

Extension history

Mattress-making provides dual solutions

After the Great Depression of the 1930s, many rural and low-income people were sleeping on cornhusk mattresses. In 1941, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had a large amount of surplus cotton, bought up from Southern cotton producers. Extension agents in 84 counties accepted the offer of cotton and ticking and organized mattress-making centers in village halls and county fair buildings. They helped 70,000 Minnesota families make their own mattresses and comforters. Total cost of supplies was 88 cents per mattress and 33 cents per comforter. With this program, Extension helped solve an economic problem in one part of the country and assist low-income farm families at home.



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