

PLAN OF WORK

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PAGE SEVEN

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County Agent

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The agricultural lands in Page County are located along the Southfork of the Shenandoah River, between the Blue Ridge and Massanutten Mountains. The topography varies from practically level to gently rolling and steep.

Crops include: 6500 acres of corn, approximately 8000 acres of other grains, 8000 acres of hay, 800 acres of vegetables - potatoes, tomatoes, and snap beans. Lespedeza, red clover, and orchard grass are harvested on many farms.

There are over 10,000 cattle, of which about one-fourth are dairy cattle, the others being beef cows and calf herds.

The income from poultry represents well over one-half of the total agricultural income. This consists of turkeys, broilers, and laying flocks of hens kept for production of eggs for fresh egg market, as well as hatching eggs.

The long time trend has been towards more hay and pasture crops and less grains. This trend continues.

In order to select the Extension Projects to be stressed during 1954, Commodity groups met with the Agent and Extension Specialists to discuss the problems and to work out plans to help farmers meet their problems.

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AGRONOMY:

The important agronomy projects to be stressed this year are:

- (1) Increase corn production - have 100 Bushel Corn Club.
- (2) Improve pastures - have Pasture Improvement Club.
- (3) Get more farmers to harvest first cutting of clover and alfalfa earlier and to store as silage.

GOAL

METHODS TO BE USED

DATE

ALFALFA:

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>1. To increase alfalfa acreage</p> | <p>1. Alfalfa seeding demonstration.</p> <p>2. Prepare timely newspaper articles and radio programs on methods of seeding alfalfa in spring and summer.</p> <p>3. Furnish all farmers information on methods of seeding, fertilization, varieties of seed, in "Fertilizer and Crop Tips", prepared by Agent and mailed out.</p> <p>4. Have farm tour to visit farms where alfalfa silage is being used and where hay dealers are in use.</p> <p>5. Conduct demonstrations to show advantages of early cutting of alfalfa.</p> <p>6. Give publicity to demonstrations through radio and newspaper.</p> | <p>Aug.</p> |
| <p>2. Increase acreage of ladino clover-orchard grass pastures and improve other permanent pastures</p> | <p>1. Pasture tour.</p> <p>2. Hold pasture seeding demonstration.</p> <p>3. Continue with pasture demonstrations being conducted in cooperation with Plant Food Institute.</p> <p>4. Furnish all farmers information on the advantages of improved pastures and methods of improving pastures through "Fertilizer and Crop Tips", prepared and mailed out.</p> <p>5. Prepare timely newspaper articles and radio programs in Spring and Fall to give information on pasture improvement.</p> <p>6. Have Pasture Improvement Club - get bankers and others to sponsor by awarding prizes.</p> | <p>May</p> |

GOALMETHOD TO BE USEDDATE

CORN:

1. Increase corn yields
 - 1. Furnish all farmers through circular letters information on the recommended varieties and fertilization.
 - 2. Have 100 Bushel Corn Club as a means of encouraging more farmers to increase corn yields by using adapted varieties and heavier applications of commercial fertilizer.
 - 3. Conduct demonstration on corn borer control, if necessary.

SMALL GRAIN:

1. Increase yields and quality of small grains
 - 1. Give all farmers information on recommended varieties and encourage seed dealers to stock supplies of adapted varieties.
 - 2. Conduct demonstrations to show advantages of top dressing small grains with nitrogen fertilizer.
 - 3. Give publicity and information on controlling insects in stored grain.

POULTRY:

1. Disease control
 - 1. Give information on the advantages of using a poultry disposal pit as a means of controlling diseases.
 - 2. Get cooperation of contractors to help stress the importance of the use of disposal pits.
 - 3. Goal is to have built 25 disposal pits during 1954.
2. Hold County Wide Poultry Meeting
 - 1. Get cooperation of contractors and feed dealers to sponsor a County Poultry Meeting.
 - 2. Program for meeting will include: Discussion on ventilation of poultry houses, discussion on recommended vaccination program for both broilers and laying flocks, and the importance of disposal pits, discussion on the importance of producing high quality poultry - to the grower, industry, and consumer.
 - 3. Send poultry letters during the year giving tips on management and disease control.

