County: Mathews

Headquarters: Mathews

Name: E. L. Phillips County Agent

Name: Jan Scott Stenographer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

subject	page
Mathews County	1
Organization	3
Forestry	5
Soil	6
Field Crops	7
Beef	8
Swine	8
Poultry	8
Health & Family Life	9
Home Surroundings	9
4-H Club	10
Young People	10
Other Agencies	10
Farm & Home Development	12
Evaluation	13
News Paper Clippings	15
Circular Letters	20

MATHEWS COUNTY

Mathews County is one of the very smallest counties in Virginia, consisting of a total of 55,680 acres. This is a peninsular county which extends into Chesapeak Bay and bounded on the North by Piankatank River, on the South by Mobjack Bay and North River, and on the West by Gloucester County.

The land is flat and low with an average elevation of about ten feet above sea level. The soil types are chiefly Elkton, Fallsington, Dragston, Moyock, Woodstown, Norfolk and Kempsville. Crops are grown chiefly in the better drained types of soil. The heavier, poorly drained soils are growing pines and other wood crops. About twenty per cent of the County is water area which accounts for the splendid water properties and affords so many opportunities for seafood industries.

According to the 1954 census only five farms grossed between $5,000. and $10,000. Forty-five grossed between $1,2000. and $2,5000., twenty-five grossed between $250. and $1,200. and three hundred and fifteen grossed less than $250.

More and more of the smaller farms are being rented or worked by custom workers or are being abandoned or planted to permanent cover crops. Some of the places, particularly along the highways or on the water, are being sub-divided and sold for residential purposes.

The very small number of self-sustaining farms and the many small farms or places present vital factors on how to do a good extension job in the County—who shall receive priority in our time and services, who will be the leaders, how can we best use these leaders—in order to be of greatest service to all the people in this rural County.

Of all the people residing in the County, the farmer receives only about 2 1/5% of the taxable income earned by it's people. Our people who produce and sell seafood account for over 21% of the taxable income. These people reside in the County. Most of them have small places. It may not be more than a house and garden but most of them have from six to ten acres of land which at one time was used to produce hay, pasture and grains for their horse, family cow, pen pigs and back yard flock of hens.

The average taxable income per person in Mathews County is just over $1,000. but this income is derived from the many activities in the

County and no small part from wages received from industries outside the County. Over 97% of our people own their homes or are in the process of owning their homes. The land they own, except their lawns and gardens is a problem to them. The horses have been sold. The family cow went next. The poultry flock followed. The pen pigs are diminishing rapidly. Even the gardens are on the decrease.

During the past few years there has been an increasing influx of retired and semi-retired families moving into the County. More and more summer homes and cabins are being established. These people will no doubt help the economy of the County considerably though they are received with no particular jubilation by the natives.

All of these people, other than farmers, the doctors, the lawyers, the merchants, the real estate agents, the boat builders, the banker have their problems of living more fully in our rural area. There are not problems of producing corn or selling soybeans. They are problems of lawn care, back yard fruit orchards, insect control, recreation facilities, better library service and general beautification of the County.

Where does the Extension Service fit into this situation? What process can we use to get the most important jobs done? What shall we do with the two acre fields, the six acre field and the ten acre fields which are a part of so many homes but which are now growing up into weeds and bushes or being so often misused by renters and custom workers?

ORGANIZATION

The County Board of Agriculture consists of:

Banker—L. L. Smith
Commercial Poultryman—W. P. Sadler
Beef Farmer—A. D. Chipman
Dairy Farmer—Fred Maxwell
Farmer and Business Man—H. L. White
Large Farm Operator—J. A. Mickelborough
Custom Worker—John Bing
Agricultural Teacher—Harry Clements
Soil Conservationist—D. D. Adams
District Forester—W. C. Stanley
A.S.C. County Chairman—W. C. Diggs
Woodland Owners—J. C. Miller and F. D. Preston

Mr. Preston was added during the year.

Agronomy Committee:

John Bing
James Turpin
Tom Kemp
J. A. Mickelborough
Clyde Hudgins

Livestock and Dairy Committee:

M. C. Thompson
Fred Maxwell
James Turpin
A. D. Chipman

Poultry Committee:

Roland Sadler
W. P. Sadler
Robert Lewis
E. D. Owens, Jr.

Forestry Committee:

John Miller
Irvin Hudgins
F. D. Preston

4-H Club Council:

Martin Diggs
Marian Bennett
Virginia Miles
Louise Fitchett
Virginia Armistead
Elsie Huigins

And Officers of the Clubs.

Community Work:

Recreation
Social
Church
Health
Family Life
Home Surroundings

Much of the young people work is done by cooperation with schools, welfare, churches and several clubs.

FORESTRY

It was generally agreed by members of the Board of Agriculture and other committees that improving and managing our woodland was the most important job to be done in Mathews County.

Situation:

Approximately 50% of the area of the County is covered with woodland, chiefly loblolly pine. There are about 3,500 acres of bushy and idle land which is suitable for producing good quality pines. Many hundreds of acres of wet natured land not suitable for field crops would probably be more productive if planted to pines.

A large portion of the timber land has been cut for lumber and is now growing up into brush and worthless trees. Many hundreds of acres of thick growing pines should be thinned for pulpwood and pound poles to improve the remaining stand. Many hundreds of acres need clearing with bulldozer or disk to permit reseeding or planting. Many small woodlot owners should be making use of qualified foresters to help them with general forestry management.

