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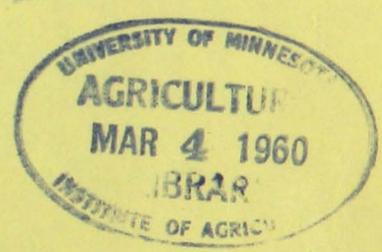
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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GROWING

The Development of the Extension Home

Program in Minnesota

1858 - 1958.



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF MINNESOTA

University of Minnesota
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Cooperating

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St. Paul 1 Minnesota

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GROWING

The Development of the Extension Home Program at Minnesota

1858 - 1958

Today, nearly 50,000 women in Minnesota are members of 3,400 local Agricultural Extension Home groups - a living monument to the efforts of pioneer farm men and women; federal, state, and county officials; and home economics trained women.

Over 20,000 local leaders, working with 55 county home agents and seven subject matter specialists, four district supervisors, and a state leader have made possible this program for carrying family living education to Minnesota families living on farms, in towns and cities.

The State "Centennial Year" of 1958 prompts us to look back and to retrace the interesting trail which home economics education has traveled to bring the Extension Home program from a simple beginning to its present vital and continually expanding service. What legislation - what pioneering - what cooperation of homemakers and trained home economists have influenced its growth?

Perhaps the best way to review the development of the Extension Home Program is to think about it in 25 year or quarter century periods.

FIRST QUARTER CENTURY - 1858-1883

"Preparing the Soil"

It was during this period that pioneers were starting to settle the prairie and timber lands of this vast area. This was the period when skills and information, needed by the homemaker, were handed down by mother to daughter and by neighbor to neighbor. Many of the skills and much of the information had been brought from the east and from over seas. Recipes were often handed down by word of mouth and individual home kitchen demonstrations. Methods of spinning, weaving, and sewing were mostly taught by older persons to younger ones. The family "handy man" fashioned tables, chairs, cupboards, and beds from native materials while home made candles, patchwork quilts, straw and feather ticks on which the family slept were products of the homemaker's own skill. "Necessity

was the mother of invention" could well be a slogan applied to family living education during this era. A few magazines and papers provided some information-- but they were few and often not available.

There were no organized Family Living Education training programs in Minnesota at this time. However, although sewing was taught in the Boston Public Schools as early as 1798 and "Household Arts" was taught in a private womans school in the East in 1821, it wasn't until the 1870's that organized training programs were developed. Among the earliest and most outstanding of the cooking schools were the New York Cooking School established in 1874 with Miss Juliet Corson in charge, the Boston Cooking School in 1879 by Maria Parloa, and the Philadelphia School in 1880 by Mrs. Sara Tyson Rorer.

Institutions which have played an important part in the development of education in Minnesota came into being during this quarter century. The University of Minnesota was established in 1857, and in 1858 a bill was enacted in the Minnesota Legislature establishing the State Agricultural College. The Morrill Act establishing the Land Grant Colleges and providing funds for the development of agricultural education was passed in 1862. The United States Department of Agriculture was established this same year.

SECOND QUARTER CENTURY - 1883-1908

"Planting the Seed"

During this period farm men and women, trained home economists, school and college administrators, and legislators planted the seeds of organized training for family living in many different ways, in many different places, and under many different circumstances.

In 1887 the Hatch Act provided federal funds for the establishment of an Agricultural Experiment Station in all land-grant colleges.

A few books, some bulletins and magazines and newspaper articles dealing with home economics topics were published during the second 25-year period, but it remained for the next 50-year period to provide much needed subject matter

material and the results of experiments for use in homemaking education.

School and College Classes

The first organized classes in home economics for adults in Minnesota were held in 1884 when, at the request of the director of the Farmers Institutes, a two weeks lecture-demonstration course was conducted by Miss Juliet Corson, Superintendent of the New York School of Cooking. These classes for "experienced housekeepers" and "young ladies, who had little or no experience in the home" were considered very successful.