MEAT ANIMALS:

The greatest problems in connection with meat animal production are: winter feeding as a result of the short feed supplies, and the price squeeze - especially on cattle. This year, the Livestock Program will be aimed towards helping farmers solve these problems.

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>METHOD TO BE USED</u>	<u>DATE</u>
<u>BEEF CATTLE:</u>		
1. Assist farmers in solving their winter feeding problems	1. Prepare and send to all farmers information on emergency feeding. 2. Discuss program at meetings and prepare radio and newspaper articles on same.	
2. Lower Production Costs	1. Set up one demonstration to assist farmers in selecting of herd replacements, based largely on rate of gain. 2. Give all farmers information on the importance of culling low producers and off-colored cows, and to replace them with good heifers. 3. Cooperate with the Veterinarians by encouraging all producers to have vaccinated all their replacement heifers. 4. Have radio programs and prepare circular letters giving information on parasite control - flies, lice, grub, and general parasites. 5. Have demonstration in Fall for controlling both external and internal parasites.	
3. Have 2 Stock Cattle Sales	1. Hold Spring Feeder Sale and Fall Calf Sale. 2. Cooperate with Farmer Committee in sponsoring these sales.	
4. 4-H Feeding and Management Demonstrations	1. Assist Club members in selecting calves to feed. 2. Work individually with each Club member enough to see that he follows good feeding, parasite control, and management practices. 3. Have demonstrations with Club members on fitting and showing calves. 4. Secure sponsorship for 4-H Baby Beef Sale.	

GOALMETHOD TO BE USEDDATE

SHEEP:

1. To increase sheep numbers

1. Work individually with 4-H Club members having sheep projects to see that they follow good management practices.
2. Give Club members training in shearing of their flocks.
3. Assist all farmers in cooperative marketing of their wool clip.
4. Cooperate with the Extension Agents in adjoining counties in sponsoring 4-H Fat Lamb Show and Sale.
5. Give all farmers growing sheep information on parasite control and winter feeding.

SWINE:

1. Lower production cost

1. Give all farmers growing hogs information through radio programs and letters on parasite control program and the use of pastures as a means of lowering production cost.

2. 4-H Feeding Demonstrations

1. Work individually with 4-H Club members with Breeding and 4-H Fat Pig Projects to help them conduct good management demonstrations.
2. Have Sale in cooperation with Agent from adjoining county.

DAIRYING:

One of the greatest problems in dairying is the large number of low producing cows.

1. Assist farmers in lowering production cost

1. Hold tours to stress importance of high quality roughage and pastures.
2. Furnish all dairymen information on services available through the Artificial Breeding Association, and urge them to use such services.
3. Establish supplemental pasture demonstrations on two dairy farms.

GOALMETHOD TO BE USEDDATEDAIRYING, Cont.

4. Give all dairymen information on winter feeding through letters and radio programs.
5. Assist farmers in analyzing DHIA Records.
6. Start 4-H Dairy Projects.

VEGETABLES:

1. Hold meeting of vegetable growers to discuss with them fertilization, cultural, and disease control program.

COOPERATION WITH
OTHER AGENCIES:

1. Cooperate with Fair Association in putting on Agricultural Fair.
2. Cooperate with other agencies in promoting all agricultural programs.

Annual Report

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service



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agent

1954

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Page
county

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ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

OF
EXTENSION WORK
IN
PAGE COUNTY

December 1, 1953 to November 30, 1954

G. B. Allison, County Agent
H. E. Landis, Assistant County Agent

	<u>Page</u>
I. Table of Contents.....	1
II. County Organisation.....	2
III. Type of Agriculture.....	2
IV. Project Activities.....	3
A. Agronomy.....	3
1. Alfalfa.....	3
2. Pasture Improvement.....	5
3. Other Agronomy Activities.....	7
B. Animal Husbandry.....	8
1. Beef Cattle.....	8
2. Sheep.....	10
3. Dairying.....	11
4. Poultry.....	11
C. Work with Other Groups.....	12
VI. A-H Club.....	13

-3-

II. COMMODITY ORGANIZATION

Extension planning is carried on largely through Commodity Committees. Early in the year, a group of commodity leaders were asked to meet with the Agent and Extension Specialist to discuss and plan for year's work. These committees have been very cooperative and helpful in deciding what phases of program to stress and in carrying information to other individuals.

