

1960

PLAN OF WORK

FOR

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

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1. COUNTY SITUATION

The county is the third largest county in the state, with 556,000 acres of which 321,685 acres are in farms, the remainder is in national forests. There are 3,571 farms which average 84.8 acres.

The county, which is agricultural, practices a very diversified system of farming. There are four major sources of agricultural income; poultry which ranks first, produces 70% of the income, livestock ranks second with 15%, dairy ranks third with 9%, and crops which includes fruit, produces 6%.

The feed supply on most farms is adequate to feed the livestock until the grazing season, as in 1959, the weather was favorable for growing all crops.

AGRONOMY

Due to the very favorable weather in 1959, considerable forage was produced on most farms, however, there is still a need for better quality forage, and there will be need for more forage during a year when the weather conditions are average or below in order to adequately feed the livestock.

Thistles are still a serious problem each year, and plans call for a campaign to get rid of thistles by proper spraying at the right time.

There is still a need for a high money crop on small farms. Strawberry production was investigated in 1956, and we found a good market for some strawberry production on a commercial basis.

Our first objective will be to produce more and better quality roughage.

1. One county meeting on production of better quality pasture, hay and silage will be held in connection with a county dairy school in March.
2. The agent will continue to work with ASC committee to get farmers to improve pasture and hay crops through ASC Program.
3. Special publicity will be featured during September on developing winter pasture for livestock.

The second objective will be to get rid of thistles.

1. A county spray campaign will be set up this spring and an effort will be made to get all thistles sprayed.
2. Special emphasis will be placed on spraying at the proper time with the right material.
3. The commercial organizations will be asked to cooperate. The spraying recommendations will be explained to them.
4. A card will be sent to farmers urging that they spray thistles and also enclose information on when to spray and what to spray with.
5. All means of publicity available will be used to get information to farmers.

The third objective will be to increase the strawberry production in the county.

1. A county wide meeting will be set up this spring to get information to the people. Prior to the meeting a publicity program will be carried out to interest farmers who might have labor available for strawberry picking.

POULTRY

During 1959, the broiler prices have been low and there has been very little profit in broiler production. Most broilers are grown under contract and some of the feed dealers and contractors have found it necessary to reduce payment to producers when there is no profit. Also the margin of profit in turkey production was less than it was a few years ago.

A large percent of the poultry producers still have small flocks and need to modernize their operations.

Some producers have increased the waterer and feeder space during the past and also most of the producers building new and larger units, have equipped them with sufficient equipment.

There is a need for better and more turkey nests and a need for a better system of handling broody hens in many turkey breeding flocks.

Disposal of dead birds is still a problem in many flocks. There are many new commercial egg producers in the county who need information on growing pullets and managing the laying flock.

Our first objective will be to maintain the enthusiasm among the county poultrymen, and interest them in modernizing their operation and facilities, and possibly encouraging some to

expand enough to improve their efficiency.

1. One large county meeting will be held with speakers who will draw a crowd.
 - (a) This meeting will be organized by the poultry committee and all feed dealers, hatcheries, and processors will be asked to assist in promoting and organizing the meeting.
 - (b) A very intense publicity program will be carried out in an effort to get a large turn out of producers.

Our second objective will be to work very close with the poultry servicemen to keep them informed on our latest poultry recommendations so as to improve efficiency.

The third objective will be to get information to the turkey growers on turkey nests and the handling of broody hens. Disposal of dead turkeys is a serious problem especially on the range.

A county meeting to get this information to the turkey growers will be held this summer. This meeting will be organized with the assistance of the poultry committee. Also the building of disposal pits for disposal of dead birds will be presented.

The fourth objective will be to get information on growing pullets and managing the commercial flock to the commercial egg producers.

A meeting will be held during the late summer and will be organized and planned by a committee of poultry servicemen and egg producers.

Ventilation in many houses in Rockingham County is a serious problem. Our plan is to set up a good ventilation system in a few poultry houses with assistance from the Engineering Department at V.P.I. It is hoped that these houses will serve as a demonstration in various areas.

With assistance of the Poultry Department at V.P.I., a study of ways to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of hatching egg production is underway. After this study is complete, a series of meetings are being set up with hatching egg producers to give them information on the latest research available in reducing the amount of feed to produce a dozen hatching eggs, and also on the possibility of reducing the number of cockerels now being used. In addition some demonstrations will be set up where these procedures will be put into practice. Our plan is to work very close with the hatcheries in this program.

DAIRY

The number of herds selling grade A milk, and the number cows is still increasing in the county. There are many new grade A producers seeking information on managing the cow herd.

