

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

## COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

### *Virginia Agricultural Extension Service*

Mrs. Willette T. Merritt

**Extension Agent**

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1963

Pittsylvania

**County**

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

I. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING AND CARRYING OUT THE EXTENSION PROGRAM

The local leadership in the county work with the Extension Program through the following county wide organizations and committees appointed from these organizations. They are as follows:

\*\* COUNTY HOME ECONOMICS COUNCIL \*\*

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| President - Mrs. Martha Irby       | Vice President - Mrs. Cleopatra Clark     |
| Secretary - Mrs. Serlene Dickerson | Assistant Secretary - Mrs. Pearl Gravelly |
| Treasurer - Mrs. Willie Taylor     |   |

\*\* NUTRITION COMMITTEE \*\*

Chairman - - - - - Mrs. Bessie Leftwich

\*\* HOUSE FURNISHING COMMITTEE \*\*

Chairman - - - - - Mrs. Pattie Moore

\*\* CLOTHING COMMITTEE \*\*

Chairman - - - - - Mrs. Cora Gunter

\*\* COUNTY 4-H LEADERS ASSOCIATION \*\*

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President - Mrs. Minnie Motley | Vice President - Mr. James Harris |
| Secretary - Mrs. Lois Miller   |                                   |
| Treasurer - Mrs. Mary Leftwich |                                   |

A. The Home Economics Council and Committees listed above worked with the extension agent in planning and carrying out the annual plan of work. This year each met and identified the needs and interest of the people and the problems that confronted the county. They assisted in developing a sound long range county program based on factual information. They also assisted in the selection of projects, developing program planning policies and in determining program emphases for the annual program plan.

B. Local leaders made a wonderful contribution to the home demonstration and 4-H programs. They worked with the agent in determining the immediate

needs of the county, encouraged members to do their best, collected facts, compiled the facts and made summaries. The leaders assisted with program planning, helped assemble materials, gave method demonstrations, assisted with setting up exhibits, gave publicity to the club, county, district and state activities, visited result demonstrations, kept records, chaperoned 4-H members outings and represented the county at county, district and state meetings.

C. Thirty-two training meetings were held for adults and nineteen training meetings for 4-H club work. The leaders were selected according to their know how in the area of work in which they were to lead. Other leaders were chosen whom we wish to motivate. Meetings were held to give the leaders adequate training for the respective projects. Leaders were well trained. We encouraged them to discuss at the close of the meeting what they received from the meetings and explain how they plan to use the training. The agent explained to the leaders how the meetings are to be conducted, encouraged them to use the information in their homes and let them know they are expected to serve after receiving the training.

How Can I Improve the Leadership in Pittsylvania County was the topic for two workshops for home demonstration club leaders. Sessions were devoted to: how to get committees to function, how to plan better programs, how to hold better meetings and getting and keeping members in clubs. To culminate the workshops Dr. Fessler of Virginia Polytechnic Institute met with the group and discussed "How To Become A Better Leader" which served as an appropriate finale. Twenty-nine home demonstration leaders and eleven 4-H leaders attended each of the sessions. These meetings grouped to be quite beneficial to our organization.

D. In appraising the leadership program in the county I am happy to say it is more successful than had been anticipated. Membership has grown in the communities where leadership is strongest, community interest and extension programs seem to be more wide spread and on the upswing. Attendance at leader meetings have increased and leaders are willing to serve.

Perhaps even more important than the growth of interest, is the development of the women who are participating. In the words of one member, "We have gained self-confidence. The leadership program has strengthened our program and given us more stature".

#### AGRICULTURAL PHASE OF THE EXTENSION PROGRAM

The local leadership has not been greatly involved in planning and carrying out the agricultural phase of the extension program because this agent has been in the county only six (6) months. The former farm agent worked in the county only five (5) months before going on military leave. Therefore, this agent has spent a considerable amount of time studying and evaluating the present situation and determining a logical course of action. By studying and evaluating the present situation in the county I have been able to orientate the local leadership to the Agricultural Phase of the Extension Program emphasizing the importance and roles of local leaders in developing a good Extension Program. Plans are now being formulated to involve the local leadership in planning and carrying out the County Extension Program by organizing an Advisory Board, Agronomy and Livestock Committees.

II.

\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

In the process of studying and evaluating the present county situation this agent was able to concentrate some effort on two phases given major emphasis in the project area.