III. STATE OF AGRICULTURE

There are 1141 farms in Page County with an average size of approximately 93 acres. Very few farms are over 150 acres in size.

The agriculture in Page County is very well diversified. Nearly all farmers have income from several sources. The main crops consist of about 6500 acres of corn; 8500 acres of small grain; 8000 acres of hay; 2000 acres of seed crops - clover, orchard grass, and lespedesa; 500 acres of vegetables, consisting largely of tomatoes and snap beans for canning.

Livestock includes 10,000 hogs; 14,500 cattle, of which about 4,000 are dairy cows; and 2500 sheep.

The major sources of income are from the sale of whole milk, cream, beef cattle (both fat cattle and stock cattle), poultry and poultry products. The sale of eggs, turkeys, and broilers represents over 50% of the total gross income from Page County agriculture.

IV. Project Activities

A. AGRONOMY

The Extension Agronomist met with the County Agent and Agronomy Committee to review and discuss the main agronomy problems. The main projects decided on to stress during the year were pasture improvement, increased hay acreage, and raise yields of grain crops in general. In working out plans for the development of this program, it was always kept in mind the importance of good land use program with the goal in mind to have a good land use program established on every farm.

1. ALFALFA

A goal was established to increase alfalfa acreage 5%. It was felt that additional alfalfa was needed to feed the increased numbers of livestock in the County. After two dry seasons, farmers realize that they must plan to produce a higher percentage of winter forage early in the season.

In order to stimulate interest among farmers for the need for additional alfalfa acreage, a tour was conducted in February at which time 5 farms were visited where alfalfa was being used successfully as silage, or where hay driers were being used. An exhibit was prepared and displayed in a local store for about six weeks. This exhibit contained samples of silage, sun-cured hay, and blue prints for hay driers and silos. Also on exhibit were copies of various publications and charts giving information on growing alfalfa, methods of curing, and the feeding value of hay cut at various stages. This exhibit stimulated a great deal of interest among farmers.

-4-

Wide publicity was given through the preparation of newspaper stories, radio programs, and circular letters giving complete information on growing alfalfa. Stress was given to the advantage of using adapted varieties, adequate lime and commercial fertilizer, and thorough seed bed preparation. This information was given in ample time for farmers to have the information to make preparation for seeding in both Spring and Fall seasons. Seed and fertilizer distributors were supplied with the same type of information. This group have been most cooperative in helping to furnish farmers correct information in regard to growing and management of alfalfa.

Insects were a major problem on the first crop of alfalfa. Farmers were supplied necessary information on spraying for control of Spittlebug and Cutworms.

The third and fourth cuttings were grazed rather than cut for hay on more than one-half of the alfalfa acreage in the county. Farmers were given information through radio programs and circular letters, as well as through individual conferences, on the proper management practices to follow so as to avoid injury to the crop.

The acreage of this crop has not been increased as much as was hoped for due largely to the unfavorable weather conditions during the Fall seeding season. Many farmers who had planned to make additional seedings were unable to do so. However, it is estimated that the alfalfa acreage in the county has been increased a small percentage even under unfavorable conditions.

There has been an increase of approximately 25% in the acreage of alfalfa used for silage. Some 300 or 400 acres of the first cutting was used for silage. This is a relatively new practice in Page County.

It is estimated that certainly as much as 90% of the farmers planning to seed alfalfa follow recommended practices in regard to fertilization, liming, and seed varieties.

2. Pasture Improvement

Pasture improvement was emphasized because the income from livestock is a major item on a large percentage of Page County farms. This project needed to be stressed this year particularly because of the damage to pastures as a result of two dry seasons. The stands of many blue-grass pastures and ladino-clover orchard grass had been injured seriously by the drought and heavy grazing.

In order to stimulate interest among farmers and to get more of them to participate in pasture improvement, plans were made to furnish all farmers information and data to show the advantages and need for reseeding ladino-clover and rotational grazing of some. Plans were made to conduct tours to visit farms in each community where excellent pastures were. Information was to be given to all farmers showing need for treating permanent pastures and to help them to recover from injury from drought.

