

VIRGINIA
NARRATIVE REPORT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION WORK

IN
CHARLOTTE COUNTY

1953

C. B. Haskins

Local Farm Agent

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LOCATION AND DISCRPTION OF COUNTY

Charlotte County lies in South-Side Virginia, in the water-shed of the Roanoke River Valley. It is bordered by the counties of Mecklenburg on the south; Lunenburg on the east; Prince Edward on the north and northeast; Appomattox on the north and Halifax on the west and southwest, and Campbell on the northwest.

Charlottee is around the twenties in size among the other counties of the state. The land area is 496 square miles. This comprises 299,520 acres of land. There are 2450 farms averaging 100.9 acres per farm. 170,999 acres are owned by their operators and 75,677 are rented. There are 80,688 acres in crop land; and 139,660 acres in woods. There is a farm population of approximately 14,052 of which 3978 are Negroes who operate 670 farms. There are 293 owners, 115 part owners, 156 croppers. These operate and control 17,646 of the land.

The topography of the county is generally from rolling to hilly. The northern and western portions are mostly hilly to extremely hilly. The types of soil found are appling fine sandy loam, cecil, georgeville silty loam, helena sandy loam, and much of the clays. With the acception for tobacco, the best farm lands are found in the northern and western parts of the county. This is due largely to the type (fire-cured) of tobacco, type of soil and accessibility and convenience to the lime grinding plant at appomattox. The Soil Conservation Program has contributed to the distribution of lime over the entire county in recent years. The type of tobacco in this area is conducive to a more general and balance farming, and in no case has there been a desire nor a need in withholding any of the practice for a soil building program.

The county is composed of general farm with a very few acceptions. Dairy, livestock and poultry constitute the very special types of farm programs. Aside from several of the main highways, the Southern, Norfolk and Western, and Virginian railroads along with motor trucks provide easy transportation to the several markets, especially from the middle and through the northern and western sections of the county.

COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| County Agricultural Advisory Board | County Agricultural Clubs |
| County 4-H Clubs | Home Demonstration Clubs |
| County FMA., Program | Soil Conservation Service |
| County FHA Committee | Home Makers of America |
| County Mobilization Committee | New Farmers of America |
| County Fair Association | Agronomy Committee |

Charlotte Tri-County Farmers' Cooperative

The County Agricultural Advisory Board is the County-wide organization that is utilized by the extension personnel in its organization, planning, and conducting the various county-wide aspects of the extension program. Planning and setting up devices to meet the various problems have been the major phases of activities in its two meetings that have been held to date. Increasing and enlarging the activities of the program, as well as improving on those now being conducted, is the major interest of this group.

The progress of the Farm and Home Unit family is not too encouraging from the farm and agriculture side. Some improvement in the homestead was made last year. That was encouraging. Due to the season this year, the amount of time that was required for the bright tobacco grown by the farmer, and his untiring interest in this crop, scarcely any thing has been done. However, we still have faith that it is very possible and probably that a steady improvement will finally become established.

THE GOAL OF THE EXTENSION PROGRAM IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

"More proficient Farms and Homes"

A Higher Standard of Living

Major Enterprises

- I. Corn:
 - A. Goal:
 - 1. To increase yields by 10 bushels on 20 farms
 - 2. Confine corn production to a rotation with legumes and grains.
 - B. Methods and procedures:
 - 1. Organized a 100 bushel corn club with 15 members.

Conn continued

B. Methods and Procedures: (cont.)

2. Have boys in 4-H clubs to carry corn projects, and worked closely with members of Farm clubs giving each group every assistance and as much information possible on corn production.
3. Worked with farmers in setting up a better program with emphasis on the three "cornerstones" of farming-supply, cash and soil improvement crops.
4. Stressed the value of good seed and gave necessary and reasonable assistance in securing them.
5. Sat up goals and improved practices with farmer and 4-H club members.
6. Gave factual data on, and drew a comparison between poor and improved and recommended methods in corn production.
7. Distributed materials on latest methods, amounts and analysis of fertilizers.
8. Encouraged farmers and boys to exhibit their corn at fairs, and cooperated and assisted them in selecting and arranging their exhibits.
9. Induced a number of farmers to begin a rotational system with grain crops-legumes followed with corn.

