HOME GARDEN

A. Situation

Most of the families in the county have home gardens and there is much interest in gardening among the people.

B. Goals

1. Encourage soil test of the home garden.

2. Encourage winter cover crop of the home garden.

3. Encourage the planning of the home gardens to utilize maximum space.

4. Encourage proper fertilization and liming of the home garden by soil testing.

C. Methods

1. Send monthly garden letters.

2. Have 4-H boys to take soil samples of their garden and their parent's garden.

3. Stress the importance of proper fertilization and liming on farm visits.

D. Results

Soil test of the home garden has been encouraged and many soil tests from gardens have been sent for analysis.

Monthly garden letters were sent out to all home gardeners.

Proper fertilization and liming has been encouraged in the home garden by means of farm visits, radio and letters.

The specialist has worked with one dairyman in planning a new milking parlow, new silage trough, new hay barn and new loafingshed. Building plans for all of these buildings have been furnished.

ORCHARDS

A. Situation

There are two commercial orchards in the county and several small orchards.

B. Goals

1. Encourage farmers to follow the recommended spray program for orchards.

2. Increase the gross income 10% on two of the smaller orchards by good fertilization and spraying programs.

C. Methods

1. Assist farmers in spraying and fertilization program.

2. Have specialist from VPI visit the orchards in the county.

3. Distribute the Virginia spray bulletin to fruit growers.

D. Results

Fruit growers have been encouraged to follow good spray programs by means of farm visits by agent and specialist, spray bulletin cards and radio programs.

Fruit specialists have visited both of the commercial orchards during season and is working out a special spray program for one of the commercial orchards.

The agent and specialist have also worked with several of the small orchards in insect and disease control and the specialist also gave a pruning demonstration at one of the small orchards.

IV. MINOR PROJECTS

FARM BUILDINGS

A. Situation

There are three new pig parlors in the county and two new central farrowing houses. There is need for more farrowing houses and poultry laying houses.

B. Goals

1. Encourage 2 farmers to build new central farrowing houses.
2. Encourage 2 farmers to build new laying houses.
3. Encourage one farmer to convert an old barn into a pig parlor.
4. Have eight farmers attend farm building school.

C. Methods

1. Have farm building specialist from VPI to work with farmers on planning new buildings.
2. Work with and furnish plans for new buildings.
3. Encourage farmers to attend farm building school.

Results

Two new central farrowing houses were built and the agent worked with these farmers in planning and furnishing plans.

Two new pig parlors were built this year and the agent furnished plans for one pig parlor and worked with both in planning them.

Seven farmers and the agent attended farm building school held in Gloucester.

The farm building specialist from VPI has worked with the agent and two dairymen in planning buildings.

4. Provide leadership and recreational training for 4-H members.

5. Recognize outstanding accomplishments of 4-H members and publicize them.

6. Have 4-H members to be on radio program.

Results

A "Share the Fun" program was held in the spring with twenty-three 4-H members participating.

The County Council met three times and planned the 4-H program and activities for the year.

Ten 4-H boys attended Jamestown 4-H Camp.

One 4-H boy attended State 4-H Short Course.

Rural Life Sunday was observed in three different churches throughout the county with 4-H members having some part in the program.

A county-wide 4-H Party was held in the spring with approximately 100 boys and girls attending.

Approximately 75 4-H members went on an educational trip to Richmond City and visited points of interest.

4-H boys and girls in Middlesex observed National 4-H Club Week by exhibiting their projects, window displays and radio programs.

One 4-H boy entered a dairy calf at the Northern Neck Fair and placed first in that class.

4-H CLUB

A. Situation

There are approximately 200 4-H Club members in the county. Seventy-five 4-H members are boys. All 4-H meetings are held at school during activity period. Other school activities keep the older boys and girls from attending 4-H meetings. Good cooperation exists between 4-H Club and F. F. A., school principals and teachers.