A. Agricultural Production, Management and Natural Resource Use

1. TOBACCO PRODUCTION

2. This phase received major emphasis because tobacco is the primary cash crop in the county. The average yield in the county is near the highest of the state; yet many farmers' averages are among the lowest.

3. The objective of this phase of work was to improve the quality of tobacco produced and to aid farmers in preparing their tobacco for market more carefully.

4. Many farmers contacted have been made aware of the importance of raising quality tobacco and spending time properly preparing it for market as a result of farm visits, radio talks, circular letters and tobacco grading demonstrations.

Three radio talks were presented on this phase of work. These talks were entitled "Having Good Light For Sorting Tobacco, Tobacco Rotation and Preparing Tobacco For Market More Carefully in 1963".

Two circular letters and two bulletins on harvesting and preparing tobacco for market were mailed to the tobacco producers contacted.

Four Tobacco Grading Demonstrations enabled sixty-six persons to receive current information on grading tobacco. These tobacco grading demonstrations were conducted by Dr. Jones E. Jeffries, Government Grader USDA, who emphasized the importance of having good light for grading tobacco, the procedure to follow in order to grade tobacco properly

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TOBACCO PRODUCTION CONTINUED :

and how to market your crop. Dr. Jeffries discussed the advantages of using a fluorescent fixture with two 40 watt "deluxe cool white" tubes for sorting tobacco. The farmers were also instructed to keep in mind the uses of the various tobacco leaves when grading their crop. Dr. Jeffries suggested that farmers consider the auctionary average price when selling their tobacco instead of relying entirely on the advance price. Those persons attending these demonstrations agreed that this instruction benefited them greatly and will enable them to do a better job of preparing their tobacco for market.

II.

**\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\***

A. Agricultural Production, Management and Natural Resource Use

1. LIVESTOCK - HOG PRODUCTION

2. This phase received major emphasis where practical because most of the farmers contacted have not made any noticeable effort toward taking part in the increasing hog economy in Virginia. Hogs could be raised in a larger number and of a better quality. Several farmers are interested in hogs as a supplementary income.

3. The objective of this phase of work was to increase the number and quality of hogs that are grown in order to provide more ready cash.

4. Several farmers are considering hog raising to supplement their income. Some of their plans have been delayed due to the drought that was experienced in the county this summer, but many are giving Swine Production serious consideration. A farmer in the Clarktown Community has purchased a purebred Landrace gilt to supply some of the pigs to the 4-H'ers who enrolled in the Market Hog Project. This farmer is considering expanding his operation and marketing feeder pigs.

Recently, a farmer in the Keeling Community purchased a purebred Hampshire boar to serve his two Hampshire sows and those of his neighbors. This livestock producer is also planning to expand his operation and to market feeder pigs.

These two swine producers, two other farmers and the agent attended a Feeder Pig Sale in Halifax which increased our knowledge of the prerequisites of Feeder Pig Marketing. This visit to the Farm Bureau Sales Barn in Halifax also stimulated more interest in these four farmers to raise

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LIVESTOCK - HOG PRODUCTION CONTINUED:

feeder pigs and placed them in a position to provide factual information to other farmers about the merits of the Feeder Pig Sales.

In addition to the method discussed above, this agent used farm visits, bulletins and radio talks to accomplish the progress that was made in this project area.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

B. Other Work Within This Project Area

1. FEDERAL GASOLINE TAX REFUND

2. During the period that this agent was studying and evaluating the county situation, information on federal gasoline tax refund was received from Mr. W. J. Nuckolls, Associate Extension Agricultural Economist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Therefore, those farmers contacted were informed about this refund and were encouraged to file for same. It was discovered that farmers in only one community out of the 11 contacted had ever filed this claim. This agent readily provided the farmers with instructions and forms. Several of these farmers filed this refund for the first time during September. However, about two-thirds (2/3) of the farmers contacted were unable to file for this refund because they failed to keep an accurate record of gasoline purchased. The procedure to follow in order to file a federal gasoline refund has been explained to all farmers contacted.