C. Results:

1. 100 bushel corn club was organized with 13 members.
2. 69 4-H boys carried corn project, with a total of 132.5 acreage.
3. Farm programs were improved in approximately 35 cases.
4. Hybrid seed corn was used in most cases.
5. Yields were not so good due to the drought. However there were two club demonstrators whose yields were more than 100 bushels per acre, according to the chard for figuring yields when the moisture content is not known.
6. The trend is towards growing corn in rotation with legumes and grains.
7. Many corn exhibits by both boys and parents were exhibited at fairs, and prizes were received.

II. Tobacco:

A. Goal:

1. To increase the quality and yield per acre to 1100 pounds.
2. To reduce the cost of production where possible, by utilizing the farm labor and facilities more effectively.
3. To reduce the cost of fuel and time in curing by getting more of the oxford type controlled ventilators installed.

B. Methods and Procedures used:

1. Got some to see the value and necessity for growing tobacco in a rotation with grains and grasses.
2. Stressed the value and necessity for making soil tests to determine the amount and analysis of fertilizers, according to the soil requirement.
3. Assisted in planning a better labor distribution.
4. Offered my assistance in constructing controlled ventilation.
5. Kept farmers informed as the latest methods and recommendations for insect, disease and sucker control.
6. Assisted in the selection, arranging and exhibiting of products at fairs.

B. Methods and Procedures used: (cont.)

- 7. Regularly sent out information and materials on the production of tobacco, from the plant bed to the marketing floor.
- 8. Visit with farmer at several of the experiment stations.

C. Results:

- 1. Some farmers moved their tobacco from behind tobacco to a more secure practice, such as following grass crops, and some headed towards a rotational system.
- 2. In some cases the fertilizer requirement was determined through soil tests, and many who were not using sufficient fertilization, increased the amount.
- 3. Available labor was used more extensively on those jobs that each individual could do instead of every one or all working at the same job together, this avoided idle labor by those while the more heavy or difficult jobs were being done, by only those who were more physical and skillfully able for such jobs.
- 4. Four controled ventilation systems were constructed.
- 5. The latest methods for the control of disease and insect controlas well as for suckers were enthusiastically followed.
- 6. Many of the boys and farmers exhibited their products.
- 7. From results it was quite obvious that information sent out was appreciated, read and put into practicé.
- 8. Made visits to two experiment stations.

III. Pastures:

A. Goal:

- 1. Get a pasture demonstration in each community. Use ladin-orchard grass as the major permanent mixture, with other mixtures according to needs, requirements and possibility of the soils, with winter pasture included.
- 2. Distribute information for developing a good pasture, and profitable systems.
- 3. Hold pasture field meetings.
- 4. Determine with individuals their possibilities, cost and etc., in establishing a pasture according to his need and situation.
- 5. Assist farmers in securing lime.

B. Methods and Procedures used:

- 1. Visit pasture programs, sent out materials and information, and had leaders to foster and support the program in their communities.
- 2. Kept mailing list revised and used every opportunity to get information to the farmers.
- 3. Visited both, good and poor pastures and discussed the practices used and determined the results that were visable.
- 4. Visited in the field with individuals, discussed his problem, determined possibilities, made soil tests and recommendations.
- 5. Determined readily available lime supply, when necessary, and at times assisted in putting in orders.

C. Results:

1. Held four pasture field meetings; much of the material was used as evident from practices, one leader in a new community seeded three acres of permanent pasture, many were hindered by dry weather, and others boosted the pasture program.
2. Top-dressing of pastures was the number one result growing out of information and materials distributed.
3. It was admitted by some, and stressed by others that pastures pay, and good practices was the most profitable procedure.
4. Some of the problems were solved; possibilities were recognized, soil test recommendations were carried out.
5. When the PIA material was not available, private sources were contacted and their services obtained.

● IV. Wheat:

A. Goal:

1. To have each farmer grow enough to meet his farm and family needs.
2. Plan to grow a surplus that the sale of such may supplement his cash income.
3. To grow wheat in rotation with corn and legumes.
4. To get more of the latest recommended varieties sown.
5. Get farmers to use good, and certified seed; have his home grown seed cleaned and treated against diseases.

