

THE VISITOR

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FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA

A movement worthy of the attention and support of educators and farmers everywhere is the organizing of those students in our public schools who are studying agriculture into clubs for mutual improvement called Future Farmers of America. It is an organization of students officered, maintained and operated by the students, with the advice and counsel of adults interested in the study and practice of agriculture. Usually the students of one school constitute the membership of a single club (or chapter).

These local chapters are united into a state-wide organization which likewise is officered, maintained and conducted by public school agriculture students chosen from the membership of the local chapters. Similarly there is a national organization perfected to co-ordinate the activities of the various states.

The movement is well on its way in Minnesota. In May, 1929, when there were about three hundred public school agriculture students at University Farm in attendance upon the annual Livestock Judging Contest the plan to have Professor A. M. Field of the faculty of Agricultural Education in the University of Minnesota act as State Adviser for the Future Farmers of Minnesota organization was proposed and approved. When the Association of Agriculture Instructors of this State held a meeting at University Farm during the summer session of the University in 1929 they expressed a desire that Professor Field accept this office. At the first meeting of the faculty

of Agricultural Education of the University early in September hearty approval was given to Dr. Field accepting this position. The members of the faculty commended the movement and pledged their individual and collective support in promoting its activities in Minnesota and in the nation.

Mr. Paul Calrow, State Supervisor of Agriculture in the public schools, also approves the selection of Dr. Field as State Adviser for the Future Farmers of Minnesota organization.

With this degree of harmony the success of the organization is promising. Now, if Superintendents of City Schools, their teachers and school boards, County Superintendents and their teachers, and other persons interested in the progress of Agricultural Education among our farm boys will lend their encouragement and support, the Future Farmers of Minnesota ought to be highly successful and should be able to add materially to the advancement of scientific and practical agriculture in our State.

From time to time information about the Future Farmers of Minnesota will be found in the Visitor. We shall appreciate news of the Future Farmers of Minnesota events to which as fully as possible we shall be pleased to give publicity.

In this issue of the Visitor, Dr. Field is supplying valuable information regarding the Future Farmers Organization in Minnesota. It is well worth careful study by all who are interested in the organization. Agriculture teachers should carefully preserve this copy of the Visitor for future reference.

A. V. S.

THE MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF F. F. A.

The "Future Farmers of America" is an organization of students in Vocational Agriculture in the secondary schools operating in accordance with the National Vocational Education Act of 1917. Students enrolled for instruction in agriculture on a vocational basis are largely farm boys therefore the organization is essentially one operated and controlled by and for farm boys.

The plan of organization includes a local chapter for each school. The local

chapters operate under a state charter and a state constitution. The various state chapters operate under a national chapter. This gives the entire program the dignity, scope and stability it needs to assure its success. The first National Congress of Future Farmers of America was held at Kansas City in connection with the American Royal Livestock Exposition, November, 1928. Delegates were present from nineteen states. At the present time twenty-two states have been granted state

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charters and the total membership of the national organization is over 30,000 boys. The movement started with farm boys and has developed into an organization of national scope in a relatively short time. The fact that the work of the organization is so closely related to the instruction in agriculture should make it a valuable aid in the improvement of instruction on a vocational basis because the boys will have more interest in their work and a greater incentive to take a more active part in the practical application of their classroom studies.



Objectives

Among the most important factors in the success of any organization are the objectives or the purpose for which the organization is established. The tentative objectives set up in Article I, Section B of the constitution of the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America includes the following statements:

1. To assist in the development of an effective program for vocational education in agriculture within the State.
2. To assist and encourage its members in getting a start in farming, including the promotion of thrift among them.
3. To develop effective rural leadership and provide experience in its techniques.
4. To encourage worthwhile social, civic, and recreational activities for students in vocational agriculture.
5. To add to the prestige and dignity of farming as an occupation and a calling and to strengthen the confidence of the farm boy in himself and his work.
6. To promote scholarship and all-round achievement on the part of farm boys.
7. To assist in promoting co-operative effort among students of vocational agriculture directed toward the improvement in country life.
8. To provide an opportunity for the affiliation of Minnesota students of vocational agriculture with those of other states in a national organization dedicated to the cause of agriculture.
9. To co-operate with other worthy organizations which are working towards a sound agricultural industry and to promote a feeling of good will among all the people of the State who are engaged in agricultural pursuits.
10. To create and nurture an appreciation of and a love of country life.
11. To promote a wholesome school and community spirit.
12. To foster and develop a scientific attitude towards the problems of farming.

It is desirable for the teachers and the students to carefully study these objectives as a basis for gaining a point of view that may be helpful in determining the nature and scope of the program of activities considered to be suitable for local chapters as well as for the state chapter. Any organization which is to become great and powerful must do so on its own merit. The individual members must accept personal responsibility for accomplishing the objectives and unfolding the principles upon which the organization is built.