Methods:

February 20th, a meeting was held to discuss the situation and suggest methods of procedure. Nine farmers, two foresters and the County Agent were present at this meeting. A forester and the County Agent toured the County to help determine the problems and needs in forestry and some of the machinery and methods needed to do our forestry jobs. April 9th, a tour was made of five forestry demonstrations representative of our situation. These included bulldozing, disking, thinning, marking for thinning and lumber, killing weed trees, planting seedlings and natural reseeding on worked areas. Seven articles regarding forestry practices and management were published in the local news paper. The County Agent gave seven talks on the local radio WMBY regarding the various phasis of forestry. One hundred and six personal contacts were made with the wood owners during the year.

Results:

The progress in this project was a little slow chiefly because of lack of heavy machinery in the County. Our bulldozer and heavy tractor owners were inexperienced in woods operations and were inclined to charge too much and sometimes do inadequate jobs. However, we are progressing and should do much more in future years.

Forty-three farmers have done and are doing definite forestry improvement jobs including bulldozing cut-over land for better seeding or replanting, disking or bulldozing before cutting, thinning, selective cutting, and open field planting of seedlings. Between twenty and thirty wood lot owners have indicated their intention to do various management jobs. An investigation is being made by a committee to find some use for the considerable amount of hardwood we have. We hope to be able to sell the hardwood for enough to pay for the cost of ridding our land of these weed trees and make room for the more valuable pines.

SOIL

Situation:

The Agronomy Committee believed that good soil management is the most important part of economical crop production. They also felt that nature and management of our soil are the least understood by average farmers.

Most of our poorer soils are now in timber land as they should be. We do have considerable flat, wet natured land which are being used to produce grain crops but which are better suited for grass or timber. Most of our soil responds very well to good management and will produce well the crops for which they are suited. For instance, during this year a survey was made which indicated most of our heavier type soils were very well adapted to produce loblolly pine. It has been well proven that by proper drainage, working, liming and fertilising much of our poorer type soils and abused land will respond rapidly and produce crops profitable to the farmer.

Over 95% of our people own their homes. The growing of good lawns, shrubbery and shade trees depend considerably on the proper soil treatment and management.

We have a complete set of soil type maps for Mathews County which aid greatly in determining better soil management.

Methods:

Seven meetings were held during the year at which the importance of soil and soil management, soil types in the County and their character and management, balancing plant food for various crops, testing soil and using the test were discussed. Live displays and other visual aids were used at these meetings. Eight news articles, five radio talks and one circular letter were devoted to the subject.

Each field which was tested offered an ideal opportunity to promote better soil management. The person having his soil tested was in a

receptive mood. A history of his field could be gotten. Crop needs could be discussed, soil characteristics could be discussed. General soil management was always a point of interest.

Results:

Soil meetings were attended by 171 persons. There was a large increase in the number of non-farmers who used soil improvement methods and management. The number of farmers and others who had their soil tested for the first time this year increased over 50% more than in previous years.

As we worked with people who were interested in soil management, particularly soil testing, the opportunity was almost ideal to discuss the various phasis of crop management. Approximately twenty-five farmers have done a definate job of drainage on their farms or are in the process of doing drainage work with power grading machinery.

FIELD CROPS

Situation:

Approximately 3,000 acres of soybeans, 2,000 acres of corn and 500 acres of small grains are produced in Mathews County each year. Almost every farmer is using recommended varieties. Many farmers are not using enough fertilizer for corn. There is an inclination to not fertilize soybeans even where they are raised on the same land year after year. Most of the small grains are not fertilized as they should be at planting time then nitrogen is used too late in the spring. It is our annual job to help farmers to produce these crops more economically by better overall management.

Methods:

Much of the information was given to our farmers by working with leaders in each community. We worked with these leaders to help them do a good job and help them understand better practices so they could tell their neighbors. This method is particularly effective because so many of our people live close together, they are kinfolks, go to the same church and other organizations and most important, they work in groups while fishing, crabbing, oystering or traveling to work on jobs other than agriculture.

Eleven news articles, six radio programs, one letter with leaflets were devoted to information about these crops. The interest created by publicity was evidenced by the many phone and office calls received regarding crops. A few farmers visited the research farm at Warsaw. We also worked closely with custom workers and local dealers to promote more economical crop production.

Results:

This was a good crop year for corn and soybeans. I feel pretty sure our goal of fifty bushels of corn per acre and twenty-five bushels of soybeans were attained or exceeded. According to reports received from seed and fertilizer dealers, the greatest demand was for seed we recommended and to fertilizer analyses recommended.

BEEF

Mathews County farms are not large enough for beef production. Over half of the people who have attempted to produce beef in the past five years have decided they made a mistake. Three small herds were sold during the year. Four people moving into the County this year discussed the feasibility of producing beef and decided against it.

Most of the work done with beef cattle was done by personal contact: phone, office visits and farm visits. Most of the cattle are very well bred, pastures are improved and adequate with dividing fences for better use of pastures.

SWINE

The number of swine in Mathews County is decreasing from year to year. A few years ago most of the small places produced corn and other crops which could be utilized by hogs. As the people got jobs in other industries they stopped farming and discontinued producing pen pigs for home use.

The pigs purchased for pen pigs are increasingly better each year. Feeding practices are improving but there are still too many who do not know how to balance rations. Most of our calls for information and assistance are in regard to feeding, control of internal and external parasites. There being no veterinarians in the County we receive many calls to help with sick animals. We give vaccinating and castrating demonstrations.

