VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

NEW COUNTY BEGINS

ESCRIPTION TARGET

Annual Report

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service

1955

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Sussex
county

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III. County Organization

The Agronomy Committee, Beef Cattle Committee, 4-H Advisory Group and the 4-H County Council assisted the agent in developing the Extension Program for Sussex County. These committees also assisted in the execution of the program.

Other organizations helping with the Extension Program during the year were The Farm Bureau, A. S. C. County and Community Committees, Soil Conservation Committee and the four Ruritan Clubs of the county.

IV. Type of Agriculture

Sussex County is located in the southern part of the Coastal Plain Belt adjacent to the Piedmont Belt of Virginia. Sussex has a good highway system, with three U. S. Highways crossing the county, two going north and south and the other east and west. It has a main state highway that also crosses the county. In addition to the above there is an excellent system of primary and secondary roads. Three major railroads are found in the county; the Virginian, the Norfolk and Western, and the Atlantic Coast Line. These furnish freight service for our farmers, though to a lesser extent than in the past due to an increase in the use of motor trucks.

In Sussex County you will find typical coastal plain soils; deep phase sands, sandy loams with good subsoil, and wet soils. Approximately 20% of the county is open land and 80% is forest. The land used for crop land is mostly sandy loam with good subsoil. Some of the best of the deep phases and of the wet soils are also used for cropland. Pastures are now found on much of the wet soils on which crops were formerly produced. Many acres of low wet land have been cleared and seeded to pasture in recent years.

In 1950 we had 1280 farms containing approximately 184,180 acres of land. The average size of each farm was 143.9 acres and contained 43.5 acres of crop land.

Of the 1280 farms in Sussex 514 are operated by white farmers and 766 by non-white. Even though there are fewer white farm operators, they operate 124,138 acres as compared to 60,042 acres operated by non-white farmers. There are 204 white operators that own their farms compared to 186 non-white. There are four Extension Agents in Sussex; a Home Demonstration Agent, a County Agent, a Local Home Agent and a Local Farm Agent.

The 1950 census showed Sussex to have a population of 12,785. Approximately 67% of the population is colored and 33% white. There are four small towns in the county, ranging in population from 500

to 1400. These towns form definite centers for the county. Each town has a white high school, churches, and trading centers. Three of the towns have wood industries, ranging from a pulp mill to saw and planing mills. Farm people purchase many of their needs outside of the county.

V. 4-H Club

A. Situation

There are 714 farm and rural non-farm white boys and girls in Sussex County between the ages of 10 and 19. Three hundred and ninety-nine are listed as farm boys and girls and 305 as rural non-farm.

4-H clubs are organized in each of the four white high schools. There are four clubs in Jarratt, Waverly and Wakefield schools and two clubs in Stony Creek school. Boys and girls are members of the same club and have part of each meeting together.

Leaders are of the project and special activity type.

B. Goals

To develop knowledge and skills of one hundred boys in agriculture and rural living.

To create a desire in the youth to do a better job by each club member having and completing a 4-H project.

C. Methods

1. Organization

4-H clubs in three schools were organized on room basis. There was a fifth, sixth, seventh and high school club in three of the schools. In Stony Creek there were two clubs and they were organized in the elementary school.

2. Projects

a. Looking Your Best

This project was offered to the younger children, namely the fifth grade boys and girls. The project outline, which was given to each club member, was developed so that projects would be of equal interest to the boys and girls. Thirty-seven boys were enrolled in this project with twenty-two boys completing.

b. Your Room Pep It Up

This project was offered to the sixth grade, with 38 boys enrolled. The project covered phases of room improvement that would be of interest to the boys as well as to the girls. It included partitioning dresser drawers, building a bulletin board, arrangement of furniture and care of the room. Eighteen boys completed this project.