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**\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\***

B. Other Work Within This Project Area

1. HOME GROUND BEAUTIFICATION

2. During the summer the agent was requested to assist several families with their landscaping. To aid these families, the services of Dr. W. L. Watson, Professor of Horticulture at Virginia State College were requested and received. Dr. Watson drew landscaping plans for farm families in two communities during October. These families have agreed to landscape their homes on a yearly budget plan following the landscaping plans. The assistance that Dr. Watson gave has also served as an incentive to other farm families in the county to landscape and/or to improve their existing home grounds after making a landscaping plan.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

C. Extension Home Economics

1. HOME FURNISHINGS

2. Furniture, furnishings and accessories for the home have changed more in the last ten years than for the same period of any given time in history. Families need to know recent trends, how to select furnishings and accessories that are durable, good design and will give long service.

3. Our program activities were directed toward helping homemakers who lacked knowledge of good design, how to select and properly care for furniture and accessories, how to evaluate furniture in terms of their own needs and how to arrange furniture for maximum comfort, convenience and attractiveness.

4. The objective of choosing this area was to further improve skills in the selection, care and arrangement of furniture in the county.

II.

**\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\***

C. Extension Home Economics

1. HOUSE FURNISHING

Home Demonstration Club women recognized that wholesome pride in the home and its surroundings can lead to greater personal and family contentment, better family living and they also realize that a sound house furnishing program must be based on an understanding of the needs of individual families and their income.

The rapid pace of which new homes are being constructed in the county has contributed much to the area, more than 50% of such homes are either owned or occupied by young couples with little or no experience in buying, arranging or caring for furnishings. Today's markets are flooded with many different types and brands of furniture with prices ranging from very cheap to very expensive. In order to make wise decisions as to what to buy, one must know something of the basics in good furniture, construction, lines, design and color in woods as well as overstuffed pieces.

To begin with leaders established goals. The first, development of leaders, secondly, that homes have nice furniture regardless of family income.

The teaching program was designed to (1) to give rural homemakers some background information on fabric combinations, blends and finishes, (2) to help homemakers plan a whole home furnishing program to be completed in a reasonable time which she thinks best according to her income and family needs, (3) to help her recognize good construction in furniture as a basic upon which to expect and appreciate prices quoted.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

C. Extension Home Economics

1. HOUSE FURNISHING CONTINUED:

This area of work was badly needed for all ages. Leaders were called in to assist with the program. Result demonstrators were selected. House Furnishing Specialist, Miss Habel sent material and slides monthly as the program progressed. The first month we studied "The Selection of Furniture" keeping in mind good service, money and improved appearance of the home. Slides emphasizing the points were shown and discussed along with miniature furniture to re-emphasize what we thought important. This was followed by "What Goes With What"? We started with the house itself and identified it by periods, keeping in mind line, design and color. Leaders visited furniture stores to observe furniture and each brought pictures from magazines to the meeting to re-emphasize the lesson.

Arranging the furniture in the home keeping in mind the size of the room and scale of furniture proved to be very interesting. Again this miniature furniture played an important part in putting the lesson over.

Accessories Selection and Arrangement added much humor to our meetings. Each club member brought one accessory to the club meeting they thought was a poor selection or that could be easily done with out in the home. They brought statures of Indians, Dogs, Cats and all kinds of monostrosities. This lesson really made them realize their homes should not be a dumping ground for all the trinkets they accumulate and accessories are to a room what seasoning is to food.

In reaching out and expanding our House Furnishing Program the Home Demonstration Council decided to be a blue ribbon club member,

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

C. Extension Home Economics

1. HOUSE FURNISHING CONTINUED:

you are required to put into practice seven lessons and pass the information on to a non-club member. The club member gets the information to the non-club member and teach her the skills learned at club meeting. She also must bring back to the club progress reports of the non-member. We know this idea helped us reach more people, it also helped us more effectively reach people who cannot come to meetings. It focused attention on the value of extension information and helped to develop more leadership among home demonstration members.

The following areas were also studied during the year.  
Better Lighting, Floor Coverings and Selection of Bedding.

The following was accomplished during the year.

Twenty two volunteer local leaders were trained and assisted with the program.