POULTRY

The small, family flocks are diminishing. The larger flocks are slowly increasing. Considerable publicity and several opportunities to attend district meetings, tours, etc. have been offered to our people but slight interest has been indicated to establish larger flocks of poultry.

We believe there is a good opportunity for large flocks of layers for people who wish earnestly to produce eggs and who are capable of managing flocks well. Several years ago there were many flocks of layers in the County. Most of these failed chiefly because of poor management. The people remember these well, though they probably do not realize the failure was caused by poor management. Because the people remember the failure they are not easily approached on the subject of poultry production or attracted to meetings to discuss poultry as a possible project for the County. Most of the people who want to work regularly prefere to get jobs where they have Sunday and part or all of Saturday off and are sure of their income rather than spend so much for buildings, equipment, birds, etc.: be tied down everyday, and take the chance of failing with a laying flock. The farmers who have the larger farms, the custom workers and renters get more requests for work than they can do.

A sound poultry production program for the area of several counties seems to have good possibilities in the next few years.

HEALTH AND FAMILY LIFE

Mathews County is one of eleven counties included in the Tidewater Guidance Clinic. We have been rather slow in our support of this Clinic and the wise use of the Clinic. The County Agent decided to promote a County-wide program to get information to the people and to help our people to use the Clinic in such a way as to get the greatest use of the Clinic.

We personally contacted all the churches, PTA's, lodges, garden and woman's clubs, Ruritan and Lion's Clubs two and three times during the year. We placed three articles in the local paper regarding the Clinic and it's functions. We believe this type of service is difficult for the average person to understand and without understanding the people cannot use it or do not feel free to use it.

HOME SURROUNDINGS

Mathews County is gradually becoming a residential area. Over ninty-seven per cent of the people own their homes or are in the process of owning their homes. It seems most of these people have problems with their lawns, shrubs, shade trees, soil and landscaping.

We furnished as much information as we could to the two woman's clubs and four garden clubs by meeting with them and furnished bulletins, leaflets and mimeographed information. However, it was necessary to spend much time by personal contacts by phone, office calls and home visits to meet the growing demand for this type of service.

4-H CLUB

We had seven 4-H Clubs in Mathews County. There were 63 boys and 51 girls or a total of 114 members attending these Clubs. There being no Home Agent in the County, the County Agent works with the girl members. Very few of our members have dairy, livestock or poultry at home, consequently the projects consist chiefly of Home Grounds Beautification, Home Room, and Safety. Many of the boys have their own crabbing business or work with their folks in some seafood project so we arranged for them to carry special projects in seafood.

During the year we trained four leaders in leather work so they could help with leather work during some of the meetings and special meetings held in homes at night. Most of the members took leather work and most of them completed acceptable articles in leather.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Most of our work with young people was done cooperatively with other organizations. One of our committees worked with softball games which was very successful this year, furnishing recreation for hundreds of people of all ages throughout the whole summer. The other project was to help raise money for a county wide supervised recreation area. Our committee helped with a pageant and other entertainments to help raise the money. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people were present at these programs.

There are only two young men in Mathews County who are farming full time. One other has moved into the County recently. There are three or four young men who are hired to do tractor and other machinery work but they are not permanent enough for us to give them very much assistance.

OTHER AGENCIES

Most of the farmers and other people who have problems come to the County Agent for advise or assistance. We usually discuss the problems, then if the forester, soil conservationist, F.H.A. Representative or A.S.C. Office Manager can give help in more details than we can, we either send them to these agencies or contact the agency representatives for them. With this proceedure we can keep in touch with

all types of work being done. We make most of the recommendations for A.S.C. practices such as liming, fertilizer, and seed for winter cover crops, summer cover crops and permanent cover crops.

The cooperation with other agencies has been satisfactory. They help with details which we are not trained to do and they can help us and we can help them in many things and thereby serve our people more completely.

FARM AND HOME DEVELOPMENT

Mathews County has no Home Agent, consequently the program dealt chiefly with overall farm management programs. Eight farmers were included in the program during the year.

The chief assistance given to these farmers were: farm plans, better crop yields by using lime and fertilizer according to soil tests and soil types, balancing crops and livestock production, better livestock and marketing.

Assistance given:

John Bing, renter and custom worker, decided to work less crops, use more fertilizer per acre and recomended seed. He planted more in season, cultivated and managed his crops better and sold his crops to better advantage.

Gen. Payton Park. Assisted him in better fertilizing of pastures, cross fencing pastures, feeding practices and marketing livestock.

M. C. Thompson. Complete fertilizer program for pasture, established extra hay field, better balance in field crops and assisted in marketting livestock.

Fred Maxwell. Fertilizer and seed program for entire farm. Establish crop rotation to suit pasture, silage and field crops for dairy herd. Helped establish records for herd and eliminate low producers. Helped with labor problems and established more retail market.

Mrs. Lois Causby. Lime and fertilizer program for pasture and field crops. Helped her to rent more land for field crops and balance crops on own land. Established system of record keeping, selling low producers and better care of replacement heifers.

M. K. Snead, a city farmer, entire program for farm including seed, fertilizer, swine and poultry management, gardening, placing low land in pines and marketing crops.

J. T. Tunstall. Over all farm plan, lime, fertilizer and seed recommendations, establishing and renovating pastures, drainage in four fields for better production, managing sheep, adjustment in labor and marketing.