B. Methods and procedures used:

1. Stress the value of a rotational system; the possibilities with wheat in supplementing the cash income, and supplying information for reducing cost per unit of production, and ways to increase production.
2. Information was distributed on ways and means of increasing yields, lowering cost per unit, and the advantage from growing the home supply instead of having to purchase with cash obtained from other sources (in most cases from the limited acreage allotted for tobacco).
3. Observation on our last tour was coupled with factual information given and distributed, and experience of farmers having carried out rotational systems were important factors used in getting this over to farmers.
4. Gave factual data along with farmer experiences as well as from observation when ever possible, the experiment stations contributed much to this.
5. Observed at experiment stations those tested and recommended along with those that would go off the recommended list, and those that were under observation as to their possibilities.

C. Results:

1. A number of farmers are changing, who had failed so far, to a rotational system. Many are geared for a surplus production.
2. Much interest was taken in wheat allotted acreage. Some are renting extra land that they may be guaranteed support in the sale of their wheat. One of my demonstrators is growing or has seeded forty(40) acres this fall.
3. There is quite an increase interest in crop rotation on many farms.
4. Thorne, vahart and atlas are the predominant varieties of wheat sown this fall.
5. Some farmers bought certified seed, others used their home grown seed cleaned and treated, and a few still sow without treating.

V. Farm and Home Unit Demonstration

A. Goal:

- 1. To get this farm and home developed to an all-round farm and home, self supporting, a pride and asset to the owners as well as an example, a credit to the community and inspiration to all individuals who may have an opportunity to visit there.

B. Methods and procedures used:

- 1. We worked constantly with the demonstrators assisting in every way possible and practical. Submitted to them all information obtained that we felt would aid in making progress.
- 2. Farm homes were visited, literature on the better homes was given and the labor problem was discussed in trying to find time at which available labor might make some contribution to its development.

C. Results:

- 1. The road to and through the homestead has been improved to the level comparable to the secondary state road system.
- 2. Tobacco storage, striping and packing facilities have been improved to the point necessary for convenience and effective work.
- 3. Judicious purchase of farm tools, tractor and equipment have been made and are being utilized very effectively.
- 4. The general farm program is improving and progressing gradually. The storage of labor is the greatest factor retarding and slowing up progress.
- 5. Potentiality and interest are very favorable for gradual and steady growth and development.

VI. Swine:

A. Goal:

- 1. To increase the number of hogs to the point of necessity for the family need, on thirty farms.

B. Methods and procedures:

- 1. To increase the brood sows to one per family on thirty farms.
- 2. Encourage more pastures for hogs, and assist in setting up pasture programs.
- 3. Cooperate in sponsoring a pig show and sale.
- 4. Have farmers and boys to exhibit their animals at fairs.
- 5. Have boys to carry pig projects from animals of improved breeding.
- 6. Visit, with boys and farmers, some of the leading breeders such as some found in Southampton and other counties.
- 7. Stress at all time a live-at-home program.

C. Results:

- 1. Between 20 and 25 of the farms of the thirty worked with have sufficient animals for pork, to meet their need.
- 2. Due to a lot of rain in late winter and early spring, the number of new pastures seeded were limited, however several succeeded in seeding them.
- 3. There were twelve boys carrying 12 pigs for a pig show and sale. Due to failure of carrying through the show and sale planned, with other counties, only five pigs were actually sold.
 - a. Five (5) pigs were sold at a local market, with interest and cooperation of the manager for around \$295.00.
 - b. Four (4) were retained on the farms with arrangement with the boys' fathers for purchasing the animals from the boys.
 - c. Four (4) were too small, due to the lateness in the purchasing of one, and improper feed in the others.

C. Results (cont.)

4. Much interest was aroused among these boys and their parents as well as some of their neighbors. Exhibits were made at fairs.
5. Two of these pigs, the two making the greatest gain and graded high were from registered stock.
6. We were not able to leave the county to observe other projects as planned.
7. The trend of the time or condition of prices, if not our efforts, has brought about a consistent effort to become more secure in the matter of the home supply, as evident by four fathers retaining their boys' pigs on the farm.
8. The announcement of the five pigs sold, as A-H boys' pigs, I feel was responsible for their bringing the highest price paid for pigs during that particular sale's day.
9. Several fathers have promised to cooperate in doubling the number next year.

