

The Extension program has been well received by the people of the county and a good spirit of cooperation has existed between all agencies. Perhaps the most outstanding progress made has been in a better understanding and attitude of our rural people toward working together and following scientific information which has been proven at the various experiment stations.

membership meeting to be held in August.

The agent attended the Institute of Rural Affairs at VPI from July 26 - 28. It is estimated that from 50 to 75 county people attended at least part of the institute.

A conference was held in August with the FHA Supervisor to discuss ways and means of helping their clients. The agent was invited to and attended the Laurel Branch Home Demonstration Club family picnic in August.

He attended the Home Demonstration Annual Achievement Program on September 17.

On September 6, the agent and one of the Vocational Agricultural Instructors judged the agricultural exhibits at the Montgomery County Fair. He attended a District Conference in Roanoke on April 28, the annual Extension Conference at VPI from August 23-26, and another District Conference in Roanoke on October 27 and 28. He attended all the Ruritan Club meetings during the year and served on the agricultural committee of the club. The agent was an invited speaker at two neighboring Ruritan Clubs during the year.

Numerous office calls were received for information on the Social Security program, for farm record books and for blue print plans for farm buildings and trench silos. The agent attended a trench silo construction demonstration at Galax in October. There were 8 farmers from this county attending.

The agent appeared on 14 television programs and gave 6 radio programs during 1955. He secured the assistance of A. S. Beecher from the Horticultural Department, who met with a church committee at Willis and planned the landscape around the new church building. The agent was also a speaker at the Floyd Garden Club meeting on September 27 and discussed seeding and management of lawns.

held early in November at Willis, Indian Valley, Alum Ridge, Check and Floyd.

Approximately 150 farmers were reached.

The agent has worked in cooperation with the SGS, Farmers Home Administration and the Vocational Agricultural Departments. A very good spirit of cooperation exists among the personnel of all agencies working with farm people in the county.

In December, 1954, the agent arranged for a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the Social Security program and how it affects farmers. Mr. V. B. Holloman from the Roanoke Office discussed this subject. There were 55 people present. During October the agent arranged for and assisted with four meetings in the county at Floyd, Willis, Indian Valley and Check for the purpose of discussing the program and to point out the farmer's responsibilities. Two representatives of the Roanoke Office attended these meetings. Approximately 150 farm people attended.

7. Miscellaneous

The agent participated in many meetings throughout the year. In early February he attended the Virginia Farm Development Program Work Shop at Abingdon. He attended the Virginia Bankers Agricultural Credit Conference at Natural Bridge from March 6-9, as a guest of The Bank of Floyd. He was an invited guest at the Father-Son FFA Banquet at Willis and also at Floyd.

On March 25, a county-wide meeting was held with 31 people present at which time D. U. Livermore of VPI discussed "What State Services Do We Want and How Shall We Pay for Them". The agent attended a Water Resources meeting at Riner in April. He attended the Roanoke Fair committee meeting on May 31 and in June he attended a meeting to assist with planning the Southern States annual

5. Farm and Home Development Program

Several visits have been made relative to this program. In many instances the farmers contacted were not interested in cooperating with it. Three farm families have indicated their desire to cooperate and the program has been discussed in a rather general way although no plans have been developed more than in conversation. Problems relative to farm buildings, livestock, crop rotations, fertilization, etc. have been discussed in detail with two of the farmers. On several occasions when the agent visited he found that the farmers were busy with their harvesting and could not discuss the program at the time. It is contemplated that during the winter months considerable time will be spent on this phase of work.

6. Cooperation With Other Agencies

The Professional Agricultural Workers Council has not met for several months. The interest gradually declined until finally no one came to the meetings.