The milk production per cow is still lower in Rockingham County than in some of the other leading counties in Virginia. Some of the factors limiting the production are poor quality of hay, silage and pasture; mastitis, and poor breeding conception.

Many herds have increased the number of cows during the past two years, and have not increased the housing and feeding facilities. There are also many new herds which do not have adequate housing.

There is also a tendency to feed too much grain to low producing cows and too little to high producing cows.

The first objective in our plan is to increase milk production by getting farmers to produce better quality of forage, eliminating mastitis and by getting a better breeding conception.

The second objective will be to get producers who need housing facilities to build economical practical facilities, or remodel the present buildings.

The third objective will be to get producers to feed the individual dairy cows according to the production.

A two day dairy school will be set up for county dairymen. The program will include information on all problems outlined above.

This school will be set up with a registration through the mail so we will have commitments from the dairymen in advance.

The D.H.I.A. demonstration program and the Owner Sampler program will be continued and expanded this year. At present, there are 67 D.H.I.A. demonstrators with 2,493 cows, and 14 Owner Sampler herds with 356 cows. The agent will continue to work very close with the D.H.I.A. members and the Owner Sampler members. One large meeting will be held to publicize the program and build more enthusiasm among demonstrators and other dairymen who are prospective demonstrators.

During the year sometime will be set aside to visit the demonstrators with the lowest production, in order to discuss their problems with them, and also to visit the new dairy herds beginning milk production.

LIVESTOCK

During the past year there has not been much change in the number of beef cows, but, the number of steers being grazed and fed grain in the county has increased. Rockingham County does not produce sufficient grain to feed the feeder cattle

available in the county, and, therefore, exports some feeder cattle.

At the present time, we are conducting one calf sale demonstration, and one yearling demonstration sale in the fall, and one yearling demonstration sale in the spring. These sales need more cattle, and also better quality cattle to attract more buyers. Also there are quite a few cattle turned down because they were not properly dehorned and castrated.

Many farmers find it difficult to test cow herds for bangs and vaccinate calves for bangs, blackleg, shipping fever, and dehorn and castrate because they do not have proper handling pens and chutes.

There are still some herds that have some cows with dairy breeding.

Our objective is to improve the quality of beef cattle in the county and in the sales and increase the number of cattle in the demonstration sales.

1. One meeting of beef producers will be held to build more enthusiasm for the demonstration sale, and also get information to producers on what to do in order to get cattle into the sale.
2. One letter will be sent to producers giving information on building handling pens and chutes.
3. Producers who have had difficulty in castrating and dehorning, will be contacted and proper methods will be discussed with individuals.

SHEEP

There are many flocks of sheep in the county producing poor quality lambs. In some cases, producers are not using good rams. Parasites are still a problem in some flocks, and there are a good many lambs that are not being castrated and docked.

Our objective is to get producers to use better rams and produce higher quality lambs.

1. The staff will continue to assist the purebred breeders in conducting a county ram sale in order to improve the quality of lambs through breeding.
2. Special news items will be featured in the newspaper and on the radio stations on when to treat for parasites, when to dock and castrate lambs along with the advantage of each.

4-H CLUB WORK

In Rockingham County, there are at present thirty-three different 4-H Clubs. Nine (9) of the clubs are joint boys and girls community night groups; two community night groups with girls only; eleven (11) Elementary School 6th and 7th grade boys clubs, and eleven (11) girls clubs. The 1959 membership in these clubs was 697 boys and girls.

The community senior 4-H clubs which meet at night, meet monthly, a total of twelve times per year. The Extension Agent meets with these clubs every other month, and the other six meetings are carried on by the supervision of the adult leaders. The meeting the agent attends, about 1 hour is devoted to project discussion and training and thirty minutes business meeting, and officer training. The six meetings which are supervised by the adult leaders consist of about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. of business, $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. project reports or demonstrations by members, and $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. of recreation.

Eleven junior school clubs meet monthly during the school months. About $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. is devoted to business and parliamentary procedure training, $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. to project training, and about 10 minutes for recreation, which includes games etc.

Each club member is given a choice of projects. Junior members, however, are encouraged to select one of the simpler projects.

In eight of the nine community 4-H clubs there are 18 project adult men leaders. Assisting these leaders there are 10 junior leaders. In one club there is no adult leader at the present time.

Dairy Projects.

Last year there were 44 members enrolled in dairy projects.

