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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

Virginia Polytechnic Institute &
U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Cooperating

EXTENSION SERVICE
County Agent Work

PLAN OF WORK

COUNTY Tale of Wight

YEAR 1955

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(Local Farm Agent)

Date Mailed January 17, 1955

General Description of County:

Isle of Wight county is located in the southeastern part of Virginia. It is bounded on the northeast by the James River; by Surry county on the northwest; by Southampton county on the west and south - following the Blackwater River which divides the two counties, and by Nansemond county on the east. The county has an area of 314 square miles.

The soils are of marine origin and are naturally deficient in plant food. the surface soil is generally a fine sandy loam - with sub-soils ranging from sandy clays to sticky clays. The sandy soils have sub-soils that drain naturally - making them subject to leaching - one of our greatest soil conservation problems in the county. The heavier soils are rich in organic matter but drainage is the soil conservation and land-use problem ~~on~~ these soils. The surface ranges from level to gently rolling.

The climate is oceanic. The average frost-free season ranges from 190-210 days. The average normal rainfall is 49 inches annually. During a normal year, the long growing season and abundant fairly well distributed rainfall, make for good crop production. For the past four years drought conditions altered our otherwise ideal situation as far as weather is concerned.

The county is located in the Peanut Soil Conservation District - embracing the counties of Nansemond, Surry, Southampton, and Isle of Wight. Peanuts, corn, soybeans, cotton, and hogs constitute the principal sources of income for most farmers in the county. Sweet potatoes, watermelons, white potatoes, poultry, and truck crops are grown for home use and the surplus is sold on local markets, and in nearby cities and towns.

Market facilities are available for most commodities produced in the county. Local meat packers can absorb all hogs produced in the county and must rely on other counties and states to keep their operations going. Prices in these plants are usually a little lower than they are in Richmond - but additional transportation costs and shrinkage make it unprofitable to use that market. Suffolk - World's Largest Peanut Market - is readily accessible to farmers by good roads, local buyers for Peanut firms in Suffolk, and local hauling companies to aid farmers not having trucks to haul their own. Feed mills in the county, in Norfolk, Berkley, Churchland, Chuckatuck, and transient buyers from North Carolina and Petersburg provide outlets for surplus corn and soybeans.

Negroes constitute a little over fifty per-cent of the total population, operate a little over one-third of the farms - even though their farms are relatively small. Professional leadership is seriously lacking - one colored resident physician, no colored dentist, lawyer, and few resident teachers and ministers. Narrow denominational leadership hamper some group activities where denominational honor seems more important than the project in question. Local leadership among the rank and file will cooperate in worthwhile projects and activities. It is with this group that we must rely for putting over the program as planned for the year.

REA, with an office in Windsor, Va. and VEPSCO furnish most electricity to farmers in the county. Farmers Home Administration and Credit agencies in Suffolk, Va. supplement credit from local banks. A local office of ASC and two resident soil conservationists aid in these areas. Public officials and local business concerns are most cooperative when called upon to aid in a project or program.

Some Statistics on Isle of Wight County
(From 1950 Census Report)

Total number of farms in county	1246
" of non-white operators	390
" " full owners	166
" " part owners	69
" " all tenants	155
" " croppers	44
Average size of farms (all)	211.8 Acres
" value of farms (land & bldgs.)	\$9884.00
" " per acre	90.57
Number of telephones	297
" having electricity	993
" " water pumps	468
" " corn pickers	175
Average income per farm	\$4660.00

Income from Livestock for Isle of Wight County Farmers

Total Poultry Income	\$233,196.00
a. Chickens sold (av. 497 birds)	515.00
b. Eggs sold (Av. 412 doz.)	168.00
c. Average no. of chickens on hand	56
No of Livestock Farms (other than dairy & poultry)	77
a. Number of beef cows	565
b. " of steers and bulls	121
c. Calves sold alive	826
d. Cattle sold alive	502
e. No. of Ewes	371
f. # of Hogs and pigs	31,225
g. " of sows and gilts	13,271
Total value of livestock products sold	\$1,019,895.00
Hogs amounted for some	876,053.00
value \$39,270.00	
" 64,412.00	