B. Goals

1. To hold 3 county council meetings.

2. To hold a "Share the Fun" program in the spring.

3. To have 70% completion of records.

4. To have 10 4-H boys attend Jamestown 4-H Camp.

5. To observe Rural Life Sunday.

6. To observe National 4-H Club Week and have one county-wide exhibit.

7. To have 4-H boys set out 12,000 pine seedlings.

8. Encourage participation in the county contest.

9. Have two 4-H members attend 4-H State Short Course.

10. To hold a 4-H Party in the spring.

11. To have educational trip to the City of Richmond.

C. Methods

1. Stress the importance of tree planting and encourage boys to take advantage of 500 pine seedlings free from the Va. Forestry Service.

2. Secure and train adult leaders to help with 4-H program.

3. Hold county contest for boys.

D. Results

Approximately ten more farms had cover crops this year than last. Most of the farms using cover crops took advantage of the ACP cost share payments.

The number farmers sending soil samples for analysis have increased by about 10 per cent. Farmers are realizing the importance of soil testing and are relying more on soil test recommendations. There is a bulk lime spreading service in the county and more farmers are spreading lime by bulk than in previous years.

Corn yields were reduced this year by approximately 35 percent because of the two droughts during the growing season.

Soybeans were also reduced approximately 30 percent this year by drought and corn ear-worm damage. Approximately 1,000 acres of soybeans were sprayed by airplane and 500 acres by ground equipment for the control of the corn ear-worms. Good results were obtained from spraying and the farmers were well pleased.

The agent held a county-wide agronomy meeting with forty-five farmers attending. At this meeting the agent stressed the importance of soil testing, cover crops, rotations and good fertilization programs. The SCS technician spoke on the value of soil and water conservation. The ASC office manager discussed the different ASC practices and encouraged all farmers to take advantage of the cost share practices.

AGRONOMY

A. Situation

Soybeans, corn, small grains, milo, tomatoes and peas are produced in the county. Several farmers in the lower end of the county raise sweet potatoes, beans and other vegetables for the Richmond market. More soybeans are raised than any other crop.

B. Goals

1. To send 100 more soil samples this year for analysis.

2. Get 35 farmers to top-dress small grain.

3. Increase the use of lime by soil testing.

4. Increase the use of cover crops on 15 farms and take advantage of ACP payments on cover crops.

5. Encourage farmers to follow better fertilization programs.

6. Encourage better rotation programs.

7. To control insects on soybeans by spraying in time.

C. Methods

1. Encourage farmers to take advantage of ACP payments on cover crops.

2. Encourage farmers to take soil samples and assist them in planning their fertilization program.

3. Encourage winter cover crops.

4. Send circular letters on crop recommendations and proper fertilizer and lime practices.

5. Assist farmers in identifying and controlling insects.

6. Distribute information on the control of the alfalfa weevil by letters, radio and newspaper.

7. Encourage farmers to use soil and water conservation practices where applicable.

C. Methods

1. Hold two forestry committee meetings during the year.

2. Encourage farmers to take advantage of the cost-share practices provided under the ASC program.

3. Encourage 4-H members to set 500 pine seedlings if they have the land.

4. Hold demonstrations on setting pine seedlings for 4-H members.

5. County Agent will work closely with Virginia Division of Forestry and Chesapeake Corporation to provide the needed service and information.

6. Demonstration areas will be set up in the county on thinning, chemical killing, bulldozing and planting.

D. Results

Thirty-one 4-H boys set 13,500 pines this year as their 4-H project. Fifty-five acres of land has been bulldozed for tree planting to date and the hope is that over one hundred acres will be bulldozed before the end of the year.

Six more farmers have done forestry improvement work this year. More farmers are taking advantage of the cost-share practices provided under the ASC program.

The agent has been arranging for bulldozing in cooperation with the Chesapeake bulldozer.

Two private operators have done some work also.

Demonstrations on setting pines were held for 4-H members.

D. Results

The agent has held demonstrations on the vaccination of fowl pox and has encouraged six farmers to vaccinate their flocks that had not been vaccinated.

Eleven farmers attended the Tri-County Poultry Meeting held in Mathews County.

Poultry pellets are mailed to all poultry producers in the county.

Three of the farmers have increased their flocks to meet the needs of rising cost.