How to Get Started

There are many ways to go about the problem of organizing a local chapter of the Future Farmers of America. As a guide to teachers the following suggestions are made as a basis for procedure in Minnesota:

1. Call a meeting of the boys and tell them about the organization. Invite former students to attend this meeting.
2. Elect a temporary president and a secretary.
3. Have the state constitution read. Explain that they must accept the state constitution and make one of their own that is in accord with the state constitution.
4. Explain that boys who qualify for membership when the organization is effected will be charter members and will have their names on the charter.
5. Charter members become members without being voted in and without initiation.
6. Adjourn without further action so as to permit the boys to discuss the activity among themselves and with their parents.
7. The next meeting should be on call from the boys themselves acting through the temporary officers.
8. At the second meeting select permanent officers and organize according to the suggestions in Article II of the state constitution. The officers are given in Article V as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, adviser, reporter. (The teacher of agriculture is the logical person to act as adviser.) The local chapter should be called "The (town) Chapter of Future Farmers of America."
9. Appoint committees to prepare the constitution and a program of work.
10. Adopt the constitution and approve the annual program of work.
11. Fill in the application blank for a state charter.
12. Send the following to A. M. Field, University Farm:
 - a. A copy of the constitution and by-laws.
 - b. A copy of the program of work.
 - c. The application blank for a charter.
 - d. A list of the officers.
 - e. A list of charter members arranged according to membership grades as stated in Article IV of the state constitution.
 - f. Thirty-five cents (\$.35) per member to cover state and national dues.
 - g. One dollar (\$1.00) for the charter.

Responsibilities of Local Advisers for Future Farmers Chapters

The following suggestions for the local chapter advisers are made by H. C. Grose-close, National Secretary, Future Farmers of America. The Adviser must first of all know the purposes of the organization and fully understand that the organization is one for boys. The Adviser who takes responsibility away from the boys will never have a successful organization.

1. Be thoroughly familiar with constitution and by-laws, ceremonies, parliamentary procedure.
2. Keep informed of work of other chapters by reading state publications, and distribute publications among boys.
3. Assume responsibility for having an organization in the school.
4. At all times serve as an inspiration to the group.
5. Thoroughly acquaint the boys with the organization.
6. Organize the Chapter.
7. Inspire the boys to accept and carry out the State Objectives.
8. Guide boys in setting up Chapter objectives, but avoid dictating the nature of objectives.
9. In such activities as school fairs, banquets, etc., direct thoughts of boys in making plans, but place the responsibility upon boys. (The boys should feel that all activities are theirs, and not the instructor's.)
10. Encourage all evidence of initiative.
11. Solicit support of banks, etc., in making contests possible.
12. Avoid taking leadership away from boys, even though boy leadership seems inadequate.
13. Avoid doing work for boys, but train them to perform the task.
14. See that Chapter meetings are held in summer months as well as during school session.
15. Avoid, when possible, holding of meetings during class periods. (Continually meeting at class time tends to lead boys to feel that the meetings are only that many more classes.)
16. Avoid any form of secrecy in the organization.
17. See that initiation and degree ceremonies are properly conducted.
18. Train boys through participation in co-operative buying and selling.
19. Keep in mind that the chief aim of the organization is the training of country-loving, co-operative citizens.

Program of Work

One of the essential features of the activities of each local chapter is a definite program of work. As the objectives of the Future Farmers of America Organization become more clearly formulated and understood the state association will probably set up guiding objectives to aid local chapters in arranging suitable programs of work. A program of work must, however, be submitted with the application for a charter. The objectives as previously stated should be helpful to local chapters in determining the type of activities which may be carried on by chapters. As further aid the following items are suggested as examples of types of suitable activities to include in the program of work:

1. Plan and put on a Parents and Son banquet.
2. Put on a chapter exhibit at the local or county fair.
3. Conduct one or more community improvement projects.
4. Arrange and conduct farm practice tours.
5. Enter teams in contests.
6. Put on one or more agriculture demonstrations.
7. Conduct a vacation encampment.
8. Stage a play or short pageant.
9. Conduct a farm survey as an aid to the teaching.
10. Engage in some co-operative marketing or buying activity.
11. Aid in arranging for evening schools.
12. Conduct a publicity program for the agriculture department.
13. Organize a thrift program.
14. Organize a definite cow testing program.
15. Participate in one or more worthy community enterprises.
16. Conduct candy booth in school.
17. Initiate and put on a crop or livestock improvement campaign.
18. A definite program of work for each member based on the needs of the farm and the boy.

The chapters should not take on too elaborate a program the first year. It is suggested that serious and intense effort be directed toward selecting a few definite and worthwhile activities that appear to have major importance in the community. These activities may be of two types selected on the basis of scope. There may be two or three activities of

considerable significance from the standpoint of size, importance and difficulty. Then there may be a larger number of activities of great importance but simpler and easier to perform. An example of the former might be a community improvement enterprise and an example of the latter might be to put on a Parents and Son banquet.

The program of work that is set up should be one that can be accomplished and one that has the interest and backing of each member of the group. It would be well to let the annual program of work for the chapter be a portion of the long time program of work set up by the teacher. As time goes on a portion of the long time program may be delegated to associate members because their interest and co-operative effort must be maintained.

Individual Program of Work

The individual program of work can be related very closely to the farm practice activities of individual students. In this way the chapter activities may be used as an aid in securing better practical application of the class room study of the students. This phase of the work will be discussed more fully at the fall sectional conferences.

Rituals for Initiation

It is desirable to have a formal procedure for opening and closing the meetings of local chapters and to have a simple formal initiation ceremony for each degree or grade of membership. Suitable rituals are in preparation and will be made available for local chapters after the organization activities are completed.

Former Students

Former students who have enrolled for instruction in Agriculture within the last three years are eligible for active membership. After three years they become associate members. Teachers should make it possible for former students to be present at the first meeting so that all persons who are interested may become acquainted with the plans and purposes of the new organizations. The former students, many of whom are now farming, can be of valuable assistance in planning and executing the work of the local chapter.

A. M. F.