Acreages, and acreages to which such acreages were put:

Cropland harvested (all)	48,643 acres
Used for pasture	3,906 "
Idle land	1,750 "
Acrees planted to corn	21,561 "
" " to peanuts	19,943 "
" " to soybeans for harvest	1,170 "
# " cotton	645 "
" " oats	232 "
" " barley	177 "
" " wheat	91 "
" " alfalfa	92 "
" " hay - clover and timothy	34 "

County Advisory Board Officers

President: Mr. Richard P. Robinson, RFD #1, Box 50, Smithfield, Va.
Secretary: Mrs. Clementine W. Odom, P. O. Box 134, "
Treasurer: Mr. James B. Evans, Walters, Virginia

4-H County Council Officers

To be elected after all clubs are organized for 1955

President: _____
Secretary: _____
Treasurer: _____

Some organizations that the extension agent will work with in their programs for the people in the county:

1. Isle of Wight T. B. and Health Society
2. Isle of Wight County PTA & School Board
3. ASC, FHA, SCS
4. Isle of Wight School Band Committee
5. Polio & Red Cross Drives
6. Commissioner of Revenue - State & Federal Income Tax Returns
7. Welfare and Social Security
8. Isle of Wight Cooperative Club
9. Isle of Wight Federal Credit Union
10. Employees Beneficial Association

Extension Organizations:

1. County Advisory Board	<u>1</u>	No. of members	<u>43</u>
2. No. of community groups for special meetings			<u>9</u>
3. Families in such groups	<u>225</u>		
4. No. of families in Demonstration Community			<u>28</u>
5. No. of Leaders: Men	<u>62</u>	Women	<u>28</u>

Major Factors Affecting Crop Production in County:

1. Adequate plant food & insect and disease control
2. Grading up home grown peanut seed to market grade and following other recommendations for other crops in this area
3. Early planting to off-set previously experienced droughts
4. To continue to explore newer crops to off-set acreage allotments in peanuts and corn
5. To continue to advocate cover crops to conserve moisture and to minimize leaching even though the ASC program has dropped such practice from its list of practices for payment

The What and How of Crop Production:

1. To get out general recommendations of varieties and fertilizers through circular letters, meetings, visits, etc.
2. To process soil samples upon request and for demonstrations to be carried this year
3. To work more closely with farmers planting sweet potatoes, watermelons, truck crops, and some of the grain sorghums to see how such changes have fitted into their farming programs
4. To tour a fertilizer plant in the Norfolk area to let farm leaders see what the industry is doing to meet plant food needs of farmers
5. To encourage farmers to either provide or to share storage facilities for sweet potatoes so as not to 'glut' the market at harvest time
6. To acquaint farmers with insect and disease control recommendations both generally and upon request

Major Factors Affecting Livestock Production in County:

1. Adequate feeding programs with emphasis upon supplementing home grown feeds
2. Adequate housing for the livestock in question
3. Considering market trends in livestock production
4. Parasite and disease control measures
5. The need for improving foundation stock
6. Pastures and home grown feeds

The What and How of Livestock Production:

1. To try to get farmers to see that the 10'x12' chicken house is outmoded, obsolete, and antiquated
2. To try to get economical units in poultry - laying flocks that can take care of current expenses
3. To try to get farmers to furnish sanitary hog houses for their breeding stock
4. To get over to farmers the need for parasite and disease control so as to furnish meat packers a maximum number of marketable cuts from hogs
5. To encourage measures that will provide the maximum of home grown feed so as to off-set costs of production
6. To 'wiggle out' as much as possible the personal service involved in treating hogs against hog cholera, and related diseases
7. To get farmers to utilize more fully the services of the diagnostic clinic at Ivor, Va. for questionable hog diseases

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Major Problems Affecting Use of Income:

1. Changing attitudes toward changes in our social order
2. The difference between needs and wants
3. Keeping credit a tool rather than letting it be a Master
4. Wise buymanship

What we plan to do about these problems:

