

34
72

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL AIDS PLAN OF WORK

For

Calendar Year 1961

<u>Major phases of project or subdivisions of project covered</u>	<u>Name of Worker</u>	<u>Percentage of time devoted to entire project by each worker</u>
General Administration and Editorial	R. D. Michael	100*
Bulletins and Circulars	Elwood Mints Mrs. Wilma Lane	100** 50*
Press Service and Periodicals	Mrs. Gene Moody W. G. Mitchell	50* 100*
Visual Aids	W. P. Bradley Mrs. Hope Banks	100* 100
Radio and Television	R. L. Rees	100*
Motion Picture Production***	Stuart Sutherland (Vacant) (Vacant) (Vacant)	100 100 100 100

Date submitted: May 13 1961

Signed: _____
Project Leader

Date approved: ~~May~~ 1961

Signed: R. D. Michael
Head of Department

Date approved: May 15 1961

Signed: W. H. D. [Signature]
State Director of Extension

Date approved: JUN 30 1961 1961

Signed: E. Z. York, Jr.
Administrator, Federal
Extension, U. S. Department of
Agriculture

- * 25% Experiment Station
- ** 50% Experiment Station
- *** Project supported 40% by Extension Service, plus supervision.

34
72

Situation and Analysis

Since this department attempts to serve in many ways all others in Extension and in Research, as well as many phases of college activity, it is not surprising that demands have outgrown our capacity to produce. We have grown a little but not nearly enough to produce the quality and quantity of information and educational aids that others expect.

A year ago we listed ratios of total state staff in agriculture to the total editorial staff in a number of states. Virginia's ratio was highest of ten states studied and is probably highest in the nation. Since total staff has increased materially in the past year and we in information have prospect, of increasing only through employment of per diem help, our situation has worsened.

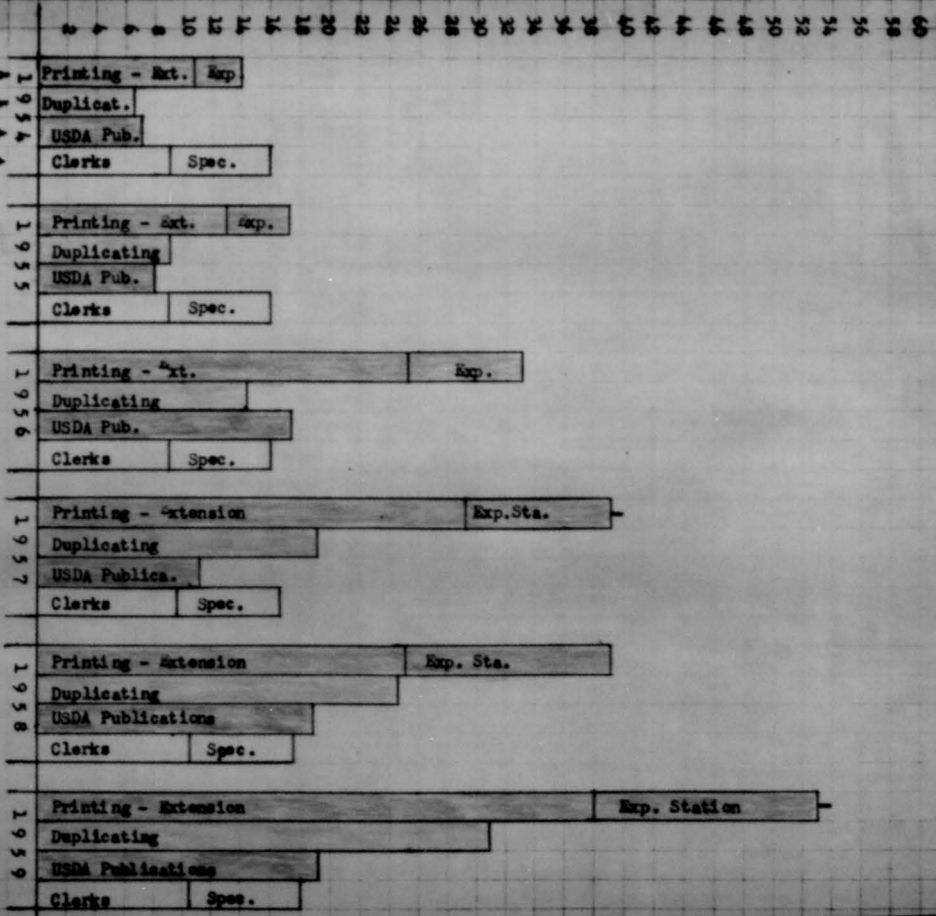
The nature of increased activities is as important as the number of persons in the increase. A school of home economics has been instituted; there will now be several departments instead of one; and we are still without a home economics editor. The school of agriculture has established the office of director of instruction. The dairy science department has new support for expansion through a special foundation. Many departments now have one or more monthly publications in addition to the several that Extension has had for many years. We know of no other state that has as many; and as quantity increases, quality seems to decrease.

