

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service

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1959

LOUISA

County

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I. LOCATION AND TYPE OF AGRICULTURE

Louisiana County is located in the Central Piedmont Plateau and is almost wholly in the Pamunkey River Basin. The divide between the main forks of the Pamunkey River, North and South Anna Rivers essentially bisects the county from northwest to southeast. The extreme eastern portion of the county is drained by tributaries of the James River. North Anna River forms the northeastern boundary of the county. Fairly large supplies of surface water are available from both North and South Anna Rivers during periods of normal rainfall. However, the flow of these rivers becomes extremely low during periods of prolonged drought. Storage dams would be needed to furnish dependable supplies continuously.

In 1954 land in farms totaled 173,583 acres, 53% of the county's area of 329,960 acres. According to the 1954 Census there were 1371 farms which averaged 126.6 acres in size, \$8,999.00 in value of land and buildings. Land in farms has been steadily declining since 1940, when 215,701 acres were recorded and the number of farms has dropped 43% from the peak number of 2,415 in 1935.

The land is rolling and altitudes vary from 200 to 500 feet above sea level. The temperature averages about 35 degrees in January and 75 degrees in July. The frost free growing period is approximately 182 days. Annual rainfall averages about 40 inches. July and August are normally the wettest months and November the driest.

The county has a wide variety of soil types. The most important listed in order of importance are:

Cecil
Appling
Durham
Tatum
Nelson
Iredell
Cherokee

These soils respond well to lime, fertilizer and good management. Agriculture is the leading industry. There are a few manufacturing concerns, but many people are employed in plants in Charlottesville, Richmond, Fredericksburg and Orange. The county has a well-balanced system of agriculture and farm income is derived from many products. Poultry, including chickens, eggs and turkeys leads in the value of farm products sold, with about 24% of the total and is followed closely by cattle and calves which provide about 22% of the total. Milk sales have more than doubled during the past 10 years and this product ranks third with slightly more than 16% of the total.

II. SITUATION AFFECTING THE 1959 PROGRAM

Louisa County is completely rural. However, its location is such that non-farm rural residents are increasing; farmers, in greatly increasing numbers, are finding off-farm employment, more women are employed outside the home and in general there is greater mobility of all the people. Fewer functions are performed in the home and more and more dependence is being put on agencies outside the home. There is a marked scarcity of young people in their 20's and a marked increase in the proportion of aged and or retired people.

Operating the farm itself is becoming more highly specialized and mechanized. The capital required to break into farming as an occupation is going up steadily. Industry is providing farmers with more services. People are relying more on purchased foods. Home

production of the food supply is decreasing. Unfavorable disparities in cash income between farm and non-farm is a glaring reality.

About 60% of all farms in the county are classed as part-tims. This group is made up of those farms that sold less than \$250 worth of farm products and those that made sales ranging in value from \$25 to \$1199 and the operator reported 100 days or more of off farm work and those reporting other income exceeding the value of farm products sold.

All farm products sold in 1934 according to Census figures brought \$1,190,000 as compared to \$1,595,000 sold in 1949. Approximately eight-tenths of the county's income is derived from the sale of four different products: Poultry, poultry products, cattle, milk and tobacco.

Sun-cured tobacco is the only cash crop grown in the county. In 1939 the county allotment was 1128.7 acres. There were 190 farms having allotments totaling 295.9 acres which did not plant any tobacco. 285 farmers planted and harvesting 520.8 acres or approximately one-half the county allotment. However, this was 100 acres up from the low reached in 1938 - The Tobacco Soil Bank year.

In the meantime the production of livestock, livestock products and poultry has increased materially.

Because of increased interest in the production of forage and livestock the Extension program has been directed toward promoting a livestock type of farming.