The agent and two farmers attended the State Poultry Federation Meeting held in Richmond.

FORESTRY

A. Situation

Middlesex County has approximately 50,000 acres of woodland with an income of about $250,000 per year to farmers and landowners from forest products. About 1,000 acres of saw timber is being cut annually.

More pine seedlings have been set in the county in the last three years than the previous 40 years. Pine seedlings being set this year will exceed any previous year. Approximately 165,000 pine seedlings will be set this year. Of this total amount, 4-H Club members will set approximately 15,000 pine seedlings.

B. Goals

1. To set 150,000 pine seedlings this year as a county goal.

2. 4-H members to set 12,000 pine seedlings.

3. To bulldoze 100 acres of woodland for tree planting.

4. To increase the number of acres of thinning of young fast growing pines.

5. To increase the number of acres of chemical killing of undesirable hardwoods followed by spot planting 100 acres.

6. To get 10 more farmers and landowners to do some forestry improvement work.

The agent and several farmers went on a tour of beef cattle feeders in adjoining counties and also in Maryland.

The agent has held several demonstrations on worming cattle and more farmers are practicing internal parasite control.

POULTRY

A. Situation

Poultry was the largest source of farm income five years ago but is decreasing every year. Most of the poultry is raised by commercial producers; however, chickens are found on over half of the farms in the county. The turkeys are raised by one commercial producer with the exception of a few small producers. About all of the ducks are raised by one commerical producer.

B. Goals

1. Improve quality of eggs offered for sale from every poultry farm.

2. Have ten producers attend the Tri-County Poultry Meeting.

3. Have at least 10 more small flock owners to vaccinate for fowl pox.

4. Get 3 farmers to increase size of laying flocks.

C. Methods

1. a. Stress the importance to all poultry farmers the steps necessary to maintain the quality of eggs.

   b. Assist farmers in planning and building egg handling equipment.

2. Encourage all poultry farmers to attend Tri-County Poultry Meeting.

3. Hold demonstration on vaccinating for fowl pox.

4. a. Give farmers research information concerning cost and returns per bird in laying flocks of different size.

   b. Point out advantages of marketing with volume.

5. Send the poultry suggestions to all poultry producers.

C. Methods

1. Advertise and encourage farmers to attend extension sponsored livestock schools in the area.

2. Hold livestock tours in adjoining counties.

3. Encourage farmers to purchase meat-type boars and sows at the purebred hog sales.

4. Encourage sale of fat cattle through the organized fat cattle sales.

5. Encourage the sale of feeder pigs through the Tappahannock Feeder Pig Sale Organization.

6. Encourage farmers to do a better job of feeding and management.

7. The county agent will continue to stress timely tips for better feeding and management through radio, newspapers, and circular letters. Also notice will be given of purebred sales, feeder pig sales, fat cattle sales and other activities of livestock nature.

8. Conduct Bangs vaccination tour every 4 months.

D. Results

The number feeder pig consigners has increased from two to six and there is much interest in the feeder pig sales. The feeder pig sales have encouraged some of the farmers to improve their breeding stock and do a little better job of management such as controlling lice and worms and follow a vaccination program.

Ten farmers have purebred hogs which they purchased at the State Purebred Sale in Tappahannock. More farmers are realizing the importance of good breeding stock and meat type hogs. The purchasing of purebred hogs from the State sales has increased the quality of the hogs in the county.

Three more farmers are feeding cattle this year than last. Three farmers consigned fat cattle to the special fat cattle sale last year. Two farmers purchased feeder calves at the special feeder calf sale this fall.

A calfhood vaccination program has been carried out this year in the majority of the beef herds in the county.

D. Results

The number of dairymen using bulk tanks has increased from two to six. There are nine dairymen in the county and the other three are making plans to install tanks as soon as possible. The agent has been working with the dairymen in securing credit to install tanks and planning the farm program to meet increased cost of production.

A Brucellosis calfhood vaccination program has been carried out very successfully this year. The agent has been arranging for the vaccination tours every four months of all heifer calfs between 4 - 8 months of age. Dr. Musselman has conducted vaccination tours.