An interesting sidelight on this situation is industry's standard of having one editor for issuing not more than 85 pages of quality periodical material a year. In two of our periodicals we issue 96 pages a year and do it with much less than a quarter-time of one person. We realize that not one of our periodicals is as glamorous as most other states issue as quarterlies, but we hesitate to undertake more elaborate types of publication without a staff to match.

Although further expansion of the staff of this department will have to come if we are to meet mounting demands and issue better quality material, we will continue to study what is now being done with a view to more efficient and effective operation. We feel that our self-examination should be accompanied by a study to determine if Extension can modify or reduce the amount of periodical publications, not only because of personnel shortage but because of possible adverse public opinion. On the other hand, sentiment grows among research workers for a periodical from the Experiment Station. If the quantity cannot be lessened, an appropriate addition to the staff would be someone to devote full editorial time to periodical publications alone.

As publications increase in number--more periodicals, more bulletins and circulars, more departmental issues--company problems arise in shelving, inventory, and distribution. Here again it is evident that increases in production by specialists must be accompanied by increases in personnel to inventory, package, and distribute.

INDEX
NO.



Clerks in supply room and information specialists.
 Items plus volume (regional pubs. and purchases not included),
 Extension duplicating only; departmental operations not included.
 Bulletins, circulars, reports, etc.

This situation can best be summed up in the accompanying graph which shows how the publishing load has increased since 1954. Although 1960 is not represented, bars for this year would all be considerably taller, except for clerks and specialists, than those for 1959.

Other less pressing problems will be discussed under subdivisions of this report that follow.

The administration has been generous in replacing worn-out or outdated equipment so that mechanically our operations in visual aids, photography, motion picture production, recording and dubbing, duplicating, addressing, and related work remain at a high level of efficiency.

Periodicals

Extension Service News

Content is examined constantly for timeliness, interest, and educational value. The main sources of material are the Extension specialists, whose programs we support; research workers, whose findings we are constantly bringing before the public; and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Stories of accomplishments of groups or individual farmers appear frequently.

At present the News is mailed monthly to about 25,000 families.

This number might well be doubled, since we still have more than 90,000 census-defined farmers, but to do so will require the efforts of county personnel to acquaint more people with the publication, inviting interested persons to request that their names be put on the list.

4-H Club Paper:

Since this is in a sense a departmental publication, the 4-H office is largely responsible for the content of this monthly news sheet. The editorial office assists in editing, layout, printing, and mailing.

A chief problem has been with the mailing list, especially difficult to handle because of the large annual turnover in club enrollment. County workers will have to be more prompt in supplying membership lists and we will need to find a quicker way to set up a file of address plates. The best way appears to be to turn the plate making over to a commercial outfit. The sooner we can complete the file, the more useful the publication will become to new members.

Since more and more state or area-wide activities are taking space in the 4-H paper, items of local interest are of necessity being reduced in number. Some counties, especially those most active in club work, are supplementing the state paper with a mimeographed newsletter of local items. Others will be encouraged and aided in doing likewise.

Virginia Farm Economics:

This quarterly publication goes to a select list of only about 2,500 consequently no special problem is involved. For general consumption, however, the content is frequently too difficult. Efforts will be continued to aid authors of economics material to make their writings easier to understand. Workshops recently held for all staff

members in written communications have helped some in this and similar work but more attention to simplified writing is needed.

Other Periodicals:

The several departmental issues of periodicals have already been mentioned. Some are directed at Extension Service personnel; others are for specialized production areas, such as poultry, dairying, fruit growing, nurseries, etc. Since reaching these groups with detailed production information through mass media is becoming less practical (newspaper publishers, for example, like material that interests most of their readers, not just a few) this trend is very desirable. But the effort is limited by how much the material has meaning for readers, how attractively it can be presented, and how economically and efficiently it can be gotten to them.

As already stated, more editorial attention should be provided, but the many hours needed to make the material easier to read are not available. Attractiveness can be aided materially by providing equipment for typing masters with even margins automatically. For this a "Justovriter" unit should be provided in some central location. This unit could also be used for making "original copies" of certain important letters, and "setting type" for many other printed jobs.

Readership Surveys:

Research assistance will be sought in order to make some study of reader interest in the Extension Service News, the 4-H Club paper,

and other periodicals. A questionnaire survey of a sample of readers of the News is planned for 1961.

Bulletins and Circulars

One person will spend full time, one other will spend half time, and a third will spend part time in editing and processing bulletin and circular material. Efforts will be continued to assure that as much as possible of our published material be presented as simply as possible, both in style of writing and in size of publication, and that it is adequately illustrated and as attractive as possible within budget limits.

