

PLAN OF WORK

NANSEMOND COUNTY

1959

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## I DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY

There are 1306 farms totalling 141,000 acres, with 69,000 acres in cropland and 72,000 in farm woodland. Located near Norfolk, the area is flat, near sea-level, through which passes a navigable waterway to Hampton Roads, five railroads, and four major highways.

Urban and rural non-farm population constitutes at least 70% of the total population of some 30,000, with approximately 65% of this being Negro.

Major sources of farm income are peanuts and hogs, with corn playing an important indirect role, with about 80% of the county's 26,000 acre production being fed on the farm. Other enterprises include soybeans, sheep, beef cattle, truck crops, cotton, dairying, flue-cured tobacco, small grain, milo, pastures and hay.

## II TRENDS AND OUTLOOK

Over-all, importance of peanuts as the major source of farm income (50%) will decline and likely will continue to decline. Price support for 1959 has dropped another 1 cent per pound, reducing anticipated total receipts by at least \$300,000. Hog numbers likely to increase but lower prices, probably averaging 5¢ per pound, or more, under 1958, will cut 1959 income some \$400,000. Interest in concrete floor feeding units will continue, though not to extent it has the past year or so due to lower hog prices. An increase in interest in farrowing facilities, particularly in central farrowing houses, is expected, in fact is already underway.

Poultry - - 100% cage layers - - to continue upward in a phenomenal spiral - - may double in 1959 - - from an estimated 50,000 or 60,000 birds on some 15 to 20 farms now, to 100,000 or even 125,000 on maybe 30 or 40 farms. What the long-range trend is on this is anybody's guess.

Even with a good growing season, it looks like the cost-price squeeze will be the tightest and produce the lowest total net income in well over a decade.

## III DETERMINING PLAN OF WORK

Committees representing agronomy, livestock and 4-H Club work helped analyze and plan this year's extension program, after studying background data, and current visible trends not contained in statistical data.

IV MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. Swine

- (a) Situation: (1) generally poor selection of sites for concrete feeding units (25) and/or farrowing houses (10) recently constructed in the county; (2) Inadequate planning before construction of such facilities; (3) Lack of satisfactory source of feeder pigs for many market hog feeding units; (4) Poor management of such units - - in sanitation, feeding, and other practices.
- (b) Methods: (1) Hold two feeding and farrowing facilities' tours - - one in mid-summer and one next winter; (2) Hold one, preferably two, county-wide hog producers meetings on feeding, breeding, facilities, and other management practices; (3) Hold at least one meeting in each of the four major swine producers' communities; (4) Make as many farm visits as possible; (5) Encourage, through mass media (press, meetings, personal contacts, etc.) wider use of information available at county extension office on physical facilities, feeding and rations, parasite and disease control, breeding, etc.
- (c) Goals: (1) More pigs weaned - - increase by one per litter - - through as many new or re-built farrowing houses as practical, and through improved management of existing facilities; (2) At least five producers with concrete feeding units but without breeding stock to provide satisfactory source of feeders, either by patronizing Courtland feeder pig sales, or by private agreement, or by having all or at least part of necessary breeding stock; (3) Give individual guidance to as many producers as possible contemplating feeding and farrowing facilities construction - - probably 15 to 20 feeding units and 10 central farrowing houses; (4) Assist in every possible way all producers in sanitation, feeding, breeding, and other management problems.

B. Crops

- (a) Situation: (1) Inadequate and inefficient insect and disease control practices; (2) Lack of farm storage; (3) Inadequate use of soil tests to help determine lime and fertilizer needs.
- (b) Methods: (1) One county-wide and four community farmers' meetings, with extension specialists to discuss various phases of production, storage, etc.; (2) Use of all mass media at timely intervals regarding insect and disease

control, soil testing, etc. These media include circular letters, personal contacts, press and radio, etc.; (3) Frequent inspection of crops periodically to check on pest infestation will be made to keep abreast of this problem and make announcements accordingly; (4) Hold a tour of existing farm storages in the summer.

- (c) Goals: (1) Soil samples from 400 farmers, properly taken; (2) Twenty five new or repaired farm storages; (3) Increase as much as possible the adequate and timely use of pest control measures.

#### C. Poultry

- (a) Situation: (1) Increase "over-night" from average farm flocks to 50,000 or 60,000 cage layers on some 15 to 20 farms; (2) Probable doubling of this number in 1959.

- (b) Methods: At the moment, not too clear. Broadly, (1) A Poultry School will be held in April by extension poultry specialists. Producers from this and nearby counties will be invited. If enough interest shown another meeting, perhaps on the county level, will be held. Other than this, the other methods anticipated include (2) Farm visits, accompanied by extension poultry specialist; (3) Closer contacts with feed company representatives and others servicing cage layer owners; (4) Periodic meetings of the Multiple-County Poultry Industry Committee, made up of Va. Poultry Federation folks, extension agents and poultry specialists, Va. Dept. of Agriculture personnel, feed dealers, hatchery people, bankers, a few producers, etc.