A county-wide dairy meeting was held during the year on the value of D. H. I. A. testing and the feeding and management of dairy animals.

LIVESTOCK

A. Situation

According to the 1954 census, there were 2,200 hogs and pigs in the county. This number has increased to about 4,000 now. There were about 1300 milk cows and 200 sheep and lambs in 1954 and this number is about the same. In 1954 all cattle totaled about 2,200 head.

B. Goals

1. Increase the number of feeder pig consigners to the Tappahannock Pig Sale to seven.

2. Encourage ten more farmers to vaccinate for hog cholera and erysipelas.

3. Increase the number of fat cattle feeders by four.

4. Increase the fat cattle sale consigners to four.

5. Encourage more steer feeding.

6. Initiate control of internal and external parasites on eight farms.

7. Increase the quality of livestock on seven farms.

III. MAJOR PROJECTS

DAIRYING

A. Situation

1. The sale of whole milk has increased 35% in the past five years.
2. There are nine grade A Dairy farms in the county.
3. Five of the dairies have installed bulk tanks.
4. Two dairies are testing in D. H. I. A.
5. One dairy is using artificial breeding.

B. Goals

1. Encourage 2 more dairymen to use some form of testing.
2. Encourage 1 additional dairyman to use artificial breeding.
3. Increase the number of bulk tanks to seven.
4. Continue the Bangs control program.
5. Improve the herd production of the county.

C. Methods

1. Hold a pasture tour.
2. Explain to dairymen the value of D. H. I. A. testing.
3. Continue to hold the Bangs vaccination tours every 4 months.
4. Hold meetings for dairymen during the year on management and feeding.

I. GENERAL COUNTY SITUATION

Middlesex County lies in the coastal plain and extends along Virginia's Middle Peninsula to the Chesapeake Bay. The Rappahannock River is it's upper boundary and the Piankatank River and Dragon Run it's lower boundaries.

There are 501 farms in the county averaging 74 acres in size and $10,436 in value of land and buildings.

Receipts from sale of farm products usually exceed one million dollars. The income is about equally divided between crops and livestock. Field crops (soybeans, corn and wheat) contribute nearly one-fourth of the county's farm income. Soybeans have expanded rapidly in recent years and are now grown on a larger acreage than corn. Vegetables for processing and fresh market are important crops. These include green peas, tomatoes and snapbeans. Dairying is a rather stable farm enterprise and contributes about one-eighth of the total farm income.

The seafood industry is important and the tourist trade is becoming an increasing stimulus on the county's economy.

II. COUNTY ORGANIZATION

The following is a list of the county organizations with which the county agent has cooperated in furthering the Extension Program:

County Board of Agriculture
Norfolk Area Milk Producers Association
Middlesex ASC Committee
Tidewater Soil Conservation District
Tappahannock Feeder Pig Sale Association
Tidewater Dairy Herd Improvement Association
Richmond Fat Cattle Sales
Middlesex Forestry Committee

Agronomy 8

A. Situation 8

B. Goals 8

C. Methods 8

D. Results 9

4-H Clubs 10

A. Situation 10

B. Goals 10

C. Methods 10

D. Results 11

IV. MINOR PROJECTS 12

Farm Buildings 12

A. Situation 12

B. Goals 12

C. Methods 12

D. Results 12

Orchards 13

A. Situation 13

B. Goals 13

C. Methods 13

D. Results 13

Home Garden 14

A. Situation 14

B. Goals 14

C. Methods 14

D. Results 14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. GENERAL COUNTY SITUATION 1

II. COUNTY ORGANIZATION 1

III. MAJOR PROJECTS 2

Dairying 2

A. Situation 2

B. Goals 2

C. Methods 2

D. Results 2

Livestock 3

A. Situation 3

B. Goals 3

C. Methods 4

D. Results 4

Poultry 5

A. Situation 5

B. Goals 5

C. Methods 5

D. Results 6

Forestry 6

A. Situation 6

B. Goals 6

C. Methods 7

D. Results 7

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

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