handling will make a good legible chart. You have these materials in the classroom. On the other hand, one of the most distressing problems for the teacher located in the small town is to find suitable material for good portable charts. Paper and inks and other chart equipment are hard to get even in the larger cities.
2. **They Are Cheap.** Chalk is cheap but the materials involved in the making of permanent charts soon count into dollars.
3. **Easy to Make.** Fewer skills are employed in making a sketch on the board. You are not bothered with ink blots and mistakes that can not be corrected on permanent material if you work on the board.
4. **Quickly Made.** Free-hand work is much quicker than stamping or diagramming mechanically.
5. **They Can Be Altered.** Work in agriculture that is kept up-to-date must be altered. A great many of the permanent charts are soon out of date. From the teaching standpoint, the charts on the board are easy to alter to show contrasts.
6. **Stimulate Teacher Study.** The teacher must actually go through the process of studying the lesson if a chart is made at the time of lesson preparation. Ready-made or permanent charts frequently become a decoration for the wall rather than an aid to the teacher.

"For both blackboard and permanent charts it is advisable whenever possible to show the work in the form of a picture or diagram. Students see thousands of letters and figures, and another mass on the board will not interest them. It is the thing that is

out of the ordinary that will make them sit up and take notice.

"Summing up the facts, I think that the blackboard has its merits for classroom work and should receive more careful consideration than it does in most instances. A good chalk talk can be educational as well as entertaining."

R. S. Dunlop, Madelia

### A DEFINITE PROGRAM OF WORK

"When I first came to this community I resolved to work for at least three improvements in agricultural conditions; (1) a larger production of legume crops, (2) the use of more purebred dairy sires or at least improved dairy breeding; and (3) better handling of the manure produced. As a result of my observations and conclusions I persuaded a considerable number of my Smith-Hughes boys to raise legumes and to carry dairy projects. As a result of the experiments carried out by former Smith-Hughes boys, including my own classes, a good deal is known about proper methods of handling alfalfa and a considerable number of farmers are putting in alfalfa and soybeans this year. Both the county agent and I have used these projects as examples in talking to Farm Bureaus and Farmers' Clubs; and many fewer failures will result than before these projects were carried out. Better handling of manure, liming of soil, and conservation of fertility, are expressions commonly heard now.

"The boys have done considerable testing and have not only discovered several boarder cows but have also found a few separators that were losing more in a year than a new one would cost."

Warren Simpson, Lewsiton

### USING THE SCHOOL PAPER

"Our department of agriculture takes an active part in the publication of a bi-monthly school paper circulated throughout the district. We try to have at least one page devoted to agricultural timely topics in each issue, and find that it takes well. Through the interest thus aroused, I am shipping in a carload of ground limestone and expect to ship in several more. I am also buying considerable soybeans and other legume seeds for the community this spring.

"I have been conducting an evening school in dairying and have had an enrolment of nineteen adult farmers. None dropped out, but several brought in neighbors. The interest was created through the school paper.

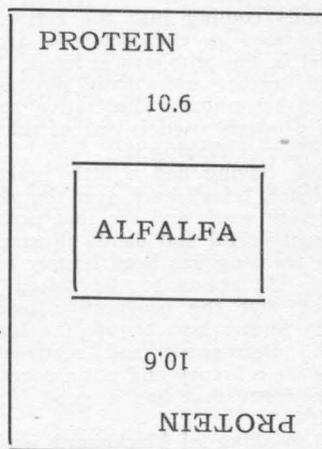
"We are testing, keeping records, and advising feeding operations for fifteen herds, with about three hundred cows at present. This is done free, most of the men being members of the evening class. They weigh their own milk and send in their samples on the school bus, and we do the rest."

R. S. Doherty, Elkton

### PLAYING THE GAME

In telling about his evening school work E. N. Johnson, Sleepy Eye, writes the following: "I have not succeeded in making them keep as careful notes as I would like. I had each provide himself with 52 cards. This proved interesting. Then we made a study of the feeds we considered most important, putting down on the card the protein, carbohydrate, fat, and ash content of the feed. Thus we arranged all the feeds from "aces" to "deuces."

"Each teacher of agriculture can no doubt think of a number of drill 'games' where these cards can be used.



"My evening class has ordered a carload of oilmeal, a carload of dairy cattle, and two silos, and has signed over 300 farmers on an area tuberculosis testing proposition for this county."

### AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Paul H. Kirk, Minnesota agricultural statistician, St. Paul, has expressed a desire to co-operate with the teachers of agriculture and has agreed to place the name of each teacher on the mailing list to receive the Minnesota Crop Reporter and any other material prepared by his division of the Minnesota State Department of Agriculture. The crop and livestock reports for Minnesota should be of value to teachers of agriculture for use in their class work and also in extension work. Any teacher not receiving this material should write to Mr. Kirk and ask that his name be placed on the mailing list.

A. M. F.

### AGRICULTURE IN THE GRADES

William M. Brandon, teacher of agriculture, South St. Paul, reports some interesting and valuable work carried on with pupils in the grades. The problems for discussion each day are suggested by the children and they make it a practice to write to the experiment stations for bulletins they need for the study of the problems suggested. The children also write to various commercial concerns for booklets and pictures and other materials for class use. The following letter was received by a little girl in the sixth grade in response to a letter sent to a seed company in which she expressed a desire to get some information on feeding birds. The letter is an unusual one to come from a business man and it is very highly prized by the girl:

"In reply to yours of the 7th, I note what you say in regard to birds. I am sorry, but we haven't a book on birds, but as I happen to raise canary birds, and watched the old bird feed the young, and am quite a lover of nature, and have watched the old wild birds bring in the worms for their young, I probably can help you a little in this line.

"The tame canary bird eats its food and when it feeds the little birds, it inserts its bill in the little birds' mouths, and for the first few days feeds it a kind of saliva, and then after the bird grows older, it feeds it cracked seed and whatever an older bird eats.

"The wild birds in the woods will bring a worm, sometimes twice as long as the little bird, in its beak, and

when the mother alights on the nest, the four or five small birds in there will open their mouths as wide as they can, and that is very wide, because about all there is to a very young bird is mouth. The old bird will feed one of them this large worm, and then go away and get another one and come back and feed it to another bird, and hardly ever makes a mistake, altho everyone looks just alike. She seems to be able to tell one bird from another, but it is not always the mother bird that does all this feeding. The father bird does his share of it and he feeds the mother bird while she is sitting on the nest. He will bring her a worm, and in fact every thing she likes. He seems to take delight in giving her the very best possible care.

"With our tame canary bird, when the mama bird wants to get off the nest, and the papa bird is shut in the same cage, he will give her a very good scolding. She goes back on the nest and he goes and cracks a few nuts for her and comes and feeds her. Especially if the weather is cold, he seems to be boss and they generally have a good hatching of eggs.

Sincerely yours,

P. S. Gurny."

### SUMMER CONFERENCE

Have you marked your calendar to remind you that the date for the Annual Training Course is June 16 to 21? This week should be provided for as a definite part of the summer responsibility of the teacher of agriculture.

A. M. F.

### EVENING SCHOOLS

Evening school work promoted by the teachers of agriculture in Minnesota made decided progress over last year. Reports from teachers show that these schools are playing an increasingly important part in the program of agricultural instruction. In fact, many teachers regard this work with adults to be fully as valuable as the instruction given to high school students. The following data compiled from reports by teachers show the increase of evening school work this year over last year.

Year	Schools	Meetings	Attendance
1922-23	35	399	709
1923-24	67	782	1345

A. M. F.