- (c) Goal. Very vague at this time. Frankly, it boils down to: (1) Learning (the agent) more about the technical phases of this specialized enterprise; (2) Working more closely with industry people servicing producers, as well as producers themselves; (3) Trying, through extension poultry and marketing specialists, to coordinate and guide this budding industry towards an economically and technically sound foundation. Absolutely no goals as to numbers of layers are envisaged at this time, nor apparently are they needed.

#### D. 4-H Club Work

- (a) Goals

- (1) Minimum project completion of 70%.

- (2) More participation in District Contest, shows and sales and other 4-H activities.
- (3) Increase community club membership by 50% as well as increase membership of school clubs.
- (4) Arrange better meeting places.

(b) Problems

- (1) Lack of interest in adult groups thereby resulting in few adult organizational and project leaders.
- (2) Inadequate meeting places in schools for 4-H meetings.
- (3) Getting 4-H members to complete records and hand in.

(c) Educational Methods

(1) Electricity Workshop

Have at least 35 members enrolled in Units I and II, holding monthly meetings, cooperating with representatives of VEP Co. and Community Electric Coop. in conducting a successful workshop.

(2) Tractor Maintenance Project

Have at least 10 members enrolled in Unit I of tractor maintenance and 12 members enrolled in Unit II. Conduct a county Contest and enter winner in District Contest. Have local dealers work with us in conducting a successful program.

(3) Crop Projects

I would hope to have 12 boys enrolled in each of the following projects: corn, peanuts and soybeans; and 6 enrolled in sweet potato project. Advice will be given so that members will choose correct varieties, fertilizer and weed control method.

(4) Livestock Projects

Have 20 members enrolled in baby beef projects; 5 in sheep project; 15 in market hog project; 15 in sow and litter project; and 5 members enrolled in each of wildlife and entomology project.

(5) Forestry

Increase forestry enrollment from about five members to at least ten (10) members, and strive to have these members set out 200 pine seedlings each, or

at least 2,000 seedlings in the county.

(6) Horticulture

Have ten members enrolled in Garden projects; five Home Grounds Beautification; and five in sweet potato. Advise the members on seed and varieties to use, fertilizer and management practices to be used to aid members to get the maximum profit from their projects.

(7) Supplemental 4-H Activities

Activities of regularly enrolled members in various projects will be supplemented by such activities as (1) Baby Beef Show and Sale; (2) Market Hog Show and Sale; (3) Sweet Potato Show and Sale; (4) 4-H Short Course; (5) 4-H Camp; (6) Electric Congress; (7) Rural Life Sunday; (8) National 4-H Week; (9) Achievement Day; (10) County Council meetings; (11) Club projects to raise money for worthy causes.

(d) Other Educational Methods

Cooperate with business firms, civic clubs and other institutions in sponsoring over-all 4-H projects. Also cooperate with these organizations in helping build a better community so it will be of better service to it's people.

(e) Cooperation With Agents

Cooperate with other agents in office in making the extension program more effective and beneficial to the people of the county.

V. OTHER PROJECTS

A. Sheep

Numbers increased some the past year or so, reaching an estimated 1200 head of ewes and rams, concentrated on about 50 farms.

Major problems are: (1) Lack of internal parasite control; (2) Loss of lambs at lambing due to cold weather (or poor or no management at lambing); (3) Improper feeding of lambs to achieve optimum weight and quality by marketing time.

Lamb marketing has been largely solved through organization

of multiple-county lamb pool sales (three each spring) and a wool pool for the wool. Docking and Castrating demonstrations - - at least two will be held in January and February, which will also include drenching techniques and importance, along with other production and management practices. A meeting of sheep growers will be held also to discuss these practices.

**B. Soybeans**

Main emphasis on the county's 6,000 acres of soybeans centers on (1) Rates and dates of planting; (2) Varieties; (3) Insect control. This will be done through circular letter, county and community meetings, press and radio releases, and periodic field inspections during insect season, followed by appropriate insect control announcements, if necessary.

One problem that has cropped up through field inspections of Va. Dept. of Agriculture personnel is the cyst nematode. This pest has been definitely identified on a number of farms in the county. Action to be taken on this pest will be determined by the state and federal regulatory people.

**C. Beef Cattle**

Cattle on feed lowest in several years due to high feeder prices. Work with cattle centered largely on farm visits. However, four pole-type cattle barns (new) is set as a goal.

**D. Potatoes and Vegetables**

Most of the work to be done along this line will involve farm visits relative to pest control and physiological problems. Also, soil test recommendations for fertilizer and lime.

**E. Flue-Cured Tobacco**

About 175 acres grown on 50 farms. Provide variety, fertilization, and other production and harvesting information during February and March, and again in June and July. This to be done by circular letter and personal contacts.

**F. Small Grain and Milo**

About 2,000 acres of small grain, principally barley and oats, are harvested annually, most of it being fed on the farm. Milo will continue to decline sharply due to black-bird damage. Through all available educational media, information on varieties, dates and rates of seeding, fertilization, etc. will be furnished growers.

G. Pastures - Forage

Proper management - - grazing, liming, fertilizing, seeding, etc. - - of permanent pastures will be emphasized through letter, press and radio, and personal contacts. Seeding of summer pastures - - what, when, etc. - - will be emphasized by the same media. Importance of winter cover crops will receive full attention by the same means.