VII. Poultry:

A. Goal:

1. To increase egg production of 145 per hen in fifty flocks.

B. Methods and Procedures:

1. Increase number and size of flock to at least thirty birds in forty flocks.
2. Encourage more women to become members of farmers' clubs.
3. Give farmers and farm women more information on the production of poultry, through discussions, bulletions and other materials.
4. Encourage cooperative marketing, and grading of poultry and poultry products.
5. Stress and assist in improved housing.
6. Distribute materials giving information on proper rations and feeding programs.
7. Urge farmers to grow the necessary grain on the farm.
8. Teach farmers and farm women how to cull their birds, and insist on keeping them rigidly culled-marketing the culls at home and commercially to supplement the diet and the cash income on the farm.

C. Results:

1. Thirty hens per flock have been exceeded in more than thirty five flocks.
2. Very seldom women attend farmers' clubs, ther is a HD club in each community where ther is a farmers' club, cooperation is given them in improving their flocks.
3. Discussions at meetings and distribution of bulletins and other materials have been means to get over necessary instructions.
4. Market reports are being studied to determine the value and advantage of grading.
5. Instructions and help have been extended in this phase of the program, with sanitation as well as production in mind.
6. Materials including charts have been studied, on feeding.
7. particularly oats and barley are being increased with the idea of improving the grain ration as well as a cash outlay for this necessary feed, will be avoided.
8. Farmers are learning that the fattest and best looking hen is not always the best layer.

VIII. Beef Animals:

A. Goal:

1. To get an increase of ten farmers to start a beef animal enterprise.
2. To get some boys started in beef projects.
3. Work towards getting beef programs established as a substantial cash ~~enterprise~~ income.

B. Methods and procedures:

1. Encourage more pastures, a complete pasture program with winter, temporary, and supplementary as well as permanent. These females now on the farm and save the heifer calves, and breeding all to a pure bred bull.

C. Results:

1. Due to the fall of beef prices no new producers come in. Approximate one half of the breeding done by farmers was with beef type bull.
2. Only one boy carried a beef project.
3. The price situation has been discouraging, however some looked forward to holding their own until the drought and hay shortage. It is encouraging to know that those who were already in the business still plan holding on.

IX. Hay:

A. Goal:

1. Urge farmers to produce all of the hay that his livestock requires, and additional amounts for sale.

B. Methods to be used.

1. Urge farmers to grow their hay in rotation with corn and small grains.
2. Get all idle and bottom lands, not suited to row crops, sown down into hay mixtures.
3. Get farmers to use the required amount of lime and other plant foods, determined through and by the practice of soil tests.
4. Stress the value of summer as well as winter and bi-annual legumes in a good farm program.
5. Sow legumes and grasses with small grains as a time saver, and in addition, seed bed preparation and lowering the cost per unit of production will be the result.

C. Results:

1. In eighty five percent of the farm program some type of a hay crop is needed with small grains.
2. Some idle and bottom land is seeded to hay mixtures, but most are sown in ladina-orchard grass and fescue pastures.
3. The requests for lime and plant food has improved to a very creditable extent, much of the land has never been limed and the advice usually is, you are safe to like without a soil test.
4. Crimson clover is being utilized as an annual legume, while soy beans have begun to come in, even more to than the "OLD FAITHFUL" COW PRAS.
5. Sowing legumes and grasses with small grains is one of the most encouraging factors, rather the most extensive practice.

X. Home and year-around gardens:

A. Goal:

1. To increase the year-around garden by four in each community.

B. Methods used:

1. Distribute among farmers all-year-around garden programs.

B. Methods used: (Cont.)

- 2. Stress the value of a balance ration, the need and economy of the home-grown vegetables.
- 3. Assist in making group orders for necessary plants that are not available on the farm.
- 4. Determine with farmers the cost of purchasing the necessary vegetables against that cost necessary to grow them on the farm.
- 5. Teach farmers the fertilizer requirement of vegetables according to their type.