Organized groups of farmers and farm homemakers worked hard as individuals and through their organizations, such as the Grange and other farmers groups, to have other classes for women. It wasn't, however, until 10 years later (1894) that a trial four weeks summer course was started by Miss Juniata Shepperd, a Farmers Institute lecturer, and were continued each summer until 1897 when a full-time course (secondary school level) was adopted and the School of Agriculture which had been started in 1886 for boys became a co-educational institution. Thirty-six students registered in September of that year and in 1899 the first class in "Domestic Science", as it was then called, graduated from the two-year course. (6 months a year)

In 1900, two graduates of the school of Agriculture enrolled in the first four year college course in "Domestic Science" in the College of Agriculture and in 1904 Mary L. Matthews was the first woman to graduate from the four year college course. Miss Matthews later became head of the Home Economics Department at Purdue University.

While home economics adult education and education for young people was starting throughout the state 4th and 5th grade girls were being taught sewing on an experimental basis in two or three Minneapolis public schools (1888) and by 1892 all 4th, 5th and 6th and 7th grade girls had sewing. Cooking also was taught in one Minneapolis school center to 7th and 8th grade pupils by 1892.

It is interesting to note that sewing preceded cooking in elementary and secondary schools and food classes seemed to precede sewing classes in adult education.

Extension Service

The fore runner of the present Agricultural Extension Service began in 1885 when the Minnesota Farmers Institutes were established. These one day meetings were held throughout the state and were conducted by two outstanding farmers plus agricultural faculty members from the University. So many farmers' wives, hungry for education, had been accompanying their husbands to these meetings that the Institute directors felt it would be a good idea to provide special talks on subjects pertaining to the home. Therefore, in 1889 a woman was added to the institute instruction staff. Topics discussed at the meetings this first year included talks on "food habits" and "bread baking". This was the beginning of the rural home program.

Reports of the Institute meetings (1886 to 1926) were printed and widely distributed throughout the state in book form. They included the subject matter presented at the meetings and acted as the fore runner of today's bulletins, news and radio releases, and experiment station reports.

The Farmers Institute Board was composed of three members of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, the President of the State Agricultural Society, the President of the State Dairy Association, the President of the State Horticultural Society. In 1907 the Institutes became an authorized Agricultural Extension Activity. Prior to that time they had been a separate function of the state.

Professional Organization

About this same time (1899) a national movement of great significance to home economics education began when the first national conference of persons engaged in or interested in the teaching of "home science" or "household economics" was held at Lake Placid, New York. Mrs. Ellen H. Richards served as chairman for all but one of the conferences which were held annually until 1908. At the meeting in 1908 with 143 persons in attendance the present American Home Economics Association was formed. In 1956-57 the Association had 24,420 individual members. In addition to these individual members 441 College clubs, many Homemakers groups and six foreign home economics groups were affiliated with the organization

which represents home economists in many different fields of activity

THIRD QUARTER CENTURY -1908-1933

"Cultivating the Soil"

Many of today's homemakers or mothers of today's homemakers were born during these years. They experienced at first hand and participated in the spreading of education for family living into more and more areas and activities.

Many active farmers clubs were organized throughout the state and did much to spread good farm and home practices. By 1917 there were at least 1,100 such clubs averaging 23 families or about 100 persons per club.

Some Important Firsts

During this quarter century several happenings significant to the home economics movement in Extension occurred as follows:

- The first county agricultural agent in the United States began work in Smith County, Texas in 1906.
- The first home demonstration agent in the United States began work in the State of Virginia June 1910.
- The first Minnesota County Agricultural Agent was employed in Traverse County, September 1, 1912 -- Frank Marshall.
- The first federal legislation -- the Smith-Lever Act -- was passed in 1914 to provide funds for extension work.
- The first Minnesota Home Demonstration Agent, Rosamund Adams, was employed December 1, 1917 in Mower County.
- The first issue of the Journal of Home Economics was published in 1909.
- The first section of the present Home Economics building was built on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota in 1914 with 214 school of agriculture home economics students and 211 college students enrolled.
- The first federal legislation, the Smith-Hughes Act providing funds for training teachers of Home Economics and the establishment of Home

Economics in high schools throughout the state was passed in 1917.

- The first federal funds stimulating Home Economics Research were provided through the Purnell Act of 1925.