Farm and Home Electric Project, Unit I, was offered to the boys in the seventh grade and high school in three of the schools. Mr. David Staples and his co-workers, of Virginia Electric and Power Company, assisted us with the project. Thirty-nine boys enrolled in this project. The club meetings were used for project instruction. All of the boys were very interested and received information and training that will be useful to them. Project completion, as measured by record books turned in, was disappointing in that only 18 books were received from the boys enrolled. The agent knows that a number of other boys completed all the requirements of the project but did not submit their record books. Milton Spain was the county boy winner and attended the State Electric Congress in Richmond.

first place in the district contest and placed sixth in the state contest. Farm machinery dealers supplied the tractors and assisted with the local contest.

e. Baby Beef Show and Sale

Last fall eleven boys and girls secured steer calves and began feeding them for our second baby beef show and sale, which was held in May. The calves were secured with the assistance of the agent and local leaders.

In December, local leaders assisted with a tour arranged so that each of the eleven club members could see all of the calves on feed. During the tour feeding, fitting and showing was discussed.

In February a fitting and showing demonstration for these boys and girls was conducted by the agent.

In April, the committee of adult leaders met with the agent and plans for the show and sale were made. The committee decided to raise through donations $550.00 for prize money for our show. A total of $645.00 was raised. The committee also outlined plans for the sale of the calves. These plans were carried to completion.

On May 2 the Second Sussex County Baby Beef Show and Sale was held in Waverly. Thomas Drewry's Hereford steer was judged to be Grand Champion of the show, with Milton Spain's Angus steer Reserve Champion. Milton also took first in fitting and second in showmanship.

The calves averaged 939 pounds and the average sale price was 29.6¢. Four calves were purchased by Richmond buyers, one by a Smithfield buyer and one by a Norfolk buyer. Five calves were purchased locally. A total of $498.00 was given in prizes, the rest of the money is being kept for use next year.

The show and sale was supported by the Ruritan Clubs and other individuals in Sussex County. They helped to interest the boys and girls in raising a calf, and helped to select the calves. Many of the Ruritans visited the club members and took an interest in their project. This greatly encouraged the boys and girls. It would have been impossible to have a successful show and sale without the cooperation of the Ruritan Clubs and other individuals.

f. Peanuts

Peanuts are the major source of farm income in Sussex County. Several peanut buyers met with the agent and Agronomy Specialist in February and discussed a 4-H peanut project. It was decided to offer this project to about 12 boys and to conclude the project with a show and sale of the peanuts produced by the club members taking the project. Prizes were set up for the winning boys.

The Peanut Contest was discussed with the boys in club meetings. Letters were written to some of the older boys and personal contacts were made, trying to interest more boys to enter the peanut contest. Very little interest was shown. Four boys enrolled in this project. One of the boys is now attending another school and is not in 4-H club work at this time. The show and sale is scheduled later.

g. Entomology

The younger club members indicated that they would like to have summer 4-H meetings. They decided to take Entomology as a project since many of the members live in town or near the edge of town and have very little [illegible] Entomology Specialist assisted the agent in starting the project in three school areas. Twenty boys attended the first three meetings and each showed considerable interest. In July 10 boys attended the meetings, the other 10 indicated that they were not going to continue. Five boys have done sufficient work on this project for completion. Dick Kinzie of Waverly has collected over 110 different insects and has identified over 85 of them.

3. 4-H Activities

a. County Council

The county council, an organization of 4-H officers, held

b. National 4-H Club Week

Five clubs observed National 4-H Club Week. The four clubs in Wakefield had a banquet. The officers of the clubs were also entertained by the Wakefield Kuritan Club. The high school club of Jarratt had a radio program during National 4-H Club Week.

News stories were used to emphasize 4-H club work.

c. Rural Life Sunday

A County Vesper Program was conducted by 4-H club members on Rural Life Sunday. They had the assistance of local pastors and adults in planning and conducting the vesper program. Each club had some of its members helping with the program. Approximately 175 club members, parents and friends attended the vesper program.

d. County Picnic

A county picnic for 4-H club members was held in August. This was another county activity planned by the county council and designed to create and hold the interest of boys and girls in the 4-H club program. This was also another county activity in which adult leaders helped with the 4-H club program. Approximately 75 club members and 10 adults attended the picnic. The program consisted of swimming, games and a picnic lunch.

e. Achievement Day

An Achievement Day will be held later, at which time awards will be given to outstanding club members and clubs.

f. Camp

Ten boys and five girls attended 4-H Camp Parrar this summer. One of the club members was elected an officer of the camp. All of the club members took part in some of the evening programs or vespers.