Much material formerly mimeographed is being converted to circulars of the regular series and produced by offset printing--many of the smaller jobs--on our own machines. This is a desirable trend. The office-type of offset machine has been so perfected that it is now much more efficient than mimeographing and produces much more attractive material. Eventually all of our duplicating machines at state headquarters should be of this type.

Printing delays are in many instances a serious problem. Some of these arise because all printing is not planned very far ahead. With the help of the administration, such more planning is now being done--perhaps as much as can be done--but emergencies arise so regularly that any sort of a schedule is almost impossible to maintain. Every emergency delays many other jobs. Other delays in printing that arise from obtaining individual printing contracts

and sending jobs off campus may be corrected if plans are carried out for the addition of a professional offset printing unit in the college shop.

The current supply of Extension, Experiment Station, and USDA publications is now being kept in one general area, making the filling of orders from the counties and general requests easier to handle. Some work still needs to be done on organization and inventory, although operations are now in much better shape than ever. Some departments feel that the supply room should be a depository for a good deal of miscellaneous material for which there is little if any demand. This idea will have to be checked, for space is not that plentiful nor is clerical help sufficient to keep track of such material.

A supply problem of long standing but as yet unanswered: How to handle requests from garden clubs, women's clubs, and some other groups for quantities of circulars and bulletins? If we fill them, the demand could easily build up beyond our capacity. If we do not, individual requests can be substituted, causing more work for both sender and receiver. Currently we are asking payment to cover cost of printing on bulk orders. Perhaps all publications costing 10 cents or more should have a price tag on individual copies.

News Service

State Level

A large volume of news goes regularly to daily and weekly papers in the state, to radio stations in the state, to farm journals, and

M
4
2

to other interested parties. Each week we send a packet of 20 or more stories to a mailing list of 660, including about 260 for county agents. Special events on campus and out in the state receive as much spot news coverage as possible. Special news packets are also arranged for distribution to papers which wish to run annual farm and/or home editions. Although "exclusives" are not countenanced, many individual requests for information, pictures, etc., are also handled, from newspapers and farm journals.

We also get many requests to make special reports of meetings which are of interest to only a limited group, and to tell of personal recognition--both being more publicity than information. The desire to "get something in the paper" rather than to provide helpful educational experience seems to be a growing one and is regarded as not too healthy. We handle as much of this "publicity" as time and good judgment will permit.

In quantity and quality of our news services no serious problems exist. We believe we generate about all the general release copy the press will absorb; and such comments as "the best copy we get from anywhere," "interesting material well presented," and the like lead us to believe the quality is adequate. Unless we turn to expensive equipment and individual mailings, which would give only apparent--not real--efficiency, we cannot alter our mechanics of distribution.

Some minor problems that need attention are:

1. Our records show that some departments originate much than others, and that one or two are quite reticent. We shall

RM
34
72

continue to try to remedy this situation by making frequent requests to "backward" departments.

2. Much of our material for state distribution is of the "specialists advise" type. But we are balancing this more and more with features of farm family accomplishments (results of using this advice), and fuller accounts of research work. Advice material has been expanded to include more things of interest to consumers, semi-urban dwellers, gardeners, etc. Increase in personnel has made this possible.

3. Although more of our material is being accompanied by illustrations, their inclusion is welcomed by editors and we plan to expand this service within budget limitations. Likewise, a mat service, including an engraver's proof service to papers changing to offset, to weekly papers will be increased as funds will allow.

County Level

In general, our studies show that most of the weekly papers are being well supplied with information from county offices, in addition to material from this office. Counties near the large daily papers also make frequent use of the dailies. Here again we know of no serious problems as to quantity or quality, but there is undoubtedly room for improvement in many places. We will expand, since we carry some additional load in this area, our visits to county weak spots, bolstering the news work through direct service and personal instruc-

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tion. District agents will advise us on where we can work most effectively. We will also continue to promote the holding of news writing workshops for club reporters and others interested.

Visual Aids

The need for additional help in studio photography and laboratory operations has been partially met by the addition of student help on an hourly basis. Since demands for special copywork and studio photography, as well as for developing and printing are still increasing, more help will be needed. Unfortunately, however, student help is sometimes not the best, and the demand for copy and record work, making slides, and other "routine" photography has grown rapidly--so much so that one of two things needs to be done: Tell staff members to arrange for their routine photography in some other way or add someone to provide this service. As the situation is now, other aspects of visual aids are neglected because of the mounting pressure for photographic service.

Another survey of the visual aids equipment in the counties needs to be made, so we can have accurate record of the location of projectors, easels, screens, flannel boards, etc. Eventually some plan for keeping a running inventory of such equipment needs to be formulated.

As planned in previous years but not accomplished, we hope to send out a visual aids and photography news letter every two or three months. A 4-H bulletin on photography would also be a helpful program aid.