The State Leader Appointed

The services of the home economists attached to the Minnesota Farmers Institute Staff as lecturers were broadened during these years. By 1912, in addition to the one and two day Institutes, a series of five day Short Courses were held throughout the state with separate and joint meetings for men and women which were much like today's "Farm and Home Week" short course, still held on the St. Paul campus once a year. Another way of taking subject matter to the various communities was by way of a special train that stopped from 1 1/2 hours to 1/2 a day at scheduled towns. From 8 to 10 instructors, including 1 home economist, gave talks and demonstrations and the train carried an exhibit of up-to-date home equipment. These same home economists judged at county fairs and conducted one week summer schools for teachers in county teacher training schools. They also contributed to news sheets, which gave useful helps on farm and home practices, and were distributed throughout the state. Some time also was spent visiting farm homes, but due to the difficulty of transportation and the limited personnel, this service -- desirable though it proved to be -- was limited.

The first home economics bulletin was published in this period on "Care of the Baby" (1916) and the program title "Domestic Science" was changed to "Home Economics".

During the early years there was no state leader. At that time four women, Bess Rowe, Juniata Shepperd, Mary S. Bull and (Mrs.) Margaret Baker, made up the staff. In 1916 a nutritionist, Lucy Cordiner, and a registered nurse, Josephine Creelman, were added to the staff. Julia Newton was appointed State leader in 1920, and remained until 1948. She followed May Secrest who had served in that capacity a year or two.

The Home Demonstration Agent Arrives

In 1909 the Minnesota State legislature passed an enabling act making pos-

sible the establishment of an agricultural extension division in the department of Agriculture of the University and the Minnesota Agricultural Extension division was set up in 1910.

Four years later in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act, providing federal funds to supplement state funds, for the work of the extension division, was passed. Congressman Lever said "This bill provides authority and the funds for inaugurating a system of teaching the farm wife and farm girl the elementary principles of homemaking and home-management and your committee believes there is no more important work in the country than this."

However it wasn't until 1917 that home demonstration agents were employed in Minnesota. The federal Food Production Act of 1917 provided funds used for the employment of an Assistant State Leader, nine district home demonstration agents (each serving several counties), and three urban home demonstration agents.

The slogan "Food Will Win the War" gave direction to both Agricultural and Home Economics programs during 1917 and 1918. Increased home food production and preservation - save wheat products - eliminate food waste - were basic goals of the home economics foods program. Making cottage cheese, making and use of the fireless cooker, preserving eggs in water glass, and drying foods were some of the early topics. In addition to foods and nutrition such topics as health, personal hygiene, conservation of fabrics, clothing thrift, housing improvement and convenience, budgets, recreation, and the school lunch were emphasized. Bulletins were issued on conservation, recreation, and textiles and leaflets on milk, fish, and eggs.

Thus a national emergency initiated an educational program which has proven itself in helping families meet other emergencies during the years as well as providing basic education for family living.

In 1919 when federal funds provided by the Food Production Act were withdrawn and many of the counties wanted to retain the services of the home demonstration agents the Minnesota Legislature passed an act making it possible for counties to pay for any kind of extension work they desired. It also required that

a county farm bureau be incorporated with a minimum membership before the county commissioners could be asked for extension funds.

The Home Economics Extension staff increased in 1919 to 20 and included, in addition to the State Leader and the Assistant State leader, five subject matter specialists, eight county home demonstration agents, three urban and two assistant urban agents. The urban agents were retained in Duluth until 1932, in Minneapolis until 1941, and in St. Paul until 1944.

The Local Leader Emerges

In 1922 an important milestone in the extension program was the initiation of the use of local homemakers as leaders in the clothing program (Winona County) thus making it possible to reach many more homes than where the specialist or home agent met directly with groups of women.

In Steele County in 1921 a nutrition project carried out in three communities on the leader plan proved so successful that Mrs. Anna Partridge, an active member of the county committee, pioneered in requesting that other projects be handled in this manner and assisted in organizing the groups.

These experiments were so successful that in 1923 definite procedures were formulated for organizing the groups and for carrying all phases of subject matter on the leader training basis.

The service and leadership provided by the homemaker leaders over the years has been a primary factor in the success of the home economics program and in helping to develop leadership skills.