Circular letters were prepared and sent to all farmers having ladino-clover pastures giving each individual information

on methods of reseeding, fertilization, and management. About one-half of the ladino clover in the county was reseeded this year.

Four demonstrations were conducted in cooperation with the Plant Food Institute. The farmers conducting these demonstrations are furnished annually, through the fertilizer industry, sufficient fertilizer to topdress the one acre demonstration. It was necessary to reseed three of these plots to reestablish the clover.

The Pasture Improvement Program has been discussed at meetings and through individual conferences and farm visits with farmers all during the season. Four times during the year, circular letters giving information on pasture improvement program have been prepared and sent to all farmers. Individuals have been encouraged to use the ACP Program as a means of seeding additional pastures. Pastures were seeded on 25 farms with this help.

Information was prepared and furnished all dairy farmers by the agent and from the Extension Agency Department, as to the advantages of using supplemental pastures. About 60 acres of these pastures were used by dairy farmers.

Although the results of the pasture improvement project have not been as great this year as expected, approximately 150 acres of new pastures were seeded, and 150 to 200 acres of ladino-clover pastures were reseeded.

We expect that much more results will be accomplished next year due partly to the fact that farmers will be able to own a larger part of their ACP payments by carrying out

72
pasture improvement practices.

3. Other Agency Activities

Fertilizer and seed retailers were furnished various publications giving recommended varieties of seed and recommended fertilization for all crops. This group has cooperated in passing on to farmers information in regard to varieties of seed and recommended fertilization practices.

Information has been prepared and sent out through circular letters, radio programs prepared, and news articles published, both during the Spring and Fall seeding periods, so that all farmers were pretty well kept up to date on the recommended varieties of seed and the kinds and amounts of fertilizer to use.

Demonstrations were conducted on using nitrate on corn, small grain, and orchard grass.

The importance of growing high yields of corn were discussed with many individuals through farm and office visits. As a result, practically all farmers have increased the amount of commercial fertilizer applied on corn crop materially in recent years.

Insects on grain and forage crops has become a major problem with many farmers. During the year, there was much damage caused by insects, such as, Spittlebug, Aphids, and Cutworms. Individual farmers were given recommendations for the control of these, and many leaflets were distributed at meetings as a means of getting the information to others.

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Publications were called out to farmers, and circulars prepared and sent out, giving information on control of insects in stored grain and on diseases in small grain.

There has been a great deal of interest in irrigation this year. Extension Agricultural Engineer assisted agent in working out problems for two farmers who installed irrigation systems.

B. Animal Husbandry

The income from livestock and livestock products makes up a major portion of the income on most farms. In addition to the usual problems, livestock farmers have, this year they had an additional problem, that of feeding the livestock through the winter in order to maintain the breeding herds. Feeding supplies were very short. A large part of the agent's time during the winter months was devoted to assisting farmers in meeting the problem of the feed shortage.

1. Beef Cattle

Twice during the year, circulars were prepared in which information was given on rations suitable for enabling farmers to stretch their feed supplies. Many individuals were assisted in working out rations and given advice on how to get the maximum use from Drought Relief Feeds. Several radio programs and news articles were prepared giving information on this subject in order to reach more farmers.

Most farmers were able to winter their herds of cattle in fairly good condition. Very few were forced to cull their herds. A shortage of feed may have helped in one way by causing more farmers to rigidly cull their herds.

The cattle sales were held this year. A Yearling Sale in the Spring, and a Yearling Calf Sale in the Fall.

Plans were made to hold a special sale in the spring, but we were unable to get a large enough number of cattle consigned to hold a special sale. The sale was held at the Front Royal Livestock Market on a regular sale day. The cattle were sorted into uniform lots and sold at about a cent above the going price at that time.

Page County farmers, along with farmers from Warren and Fauquier Counties, cooperated with the Virginia Beef Cattle Producers Association in putting on a sponsored Calf Sale in October. 850 calves were sold for 52 consigners. Cattle in this sale were officially graded by the Division of Markets and sold in uniform lots. The average price received was from two to three cents above the going price on the weekly auctions for steer calves. Most of the heifers brought about the same money as they would have on weekly auctions.