The Agent was Director of camp this year. In March a camp planning meeting was held for our camp group. The daily schedule and handicraft was decided upon. Duties and responsibilities were assigned. The Agent and the extension secretary compiled the camp handbook, a copy of which was given to each camper, made name tags

for each camper and divided the campers into colonies before leaving for camp.

The camp nurse was secured by the agent. A leader from the county was secured but we were unable to use her because the quota was supplied by other counties.

g. Short Course

Three boys, two girls and the agent attended the 4-H Short Course this summer. Evelyn Proctor was taken into the All-Stars. George Holdsworth, district winner in the tractor driving contest, placed sixth in the state contest.

h. All Stars

There are nine All-Stars living in Sussex, four ladies and five men. One meeting of the All-Stars was held during the year. The All-Stars reviewed the records of the older club members and recommended Evelyn Proctor for an All-Star. Some of the All-Stars are active as leaders.

i. 4-H Year Book

A 4-H Year Book was requested by the county council. They suggested that the year book contain meeting dates and officers of each club, outline by months for each project, calendar of 4-H events, requirements for camp, Short Course and Conservation Camp, standards by which the clubs would be judged for the outstanding club, order of business for club meetings and interesting facts and history of 4-H. A copy of the hand book was given to each club member.

j. Leaders

Each club obtained a leader. A few of these leaders

One hundred and fourteen boys were enrolled in 4-H club work with very few dropping out. Project completion was not as high as had been hoped for but the agent and leaders feel that each boy received some benefit from the 4-H program. Boys carrying the tractor maintenance project and baby beef project received more training and these groups had 100% completions.

E. How Next Years Work Can Be Strengthened

The 4-H Club Program in Sussex should include all of this years activities. Adult leaders should be used to a greater extent. They should be given more training and responsibility so that they will become interested in the entire 4-H progrm instead of only portions of it. Agricultural project work should be strengthened. The Baby Beef and the Tractor Maintenance projects are very strong in Sussex. They are concluded by a local contest which interest the club members. Other projects need similar local stimulus such as shows, contests and judging teams.

Parents should be informed of 4-H club work so that they may encourage their children to be better club members.

VI. Crops

A. Peanuts

1. Situation

Peanuts are produced on practically every farm in Sussex County. Peanuts are our most important money crop. During recent years peanut yields have increased. Part of the increased yields have been due to the control of the southern corn root worm on our heavy soils. Increased fertilization of the rotation also played an important part in the increase of the peanut yields.

2. Goals

To increase the use of peanuts.

3. Methods

An agronomy meeting was held in February with 60 farmers present. Peanut production, including liming, fertilization, varieties, spacing, insect and disease control and spraying for weed control was discussed. Mr. M. P. Lacy, [illegible] As a result of the above meeting a considerable interest developed in spraying peanuts and other crops for weed control. In April, Dr. J. O. Howell and Mr. John Amos, Extension Entomologists, assisted the agent with a general farmers meeting on insect control and spraying of crops to control weeds. There were 95 farmers and farm supply dealers present. Dealers had a display of various sprayers for the farmers to see.

Twenty-five demonstrations on weed control in peanuts were conducted in the county. Some of these demonstrations were on a few acres, while others included practically all of the peanuts on the farm. The agent, from talking with farmers over the county believes that every peanut farmer either saw one of these demonstrations or talked to a farmer who was conducting one.

The Agronomy Committee indicated the need of a greater use of aldrin to control underground insects attacking peanuts. Publicity was given to this through meetings, newspapers, letters and personal contacts. In past years demonstrations had been conducted that showed the value of aldrin or similar insecticides. There was an increase in the use of aldrin to control underground insects. It is estimated that in some areas 75% of the farmers used aldrin this year.