The agent has worked rather closely with the ASC County Committee throughout the year. He assisted in selecting practices to be recommended for the 1956 program. He also, with the county committee, attended the State Convention in Roanoke in June. The agent was chairman of the election board which selected community election boards to carry out the 1956 program. In September, the agent worked with the ASC committee in selecting practices for the county from the state handbook. The agent attended a district meeting in Abingdon at which time the wool incentive payment program was discussed. During October, the agent attended a district meeting at Pulaski to hear a discussion on the 1956 program and following this, plans were made to have five local meetings to discuss this with county farmers. These meetings were

meetings and in March, F. H. Scott from VPI discussed vegetables at the Topeco Community Club. Monthly garden suggestion sheets prepared at VPI were mailed out to about 75 families. All families within the area of two community improvement clubs were included.

Practically each week before and during the growing season, the agent prepared news articles on various cultural practices, disease and insect control. Several television programs were devoted to this subject.

Commercial vegetable production has declined in recent years because of diseases and the lack of sufficient labor, however, a few farmers are still producing snap beans and cabbage for local plants.

4. Forestry

Application forms to secure tree seedlings were made available. Farmers were assisted with filing their applications and it is estimated that from 75,000 to 80,000 white pine seedlings were received. Considerable publicity was given on fire prevention, the importance of preventing grazing of forest lands and the need for more forest tree plantings. At the five meetings held in the county to discuss the ASC program, emphasis was placed on the need for increased participation in the forestry practices.

The agent with two farmers and three Agricultural Instructors, attended the area "Plant More Trees" meeting at VPI in September.

In early September, A. B. Lyon from the VPI Forestry Department, discussed fence post treatment at a meeting at the Floyd High School. Plans were made at that time for a post treating demonstration to be held on the J. H. Poff farm on October 12. Working with Mr. Lyon, the agent secured the materials and this demonstration was held although there were only 7 or 8 people present. Following the demonstration, a radio tape recording was made and the process explained in detail. This was used on a nearby station.

(f) Hogs

The major portion of work with hogs has been through 4-H Club projects. The Breeding Pig project, sponsored by Sears, Roebuck & Company, was carried out successfully.

Practically all farm families grow sufficient pork for the family food supply. Much information was distributed through club members, news articles, TV programs, etc. Relatively few office calls were made for information on hogs except relative to the curing process.

(g) Poultry

Relatively little work has been done on poultry except of a general nature. Several 4-H Club members had poultry as their project.

The agent, with three commercial producers, attended a committee meeting at Salem to discuss egg marketing. Another such meeting was attended in February and in June the agent attended the breakfast meeting on the improved egg quality program in Roanoke.

H. L. Moore, Head of the VPI Poultry Department, discussed the poultry situation and poultry production factors at a meeting at Willis on August 2. There were 20 in attendance.

Publicity was given at regular intervals throughout the year relative to the need for improvement in better quality egg production, securing high quality chicks early from reliable hatcheries and general good management practices.

h. Vegetables

Practically all farm families have vegetable gardens. There were three meetings on vegetable production this year. In February the agent discussed the subject at the Falling Branch and Locust Grove Community Club

The agent, with the feeder calf sale committee, attended two or three area meetings to plan for the sale.

Most farmers follow a good vaccination program for blackleg. With the services of a local veterinarian, diseases are kept fairly well under control and at various times throughout the year newspaper and TV publicity is given on the control of lice, flies, grubs, sorefoot, etc. Several farmers were assisted in locating purebred sires.

(e) Sheep

There are approximately 3,000 head of sheep in the county. Many farmers have discontinued the sheep business because of the dog situation.

Publicity has been given through the local paper suggesting treatment for worms and giving good management practices such as a good winter feeding program to prevent paralysis or lambing disease.

The agent and one member of the wool pool sales committee attended a district meeting in Pulaski in April. The sales committee attended a meeting in Sparta, N. C. on May 12 for the purpose of selling the pool, however, since the bids were not satisfactory no sale was made. Another such meeting was held on June 1 at which time the pool was sold. The pool directors met to make plans for the pool which was held on June 10. It was the largest pool ever held in the county. Many farmers from the adjoining counties brought in their wool. A total of 19,830 lbs. of wool was sold for \$10,345.75. The top grade brought 52¢ per pound after handling charges were deducted. The pool was well organized and handled by the farmers themselves with the assistance of the agent and a few of the Vocational Agricultural Instructors. The directors met again on June 27 to settle all accounts. The pool was sold to a private company in Philadelphia.

on January 14.