High yields of grains, forage crops and pasture are highly essential. Consequently, the County Agronomy Committee adopted the following long-tim objectives:

1. Increasing the average per acre yield of grain and forage crops.
2. Expand the acreage and build fertility of permanent pasture.
3. Improve quality and increase population of livestock.
4. Increase marketing efficiency and facilities by working with marketing cooperative.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A. Agronomy

Situation

- a. The acreage of alfalfa is increasing slowly. The average yield is about 1.9 tons.
- b. The average yield of corn for grain was 32.2 bushels in 1954 and for silage was 9.2 tons.
- c. 18,219 acres of pasture unimproved.
- d. Too few soil samples sent in for testing.
- e. Drastic reduction in acreage of tobacco planted.

Objectives

- a. To produce higher average yields of grain and forage crops.
- b. Increase carrying capacity of permanent pasture.
- c. Improve methods for harvesting forage crops.
- d. Produce higher average yields of tobacco.

Goals

- a. Provide farmers list of recommended varieties.
- b. Have 400 farmers requesting soil tests.
- c. Have two demonstrations each year showing better equipment and methods for housing hay.
- d. Hold two educational meetings each year relative to tobacco production.

Results

- a. List of recommended varieties were mailed to 400 farmers. Posters displaying the same varieties were displayed in the two leading feed and seed stores in the county. Sales were in such volume that these varieties were not available toward the end of planting season.
- b. The above goal was not reached this year. However, the records show that 558 soil samples were tested and recommendations made.
- c. The only work done in connection with this goal was in answer to requests for information relative to hay conditioners. Fifteen or more conditioners were placed during the year. The farmers who bought conditioners think that the time needed to cure hay was reduced from one-third to one-half.
- d. Four tobacco fertilizer demonstrations were set-up in lieu of the two proposed meetings. The demonstrations were selected on the basis of soil tests and soil history. Mr. G.R. Mathews, Tobacco Specialist, VPI, supervised the selection of demonstrations and provided the fertilizer material. Information relative to the results is being gathered and will not be complete before about December 30, 1959.

IV. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

1. Beef Cattle

Situation

There are approximately 80 producers of beef cattle in Louisa County who have herds averaging about 40 cows per herd. Many other farmers have smaller herds. There are

approximately 10,000 beef type cattle in the county.

Objectives

- a. Improve quality of breeding herds.
- b. Improve the quality of forage, especially by timely harvesting and curing.
- c. Increase the proportion of corn silage in ration.
- d. Keep information relative to cooperative marketing before herd owners.
- e. Inform producers as to most practical control measures for parasites.

Goals

- a. Two additional herds enrolled in BCIA each year for next 5 years.
- b. Place two BOP bulls in county each year for next 5 years.
- c. Increase by 50 each year the number of feeder calves sold through cooperatives.

Results

- a. The two additional herds were secured and enrolled in BCIA, making a total of four herds enrolled from the county. One bull calf was selected from the county for the 1959 feeding tests. One BCIA bull from the 1958 BCIA Sale was placed in the county.

The advantages of cooperative marketing feeder calves was stressed in a county-wide Farm Bureau Meeting by the agent and a panel of local calf producers. The members

of the County Livestock Committee were active in promoting cooperative feeder calf sales. As a result 465 calves were sold during 1959 sales. This compares favorably with 221 sold in 1958.

2. Dairying

Situation

There are 23 Grade A Dairy Farms in Louisa County. 35 farms produce Grade B milk.

The number of dairy cows on farms in the county is about 4000. Only about 200 of these cows are on official DHIA test. These cows are on three different farms and served by DHIA located in adjoining counties.

The Louisa County Artificial Breeding Association was started January 21, 1957. From that date to the end of 1957, 576 cows were bred. The cows were located on about 30 different farms.

There are 11 dairymen using bulk tanks at the present time.

At the present time it is very difficult for new producers to get on the Grade A markets. Consequently, there is little interest in establishing new dairy operations. However, the majority of those already in have expanded the operation or plan to expand in the near future. Additional land is being acquired either by rental or purchase and additional buildings to accommodate a greater number of cows are being provided.

Practically all dairymen in the county have installed bulk feed tanks which has reduced the cost of bought feed by two to three dollars per ton.