Mrs. W. E. Pembelton. Over all farm plan in spring, use of lime, fertilizer and seed, gardening, lawn, labor problems. Decided to place most of farm in 1959 Soil Bank.

EVALUATION

It becomes increasingly difficult to evaluate Extension work in Mathews County. The large number of very small farms cannot be operated economically. It is difficult to know what is the best program for these. By working rather closely with custom workers most of these places are being worked about as well as circumstances will permit. An increasing number of the owners of these places are finding work other than on the farm which are paying quite well. This is a fortunate situation for which we can take very little, if any, credit.

We have felt that the Soil Bank program offered a good opportunity for many small farms. We did not attempt to recommend this program but we did a good job of publicity on the program so the farmers had ample information to help them make decisions. Thirty-one farmers applied for the 1959 Conservation Reserve program. Thirty-four farmers had contracts in the 1957 and 1958 programs. The total number for Mathews County is close to the top for all counties in the state. This is probably significant only as it shows the trend for small farms in this area.

We think we have taken a good stride in the right direction in a sound forestry program for the County. The results for this year are not impressive chiefly because of our late start and because proper machinery and assistance by foresters was not available until late in the year. We are making progress in a project which will mean a great deal to the County over a period of years.

We received considerably more requests for information from clubs and other organizations than in previous years. These were requests for talks, publications or general information which they could use in their programs for better rural living.

We believe there were more innovators gotten by our "Ramblings of a County Agent" which is published each week in the local paper. It reaches a large number of the people every week. It is written to give timely information in such a way as to be easily read and understood. We try to be specific enough and local enough to enable people to use the information. With newer things or more difficult things we try to create a desire for further information. The confidence the people have in Extension and the County Agent is a necessary part of the use of such a method of producing innovators.

Working with leaders in the many, many groups which work together in their every day jobs is also effective to get innovators. People who

will not ordinarily contact the County Agent for assistance will know all about projects on their neighbor's place. These people make changes in about two years but they will not even realize the part the Extension Service had in causing the changes. We work with the effective project leaders. When they do good jobs in these projects the neighbors,with whom they are so closely associated, come to admire, to praise and perhaps envy, but they do not go home until they have, by one means or another, found out the secrets of success. We believe we are making better use of this type of group leader method each year.

There is much to be done to improve our 4-H Club work. Probably more and better trained leaders is the chief answer to this problem. There are many, many other things which are important to the Extension work for which we feel inadequate. Perhaps with the desire on our part and the inspiration and training from our leaders we will progress.

Ramblings

of a County Agent
by E. L. Phillips

Farm Safety Week

When a black, noisy thunderstorm is coming our way right many of us shiver in our boots and wish the thing would go away lest the lightning should strike us. Most of us will casually step into a bathtub several times a week and think nothing of it but a lot more people get hurt taking a bath than by lightning.

Far more people in the United States are crippled and killed by accidents than are crippled and killed by wars. We can get pretty excited about war and how we dread to see our children sent into the battle area, but we hardly give any thought to the things which are so dangerous in our every day life.

We cry and complain about the high cost of educating our children but accidents cost us over eleven billion dollars each year and that is more than we are required to pay for our schools and teachers.

You may think farming is a pretty safe kind of business to be engaged in but there are more people crippled and killed in farming than in any other major industry. Only about one-tenth of the workers in the United States are farmers but one-fourth of the people killed by accidents are in the farming business.

About 12,800 farm people get killed by accidents each year and more than a million farm residents are injured by accidents each year.

We all are hearing so much about automobile accidents and rightly so, but there were 460,000 farm residents injured in farm homes last year and only 200,000 farm residents injured by traffic mishaps. More farm people are killed in automobile accidents than home accidents because when you have an automobile accident it is probably more violent than the average home accident.

There are a lot of statistics which prove the farm and home so dangerous we are almost afraid to go home. We are deeply concerned about the prevention and cure for cancer, TB and heart diseases. We are contributing huge sums of money each year to help prevent these diseases. Accidents are chiefly prevented by you and me.

Falls cause the most accidents. We can help prevent falls by not having slippery floors or securing small rugs to such floors, place rubber mats in bathtubs, keep containers and trash off of stairs and steps, renew rotting steps and floor boards, use safe ladders, have plenty of lights on at night.

Fouled up chimneys cause too many fires, lighting over-flowing oil stoves are dangerous, smoking in bed is a good way to assure an early death. Rusty stove pipes cause fire.

Hoes and rakes lying sharp side up, sharp knives and other utensils placed where children can get them, boxes of matches lying around, oily rags, old electric extension wire, open tubs of hot water and many, many other hazards are the causes of sad accidents which we can prevent by being alert to the causes and doing what is necessary to eliminate the dangers.

It can't happen to me, but TOO OFTEN, IT DOES!

Control Garden Diseases

S. B. Finne plant pathologist at VPI, reminds us that this is the time of year to be alert in our prevention of garden diseases.

There are good spraying and dusting materials to prevent plant diseases if they are used before the diseases injure the plants.

Other preventative methods are keeping the plants thin enough so rain and dew dry rapidly. If you irrigate your garden, it is better to use the water in the morning so the sun will dry the plants readily.

Stay away from wet plants. It is a temptation to work in the garden in the cool of the morning but that is also the best time of the day to spread diseases.