C. Results:

- 1. Information on type, variety and dates for planting was given and distributed to farmers.
- 2. According to market prices it was not too hard to convince the average farmer that growing vegetables is more secure and economical than buying them.
- 3. Group orders for plants was made in one community.
- 4. Much interest was taken and manifested in the discussion of types, as thought had been given, formerly only to vegetables as cabbage, beans and potatoes, etc.

XI. Land use:

A. Goal:

- 1. Cooperate with the SCS as well as with the farmers in planting the various fields on the farms to those crops that each particular field is most capable of producing.

B. Methods and procedures used:

- 1. Get more farmers lined up with the SCS.
- 2. Work with farmers in carrying out recommendations written into their organized farm plans.

C. Results:

- 1. Only two farmers have been worked with in relation with the SCS., due to a number of farms ~~in carrying out~~ already signed up, not having been processed and worked with by SCS to date.
- 2. Seeding and terracing land have been the greatest activity in assisting in the land use and soil building program, by the extension agent.

XIII. Forestry:

A. Goal:

- 1. Was to get farmers to realize that their forest and forest products are as much of their farm program in soil and moisture conservation, and the possibilities for cash income as any other crop on the farm.
- 2. To get farmers to utilize, care for and make plans for developing his forest as he does any other phase of his farm program.

B. Methods used:

- 1. Discuss with farmers and distribute material on the possibilities for developing and improving the forest and the income derived there from.
- 2. Use idle and wast land, land not suited to cultivate, are those described as best and most profitable for forest planting.
- 3. Get farmers to market their timber according to the forestry department recommendations.

C. Results:

- 1. Information, observation and experiences have done much in bringing about an increased interest in developing and caring for forest products.

C. Results (cont.)

- 2. I have been able to get some farmers to have their timber estimated and marked who did not know that such service was available.
- 3. Very little interest has been created for planting seedlings.

XIII. Adult Farmers' Clubs:

A. Goal:

- 1. To organize additional clubs, with the idea of having one in each community.
- 2. create interest in cooperative buying and selling.
- 3. Concentrate on members of clubs to develop more result demonstrations that they may be examples of prosperous and progressive programs for others to follow.
- 4. Use these club and club members as an overall procedure and example for extension teaching.

B. Methods:

- 1. Work constantly and intensively with member of clubs to develop the extension program, through demonstrations and other farm activities.
- 2. Stress the value and importance of group action for economy in time as well as in cash saving and in buying and selling.
- 3. Encourage cooperative activity when ever possible and practical.
- 4. Give factual data showing the results of cooperative activity.
- 5. Draw out of members at group meetings, their interest and activities resulting from observing practices of other farmers.

C. Results:

- 1. No additional clubs were organized. More people were contacted in the various communities. Interest and efforts are being made for additions.
- 2. Cooperation by way of information through explanation etc., was given in the organization of a farm cooperative in the county. A number of club members along with other farmers became members and experienced much in saving in the purchasing of fertilizers and other supplies.
- 3. Corn clubs, pastures, pig projects supported by the fathers, and controlled ventilation in flue-cured tobacco barns have been the outstanding demonstrations for the past three years. Tobacco barn ventilation took the lead in interest and activity this year.
- 4. Many demonstrations are being developed now without the direct assistance of the agent. Particularly the barn ventilation demonstration that was ridiculed by some individuals when we first started them, are being installed by those individuals now, with enthusiasm.

The saving of fuel is the number one asset favorable to those who have them installed. Time saved in the curing process per barn and amount of time required to remain or stay at the barn during any or each curing is high in their favor for these ventilators. Due to difficulty in getting tobacco to yellow this year, one farmer states that his ventilator was a great asset in aiding him to yellow his tobacco, for he could keep out all air, thereby retaining the needed moisture to aid in the yellowing process. Many farmers had to haul water to create additional moisture.

Xiv. Community 4-H Clubs:

A. Goal:

- 1. To enroll 155 boys in 4-H club work.

XIV. Community 4-H Clubs: (Cont.)

A. Goal:

- 2. To get at least 85% of projects started, completed.
- 3. Teach members how to conduct meetings.
- 4. Obtain agreement with parents to allow boys to carry projects, and cooperate in encouraging them by allowing the boys certain definite ownership and control; the opportunity to put into practice the improved practices, and a definite share in the ~~practicax~~ cash value and income for his effort in producing these projects.
- 5. Encourage boys to demand respect from other citizens through their industry and behavior.