These marketing demonstrations have been helpful in showing farmers the advantages of producing good quality cattle and selling them in uniform lots.

Several times during the year, circular letters have been prepared and sent to a livestock producers giving them up-to-date information on such subjects as feeding, culling, parasite control, and disease control. The Animal Husbandry Department at the College this year published a new bulletin on beef cattle. Copies of these were supplied to about 150 farmers, the ones having the largest numbers of livestock.

4-H Baby Beef Project has been popular for a good many years. This year, 21 club members completed projects with beef animals. The boys feeding calves were given assistance in selecting animals suitable for feeding. Each of them was visited from four to six times to see that they followed good feeding and management practices.

The calves were sold in April at a Show at Front Royal, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and other public organizations who contributed \$200 to use as prizes.

2. Sheep

Sheep numbers have increased 10 to 15% during the last year or two. With the lower prices received for cattle, farmers are looking to sheep to increase the farm income. All sheep producers were given information on parasite control, marketing of wool, and on feeding and management.

Thirteen Club members completed projects with sheep this year.

These boys have each demonstrated that there is a place for a flock of sheep on many of our farms provided that they are managed well. These 13 boys made an average profit of \$12.50 per ewe bred. They were all given training in sheep shearing, treating for parasites, and given advice on feeding and management. Seven additional boys started with sheep projects during the year.

Farmers with sheep purchased purebred ewes through nearby sales sponsored by the Sheep Producers Association. Nearly all of them now follow recommended practices for parasite control.

All farmers were given help in the cooperative marketing of their wool clip.

3. Feeding

All dairy farmers were assisted in working out rations for feeding their herds through the winter. Practically all of them used a great deal of Drought Emergency Feed during the winter of 1953.

Publicity was given to the advantage of supplemental pastures, and all dairymen were furnished information on kinds of supplemental pastures suitable. Several demonstrations of supplemental pastures using soybeans and sudan grass were conducted. Farmers with such pastures found that they were able to keep milk production up much better than the ones who did not have these pastures.

Most of the A Grade producers are now using the services of the Artificial Breeding Association.

Nine 4-H Club members completed projects with dairy calves and heifers. These club members were given training in judging of dairy cattle and in fitting and showing their animals. Most of them exhibited their animals at the County Fair.

Two farmers have been given assistance in planning dairy farming operations and establishing A Grade dairies.

4. Poultry

A county-wide poultry meeting was held in March. Feed contractors and others interested in the poultry industry cooperated in sponsoring this meeting. The more important topics discussed were Vaccination Program, ventilation of poultry buildings, sanitation, and methods of producing high quality poultry. These topics were discussed by members of the Extension Poultry Department and representatives from the Marketing Industry.

Throughout the year, information has been given through letters and meetings on poultry problems. It is felt that even in a period where profits in poultry have been very small that there has been advancement in the way of producing higher quality poultry.

Work With Other Groups

In 1932, a group of rural and urban leaders organized the Page Valley Agricultural and Industrial Fair. The Agent has worked very closely with the officers and committees of this association during the year. The second Annual Fair was held in August. The 1934 Fair was much larger than the first one held.

The rural and urban leaders working together through this organization has meant a great deal towards improving the rural-urban situation. Each group is now much more interested in the other's problems and more willing to work with them in solving same.

The Agent cooperated with the Farm Bureau, Southern States Cooperative, and the Page County Farm Bureau in conducting community and Annual Meetings of these organizations.

Assistance was given the County Manager of the A.S.C. in holding community meetings to discuss the ACP Program. Farmers are encouraged to participate in the ACP Program in order to carry out soil and water conservation programs on their farms.

VI. 4-H Club

Page County being an agricultural county in which the majority of the people receive all or a major portion of their income from the production of farm products. A large number of the boys and girls now on the farms today will remain on the farm and be the farm men and women of tomorrow.

Rural youth need to use their time more wisely at a worthwhile and profitable enterprise.

In order to reach more of the rural boys and attempt to organize one or more 4-H clubs in each community and school in the county. Also, to have the Community Clubs federate into what is commonly called a County 4-H Club Council.

Boys interested in 4-H Club work were given free choice in project selection in order that they may select a project suitable to their farm and home conditions.