As soon as the crops have been harvested, plow or disc under all of the vegetables, grass and weed plants to get rid of diseases. Rotate the vegetables as much as possible so the diseases do not cary over from one planting to the next planting. Use disease resistant varieties as much as possible. Pull up and destroy any diseased plants which may appear before the disease spreads to healthy plants.

Registered Hog Sale

Here is another reminder of an opportunity to purchase top quality registered bred sows and boars at farmer's prices. The sale is at the Tappahannock Livestock Market and will be held Tuesday, August 12 beginning at 1 p. m.

These animals are carefully selected from the best breeding herds in Virginia. They are guaranteed. Berkshires, Durocs, Hampshires, Poland Chinas, Spotted Polands Chinas and Yorkshires will be sold.

Institute of Rural Affairs

Another reminder: July 29-31 is the date set for this years Institute of Rural Affairs. In my opinion this is the top meeting of the year for rural people. If you go once you will want to go every year.

Ramblings

of a County Agent

by E. L. Phillips

Profits and Overproduction

I think it is fairly well agreed that the farmers are not getting enough for the things they produce. They are working more hours and getting less per hour's labor than almost any other group of workers.

It is also pretty well agreed that farmers are producing more products than the market can handle profitably or that there is a demand for.

It is a reasonable assumption that the overproduction is the chief cause of the low prices paid to the farmers for his products. This is the reason the farmer is being paid so little per hour for his labor.

Now who is actually responsible for this situation? Whose responsibility is it to correct this situation? Who is in the best position to correct the situation?

Of course there is no simple or easy answer to this situation, but let us look at a few facts and figures which may throw some light on it.

The average production per cow in the nation is about 6,000 pounds of milk. This means there are a lot of farmers who have herds averaging 5,000 pounds and less. This means that those farmers are only making about $10 profit per cow per year or about 10c per hour for all their work after all the expenses are paid.

Such farmers would have to milk 300 cows to make $3,000 profit a year. He would be producing about 1,500,000 pounds of milk to make his $3,000. Of course he could not take care of that many cows or produce that much milk.

Now let us go a step farther. The average production of the better dairymen who are in the testing association is about 9,000 pounds per cow per year. These farmers would have to milk 33 cows to make $3,000 per year. They would be producing about 290,000 pounds of milk to make the $3,000 per year.

A lot of the better dairymen are producing over 10,000 pounds per cow and they only have to milk from 2 0to 25 cows and produce 200,000 to 250,000 pounds of milk to make $3,000 per year.

The good dairy manager not only makes more money but at the same time he places less milk on the market. Who is responsible for making the adjustment from the poor management to the better management. Frankly I do not see how the government can press the right buttons to do this kind of job.

So you are not a dairyman, you produce corn. The average yield of corn in Mathews County ranges from 25 bushels in a poor year to 40 bushels in a good year. It costs about $50 to produce an acre of corn. It costs over $40 per acre even if you do not use fertilizer.

In recent years corn from the field to the market during harvest time has been bringing from 95c to $1.25 per bushel. Therefore you must produce about 40 bushels per acre just to pay the cost of production.

How are you going to make your corn make you more money and decrease total production at the same time? One way is to get higher yields per acre and produce less acres of corn. One other way is to feed your corn to livestock and get more per bushel from or through them.

If you produce less acres, you will have more time to do a better job and to spend on other activities such as working in your woodland, working for others or producing other crops.

I do not believe we can get more for our labor and less total production through the government.

Figures can make dull reading and I do not want to bore you with too many. However, here are a few figures about egg production. The average production per hen per year is about 160 eggs. It takes about 180 eggs to pay just for raising a hen and caring for her in a flock of hens. Your hens have to lay 180 eggs or 15 dozen eggs apiece before they start paying you any wages. You have to make your money after they have paid all other expenses. If you are a good enough manager to get three or four more dozen eggs per hen per year, you may expect to make fair wages.

A lot of farmers think if they work longer hours and produce more milk or corn or eggs, they should come out better. The fact is they would be better off if they concentrate on getting higher production per unit and less total production. That way they would make more money partly because of their net profits per unit and partly because of higher prices for their products as a result of less overall production.

The government cannot legislate good management and logical thinking. The farmers have to do this on their own or cooperatively.

While the farmers are struggling with their efforts to receive fair prices for their products some of our city friends are complaining about the high cost of food. Actually they are not paying too much for food.

In 1930 the average worker had to work 48 minutes to earn enough money to pay for one dozen eggs. In 1950 he worked 25 minutes for one dozen eggs and in 1956 he had to work only 18 minutes to buy one dozen eggs. In 1950 the average worker worked 34 minutes for one pound of chicken while in 1956 he worked only 15 minutes for a pound of chicken. He had to work 12 minutes in 1940 to purchase a quart of milk but in 1956 he worked only seven minutes to buy a quart of milk.

The cost of many food articles has gone up considerably because of fancy packages, because they are kept frozen and because of better quality products.

Farmers should definitely strive for more economical production methods and a balance between the supply and demand, but the consumer can pay more for food without being charged an unjust price.

Ramblings

of a County Agent

by E. L. Phillips

Ask Your County Agent

I am sure you have often seen in farm papers or have heard over the radio and other sources the saying "ask your county agent". When certain practices or techniques are written or spoken about which may be difficult to explain in detail or apply to individual cases, the person making the statement asks you to see your county agent for details.

