

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

For

Calendar Year 1958

| <u>Major phases of project or subdivision 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                                                              | 75*                                                                |
| Bulletins and Circulars                                          | A. M. Deekens<br>Caroline J. Pace                                          | 50*<br>30**                                                        |
| Press Service and Periodicals                                    | Mrs. Gene Moody                                                            | 50*                                                                |
| Radio and Television                                             | R. L. Rees                                                                 | 100                                                                |
| Visual Aids                                                      | W. P. Bradley<br>(Caroline J. Pace)                                        | 100<br>25*                                                         |
| Motion Picture Production**                                      | Norman E. C. Mail<br>Leonard Pullen<br>Theodore Kliman<br>Eugene Fleischer | 100<br>100<br>100<br>100                                           |

Date submitted: March 25 1958 Signed: R. D. Michael  
Project Leader

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_ 1958 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Department

Date approved: April 10 1958 Signed: W. H. Daugherty  
acting State Director of Extension

Date approved: 5-20 1958 Signed: Gene Ferguson  
Administrator, Federal Extension  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

\* Rest of time in same field of work but paid by Experiment Station.

\*\* Project supported 10% by Extension Service plus supervision.

### Situation and Analysis

This department serves all others in Extension and in Research, and in addition, many phases of agricultural college activity. With this widespread service, it is not surprising that demands are quite often in excess of the ability of the available manpower. Other departments have outdistanced "public information and educational aids" in growth. Most of our expansion has been in new activities; at the same time, demands in the older phases of work have steadily increased.

With a paragraph almost identical with that above, the plan of work for 1957 began, and was followed by statements that this department lags far behind in growth when compared with other departments, number of projects, etc. Since then one addition has been made--a fourth man in action picture production. This has not helped in meeting demands in our many other kinds of work. Some much-needed equipment was added for the photographic processing work, which has helped the output there.

Other equipment changes are contemplated, largely to replace old items (varityper, addressing machine, collator, etc.) with new and more efficient units. And changes are being made frequently in an effort to make operations more efficient. But we are still unable to render the service we should. We are bypassing the editing of much of the mimeographed material, and some of it needs it very much. We do not have a home economist editor, which most states now have. Field activity, especially for news coverage of local features and contact

with county papers, is getting more and more difficult because of the increasing demand for other services. County papers are asking more frequently for help in localizing research and extension material for their use. A revolving repertoire type of assignment would no doubt pay handsome dividends in getting some information before the public through news outlets alone.

In short, to make the most of opportunities before us, we should have two more specializations: to do home economic material for press, radio, and TV and one to cover agricultural activities throughout the state for the same outlets. These persons could also share some of the photographic load. If this means a large increase, note should be taken of a still larger increase for such the same purposes in the state department of agriculture; also, a study of other states of similar agricultural activity and operations will reveal larger informational staffs than in Virginia.

Although expansion in some way seems inevitable if we are to meet the situation confronting us, there will be a continuing study of what is now being done with a view to more efficient and effective operation. Some surveys are needed to determine if we can modify or reduce the amount of periodical publications of Extension. On the other hand, there is growing sentiment among research workers for a periodical from the Experiment Station.

More specific discussion of Extension periodicals follows.

## Periodicals

### Extension Service News:

Content is examined constantly for timeliness, interest, and educational value. The main sources of material are the Extension specialists, whose progress we support; research workers, whose findings we help bring before the public; and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, with occasional stories of accomplishments of groups or individual farmers.

At present the News is mailed monthly to about 26,000 families. This number might well be doubled, 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. Special work with Southwest district and county personnel to this end is planned for 1938.

### 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 in the mailing list, especially difficult to handle because of the large annual turnover in Club enrollment. It is being solved in a few counties by mailing to agents in bulk for distribution at club meetings.

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 so.

#### Vicinia Farm Economics:

This quarterly publication goes to a select list of only about 2,000; consequently no special problems are involved. For general consumption, however, the content is frequently too difficult. Efforts will be continued to aid writers of economic material to make their writings easier to understand.

#### Readership Survey:

As soon as statistical help can be made available, some study of reader interest in both the Extension Service News and the 4-H Club paper should be made. Distribution problems should also be considered and frequency of issue scrutinized carefully, as already indicated.

#### Bulletins and Circulars

One person spends full time and two others spend part of their time in editing bulletin and circular material. Efforts will be continued to assure that all published material is presented as simply as possible, both in style of writing and in time of publication; that it is as adequately illustrated and as attractive as possible within budget limits.

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Much material formerly mimeographed is being converted to circulars of the regular series and produced by offset printing on our own machines. This is a desirable trend but has not necessarily lessened the mimeographing load, since more informational material is being generated. 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. Future replacement of office duplicating machines for general service should take this situation into account.

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, much more planning is now being done--perhaps as much as can be done--but emergencies continue to arise. Other delays occur because we have a large amount of material on offset plates--so much in fact that the machine often runs several weeks behind just in replenishing supplies. Still others arise because we must send many of our larger jobs through the state printing section for contract work. Handling editorial and printing problems over a distance of 100 miles has its drawbacks.

The current supply of Extension, Experiment Station, and USDA publications is now kept in one general area, making the filling of orders from the counties and general requests easier to handle. Considerable work needs to be done to get the Station material properly organized and inventoried.