To teach good production and marketing practices with livestock projects.

The 4-H Pig Chain Project started several years ago by the Lunny Lions Club to be continued. Also, to continue the special Chick Project and give timely information and supervision of all projects.

Have the County 4-H Council to fill Page County's quota of delegates to attend the State 4-H Club Short Course and the Northern Virginia 4-H Club Camp. Cooperate with the Page Valley Fair and lend assistance wherever possible. Sponsor a County-wide picnic and present a County 4-H Achievement Program.

The work was carried on through regular monthly meetings of the A-H Clubs. Special interest meetings, such as Judging, Tractor Maintenance, and Farm and Home Electrical. The regular monthly meetings were generally work and recreation. In the work period, general information regarding A-H Club work was given. Also, information on project work, such as production methods, care and management practices, and record keeping. The special subject matter and practice meetings were held when the need was apparent.

Many circular letters were used to send timely information to A-H Club members. News articles were also helpful.

A tour of the baby beef projects by members and other interested persons was conducted late in December. This tour gave the A-H boy an opportunity to observe many methods and practices in beef production. They could select the better methods and practice best suited to their own conditions and use them to good advantage in their own operation.

Leaders in A-H Club work solicited the cooperation of livestock markets to hold A-H Shows and Sales of market hogs, lambs, and baby beef projects. They secured the interest and sponsorship of commercial interests and business concerns to contribute prizes and moral support to these projects. Arrangements for sale of these market animals were made with the Livestock Auction Markets to sell their products. Buyers were influenced to pay the maximum price for the quality of livestock offered for sale by A-H Club members.

There were 173 boys and 8 girls enrolled in the 4-H Clubs carrying agricultural projects. These boys and girls were organized into eleven community and school clubs. They conducted 228 projects of which 182 were carried to completion.

The 4-H Breeding Pig Chain was successfully carried on this year. The nine sow pigs given to the 4-H Club by last year's chain members were placed with 9 other boys.

The results of the special chick project sponsored by the County Council were good. The Council gave 20 boys fifty chicks each, provided they agreed to follow feeding and management recommendations as given by the county agent and return 6 of their best cockerels at 12 weeks of age to pay for the chicks received. These boys raised a total of 963 of the chicks received, with an average weight of the cockerels returned at 12 weeks of 3.89 pounds.

The Electric Power Company serving Page County cooperated in sponsoring the Farm and Home Electric Project. They gave considerable time to the 4-H Clubs in the way of giving demonstrations and technical information.

One boy and one girl were given a trip to the 4-H Electrical Congress held in Richmond as an award for the best work in this project.

The County's farm implement dealers cooperated with the Tractor Maintenance Project. They donated prizes for the best work in the project and the Tractor Operators Contest. They also supplied a meeting place and tractors for demonstration purposes.

Three 4-H Fat Stock Shows and Sales were held for 4-H Club members with baby beef, market hogs, and sheep projects.

Fage County 4-H All Stars and Honor Club members cooperated whole heartedly in supporting and sponsoring the Fage Valley Fair. They were largely responsible for building the livestock exhibit barn and the securing of most of the livestock and farm crops and commercial exhibits in both adult and junior divisions.

Six boys attended the State Short Course and took part in the State Livestock Judging, Sheep Shearing and Tractor Operators Contests. The Fage team placed 4th in Livestock Judging Contest. Robert Burner placed 4th high as individual. Billy Abbott placed 5th in the Sheep Shearing Contest.

Three boys attended the Northern Virginia 4-H Camp held at the Organization Camp in the Powell's Fort Valley.

Project work completed by 4-H Club members include 24 beef animals, 156 head of swine, 362 sheep and lambs, 4000 head of poultry, 11 home gardens, 12 tractor maintenance projects, and 22 farm and home electrical projects.

The County 4-H picnic was held at the Bushkill with an attendance of approximately 350 members, parents and interested persons.

The Annual 4-H Achievement Day Program was presented in the Stanley High School. A summary of the 4-H Club's activities were given by representatives of each club. An Extension Agent gave a County summary of the work. The awards were also presented by an agent, and the entertainment was furnished by contestants in the "Share the Fun" program.