1. To continue to encourage persons not having homes to try to get one. To try to get persons with homes to provide conveniences of running water, etc. as their incomes permit.
2. With local credit sources becoming tighter and 'high pressure' salesmanship urging people to buy on installment plans - to try to get people to weigh matters before jumping too heavily in debt.
3. To suggest the availability of project houses in the Tidewa ter area that will cut materially on the cost of construction.
4. To encourage the purchase and use of labor saving equipment for the home and farm.
5. To try to get people generally to to change their concept of VALUES -i.e.
 - a. Many people's insurance premium on their automobile is greater than the coverages on themselves.
 - b. Depreciation on automobiles is far greater than depreciation on homes yet many people postpone improvements until their families grow up.

Cooperative Effort:

1. To continue to get farmers to see that the age of the individual is fast giving way to cooperative endeavor.
2. To continue to work with groups in Central Hill and Sandy Mount to install a cooperative water system for these densely populated developments.
3. To continue to work with the Isle of Wight Cooperative Club in its program to effect savings on purchases for the farm.
4. To continue to work with the Isle of Wight Federal Credit Union in its program to encourage thrift and provide a source of credit for its members.
5. To seize every opportunity to set up groups to solve common problems.

Social Security:

To acquaint farmers and others with the provisions of the new coverages in this program. To encourage farmers to get their Social Security Cards so as to be ready when they file their 1955 income tax returns. To see if we cannot secure a representative from this agency to hold an educational meeting after farmers 'lay by' their crops. To assist persons desiring help in filling in forms, etc. for benefits under this agency.

Leadership Training:

1. Every effort will be made to get leaders to be well informed so as to work on facts rather than feelings.
2. Desirable leadership qualities will be stressed so as to off-set demagogery and impulsiveness at a time when tensions are so prevalent.

Work with 4-H and Older Youth:

1. 4-H Clubs will be organized in Trinity, Rushmere, Carrollton, Muddy Fork, Windsor and Camptown.
2. If arrangements can be worked out with the principal, clubs will be organized at the Training School.
3. The bricklaying group for older youth will be conducted in 1955.
4. To represent at all State-wide 4-H events with as large a delegation as possible.
5. To contribute \$15.00 toward helping to pay the expense of a colored person from Virginia - when and if such a person is selected for foreign travel.
6. To inject more personality improvement training and handicraft into our 4-H program.
7. To provide at least 25 animals (unless the number is restricted because of lack of space) for the third annual Junior Market Hog Show and Sale to be held in connection with the Tidewater Fair.
8. To devote more of the agents time to this phase of the program.
9. To continue to work toward permanent records for 4-H Club members in the county.
10. To do more toward training leaders for 4-H and YMW clubs.
11. To organize at least one YMW club
12. To try to get each club to have at least one educational tour or trip.

County-wide Activities:

1. County Advisory Board meetings - January, March, June, & December
2. 4-H Council meetings - March, during summer, & October
3. Health Activities - March & April
4. Agricultural Stabilization meetings - January & February
5. Social Security meetings - during summer
6. Special meetings and events as needed

Calendar of Activities:

1. December - Evaluation, planning, & organizing Bricklaying group
2. January - Planning, Com. Improvement survey, Income tax, ASC meetings
3. February - ASC meetings, Income tax, 4-H enrollments
4. March - X-ray clinics, Income tax, recommendations, etc.
5. April - Annual Farmers Conference, Health or clean up activities
6. May - Running water activities
7. June - State Short Course
8. July - Checking demonstrations
9. August - Cooperative annual meeting, tours, etc.
10. September - State Advisory Board, 4-H demonstrations
11. October - Junior Market Hog Show and Sale
12. November - Annual reports, etc.

Farm and Home Development Demonstrators:

1. Mr. Joseph Burnett, R.F.D. #1, Smithfield, Va.
2. Mr. Dennis Clinton, Star Rt. " "
3. Mr. Arthur Allmond, R.F.D. #2, Windsor, Va.
4. Mr. Rossie Davis, Star Rt. #5, Zuni, Va.
5. Mr. James E. Evans, Walters, Va.
6. Mr. Joseph L. Briggs, R.F.D. #2, Windsor, Va.