Corn earworms and/or fall army worms appeared in September eating the peanut leaves. Since the control of these insects involved the use of an insecticide that might leave a toxic residue, the general suggestion was not to dust. A few farmers dusted but there is no indication that they increased their yields of peanuts. About a week was spent by the agent making personal inspections of peanut fields upon the request of various farmers. In no case was the damage sufficient to justify dusting after considering the possible lost of the hay due to residue of the insecticide.

A new variety, N. C. 2, developed by North Carolina Experiment Station, was tried by at least ten farmers. Reports on yield comparisons as of the present seem to indicate that N. C. 2 has not yielded as well as farmers stock.

General production information was supplied to the producers through letters, timely news articles and personal contacts. Dealers in fertilizer and insecticides were given the latest production information and they assisted with the educational program.

4. Results

Peanut yields, on farms with heavy soils where aldrin was used, were increased from 5 to 15%. On other farms, where the land was light, very little increase in yield was noticed from the use of aldrin. Farmers like to use aldrin even if it does not increase their yields because it controls pouts and therefore enables the peanuts to grow off faster, giving them less competition from grass and weeds.

there is ample cropland suitable for tobacco to enable our farmers to rotate their tobacco.

Blackshank can be found on a few farms and is becoming more of a problem each year. Demonstrations showing resistant varieties have been conducted in the past years.

Yields vary from farm to farm. Some farmers make from 1800 to 2200 lbs. per acre while others only produce 600 to 700 lbs. This difference in yield is largely due to management of the tobacco crop and to the production practices that are followed.

2. Goals

To increase tobacco yields and income received from each acre.

3. Methods

Timely production leaflets, covering all phases of tobacco production, were mailed to each tobacco grower. These included plant bed management, fertilization and its placement, varieties, spacing, top dressing, the use of oil for sucker control, curing and grading. News articles were also used

Two demonstrations using methyl bromide were conducted after a meeting was held of tobacco farmers to introduce the material.

Two demonstrations were conducted using various materials for sucker control. MH-30 was used on approximately 50 acres of tobacco.

Dealers assisted by having the recommended fertilizer and insecticides available.

4. Results

The use of methyl bromide to control weeds and grass in plant beds, proved very satisfactory. These demonstrations created interest in this practice as is being shown by farmers using the material this fall.

The demonstrations on the use of MH-30 and mineral oil to control suckers were satisfactory. MH-30 is the material that the farmers liked the best.

5. How Next Years Work Can Be Strengthened

Emphasis should be placed on fertilizer placement. Many of our farmers were unable to get their tobacco to grow due to incorrect placement of fertilizer.

C. Grains

1. Situation

Corn is our major grain crop, with approximately 18,500 acres planted yearly.

Grain sorghum is being planted on more farms each year and on some farms it is replacing some of the corn acreage. Small grains are produced on the larger farms where acreage is available for a three year rotation.

2. Goals

To increase the yields of grain crops and to use the land available to the most economical advantage.

3. Methods

Recommendations were made available to the farmers on

varieties and fertilization of all the grain crops. News paper articles, letters, meetings and personal contacts were used.

Farmers who had not planted any grain sorghum previously were urged to try a small acreage.

A new variety of corn was planted on four farms so that its value could be appraised. It did very well on all four farms.

4. Results

Grain sorghum acreage doubled from last year. Farmers are generally well pleased with its yield and it adaptability to their system of farming.

Farmers generally are fertilizing their corn within the suggested rates and are using recommended varieties. Small grain as a whole are grown on the larger farms and receive ample fertilization.

5. How Next Years Work Can Be Strengthened

Farmers should be encouraged to try grain sorghum and to examine their farming operation and plant the grain crops that will give them the largest net income.

D. Soybeans

Soybeans are produced by about 300 farmers for combining. They grow about 4500 acres. Some of the land formally used for soybeans is being used now for grain sorghum. If grain sorghum continues to yield well as it has the past two years few soybeans will be planted yearly.