The objective in our dairy program will be to train members on selecting and judging of dairy animals and also to give them further training on feeding and management. At least one county wide special training session will be held for all members enrolled in dairy projects. One judging demonstration will be held to train dairy club members in dairy judging and a team will be selected to represent the county in the Northern District Dairy Contest.

Livestock

In 1959, 106 livestock projects were enrolled, and there was considerable interest in the baby beef project under which the baby beeves were exhibited at the county fair and then sold at the livestock market at the close of the fair.

The plan is to continue the baby beef project with the exhibit

at the fair and the selling of the calves at the close of the fair.

A county livestock judging demonstration will be held and a team selected to represent the county in the district contest.

Swine

Rockingham 4-H members have a sponsored swine project under the Sears Roebuck Agricultural Foundation. These projects are to be visited and checked carefully, and scored during the year.

Poultry

Last year there were 57 poultry projects enrolled. One important phase of the poultry program was the Junior Broiler Growers Contest. This program is sponsored through the Shenandoah Valley Junior Broiler Growers Committee, however, all entries were from Rockingham County in 1959.

Again this year, the contest will be sponsored through the Shenandoah Valley Junior Broiler Grower Committee, and plans will be made to score the flocks, and then judge the dressed carcasses. Each club member enrolled in the project will select from the 100 birds which were all started on the same date, 10 birds which will be dressed, and the 8 best ones will be selected for a display. These displays will be judged and the winner will be selected on the basis of the carcasses and the management score. The 8 birds will be sold at auction and the club members and sponsoring organizations will climax the contest with a barbecue dinner. The top three or four exhibits will then be displayed at the State contest where they will have an opportunity to compete for the State award.

Miscellaneous Projects.

Safety

Last year there were 153 safety projects enrolled. Due to the number enrolled and to the emphasis on accident reduction in Rockingham County this year, four special training sessions will be held at club meetings to emphasize elimination of hazards and prevention of accidents. The plan is to discuss the accidents which cause the most injuries at these sessions and demonstrate and explain how these accidents could have been prevented.

A contest was sponsored this year by the Kiwanis Club, which is to be judged on the basis of the accidents reported and what has been done to prevent other similar accidents from happening. Each 4-H club, junior and senior, was asked to name a reporter, who will keep a record of accidents and what was done to prevent future accidents. The accidents to be reported are those which happened around the home or farm of each of the individual members.

All clubs were asked to develop safety exhibits and plan safety projects in their individual community. These activities are to be included in the contest.

A committee will then judge these reports and the winning junior and senior club will be awarded a skating party.

Farm and Home Electric

This project will be continued again this year. Representatives from the Power Companies will be asked to help train club members at special sessions of this project. The project exhibits and records will be judged and a county winner selected for the awarding of a medal and a trip to the Electrical Congress.

4-H Camp

The district camp will be held this year at the Powells Fort Valley Camp. The recreational and educational program will be planned jointly with the two other counties for this camp.

4-H Achievement Program

An annual county 4-H achievement program will be held to recognize outstanding 4-H members and leaders. Details of this program will be planned by a committee of leaders and 4-H members.

County 4-H Council

The County 4-H Council will hold a spring and fall business meeting. The Council will serve as an overall 4-H organization.

4-H All-Stars

The plan is to continue the County 4-H All-Stars' organization. One business meeting will be held to select All Star candidates, and another spring meeting will be held in order for the All Stars to get together.

Calendar of Work

Adult

February

Meeting of hay and silage for dairy.

Dairy School

March

Strawberry Meeting

Poultry Meeting

April

Thistle spray campaign

June

Turkey Meeting

Campaign to reduce cost of producing hatching eggs.

September

Publicity winter pasture.

Egg Producers Meeting.

October

Set up poultry house ventilation.

Visit dairy herds with low production.

Calendar of Work

4-H Club

January

Beef training - all clubs.

Attend Senior Clubs

February

Swine training - junior clubs.

March

Dairy training - all clubs.

Attend Senior Clubs

Initiate safety program

April

Dairy judging training

Start Jr. Broiler program

Sheep project training - junior clubs

4-H County Council Meeting

May

Get junior club record books in.

Attend senior clubs.

Electric project training sessions.

Soils training - all clubs.

Check Sears swine projects.

June

Close out Jr. Broiler projects.

July

Attend senior clubs

Swine project training- senior clubs.

August

4-H Club Camp

Fair Exhibits

September

Attend senior clubs

Review record keeping

Organize Jr. 4-H clubs

October

4-H County Council Meeting

Get record books in.

November

Attend senior clubs

Discuss 4-H projects.