The County Committee Develops

During these and following years close cooperation was established and maintained between the state staff and the county extension personnel; between the state staff and the county personnel, and other agencies and womens organizations. It was agreed that careful organization within the counties was essential if the needs of the home makers were to be served. The womens committees of the Farm Bureaus which were organized on a township, county, and state basis coop-

erated in organizing extension groups within the counties and in planning the type of programs needed by the homemakers.

The County Home and Community chairmen of the Farm Bureau served as chairman for the county Extension home programs until 1952 when an act of the state legislature terminated the relationship between the county Farm Bureaus and the Agricultural Extension Service.

Mrs. E. R. Ripley of Hubbard County and Mrs. Lewis Minion of Cottonwood, the first and second State Home Directors respectively, of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation played an important part during the years in helping to stimulate cooperation and leadership in the development and functioning of the county extension home and community committees. State and county home and community chairmen of the Women's Committee of the Farm Bureau often attended home demonstration agents state conferences which helped to strengthen cooperation and provide understanding.

New Topics - New Problems - New Methods

Minnesota was unique in having a woman poultry specialist on the Extension Home Economics Staff to work with women on poultry problems. This made an important contribution to the poultry industry of the state at the time (1920-1945) when the farm flock was primarily the responsibility of the farm homemakers.

In 1927 the radio came into use as a method of reaching women who could not attend group meetings and has been in constant use ever since. Today the University Radio Station (KUOM) carries a daily program "Hi-Lights in Home-making" and many home agents throughout the state have daily or weekly programs on local stations.

During this period county Achievement days were started. Topics receiving special attention during this period related to improvement of housing - especially kitchens and storage space; household equipment and labor saving devices; saving time and energy; furnishing and decorating living rooms and bedrooms; water in the home; refinishing furniture; child welfare and family relationship. The first specialist in Child Development and Family Relationships was added to the staff in 1929. (Mrs. Belle Fish (Thompson))

During 1930-33, the economic and social adjustment problems brought on by the depression greatly influenced program trends. The Emergency Relief Administration, Civil Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, and the Rural Rehabilitation programs reaching into every rural area of the state made requests for Extension assistance. Garden production, planning food budgets, setting up canning centers, use of relief budgets were some of the cooperative programs of this period.

A new slogan "Farm First for Family Food" influenced the foods program. Such projects as: low cost foods; clothing repair and renovation; home made soap; home made cheese; home made mittens made from old wool garments; care of equipment; repair of the home; wise use of money; wise planning for use of time and energy were carried out. How to keep the family happy at home by attaining and maintaining good health and providing inexpensive recreation were popular topics for discussion.

FOURTH QUARTER CENTURY - 1933-1958

"Expanding the Field"

This period is within the experience of today's farm families. It has been a time of many different types of pressures - from peace to war and then to peace - from depression to good times and again to a period of lowered income and increased distress.

We have seen an increase of family living educational programs carried on in our schools and colleges; through books, bulletins, papers, and magazines; by way of the radio; and most recently through television.

We have experienced the development of international exchange educational programs. College faculty, farmers, and farm youth have spent short periods in many different countries studying their programs and helping develop educational programs. Foreign students have spent time in Minnesota at school and in the farm home learning about our type of agriculture and family living.

We have seen and are seeing the continuing development of an extension

program in which county committees working with county agents and home agents, with subject matter specialists and Extension administrative staff, build the local program and project their programs into the future. Such programs are no longer planned in the state office and brought to the local groups as they were in the early days but are developed democratically and are based on the needs and the wants of the local groups.

Much has happened in the last 25 years to change program emphasis and to make essential changes. To help people recognize and solve their own problems is a fundamental objective in a democratic educational program. The development of thinkers and leaders to take their place as citizens is a present basic goal of the Agricultural Extension Program. Another goal is the dissemination of information.

Emergency and Other Programs 1933-1940

"Live at Home" projects continued to highlight the home economics program during these years. During 1933 State Extension appropriations were cut in half. The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 influenced the programs of the Agricultural Extension Program. While the county agents were busy with the corn-hog and other programs, home agents helped families to stretch their dollars, to increase home food production, and to keep household equipment in working condition.