Recommended varieties of soybeans were made available to the farmers. A new variety of soybeans, the Lee, was planted on one farm. The farmer planting these beans said that at least twenty people had been to see these beans. No yield results are available as yet.

E. Pastures

[illegible] the office by the farmers and fertilizer and lime recommendations were made based on the results of the test. Rotative grazing was stressed. Supplementary pastures were recommended.

VII. Livestock

A. Beef Cattle

1. Situation

Beef cattle numbers have increased during the past 10 years. When ladino clover was introduced and farmers saw that they could have a good pasture they began to increase beef cattle numbers. Cow herds can be found on many farms. Steers are also fed on quite a few farms. In most instances there are more beef cattle on the farm than there is grazing for the cattle.

2. Goals

Supply beef cattle producers with information that will help them do a better job.

3. Methods

A livestock demonstration was held in February on castration, dehorning, worming and spraying. Mr. Hugh H. Henderson, Animal Husbandman, assisted with the meeting. Fifty farmers were present at the start of the demonstration on a day when water was freezing in the sunshine at 12 noon.

Personal visits were made to many of the beef cattle farms to discuss with the farmer breeding, feeding and management.

4. Results

B. Swine

1. Situation

Hogs are raised on practically every farm. Most farms raise their own pigs and feed them out. Hogs consume the larger part of our grain supply.

2. Goals

Improve production practices and type of hogs.

3. Methods and Results
4.

Twenty farmers attended a grade demonstration in Richmond in the spring.

The agent has personally visited over 100 farms to inoculate 4338 hogs. While on the farm hog production was always discussed with the farmer.

With the aid of an Agricultural Engineering Specialist plans were developed to improve the feed grinding and feeding system on one farm. The farmer is still considering this project but as yet has not begun to install the system suggested.

The agent has assisted in the placement of at least 15 boars, most of which were secured locally.

5. How Next Years Work Can Be Strengthened

Emphasis should be placed on type of hogs.

VIII. Forestry

In August a meeting of professional workers was held in the county to review an intensified forestry program. It was decided to hold a meeting for selected farm people in September. Twenty-three persons attended the meeting in September. Thirteen indicated that they were interested in the program and requested a forester to visit their farm and examine their woods. This is being done.

IX. Farm and Home Development

In February, the agent attended a school on Farm and Home Development Program. The work was begun in Sussex in September. Two families

were contacted and we have been working with one family. Since September the family has been busy and we have not made the progress that we had hoped for.

The farm family was clearing land for pasture when we made the first contact. We have worked with them on seeding the pasture. They have a building program in mind, including remodeling and adding to their home, building additional barns and shed. We are working with them on these phases. A specialist has assisted in developing plans for remodeling and enlarging the home.

X. Cooperation With Other Agencies

A. J. R. Horsley Soil Conservation District

Sussex County is in the J. R. Horsley district. Mr. J. J. Lilley of Sussex County is chairman of the board and Mr. W. C. Seeley is an appointed member. The agent has cooperated with the directors and the local conservationist, Mr. Kinzie. The conservationist and the agent have visited many farms together, working with the farmers on their conservation problems.

B. A. S. C.

The agent assisted the A. S. C. with the educational phase of the Agricultural Conservation Program. In December 1954 meetings were held on the 1955 A. C. P. program.

C. The Future Farmers of America and the Young Farmers Clubs

There is one white school in the county which has a Vocational Agricultural Department. The agent has assisted the Agricultural teacher and there is a friendly working relationship between extension and vocational agriculture on the county level.

The agent has appeared on the program of the F. F. A. and the Young Farmers Clubs and has made specialist available for their use.

D. Farm Home Administration

The agent has kept informed on the broader phases of the F.H.A. program and has referred farmers to F.H.A. for detailed information.

E. Farm Organizations

There are two farm organizations in the county, the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union. The Farm Bureau has been organized in the county for several years. The Farmers Union was organized during 1954.