

PLAN OF WORK

FRANKLIN COUNTY

1954

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## I. TYPE OF AGRICULTURE.

Franklin County is the sixth largest county in the state with 697 square miles composed of 3122 farms containing 459,520 acres of land of which 90,782 are cropland and 161,684 acres are in woodland, waste land, etc.

The county's type of agriculture is very diversified due to its geographical location, being located on the edge of the flue-cured tobacco belt. The types of agriculture vary from community to community because of the markets and soil types.

The soils of the county are of heavy type, well drained, and adapted to general and livestock farming.

Maintain and work with the County Agricultural Planning Board with a representative of each community in the county.

Maintain a representative of each major farm organization, the key banker, business and professional people and a member of the Agricultural Committee of the eight civic clubs on the board.

Have set up special interest committees for each interest group. These committees may designate a representative on the county board.

## II. MAJOR ACTIVITIES.

### DAIRYING

#### A. Situation.

Dairying is the most important agricultural enterprise in Franklin County. The county is well adapted to the dairy industry, including the development of pastures. The number of cows and the number of heifer replacements are increasing every year. At the present time, as the past, the markets for Franklin County are good. Fifty-seven Franklin County dairymen participate in three Dairy Herd Improvement Associations. Dairy farmers are extremely interested in participating in both the D.H.I.A. and in the Artificial Breeding Association.

The over-all goal for dairymen in Franklin County will be economic production of an adequate quantity of high quality milk. In order to achieve this, the following plan has been formulated.

1. Dairy Management.

- a. To hold a county-wide feeding, crops and management school. This school will be held with the aid of VPI Dairy Specialists and will cover all of the most important phases of dairy production. This school will be given adequate publicity through the use of newspapers, radio, television and personal contacts.
- b. To hold three community meetings regarding dairy management. These meetings will be spaced at proper intervals, both as to time and location throughout the county. Likewise, they will be concerned with all of the important phases of dairy production.
- c. Hold conferences on recommendations for dairy and agronomy practices in the interest of the development of the Franklin County dairy industry.
- d. Assist farmers and dairy fieldmen in the proper control of the diseases that affect dairy cattle. This will be done by utilizing the recommendations concerning diseases that have been sent out from VPI. In the event that any diseases arise which are not covered by these recommendations, specialists help will be enlisted.
- e. Conduct demonstrations on the control of flies around the dairy barn and cattle grubs. The control of these insects will not be limited to the cattle themselves, but will also include recommendations as to the eradication of these insects around the barn and on the premises.
- f. To hold Guernsey and Holstein Field Days in the county.
- g. To participate in the Blue Ridge Guernsey Breeders Association, State Dairymen's Association, Artificial Breeding Program, Franklin County Milk Producers Association and Franklin County Holstein Club.
- h. To cooperate with the Blue Ridge Guernsey Breeders Association in their annual A-H Heifer Sale.

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2. Feeding.

- a. To emphasize the importance of high quality non-filler concentrates. This is considered to be extremely important in order to achieve our goal of producing a high quantity of high quality milk. This point will be emphasized through all media available to the agent.
- b. Stress the importance of feeding home-grown grains and supplementing with protein to the dairy cattle.
- c. To encourage the use of early grazing on the farm through the use of temporary small grain pastures. The importance of this was brought out during the drought of 1953. In this case, if our county had more of the temporary pastures it would not have been necessary to get near as many feedstuffs through the Drought Emergency Aid Program.

3. Dairy Buildings.

- a. To hold field meetings on the repair and rearrangement of old buildings. This is considered to be of prime importance because the county dairymen find themselves, in some cases, short of labor and short of finances. By rearranging and repairing old barns, they can achieve a satisfactory building and one that will save them much labor without having to spend a great quantity of money.
- b. Conduct at least two demonstrations on trench silos. The trench silo has taken on new importance in this county in that it has proved to be an economical and practical way in which to store silage. The county dairymen that had trench silos filled last year were much more ready for the drought than were the others. Field meetings will be conducted at these demonstrations in order to bring out the points necessary along the management lines regarding these trench silos.
- c. Secure necessary information and lend aid to the construction of dairy buildings in order to meet recommended requirements.

#### 4. Breeding.

- a. To continue to assist in the operation of the artificial breeding program through administration and selection of sires.
- b. Continue work with the Manager of the Artificial Breeding Association in educating the farmers as to the advantages of becoming a member of the association.
- c. To emphasize the importance of a good herd sire among dairy farmers in breeding artificially.
- d. Dairy farmers should be taught the fact that the sire is half the herd and his importance is one that cannot be over estimated.

#### TOBACCO.

##### A. Situation.

Tobacco is an extremely important agricultural enterprise to Franklin County, especially in the eastern section. The county has approximately 3800 acres of land devoted to tobacco production. During the past few years, Franklin County tobacco growers have encountered numerous relatively new problems involved in tobacco production. Many of these problems arise from the insistence of tobacco-buying companies to obtain leaf of a thin, smoking quality. In addition, the advent and spread of certain very destructive diseases and nematodes of tobacco has created problems which must be overcome by the farmer. Much work also needs to be done following the lines of good cultural and management practices.

The past two tobacco seasons have been ones of rather severe drought in this county. This has materially decreased the tobacco yields, and has also lowered the morale of the tobacco farmers somewhat.

The following plan was formulated by "District Tobacco Planning Committees". A Tobacco Planning Committee was organized from each of the magisterial districts in the county in which tobacco is grown. These committees met, and through discussion, worked up the county plan. By employing district or community committees, the agent feels that a much more practical program can be carried out.

Listed below are the major tobacco problems and the means that the tobacco agent intends to use to improve the situation.

1. Improve Quality Through Proper Fertilization.

- a. Emphasize in every available way the importance of careful fertilization in order to produce a product of better quality.
- b. Encourage use of soil testing services.
- c. Stress the proper placement of fertilizer in the row with respect to plant roots.

These will be done with the use of meetings, radio, television, newspapers, and personal contact. These topics have already been emphasized in seven meetings in the tobacco section of the county.

2. Flea Beetle Control.

- a. Conduct a vigorous program in flea beetle control through meetings, weekly radio programs, newspapers, and personal contact.
- b. Emphasize the control of these insects in the plant bed prior to transplanting.

3. Tobacco Diseases.

- a. Encourage tobacco growers to have any disease appearing on their farms positively identified.
- b. In order to facilitate this identification, hold five tobacco disease clinics in each tobacco district (20 in the county).
- c. Publish importance and methods of disease control through meetings, newspapers, radio, and personal contact.
- d. Publish data concerning resistant varieties.