These people do not do this because they think we know all about everything, but rather because we have sources of information which no one else in the county has. Of course, we try to keep up to date in the major changes and improvements so that when we are asked about them we can give help promptly, but we cannot be experts in all fields.

County agents are the only direct representatives of V.P.I. and its vast source of information in each county and it is our job to get this information to the rural people in such a form so you can make the greatest use of it. You see V.P.I. has in addition to its teaching staff, a very extensive research department. This research department consists of many laboratories and experimental farms. The many new ideas, materials and techniques are examined and proven in the laboratories and farms so you may use them with confidence. They are particularly important to you because we are not interested in selling you any particular product or idea. We are only interested in offering you things which may help you do a better job.

As I have said, we county agents cannot hope to be experts in all phases of agriculture and rural living, but we do have specialists to help us with almost every conceivable problem. Each specialist has his own special interest in which he has special training. He usually does research work in his field of work. He reads everything he can find about the work done by others in his field of interest. He is usually a person who is conscious of the necessity of learning all the details which may affect the results of the practices which have been performed. He realizes the necessity of accuracy.

There are over 90 specialists associated with V.P.I. on whom we can call for assistance with your problems. These specialists work in almost every phase of farming and rural living. For instance, there are seven specialists in economics, eight in agricultural engineering, ten in agronomy which is the science of soils and crops. There are six specialists in dairy science, three in entomology, nine in home economics, 12 in horticulture, five in plant diseases, five in poultry, seven in 4-H Club department and several others. This gives you an idea of the number and scope of the field of endeavor they cover.

It is chiefly from these specialists that we get the bulletins written for your use in the many subjects covered by our work. The specialists are also available to you when you have problems which your county agent cannot handle.

These are the reasons writers and speakers often say "see or ask your county agent". There are so many new things in agriculture now. There are the new hormones which kill weeds or make animals grow faster. There are the antibiotics which promote growth in animals and plants or may be used to control diseases. There are increasing numbers of insects and diseases to be identified and controlled. There are new varieties of plants and crops. New techniques for breeding better livestock. The newer and larger machinery, the confusing marketing problems and the keen competition between producers within a given area and from other areas of the country. All of these factors cause more problems for the producers and complicate the problems we already have.

So see your county agent if you have a problem. If he does not know the answer he has many specialists who are ready to help. These specialists have specialists and sources of information from other states where they can go for help if they do not know the answer. All of these people have one desire and that is to be able to be of assistance to the rural people in your county and to the country in general.

Ramblings

of a County Agent
by E. L. Phillips

Home-Made Industry

A lot of people in Mathews County wish we had some nice clean industry in our county so more people could get work close to home and have more spending money and more tax money going into the coffers to pay our increasing costs of government and schools, etc.

The right kind of industry is often a real asset. However, many times an industry brings into a county or community undesirable features. Let's not wait for an outside industry. Let's develop our own individual industries. Let's do it with loblolly pine.

In Mathews County we have about 2500 acres of idle land, much of which could be planted in pines. Most of this idle land is poor land. That is the chief reason it is idle. It is too poor to produce field crops profitably. There are about 25,000 acres of woodland in all degrees of production. Some of the land has good stands of pine which have never been cut. This is valuable property indeed and will continue to be valuable for generations if managed properly.

A large portion of our woodland has been cut over in recent years. Some of this land has good stands of pine which have never been cut. Some of these have good settings of young pine which are developing into valuable property. Too much of the cut over pines are growing up into worthless briers, brush and worthless hardwood.

If you possess one of these cut over pieces of woodland you have the makings of a little factory all your own. When an industry sets up in a new site it is necessary to do much preliminary planning. Then it is necessary to make suitable investments to establish the business. Next, people are hired to do the work which produces the product to be sold.

If your cut over woodland is overgrown with worthless plant growth, you should invest in the labor and machinery to eliminate the worthless plant growth and to establish the valuable pine seedlings, then your pines proceed to pay you dividends and wages.

Now let us assume that your overgrown, cut over land is practically worthless. If it is over grown with briers, brush and sweet gum it is worth very little until you do something about it and you have to pay taxes on the property from which you are getting no income.

How can you make this worthless property over into a factory which will pay you dividends? Up in King William County on land where they planted pine seedlings, then thinned it for pulpwood as needed and clear cut it for sawtimber at about age 40 years, they made an average of $17 per acre per year or $699 per acre total sales for the 40 years.

Our soil in Mathews County will grow pines faster than most of the land in King William County. I think we can safely say that we have at least 15,000 acres of idle land, brush land, cut over land and land which is now in crops but is not paying the cost of growing crops, which could be planted to pines or managed so it would reseed to pines. Just think what a county-wide forestry program could do for Mathews County. Beside the additional income the improvement would enhance the value of the county exceedingly.

Would such a program cost too much? Through your ASC program you may receive from 50% to 80% of the cost of bulldosing, discing, killing brush and weed trees, planting and other management jobs. You may receive advice and assistance from the forestry department, free of charge.

It is my opinion that a sound, county-wide forestry program in Mathews County would do more to increase our income and enhance the value of our property more than any other agricultural project we could attempt.

If you have a wood lot which is a problem, you have idle land you think should be in pines, if you need any information about your woodland, please contact me by phone, 5-5821, or call at my office. There are excellent foresters now available to give almost any kind of assistance you need.

Registered Hog Sale

Don't forget the auction sale of registered hogs at the Tappahannock Livestock Market, Tuesday, August 12, beginning at 1 p. m. These animals are selected from the finest herds in Virginia. There will be six Berkshires, 13 Durocs, 16 Hampshires, six Poland Chinas, 14 Spotted Poland Chinas, and 24 Yorkshires.