Objectives

- a. Increase production of legume hay, especially alfalfa and corn silage per cow in county.
- b. Produce hay of higher quality.
- c. Increase number of Grade A and Grade B. dairymen in the county.
- d. Have a greater number of dairy farmers keeping records.
- e. Reduce incidence of mastitis in dairy herds.

Goals

- a. Increase alfalfa acreage by 100 acres per year for 5 years.
- b. Arrange two demonstrations of modern hay making equipment.
- c. Establish one Grade A and five Grade B producers per year for next five years.
- d. Establish a local DHIA on a part-time basis.
- e. Hold one disease control school during 1959.

Results

- a. The trend toward increased acreage received a temporary set-back in 1957, due to the alfalfa weevil. A check by seed dealers in the county shows that 20% more seed were sold in 1959 than the year before. This would indicate that the increase in new seeding would amount to about 80 acres in 1959. It is reasonable to assume that most

of this increase was the result of work done by the County Agronomy Committee.

- b. Reference to this goal was made under Agronomy.
- c. One Grade A milk producer was induced to move to Louisa County after having sold in an adjoining county. His milk-
ing herd numbers about 75 cows and has been a welcome addition to the Artificial Breeding Association.

In the spring of 1959, White House, a subsidiary of A & P Stores took over the milk business and plants of Coble Dairy. Since that time the county agent has worked with the new concern toward increasing production. Between 12 and 15 new producers of milk for manufacturing milk have been added to the list in the county.

- d. A considerable part of the agents time was spent this year helping to establish an Artificial Breeding Program on a sound basis. Considerable progress has been made. The number of cows bred has increased from about 675 in 1958 to about 850 during 1959. The maximum number of cows that could be expected is around 1200.

V. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Situation

The naturally fertile bottom lands along the North Anna, South Anna, Little River and their tributaries are among the most important basic assets of Louisa County. During the pre-Civil War years much of the 25,000 acres or more involved was used for the production of crops. However, improper use of the

sloping hillsides resulted in the piling up of soil on the lower slopes, its deposit over the fertile bottom lands and the silting up of ditches and streams to the extent that at present approximately 90% of this acreage is unfit for cultivation. Stream clearance, flood control and drainage are sorely needed practices.

Objectives

- a. Work through local Soil Conservation District to obtain Federal Aid under Public Law 566 for the purpose of flood control, stream clearance and proper land use along the flood plains of the previously mentioned streams.

Goals

- a. Obtain approval for planning by early 1959.
- b. Begin construction on flood control and stream clearance project by 1962.

Results

The Extension Agent took the lead in informing the public and organizing an Overall County Committee to work on this project. Many meetings were held, much information gathered and much thought applied to the job of preparing and submitting the two applications for watershed projects in the county.

The larger of these projects is known as the South Anna Watershed Project which involves about 244,000 acres. The smaller is what is known as Little River and contains about 40,000 acres.

The larger project will require from 25 to 40 structures and the smaller from 4 to 6 structures.

Both projects have been approved for planning by the State Soil Conservation Committee and by the Soil Conservation Service.

A Planning Party began the preliminary survey work on April 1, 1959 and easements on some of the structures are now being obtained. It is expected that construction work will begin during 1960 and will probably continue for some 10 years.

VI. 4-H CLUB WORK

A. Project Work - Home Grounds Beautification - Unit I

Objectives

- a. To grow plants from seeds or cuttings.
- b. To construct garden fixtures such as: a fireplace, picnic table, rock garden, garden pool and many other items.
- c. To learn how to make a landscape plan on paper for home or flower border.
- d. To develop game areas in yard.
- e. To learn how to care for plants.
- f. To create interesting flower arrangements for the house.

Methods

- a. Method demonstrations will be given and activities conducted by the agents as follows:
 - October - Introduce project with color slides.
How to Press and Mount Leaves for Notebook.
 - November - How to Plant Bulbs and Shade Trees.
Collect Leaf Notebooks made.
 - December - Present prizes for best notebook in each club. Tree Identification Contest.
 - January - Home Projects
 - February - Home Projects
 - March - Building Lawn Chairs and Fireplaces.

