

PLAN OF WORK

Prince George County

December 1, 1960 - November 30, 1961

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County Agricultural Agent

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INTRODUCTION

A brief description of the county, its geography, climate, soil, land, and economics may be found on pages 1 - 2 - 3 in the 1958-59 Plan of Work. Copies of these plans may be found on file at VPI, District County Agent's office, County Agent's office, and County Clark's office.

This Plan of Work was developed by the 4-H All Star Chapter; 4-H County Council; 4-H Leaders; Professional Workers, and three committees. These committees and members are:

AGRONOMY

A. E. Smelley, Carson, Virginia
H. Fred Robertson, Spring Grove, Virginia
Ben P. Kanak, Prince George, Virginia
George Zahradka, Rt. 2, Petersburg, Virginia
W. M. Holdsworth, Disputanta, Virginia
Ernest Wagner, Rt. 2, Petersburg, Virginia
W. M. Lilly, Carson, Virginia
Edward Temple, Petersburg, Virginia
Rudolph Heretick, Rt. 1, Box 84-A, Disputanta, Virginia

FORESTRY

C. W. Yancy, Disputanta, Virginia
E. W. Burrow, Rt. 1, Disputanta, Virginia
J. A. Skalsky, Rt. 2, Disputanta, Virginia
W. E. Funkhouser, 106 E. Randolph Road, Hopewell, Virginia
Paul Gerry, Rt. 2, Petersburg, Virginia
P. T. Birdsong, Rt. 2, Petersburg, Virginia
J. B. Vargo, Rt. 1, Hopewell, Virginia

LIVESTOCK

M. W. Clements, Spring Grove, Virginia
W. H. Barlow, Jr. Disputanta, Virginia
Stanley Kvasnicka, Rt. 2, Petersburg, Virginia
Thomas E. Fenner III, Prince George, Virginia
J. J. Chudoba, Prince George, Virginia
H. E. Allin, Prince George, Virginia
H. H. Jandl, Jr. Rt. 1, Box 244, Hopewell, Virginia
W. A. Burch, c/o Bank of Southside Va. Prince George, Virginia

The latter three committees met in late January and early February and outlined the plan of work under the various heading of Agronomy - Forestry - Livestock. Of the twenty-four (24) committee members listed twenty-one (21) attended the program planning sessions.

Changes in the Situation

All products sold by the Prince George farmers generally were as high in 1960 as in 1959 and in some cases higher, with the exception of occasional seasonal cycles throughout the year.

Production in general was up slightly over the previous year however, costs went up as rapidly as prices. Small farmers felt this price-cost squeeze, but were helped some by good off-farm employment conditions.

A new tax assessment year is in operation in the county under an appeal of last years assessment. This has brought about a better outlook towards improvements of the farmstead, buildings and forest lands.

AGRONOMY

Conditions:

The sale of crops provide about one-half of the farm income from the county, with portions of the livestock income dependent on the remaining crops produced. Agronomy, thus, becomes a major factor in the county's agriculture economy.

Per acre yields have gone up the past two decades but are not as high as could be expected. This is caused by a poor crop rotational system; and weaknesses in farm management with regards to proper fertility, weed control, cover crop and insect control. However, some improvement is being made in all these areas of management.

Various programs in recent years have been conducted to improve various phases of the agronomy program. These programs have been written in the plan of work 1958 through 1960. Important portions of these programs will be carried out in 1961 as in past years. The 1960 agronomy program will be repeated in 1961, with the following portion receiving special attention:

- (a) Use fertilizer dealers to assist in promoting soil testing, and
- (b) Re-emphasize the insect reporting system used last year.

In addition to the above other areas of emphasis were selected, as storage facilities for grain, beans and peanuts; mechanical harvesting of peanuts; and chemical weed control in peanuts.

PEANUTS

Situation:

Two-thirds of the county's farms produce peanuts. Labor is able to secure jobs off the farm, with many being only part-time employed on farm. In addition, small acreage allotments have not been conducive to greater uses of labor saving devices in farming.

Problem:

Peanuts frequently become grassy from poor cultivation, diseased infected from heavy cultivation, and poorly harvested due to a limited harvest season.

Objective:

Help farmers understand the practice of substituting machine use for hand labor.

Methods:

Demonstrate the uses of chemical weed control for hand weeding of grass.

Demonstrate the use of proper planting and cultivating practices for control of stem rot.

Demonstrate the use of mechanical harvesting of peanuts.

These demonstrations to be carried on by both groups and individuals. Meetings, press, radio, visits, and leaders will be used to promote this program.

OTHER CROPS

Situation:

Other crops include peanuts, plus corn, small grain, and soybeans. The most pressing need is for adequate storage facilities. Farmers do not store sufficient amounts of these crops on the farm and are often penalized in price for too early marketing.

Problem:

Farms do not fully realize the advantages of storing produce for marketing at more advantageous times and prices.

Objectives:

To show the producers of grain, corn, beans, and peanuts the method of storing, ways of financing these facilities, and the need to use storage.

Methods:

Demonstrate the use of crop dryers by one or more meetings, personal visits, and the extensive use of the agronomy committee.