Ramblings

of a County Agent
by E. L. Phillips

Country Eggs

A few days ago a lady called me to come see her flock of chickens. She had three layers which had growths in their mouths and she was afraid her whole flock was headed for a siege of sickness. She was very discouraged about the prospect of making any money from her flock because she was getting only about 30¢ for her eggs.

She said to me the feed stores and the government, including the county agent, should do something about getting better prices for the eggs produced by the small flock owners.

I wish we could do something about better prices for eggs for those back yard flocks. We have been worrying and fussing about these eggs for the past several years. Actually, the small flock owners have done themselves out of the market.

I admit the people with the large flocks have advantages which the small flock owners do not have but the small flock owners have not made good use of the advantages which are theirs.

A few years ago I stopped in to see Howard Sadler at his store at Moen. I couldn't locate him for a while then I heard him grumbling in the back of his store. Howard doesn't grumble easily. He usually ha sa pretty optimistic outlook on life. I went back to see what was the trouble and there Howard was sitting on an egg case with a pail of water and a brush and he was scrubbing eggs. These eggs had been brought in from a nearby small flock.

These eggs were pretty messy. Howard said he knew they were not fit to sell when he bought them but he didn't want to say anything to the lady who brought them in, so he took the washing job on himself. He said you would be surprised how many dirty eggs, broken eggs and old eggs which had been kept too warm to keep which he had to handle every week.

The average housewife who happened to buy a dirty egg or rotten egg from a store just would not buy eggs from that store again. She wants clean fresh eggs which are all about the same size. When she breaks them open she doesn't want them floating all over the frying pan.

So we have lost our egg market. The small stores do not want any more of these eggs than they can take in on trades. The hucksters have to pay minimum prices because the eggs must be worked over and graded before they can sell them to their customers. The large stores will not buy these eggs at any price because they do not uniformly meet their requirements.

This whole process has almost eliminated the small backyard laying flock. Even the person who can and will produce clean eggs is at a disadvantage. He must grade his eggs, but he also must have a cool, ventilated place to hold the eggs until they are sold. You can grade and candle by being careful and alert but a cooler costs too much for a small flock. The only way the small flock owner can hope to prosper is to have such good fresh eggs that he can have and hold select customers who will buy his eggs at a price considerably higher than he can get otherwise.

The lady I talked to was very discouraged. She had a very good strain of white leghorns and they were producing very well. They were young and most of the eggs were mediums. She was getting only 30¢ a dozen.

She said she could not afford to buy laying mash so she had begun to feed more corn. These pullets are still laying over 75% but how long will it be before they will drop in production with too much corn in the diet? She does not have a cooling room but her chicken house was clean and the eggs were clean. I would rather use these eggs than store eggs, especially during cool weather.

As for the feed stores, the government and the county agent furnishing a better market for eggs, we are just about helpless until enough producers are willing and able to furnish a large supply of top quality eggs which are acceptable to the large store outlets.

We, in this area, have a wonderful opportunity to produce at a good profit AA eggs. The large stores are almost begging for them and are offering a good premium for such eggs. Actually we, in this area, are letting a wonderful opportunity slip away from us. The people in other states are taking advantage of our lethargy. They will soon have our market in their control and we will complain of our hardship and try to find someone else to blame for our hard luck.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

STATE OF VIRGINIA

V. P. I. AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION SERVICE

Mathews, Virginia
January 22, 1958

Dear Friend:

This letter is about testing soil. If you never have had any soil tested you should try it. I am sure you would appreciate what these tests can tell you about your land.

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO TAKE SOIL SAMPLES I WILL BE GLAD TO COME TO YOUR PLACE AND HELP YOU GET SAMPLES.

If you had some of your fields tested please feel free to bring or send me any number of samples you wish.

All soil testing is done free. Then I will help you understand the analysis so you can make the best use of them.

Buying fertilizer and producing crops is expensive business. I think a soil test is the first step to help cut the cost of your production.

Any recommendations I may make are only suggestions which you may or may not use according to your best judgement. The tests are for your guidance.

I will be glad to help you with any of your farming problems.

Yours very truly,

E. L. Phillips

E. L. Phillips
County Agent

ELP:cw

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

STATE OF VIRGINIA

V. P. I. AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION SERVICE

Mathews, Virginia
April 9, 1958

Dear Friend:

I am sending you the enclosed leaflet because it may have some information which you can use this year.

I am not at all sure it would be wise for you to attempt to raise 100 bushels of corn on all of your corn land. Right much of our land is more suitable for 12 to 16 barrels than for 20 barrels even with a good growing season.

However this leaflet has excellent information about the practices necessary for high yields.

There are so many little things which can help to increase yields and profits. A good plowing job can help drain the field, it makes it easier to prepare the land well and insures a better stand of corn with less weeds and trash.

Using the right fertilizer at the right time for your particular type of soil is important. Weeds are corn robbers. Experiments show conclusively that corn planted one inch deep will out-produce corn planted three inches deep by 8 to 16 bushels of corn per acre.

We know most of these things but in our rush at planting time we sometimes neglect them. It may be better to plant less acres and do a better job on the rest. Could easily mean more money in the pocket.

Yours very truly,

E. L. Phillips

E. L. Phillips
County Agent

ELP:cw

Enc.