April - Lawn Care (Cutting and Fertilizing)

May - Record Books

Results

There were 309 boys enrolled and 68 completed their projects. Programs and demonstrations were given December through May as planned. Flower bulbs were awarded as prizes for best leaf collection in each club and plans for outdoor fireplaces, lawn chairs, etc. were given to all club members upon request.

B. Other Activities

The total attendance from county at Holiday Lake Camp was 48. Of this number 20 were boys.

Three 4-H boys showed their dairy cattle in the Atlantic Rural Exposition Dairy Show.

In holsteins the boys won second place in the District Herd, fifth in the aged cow class, seventh in senior yearling and ninth in senior calf.

In guernseys the boys placed sixth in the senior yearling class.

In open competition with holsteins, the boys won third in aged cow class and sixth in senior yearlings.

A 4-H club member showed the Grand Champion steer in the county 4-H and FFA Baby Beef Show and Sale. Steer was sold for \$2¢ per pound.

VII. YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN'S WORK

Situation

Representatives from the Young Adult Club and the Extension

Agents planned the following program for 1959:

January - Banquet

February - Parliamentary Procedure - FFA

March - Looking at Louisa County (Speakers to be secured by Carl Coleman and T.C. Andrews)

April - Entertain high school seniors (To be developed by Program Committee)

May - Make the Fish Bite - Mr. Max Carpenter

June - Gone Fishing - Trip

July - Hayride - Softball Game (Boys vs. Girls)

August - Swimming Party- Picnic - Demonstration on Water Safety in Pool)

September - Christianity in Everyday Life - Local Minister.

October - Money Management

November - Wilderness Battlefield - Trip

December - Christmas Project

Objectives

- a. To learn to use correct parliamentary procedure.
- b. To become more familiar with Louisa County facts, origin and history.
- c. To increase membership.
- d. To learn recommended procedures connected with fishing and laws related to conservation of game and wildlife.
- e. To provide a source of recreation for young men and women in Louisa County.
- f. To learn how we can carry out recommended water safety procedures.
- g. To learn how we can handle our money to better advantage.

- h. To learn more about historical places of interest near our homes.

Methods

- a. The agent expects to serve in an advisory capacity.
- b. Tours will be made.
- c. Members will participate in leadership camp at Camp Farrar.
- d. Mr. E. M. Penington, Vo-Agriculture Instructor, will present a program on Parliamentary Procedure with members of the Future Farmers of America.
- e. Qualified speakers will be secured for Looking at Louisa County.
- f. Mr. Max Carpenter, Game and Inland Fisheries, will conduct the May meeting.
- g. Young Men and Women's Club members will sponsor a fishing trip in connection with number 6 above.
- h. Trooper Dwight Ozmont will conduct a meeting on Water Safety in a Pool.
- i. A local minister will speak on "Christianity in Everyday Life"
- j. A local banker will speak on "Money Management for Young Adults"
- k. Young Men and Women's Club members will visit the Wilderness Battlefield.

Results

The program was carried out as planned except for the Wilderness Battlefield Trip, scheduled for November was not made.

Three YSF members, Rowena Tyler, Jackie Grebbs and Charlie M. Winston attended State Leadership Camp at Virginia Beach on August 6 - 9.

VIII. COOPERATIVE MARKETING

A. Wool

Goals

- a. Sell 90% of wool through cooperatives.

Methods

- a. Inform growers of the advantages of cooperative marketing.
- b. Provide instructions relative to clipping, handling and tying of fleeces.
- c. Inform growers as to wool loading date.

Results

The Extension Agent assisted wool growers during 1959 by arranging for custom shearing, informing producers as to date and hour for loading wool and the recommended methods of tying, handling, etc.

The Extension Agent arranged for a county representative of ASC to be present on loading day to help producers file applications for incentive payments.

Producers sold about 7500 pounds of wool from the 1959 clip and 90% of this was sold cooperatively.