Cooperation with other groups and agencies continued to be important during these years. Cooperating with the Emergency Relief Administrative three home economists were employed by Extension for one month (summer 1933) to give vegetable canning demonstrations in counties. The nutrition specialist (Inez Hobart) was loaned for one year to the Emergency Relief Administration to set up food budgets and to employ and train visitor nutritionists for county relief offices.

An eight county survey of "Farm Housing Conditions," a federal Civil Works Administration (CWA) project to employ persons in need of work was set up and directed by the state specialist in home improvement (Mary May Miller - 1934). The data from this study showed a great need for farm housing improvement in the state and was used as a basis for a housing program during the next several years.

In 1940, cooperating with the Emergency Relief Administration and using surplus cotton, a mattress and comforter making program was carried out in all but three counties in the state. Eligible families made their own mattresses under the direction of the home demonstration agents.

The state leader, Julia Newton, was on leave to work with the Farm Credit Administration in Washington D. C. for 18 months to help develop an educational program for farm families in the field of credit. During her absence Lois Reed, clothing specialist, was acting State Leader.

The Rural Electrification Administration, which was started in 1935, stimulated the interest of farm families in new household equipment. The selective service revealed the need for improved nutrition as a result of the draft physical examinations. Nutrition and physical fitness and hot school lunches were problems demanding special attention.

In 1935 the Bankhead Jones bill provided additional federal funds and by 1939 a total of 24 home demonstration agents were employed.

More Rapid Expansion - 1941-1948

The Defense program of the second world war (1941-1945) influenced Extension activities of this period.

In 1944 The Emergency War Food Program provided funds for the employment of six War Food Assistants who worked in nine counties, conducting classes in food production, preservation and use. Three of these women stayed on as home agents. The Bankhead-Flannigan Bill (1945) provided additional federal funds for extension work.

In 1941 families had more money to spend and homemakers were giving more attention to solving economic problems and to providing improvement in their homes. Farm credit and its relation to the farm family came in for special attention. "Outlook" conference material was discussed in meetings. Some of the units requested by the county committees dealt with home improvements -- care, repair and buying of electric appliances -- planning for kitchen, bathroom and plumbing improvements -- increasing storage space -- short cuts in the care of the home

and in clothing construction -- understanding farm family life -- desirable human relationships, and the assumption of civic responsibility.

In 1945-46 programs were still geared to shortage of materials, shortage of labor; and worn out equipment. Time saving methods, making tools and equipment last, food preservation, home pasteurizing of milk, pressure cooker clinics, new methods of canning and freezing foods, school lunch, remodeling clothing, sewing at home, wise clothing buying and an extensive housing improvement program were some of the things included. Rationing of meat, processed foods, butter, fats, and sugar created requests for help with use of foods that were available. Sugar saving meetings were conducted throughout the state.

Bulletins and leaflets dealing with housing, time and money management, house furnishings, food preservation and preparation were released.

Cooperation with other agencies demanded time of all personnel. One member of the state home economics staff, (Amy Wessel-now Amy Newcomb) was given a three months leave of absence (1948) to serve as advisor to the Military Government in Germany on the development of Home Extension program. Specialists assisted in training the Home Management Supervisors of the Farm Security Administration (later called Farmers Home Administration) and home demonstration agents cooperated with Home Management Supervisors in their work in the counties.

In 1948 Miss Julia Newton, state leader, retired. Miss Newton, a real pioneer, for more than a quarter of a century (1920-48) worked with other pioneers and provided vision and untiring effort which coupled with high professional standards gave to Minnesota a sound and "ever growing" Home Extension Program.

Miss Dorothy Simmons was appointed to succeed Miss Newton as State Leader at this time.

The Present Program Emerges - 1949-1958

In 1949 the title of Home Demonstration Agent was officially changed to that of Home Agent and the program title became the Extension Home Program.

By September 30, 1950 the Extension Home Economics Staff numbered 72 persons, 58 county home agents, and 14 on the state staff including 4 4-H Home Economists.

During 1953 all counties with a home agent and some counties without a home agent organized an active "Extension Home Council" made up of councilors who represented townships or communities within the county. This group counsels with and advises the home agent regarding the home program. The "Home Council" takes the place of the "Home and Community Committee" of the Farm Bureau which had been functioning in this capacity. This change was the result of a state legislative act severing the official relationship between the county Farm Bureaus and the Extension Service. Many of the same women continue to function on the "Home Council". (Note: The Home and Community Committee of the Farm Bureau continued as a Farm Bureau Committee.)