...makes a corn planting date recommendation. Corn should be planted late enough in the spring to miss late frost and cold seedbeds. Generally this is about 10 days or 2 weeks after the average date of the last killing frost for the locality. Corn should mature before the fall frost.

...variation in climate it is dif-

Plant Thick

For a full-season hybrid, plant at the rate of 14,000 to 16,000 kernels per acre. For an early variety, plant at the rate of 16,000 to 18,000 kernels per acre. The final plant stand is expected to be 10 to 20% less than the number of seed planted.

Kernels Per Acre
(How to Plant)

14,000		16,000		18,000	
Row Width	Space Between Seed	Row Width	Space Between Seed	Row Width	Space Between Seed
36"	22"	28"	10½"	28"	9½"
40"	22"	28"	10"	28"	9"
42"	20½"	40"	9½"	40"	8½"
		42"	9"	42"	8½"

The number of kernels per pound in grades will vary according to the variety. Generally the kernels per pound according to the grades are:

Grade	Kernels per pound
Large flat	1200
Medium flat	1300
Small flat	1500
Medium thick flat	1700
Large round	1700
Medium round	1900

All grades will produce a satisfactory crop. There is a relationship between size of kernel and seedling vigor. The larger kernels have the more vigorous seedlings.

Use Right Planter Plate. [illegible] the right planter plate for the grade used so that the kernels will drop the desired distance apart. Make a trial run to see that kernels are dropping properly.

Plant at Proper Depth. [illegible] planting. From 1 to 2 inches deep is usually best. Seed should be placed in contact with [illegible] soil.

Watch Speed of Planter. Speed of planter can affect the planting rate. If planter vibrates too fast, kernels will not drop regularly. Speed is too

Cultivate Shallow

Cultivate shallow and do not destroy corn roots. Use a spike-tooth harrow or rotary hoe from time starts to come up until it is 2 to 3 inches This operation will greatly reduce [illegible]

Two to 3 [illegible] intervals of about [illegible] After corn is [illegible] than 2 to 3 [illegible] and reduce yield.

Chemical weed [illegible] done in connection [illegible] information on [illegible] county agent for [illegible] lar No. 652, "Spray[illegible] 2,4-D."

Harvesting

Corn should be pick[illegible] harvesting equipment [illegible] with a minimum loss [illegible] the moisture content [illegible] 20% when harvested. W[illegible] ture, you will need [illegible] curing. Mechanical dry[illegible] corn must be harvested [illegible] or if weather conditions pre[illegible] age.

If corn is to be shelled and [illegible] content should be about 13% [illegible] mation, ask your county agent [illegible] sion Service Circular No. 558, [illegible] Air."

If corn is to be shelled do [illegible] kernels are well dented and [illegible] are dry. If this is done, moisture [illegible] usually be below [illegible] and [illegible]

Prepared by
W. [illegible] Extension Agron[illegible]
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Blacksburg, Virginia

[illegible] carefully ackn[illegible] given [illegible] L. Dunton [illegible] Dr. [illegible] Mr. [illegible] of [illegible]

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS 22
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

STATE OF VIRGINIA

V. P. I. AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION SERVICE

Mathews, Virginia
January 30, 1958

Dear Friend:

If you expect to have a garden this year here are some suggestions.

Plow your garden as early as you can, but do not plow it when it is too wet or it will be cloddy.

If you plow under a winter cover crop, sawdust straw or heavy growth of weeds spread about 30 pounds of nitrate of soda or ammonium nitrate on each 1,000 square feet of land before plowing.

Plan your planting so you can follow early crops with later crops on the same land. If you do not plant too thick you will have less thinning to do. But if the vegetables are too thick it pays to thin early.

25 pounds of 10-10-10 or 5-10-10 fertilizer for each 1,000 square feet is about the right amount of fertilizer to use. One pint of fertilizer weighs about one pound. If you work the fertilizer into the rows use about eight pounds in each 100 feet of row. Use lime only if you need it.

Select varieties adapted to this area. Get varieties which are resistant to diseases when possible.

I have garden bulletings which give all the details and recommendations for gardening. This gives planting dates, recommended varieties, amount to plant, discription of varieties and much more good information. You may have one of these for the asking.

If you want your soil tested I will be glad to send the soil to the testing laboratory and then help you understand and use the information.

Yours very truly,

E. L. Phillips
County Agent

ELP:cw

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

VIRGINIA

V. P. I. AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION SERVICE

Mathews, Virginia
January 25, 1958

Dear C-Worker:

Do you believe that there is a need for better woodland management in Mathews County?

Do you believe that better woodland management would materially increase the value of your woodland?

Do you believe that better woodland management would materially benefit Mathews County?

Do you think the people in Mathews County are aware of the services and assistance they may receive from the State Forestry Department, the Extension Forestry Department, the ASC program and interested commercial firms?

Do you believe that a determined effort should be made to improve the forestry situation in Mathews County?

Would you be willing to meet with a group of Mathews County woodland owners and forestry specialists to discuss this problem and if it seemed feasible, to help make plans for improving our forestry situation?

If you will meet with such a group please drop me a card or phone me (Mathews 5-5821) and let me know right away. I will be glad to arrange for the meeting.

Frankly I think it is high time we do something about this situation and frankly I think much can be done which will not only benefit you personally but the people in the county as a whole.

Yours very truly,

E. L. Phillips

E. L. Phillips
County Agent