Leaders gave three (3) demonstrations and made two hundred and one (201) contacts. Six (6) chairs were slip covered to show basic points of measuring for different types of chairs, three (3) discussion demonstrations on color in large and small areas was presented, seventy nine (79) rearranged furniture, one hundred ninety one (191) moved excess accessories, eleven (11) regrouped pictures, thirteen (13) purchased new furniture, fourteen (14) new homes were built, forty eight (48) women made tentative plans covering three to five year span, twelve made excellent progress toward their goals in furnishings. This group will likely improve because of their attitude, work habits and cooperative interest. This project was far reaching and will be continued in many areas.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

C. Extension Home Economics

1. FOODS AND NUTRITION - Food Conservation

The objective of this phase of work is to have well fed families through a home grown and conserved food supply. Recommended methods of freezing, canning, preserving and storing were used for maximum nutritive value.

The agent and leaders gave information and demonstrations on canning quality foods and using pressure to non-acid foods and meats. Twenty one leaders were trained and they shouldered the responsibility in getting families to conserve foods. They gave sixty nine demonstrations, passed out and collected information and kept women informed. Club members reported they canned 101,393 quarts and two hundred and six (206) planned and followed recommendations of conservation.

FROZEN FOODS

This line of food conservation grew during the year, there were fourteen (14) new home units purchased. As a result of trained leaders in this area, I observed families are using better wrapping methods and products are now of higher standards. A rough estimate shows that some one hundred thousand pounds of food have been frozen this year.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

C. Extension Home Economics

1. OUTDOOR MEALS

To plan, prepare, and serve attractive, **economical** and tasty family and community meals that meet the nutritional needs of the body, make eating a pleasure and to develop individual and group responsibility in meal preparation Miss Cameron held a one day leader training meeting which attracted twenty adult leaders. Outdoor meals was the subject for demonstration. The leaders thoroughly enjoyed the new technique in meal preparation for outdoor entertaining.

Since most meal planning and preparation activities are scheduled for the summer months, this type of service is **especially** handy and for picnics <sup>and</sup> church recreation regardless of age.

At least one planned cook-out meal was had by each of the twelve (12) clubs in which the leaders directed just as had been recommended. The Guildfield and Union Hall Clubs entertained some one hundred (100) friends on July 4. Leaders reported assisting with more than thirty outdoor meals.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

D. Four H and Other Extension Youth Programs

1. This phase of the program received major emphasis in that its purpose is to help our youth develop into useful and desirable citizens of a democratic society.

2. To provide an opportunity for wholesome attitudes, good character and leadership qualities.

3. Three hundred and thirty eight 4-H club girls conducted four hundred and thirty projects which were used as teaching tools to develop new skills, knowledge, ability to express self well, poise, self confidence and initiative. Clothing and foods and nutrition represented a majority of projects carried this year.

4. Adult leaders were very active in serving as project leaders and assisting with county picnic, Short Course Delegates, Achievement Program and Rural Life Sunday.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

D. Four-H And Other Extension Youth Programs

1. CLOTHING - Construction and Selection

The recent change in clothing trends toward the use of more casual clothes for many occasions together with the many fabric combinations out of which garments are made brought about many problems in selection, buying and sewing.

The younger 4-H club members were interested in learning to sew. They are interested in looking neat and attractive, "So You'd Like To Sew", was carried in each club.

Twelve leaders worked with one hundred and thirty one members in twenty four instruction groups. These meetings were held in various homes in each club community. The girls were taught the fundamentals of sewing. The following articles were made: laundry bags, head scarfs, skirts, aprons, simple blouses, etc. Eleven clubs held exhibits where two hundred and one articles were on display. These articles were judged by leaders and older 4-H club members. Elizabeth Gaynor won first place on her skirt and blouse and entered it in the county contest.

Ten clubs entered the clothing contest for the county. Janet Beal won first place for the junior group and Bettie Smith won first place for the senior group. Each of the girls won first in the district contest, Bettie entered the state contest but did not win a prize.

This project gave the girls much pride and just as important was the pleasure and satisfaction that they got out of learning how to sew.

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\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

D. Four-H And Other Extension Youth Programs

1. BREAD

This project was one of the most important as well as popular in the county. Two leader training schools were conducted one in making breads and the other in judging. Leaders launched out into the teaching skills with small groups in the homes after school hours and on Saturdays. Girls were making biscuits all over the county and parents were talking about the progress the girls were making. Each club conducted a contest. The best three biscuits won a dry measuring cup; the best from the clubs came up for the county contest. Elaine Roan and Safronia Gunter won as a team and entered the district contest winning first place. Earnestine White entered from the senior group winning first place in the district and second place in the state. As a result of this project, fifty two girls participated in the project and we think better breads are being made in the county.