B. Methods and procedures:

- 1. Hold regular monthly meetings.
- 2. Create competition among members.
- 3. Discuss with groups the possibilities of a good farming program, and with individuals possibilities on his particular farm.
- 4. Discuss the possibilities with various enterprises in the county in comparison with those grown and produced on the group's particular farms.
- 5. Inform the groups of the various county and state awards, as well as the reward to any one who works honestly and for any job well done.
- 6. Encourage exhibits at fairs in the light of prizes as well as participating in activities with others and the returns from good yields of quality products.

C. Results:

- 1. 170 boys were enrolled in 7 clubs.
- 2. 87.9% of projects started were completed.
- 3. The fullest amount of our limited time is given to proper conduction of meetings.
- 4. Parents are willing to cooperate in conducting projects. Some agreed to purchase their boys' pigs giving him the cash at market value.
- 5. Boys begin to realize that 4-H club work is their activity and for the most part their attitudes are much improved.
- 6. The result of a special pig project was: Five (5) pigs sold for around \$295.00; four retained on the farms, with the promise to pay the boys cash; and 4 were too small to market on October 10th when the five were sold.

There is increased interest among the boys and their parents for pig projects next year.

- 7. One boy won the tractor driving contest during the 5-county Fair, and will go to Harrisburg Pennsylvania in January to compete in the national tractor driving contest.

4-H Short Course

Three boys attended the State 4-H Short Course held at Virginia State College, Petersburg, in June. Their interest and expressions were favorable for having recieved much encouragement, information and inspiration.

Wildlife and Conservation Conference

Due to drouth, tobacco and other crop situations, I was not able to secure boys of the suggested age, to attend. Labor shortage seem to have been worst ever,

Wildlife and Conservation Conference (cont.)

and the drought seem to have aggravated it.

5- County Fair

In spite of the drought, a very creditable exhibit was made at this fair with quite a few prizes brought back to the county, including the winner of the tractor driving contest who will go to Harrisburg Pennsylvania in January to participate in the National.

NEW FARMERS OF AMERICA ORGANIZATIONS

This organization has a good and going program, the members and its advisors are very cooperative with the extension program. The two programs have been fairly coordinated and gradual progress is being made.

THIRD ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL AND SCHOOL FAIR

The fair was quite a success as expressed by farmers and visitors. Interest seem to increase from year to year. Already, meeting has been held planning the next year's activities. Cash prizes were paid from funds raised from ads to make up a catalogue, along with the premium lists, regulations and other information therein. There was an estimated crowd of near 2000 including school children.

GENERAL ROUTINE

There is scarcely any phase of farm activity in the county where the extension has not made contact, in some way, this year. The problems are many and the requests on and for the services seem to increase from year to year. Many contributions have been made by the extension service through direct contact, group action, distribution of bulletins, leaflets, correspondence and assembling certain definite information. Most emphasis has been given to the live-at-home community program, corn program, pasture and pig projects. Many home visits have been made as the result of requests. Much of the services would have gone unattended had it not been for many cooperative leaders.

EVALUATION OF THE YEAR'S WORK

My desire right now, is to have some one to assign this particular statement to aside from myself. I feel that the end result would be a greater appreciation for just what may be said, and has been accomplished, and a better indication as to "what, when, how, why, who, and where".

As the result of keeping faith and cultivating hope, I am encouraged from time to time as I get around, when I am told without soliciting; Achievements, accomplishments and benefits derived because of the extension services. So enthusiastically are some, and very recently I had the experience, that one expressed himself in an ironical manner. There are evidences to make me feel that the extension program in the county is making some contributions as evident of progress here and there sponsored through extension methods and teaching

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EVALUATION OF THE YEAR'S WORK (Cont.)

Most encouraging is the interest and cooperation that has steadily increased among farmers and other citizens since we have been here. We pledge our consistent efforts to support and encourage farmers by aiding and cooperating with them in every way practical and possible.

Finally, the most tangible evidence of the value of extension work in Charlotte County is the way the few organizations that we have, even through young, are strengthening, farmers are binding themselves more closely together. The membership is continually increasing, and for the most part each member is taking an increase interest in the activities, that those things they represent will be second to none.