FORESTRY

Situation:

About 65 percent of the county's land area is in woods or unused crop land. Near 35 percent of land is owned by wood-producing firms and is in a good state, or being put in a good state of production.

The farmers own the other 30 percent of land in forests. Much of this area is scrubby hardwood, cut-over land, abandoned cropland, or mis-used woods. There is a definite need for improved wood-lot management.

Certain areas of the county are prone toward fires during trash burning season. Available fire-fighting equipment exists in the county if fires were properly reported.

Problem:

There is a definite need for improved wood-lot management.

Some people do not know forest fires cause damage to other than forest owners.

Objective:

To help wood-land owners understand their need to improve forest lands and how to make these improvements.

To get all fires reported promptly.

Methods:

Demonstrate by holding a tour of good forestry management during summer months.

FORESTRY (Continued)

Methods (Cont'd)

Assist in helping locate more market and outlets for hard wood products, especially pulp size trees.

Assist other agencies in carrying out the annual program on fire prevention.

This agent to work with all civic organizations (23 adult) in the county.

LIVESTOCK

Condition

The county's livestock industry has made rapid changes in the past twenty years. As shown in the following chart, dairy cattle and sheep are down in number, while beef cattle and swine have made substantial increases.

Dairy and sheep are on only a few farms, beef cattle are on sixty percent, while swine are nearly ninety percent of all farms.

U. S. CENSUS FIGURES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dairy</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Beef</u>	<u>Swine</u>
1940	1,500	430	500	4,500
1950	1,400	380	1,100	9,100
1960	950	190	4,300	11,300

LIVESTOCK (Continued)

Many of the problems of past years will receive special attention again this year. Purebred sires, marketing methods, farm facilities, disease control programs, and feed/forage problems will be carried from 1960 to the 1961 program. In addition, two areas of emphasis, selection of purebred beef sires and marketing of feeder pigs were chosen by the livestock committee.

BEEF

Situation:

Too few beef producers have been in production long enough to understand the need for grading up their herds. There are no purebred producers in the county. Many who try up-grading of herds are hurt by the short time they can use a good bull. As yet no system has worked out where good sires may be traded. Good health conditions exists on all farms, since the county this year was certified as Bangs Free:

Problem:

Producers are reluctant to buy or trade for quality beef sires.

Objective:

To help beef men in the county understand the advantage of better sires.

LIVESTOCK (Continued)

BEEF (Cont'd)

Methods:

Assist this program by encouraging the exchanging of good used bulls, thereby making it possible for farmers to pay more for their herd bulls. Also, recommend the use of artificial breeding.

This objective will be helped through visits by leaders and agent, and by the use of letters, press and radio. Whenever possible help producers select good bulls.

SWINE

Situation:

Some farms have surplus feed grains while others are limited. Swine growers who have management time but limited feed grains could profit by selling feeder pigs. Producers who have feed surpluses need this market. A good market exists for feeder pigs, both on and off the farm. Due to out of state demands for feeders more money may be obtained by selling through state graded and supervised sales.

Problem:

Farmers do not use this market to maximum ability.

Objective:

Help producers understand the system of marketing pigs by the graded system.

Methods:

Hold one or more meetings to assist in creating interest. Hold one or more on-farm demonstrations on housing, treating for diseases, proper castration, and parasite control.

Encourage more FFA and 4-H boys to produce feeder pigs.

YOUTH WORK

Situation:

There are about 3000 white children enrolled in the Prince George County Schools. Nearly all of these are rural and about 300 are farm children. About 1600 are of 4-H club age and 200 of these are farm children. Any 4-H program developed in the county must be aimed at other than farm population to reach the maximum number of people. All Agricultural 4-H Clubs are organized in the four county schools, with one school club meeting after school hours.

Quite a large number of non-farm population is now in the area. Many of these potential club members are limited in project scope and activity. All of the schools, except one, are overcrowded. Excellent public relations exists between the schools and the white Extension Personnel.

Leadership is not as strong as could be under these conditions. People indicate they feel 4-H club work is a part of the school system, and thus, offer only limited help.

Problems:

1. Schools are so overcrowded adequate meeting rooms are not available in one school and limited in another.
2. Too few basic farm projects are carried.
3. Interest of members highly diversified.
4. High rate of members who do one year or less 4-H work.
5. Leadership is insufficient to carry the year's program and include any new work in the program.

YOUTH WORK (Continued)

Objective:

Develop leadership necessary to carry out a well balanced youth program in the county.

Methods:

Conduct the program along the same lines as last year.

Encourage greater participation in 4-H and Youth exhibits at State and Southside Fairs.

Establish a purebred pig chain.

Form a 4-H Honor Club.

Re-organize all or part of the 4-H clubs that are in the schools into local community clubs.

SUMMARY

This year's work will repeat very much of last years work either because last year ways were better or we need to work on these problems more. In addition certain problems have been selected for emphasis and should strengthen the county program when they have been solved.

It is most gratifying to approach a year's work with the knowledge that plans for the year were made by experienced people in the county who are willing to assist in putting across this program.