II.

\*\* REPORT ON PROJECT AREAS \*\*

D. Four - H And Other Extension Youth Programs

1. FOUR - H CLUB WORK - Boys

Eight (8) 4-H clubs have been organized this year in the county with 270 boys enrolling in the following projects: Corn, Forestry, Home Garden, Home Ground Beautification, Market Hog, Sow and Litter, Electric (Unit I), Safety, Wildlife and Tractor. The boys and 4-H leaders are showing considerable interest in the 4-H club program.

The clubs' projects have been of an electrical nature. At the October and November meetings the agent led discussions on the Functions And Importance Of Electrical Fuses preparing the 4-H'ers for an electrical demonstration conducted in December by Mr. Cartee a representative of Virginia Electric and Power Company. At the electrical demonstration the 4-H'ers learned the following:

1. The main causes for most blown fuses.
2. How to determine when a fuse blows.
3. How to properly replace a fuse.
4. The importance of replacing the correct size fuse.
5. How to use Christmas decoration safely.

III.

\*\*\* SUCCESS STORY \*\*\*

The story of Mr. and Mrs. Izea Irby is one we feel of praise. Even though Mrs. Irby has been a member of the Hurt<sup>Home</sup> Demonstration Club for quite a few years, she had never taken an active part in the club activities. This year she was asked to serve as Home Improvement Leader. She accepted and attended two workshops on leadership. At that meeting she decided if she was to lead her community she must first improve her home. After the agent discussed what was needed to bring the home up to standard they decided to build a modern new home with all conveniences which was completed in June. We are also using their home as a result demonstration in Home Beautification. Dr. Watson, Professor of Horticulture, Virginia State College visited the home and drew up plans for landscaping which is already in progress. This family also volunteered to use their farm for the Community Tobacco Grading Demonstration. This meeting was conducted by Dr. Jones Jeffries, Tobacco Grading Specialist. Some twenty six families attended this demonstration. The Irby's were also responsible for organizing the community meeting for cleaning the church grounds and repairing and painting the mail box.

Mrs. Irby said, "I have just realized how wonderful it is to share it has given me the satisfaction of knowing you have helped ~~someone~~ to do something. I now feel if I do not share with others what I have learned I will not be enriching my own life".

Mrs. Irby is called a Blue Ribbon Club Member, because she has two non-club members that she helps each month by giving them the benefit of our club lessons, taking them bulletins and reporting back to the club their progress.

By sharing her home demonstration treasures it made her happy and helped to make better homes, and the community a better place in which to live.

III.

\*\*\* SUCCESS STORY \*\*\*

EDUCATIONAL TOUR

Home Demonstration club women for two years talked about wanting to go on an educational tour. It was decided it would be a trip to Washington, D. C. in celebration of National Home Demonstration Week. In planning the tour leaders said this trip will be strictly for pleasure and education for that reason no one will need to stay up all night preparing a box lunch. The group of eighty five ladies boarded the busses at 3:30 A. M. from Danville, Virginia. Everyone was happy as could be. Arriving in Charlottesville about 7:00 A. M., there the group enjoyed a delicious hot breakfast. Then to Washington, the group visited the Washington Monument, White House, Smithsonian Institute, U. S. Department of Agriculture, where the Home Management Specialist gave a very interesting lecture on "How To Be A Good Manager" and Mr. Sherman Brisco took pictures, following lunch a tour was made of the "Capital" and the day ended at the Zoological Park.

Sixteen of the ladies going on the tour had never been out of Pittsylvania County. Forty eight had never been to Washington and none of the ladies had visited all of the places we visited. The trip provided a learning experience that was broadening as well as cultural. It promoted and aroused interest among members and the general public. This was an opportunity many would not have gotten any other way. As a result of this trip thirty one new members joined our clubs. This trip made a significant contribution to our over all program.

IV.

GENERAL APPRAISAL OF PAST YEAR

Through the organized program families are taking a renewed interest. Family relationships are very good. They have developed an interest in solving problems. They have also developed a concern in the improvement of the neighbor and the community.

Local leadership activities have improved 100% in participation and in number during the year.

Working close to the program planning leaders account for much of the success this year.

With an efficient secretary and additional supplies have contributed much to reaching more people with needed information and getting the job done as it should be.