District or county schools on photography and/or visual aids will be promoted, and held as requested by agents.

The film library will, of course, be maintained and added to as much as possible, and the film catalog will be revised and kept up to date every 12 or 15 months.

As the film library increases in size, as it should, since it is serving not only Extension workers throughout the state but also SCS and vocational teachers, space for the library is a problem. Also, keeping the films in good repair and under proper conditions is a companion problem. The most desirable solution appears to be that a central library be set up in the main library building where adequate space and equipment have been provided. This cannot be done, however, until the main library can add personnel.

Two members of the department participated along with two other specialists in a regional workshop on visual aids, and have tentative plans for carrying instruction to all others in Extension. Definite plans as to teaching materials, schedule, etc., will probably not be made until late in 1961.

Another companion problem lies in keeping projection equipment and other audio-visual aids in proper condition. What upkeep is now provided comes out of the time of specialists who need to use their time on more important things. An answer would be to secure competent technical help to service equipment, or to develop a larger pool of audio-visual aids on campus from which Extension would rent.

Radio

Although radio activity by Extension throughout Virginia is very extensive, several avenues may be further developed. Material used for radio presentation can usually be adapted for the press service. We will continue to ask specialists to supply an outline of highlights used in radio presentations to serve as material for news releases.

Radio workshops for county workers will be held whenever requested. To make radio work more adaptable as to content and time-schedules, we will continue to urge county workers to acquire tape recorders and to assist them with information as to kind and use. Constant efforts to improve the quality of all radio presentations will continue.

The present tape service from V.F.I. to approximately 50 stations will be extended wherever possible, although nearly all rural areas are being reached by one or more stations using V.F.I. tapes. Many of these stations, since they cover small sections of the state, are asking that information on tapes be confined to the major production enterprises in the station's area. Still others with mostly a "rurban" audience are urging that we provide more home and garden information.

As a first step in this direction, a committee has been named to study the problem and make recommendations to the administration. It is anticipated that more specialized recordings will be needed and that adjustments can be made to provide a more diversified program service.

34
72

Telecasting

This means of communication has great potential for Extension if suitable hours of use can be had in competition with commercial programs. Within the limits of available personnel and time, these are plans for 1961: Continue a weekly 30-minute presentation over a Roanoke station, and an intermittent series over one in Norfolk. The use of videotape should help this effort materially. Attempt to reestablish programs by county agents over stations in Petersburg, Harrisonburg, and Bristol. Hold telecasting schools as needed. Support county workers with program suggestions, kits of visuals, and other telecasting aids. And distribute the products of the motion picture unit to TV outlets as widely and as often as the situation indicates.

Motion Picture Production

Little progress was made in motion picture production in 1960 because the production staff was reduced to one person and we were unable to fill other vacancies to give us a team. Financing, which caused the exodus of technicians, has been readjusted and the support formerly from the Educational Foundation has been replaced by regular budget allotments, to which Extension contributes 40%.

At this writing prospects seem better than they have for months for finding motion picture technicians at salaries we can offer. As soon as we can rebuild the production unit, we will resume the development of motion pictures to carry the latest and best information from Virginia's land grant college to her citizens through TV and group meetings.

Other Activities

In addition to the training work already mentioned under radio and TV, news, and visual aids, these activities will, if at all possible, be undertaken in 1961:

1. Provide a deskbook on communications for each county office and subject matter department. This would contain how-to-do suggestions in the several fields of mass communications, much of which is already available in various forms but not compiled in one source book--for example "How To Write Effective Circular Letters," "Make Radio Work for You," etc. This has been in our plans for some time and some progress has been made toward it, but the constant stream of "emergencies" gets in the way.

2. Arrange for a one-day or two-day on-campus session with news, radio, and TV persons interested in knowing more about VPI and its agricultural activities. (Or the session might be held at one of the more centrally located research stations.) This idea, too, has been on paper for several years.

3. Arrange a special session between home economics specialists and women's editors of news, radio, and TV in the state. This also has been in a nebulous stage for several years. It has been discussed with home demonstration specialists and a few women's editors, but although the idea seems to meet with some favor, the specialists aren't too enthusiastic.

4. Continue to give the best possible cooperation to other agencies, such as ASC, SCS, SC Districts, Vocational Education, State

Department of Agriculture; to such Extension-related programs as safety, health, medical care, farm-city week, etc.; and to savings bonds and similar worthy "drives."

5. Continue efforts to pull together in one location the various informational activities, not only of this scattered department but other related activities. The various phases of communications aids for Extension and Research--editing, news, radio, TV, photography, motion picture production, visual aids, printing, distribution--could function much more efficiently if they were housed under one roof. The efficiency of this department is greatly reduced by trying to operate in three widely scattered locations, and by not having suitable space.