News ServiceState Level

A large volume of news goes regularly to daily and weekly papers in the state, to radio stations, and to farm journals. Each week a packet of a dozen or more stories goes by mail. Twice a week an Associated Press reporter, following visits to the campus files six or more stories based on material gathered on the agricultural campus. Special events 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 home editions. Although "exclusives" are not allowed, many individual requests for information, pictures, etc., are also handled, both from newspapers and farm journals.

We also get many requests to report meetings and to tell of personal recognition--more publicity than information. We handle as much of this type of thing as time and good judgment will permit.

There seem to be no serious problems in the operations of this news service as to either quantity or quality. Both the news editor and the AP reporter are doing very satisfactory work. The mechanics of distribution is as efficient as we can make.

Some attendant problems do need attention, as follows:

1. Our records show that some departments originate much more news than others, and that one or two are quite reticent. Having small staffs should no longer be a excuse. We try to remedy this situation by making frequent requests to these "backward" departments.

2. Most of our material for state distribution is of the "specialists advice" type. Features of farm family accomplishments (results of using this advice) would strengthen our service to newspapers. Adding a "hunting reporter" would improve this situation.

3. Not enough of our material is accompanied by illustrations. Suitable ones are selected by the editors and add greatly to the value of the information. To serve weekly papers, a mat service is desirable, but is expensive. We now do some illustrative service for news but our present service should be expanded.

#### County Level

In general, our studies show that weekly papers are being well supplied with information from county offices, in addition to material from the state 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. Our method has been to make individual visits to check up on weak spots and this we will continue, but we wish we could do much more than we do.

In addition to carrying through as much as possible on individual situations, there is need for more frequent workshops on news in the Extension program. It has been the policy to hold such workshops whenever arrangements can be worked out with district agents. We plan to develop more of this in 1938.

### Radio

Although radio activity by Extension throughout Virginia is very extensive, several avenues may be further developed. Material used for radio presentation may often 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, county workers will be urged to acquire tape recorders and assisted with information as to kind and use. Constant effort to improve the quality of all radio presentations will continue.

The present tape service from V.P.I. to approximately 50 stations will be extended whenever possible, although nearly all rural areas are being reached by one or more stations using V.P.I. tapes.

### Telectyping

This fast-growing and amusing 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 1958: Continue a weekly 30-minute presentation by VPI specialists over a Roanoke station and an intermittent *by county workers* series over one in Norfolk. Attempt to reestablish programs by county agents over stations at 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.

### Visual Aids

1. The first need of the visual aids office is for additional help in the photography and laboratory operation. Demands are constantly increasing for detailed photographs and slides of a studio nature in addition to an ever-increasing load of developing and printing coming in from the specialists and county agents. It is hoped that an additional photographer, perhaps supported in part by the Experiment Station, can be hired.

2. Much good material is developed by Extension specialists and Experiment Station personnel for use in the field. Some of this would lend itself to being photographed on slides or could be made suitable for photographing. Most of the material so developed is put on charts or posters and never becomes available as a slide set, with script, for use in the counties. It is planned to discuss this with the resident staff, both Extension and Experiment Station and urge them to develop their information so that it can be sent in the form of a set of slides.

3. Make another survey of the visual aids equipment in the counties so we can have an accurate record of the location of projectors, easels, screens, flannel boards, etc.

4. As planned in previous years but not accomplished, send out a visual aids and photography news letter about every two or three months. Begin organizing this and other material for a 4-H bulletin on photography.

5. Continue the plan of having district or county schools on photography and visual aids.

6. Aid to the film library as much as possible and make annual revision of the film catalog.

7. 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 becoming 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 were adequate space and equipment have been provided. This cannot be done, however, until the main library can add personnel.

#### Motion Picture Production

The budget for motion picture production is made up half through the VPI Educational Foundation (a special grant from the Old Dominion Foundation), and half from several divisions of campus operation. Extension contributes its share to this work. The employees in the unit are not classed as Extension specialists but the operation is a part of the information department.

Personnel changes still hampered production some last year, but altogether, progress has been good. Continued good production will depend on cooperation from other departments which must supply the technical information and guidance. It will be most unfortunate if the work of the unit is hampered for lack of this cooperation. The value of film in education has been too well established to question.

Granted that the unit will do all that it can to produce educational motion pictures of high quality, the chief problem seems to be to get enough good ideas for films from departments on the campus and, when ideas are suggested, to get sufficient help from the department to carry through with script, technical advice, and other aspects in which the subject-matter specialist is so essential.

#### 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 1950:

1. Provide a deskbook on communications for each country 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 was in the plan for 1950 and some progress has been made toward it.

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. This, too, has been on paper for several years, but the information staff is so much occupied with meetings arranged by other departments that it has little time for its own plans.

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 the planning stage for a couple of years and has been discussed with home demonstration specialists, but no definite action taken although favorably considered.

4. Continue to give the best possible cooperation to other agencies, such as ASC, SCI, SC Districts, Vocational Education, State Department of Agriculture; to such Extension-related programs as safety, health, and medical care; and to savings bonds and similar things.

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--editing, news, radio, TV, photography, motion picture production, visual aids, printing, distribution--could function much more efficiently if they were housed under one roof. This department alone is in three different locations. Progress to this end was made through a campus-wide committee which recommended a new building for many such activities, but much follow-up will be needed.