B. Milk

Goals

- a. Cooperate with Richmond Milk Producers Cooperative by furnishing information to producers relative to the Cooperative Program.

Results

There are 23 Grade A milk producers in Louisa County. Eleven of these ship to Washington, D.C.; four ship to Fredericksburg; eight ship to Richmond and one to Charlottesville.

About 35 producers of milk for manufacturing sell to White House Plant at Dixie, Virginia.

The Extension Agent worked with Field Representatives in securing new producers and helped keep producers informed relative to changes affecting the several markets.

C. Feeder Calf Sale

Goals

- a. Work with Livestock Committee and local director of Richmond Feeder Calf Sale toward consigning 350 calves to the 1959 sales.

Results

The Extension Agent worked with Richmond Spring and Fall Feeder Calf Sales and the Orange Fall Sale. Producers were advised relative to health regulations, entry dates and scheduled hour of arrival. Agent helped with calves on day of delivery to sales. 465 calves from the county were entered and sold in the three sales.

IX. COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1. ASC

Goals

- a. Cooperate with ASC to insure all farm owners and operators the maximum benefits under the

Agricultural Conservation Program.

Results

The Extension Agent served as non-voting member of the County Committee. Attended monthly meetings when matters of county-wide importance were to be discussed. Served as chairman of County Election Board.

2. SCS

Goals

- a. Cooperate with SCS in securing additional cooperators and maintaining practices which have already been established.

Results

The Extension Agent worked with Thomas Jefferson Soil Conservation District and SCS toward securing approval of the South Anna Watershed Project requested last year, and also submitted application for a similar project on the Little River Watershed in Louisa County. These applications were approved and planning is now in progress on both the South Anna and Little River Watershed.

3. FHA and Farm Credit

Goals

- a. Refer prospective borrowers to FHA and Farm Credit.
- b. Furnish applications to prospective persons.

Results

Conferences were held with FHA Field Representative

and Farm Credit Administration Representative and referred numerous applicants to same.

The County Extension Office served as contact point between borrower and agency.

4. 20th Anniversary Celebration

The Annual Louisa County Family Picnic was not held this year. In place of the picnic all groups joined in and supported the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Thomas Jefferson Soil Conservation District. The celebration was held at Bracketts Farm in Green Springs District, Louisa County, on the 19th of September. It featured a plowing contest, barbecue lunch and addresses by Representative Howard Smith, Senator Willis Robertson and Senator Harry Byrd. It was attended by approximately 1200 people from the five counties included in the District.

5. Bureau of Animal Industry

As a result of local interest in Brucellosis control work and after meetings of local livestock committee and Farm Bureau, a county-wide blood testing program of all cattle was officially started on September 1, 1959. Evidence of local interest was manifested in action by County Board of Supervisors allocating \$1000.00 toward defraying local expenses. To date approximately 2500 cows have been blood tested, which is estimated to be about one-third of the total number to be done.

X. ROUTINE WORK

During the year the agent traveled 11,589 miles, made 472 farm visits, received 668 office calls, 1001 telephone calls and prepared numerous circular letters.

Some time was spent outside the county attending the Farm Credit Conference, Extension Conference, Livestock Sales, etc.

XI. EVALUATION OF YEARS' WORK

Louisa County has made progress in several areas during 1959.

The production of beef cattle on a more efficient basis has been boosted materially by BCIA and the cooperative marketing of both fat cattle and feeder calves.

Artificial Breeding marked up an increase of 27% as compared to 1958.

A county-wide Bangs eradication program is making satisfactory progress and should be completed by September 1, 1960.

Three Land and Watershed Development Projects are moving forward rapidly. These will provide employment for a considerable number of people and add to the volume of business transacted in the county.

The Extension Agent has worked with these developments and is well pleased with the prospects for the year ahead. He wishes to acknowledge the excellent cooperation of District Extension Agent, Extension Workers on the State Level, other Professional Workers on the County Level and

the patient tolerant people of Louisa County, with whom
it has been a pleasure to work.