The service and cooperation provided by these local county groups over the years has been an important factor in the successful planning and carrying out of local programs and in developing strong leadership.

Broadening the Scope

The present program is slanted toward the "integration of Agriculture, Home Demonstration, Young Adult and the 4-H Club Programs from the standpoint of the Farm Family as a Unit." Coordination and integration of home 4-H Club and home Extension program shows definite progress.

County committees composed of about 40 persons representing members of youth groups, homemakers, agriculture and other community leaders play an important part in planning the local over-all Extension programs. Many of the county planning groups gathered local data as a basis for planning. In 43 counties (1958) long-range planning or "program projection" done by these groups is providing the county Extension personnel and Home Councils with basic information and goals toward which they can direct their activities. Each year more counties will develop such plans until all counties in the state have done this type of planning. Interesting County Planning bulletins are being released.

Methods - Subjects - Trends

Methods used in handling family living education and lesson content had changed somewhat. Slides of local interest were prepared in several counties.

More than half the home agents had radio programs 10 to 15 minutes in length, and many of them had a regular column in their local newspaper and all home agents prepare publications for county papers. Open meeting and workshops as well as leader training meetings were held. Judging 4-H activities required considerable time of these personnel. "Homemakers Achievement Days" when work done during the past year is demonstrated or exhibited had become an accepted annual event.

In 1954-55 county agents, home agents, supervisors, and specialists inaugurated a "farm and home development program" in which they work with individual farm families in the development and carrying out of their own farm and home long-time development plan. This is an educational method which requires considerable time and skill and will continue to require considerable attention during the coming years.

4-H Club work has always been an important activity in the Extension program. Home agents have been responsible for home economics teaching to 4-H Club girls, as well as for other parts of the 4-H program.

Topics of increasing interest had to do with consumer marketing and family relationships. Family life conferences were begun in 1951 on a district basis with a specialist loaned by the Institute of Child Welfare at the University. Interest in this field again warranted the employment of a full-time extension specialist in 1955. Problems in human relations and personal development are frequently considered when county programs are planned.

Bulletins and leaflets on Food Buymanship, Food Preservation, Food Preparation, Home Equipment, Laundering, Kitchen Planning, Color, Pictures, Window Treatments, Floor Coverings, Counter Tops were prepared during this period.

Cooperation in local, national and international programs of other agencies continued to be a part of the extension home program. There is evidence of more urban participation in Extension programs. The state leader spent three months in Korea (1956) on a special educational assignment.

THE NEXT CENTURY - 1958-2058

"The Outlook for Continuing Growth"

Men, women and youth of the next century will continue to want information, understanding and skills to help them do the best possible job in family and community living.

Modern methods of travel and communications have eliminated the isolation of the farm home of 1858. Research is continually providing new knowledge and new materials. New and exciting methods of education are being developed and used. These and other developments will certainly change the "what" and "how" of the programs carried out in 2058 from those carried out in 1958.

Who would have dared to tell a Minnesota farm family attending one of the first Farmers Institutes in the 1880's that in 1958 they would be able to sit in their living rooms and have subject matter specialists demonstrate the method of hanging draperies or freezing foods on TV or to have a recipe or suggestions for improving family relationships come to them over the air by way of radio?

Who would have dared to tell them they would be riding to the city many miles away and back in one day in their own automobile to attend meetings or to do their shopping - or that they could keep their garden produce frozen in their own home freezer from summer to summer - or that they would be buying drip-dry fabrics?

We do, however, dare to say that in 2058 families will continue to eat, to sleep, to need shelter and clothing, to need to work and play and will want to live happily together. But how they will get the needed knowledge, attitudes, and skills or what materials or facilities will be available it is hardly wise for us to say.

For the years immediately ahead, however, we do know that the families, the county, district and state extension personnel, the subject matter specialists, and other key individuals and groups, working together in the development of immediate and long range plans, will continue to build programs that will fit the needs of the families' and the communities' social, technological and spiritual development.

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