The agent and the three inseminators attended the annual meeting of the Virginia Artificial Breeding Association at Rocky Mount on August 1.

The officers and directors met five times during the year to discuss their problems. Although the telephone service is completely out in many areas, there has been a slight increase in the number of cows bred artificially this year over 1954. The directors are looking forward to a much better year in 1956 since a new telephone system will be in operation early in the year.

(c) Dairy Herd Improvement Association

The officers and directors of the DHIA met twice during the year. The program started in 1954 with 22 members but now they only have 16 participating.

On July 2, the agent discussed DHIA work at the Floyd-Patrick Annual FFA Field Day on the W. L. Slaughter farm. There were 150 farmers present and the farmer's records were used in this discussion.

Information from the DHIA Supervisor's report is published in the local paper each month.

(d) Beef

Improved pastures have resulted in increased carrying capacities, therefore, more animals can be kept per farm. The type and quality of beef animals are improving each year. The quality of feeder calves at the various sales has done a lot to encourage farmers to purchase better males. Twelve or more farmers consigned 92 yearling steers to the Christiansburg sale on September 20. On September 27, a few farmers consigned calves to the feeder calf sale. Several of these animals were purchased by Floyd County producers to be kept over winter.

County medals will be awarded to several boys for outstanding accomplishments at the next meeting of the county council.

The interest among club members was very good and there is definitely a better understanding of club work on the part of the parents than ever before. This has resulted in better quality projects and improved records.

2. Livestock

(a) Dairy

There were 10,593 milk cows in 1954. More than 1,300 farmers sold whole milk which brought more than \$795,000 in 1954. There are approximately 35 grade A producers. The services of the Artificial Breeding Association and the Dairy Herd Improvement Association are available.

The brucellosis control program was discussed at a county-wide meeting on May 26 by Dr. S. L. Kalison and another veterinarian from VPI. This program was discussed at the Floyd Veterans Club, Check Ruritan Club and at the three Community Improvement Clubs and was given a great deal of publicity in the local paper. In each Community Club, a committee was appointed to make a survey and work with the agent in getting the program organized. Generally speaking, the farmers were rather slow to cooperate in having their cows tested. There were approximately 1,500 animals tested during 1955.

(b) Floyd Artificial Breeding Association

Last December, the directors of the Floyd Artificial Breeding Association met to make plans for their annual meeting and to plan a tour to the Virginia Artificial Breeding Association. This tour was made on January 4 with 30 farmers in attendance.

The annual meeting was held on January 7 with 45 members attending. Dr. S. L. Kalison and W. H. Armstrong discussed the program and encouraged more farmers to use it. The newly elected directors met and selected officers on

place, Bobby Boyd second, Glenn Harris third, Joe Caldwell fourth and Ernest Wade fifth. In early May, five prospective boys to carry this project attended a meeting at Willis with their parents to discuss the program in detail. The pigs were transferred from the Indian Valley Community to the Willis Community on May 28. The agent did the final judging for the Carroll County project on May 30.

The agent attended the Fat Animal Show and Sale in Roenoke on May 10.

During March the agent attended a 4-H camp planning meeting in Christiansburg. The camp program was worked out in detail. From June 20-25 the summer camp was held at Camp Summers with 21 boys and 15 girls from the county attending. Mrs. Hugh Vest was adult leader.

Club members from this county attending the Short Course from June 27 to July 2, included Benita Dickerson, Sue Anna Sweeney, Donna Alderman, Becky Poff, Margie Vest, Robert Richards and Robert Whitlock. Sue Anna Sweeney and Robert Richards were taken into the All Star Chapter. On October 25, five All Stars and the Extension Agents attended the annual district All Star Conference at Dixie Caverns.

Janet Allen and Donna Alderman attended the Conservation Camp at Virginia Beach from July 17-23.

Leon Harris and Linda West attended the Electric Congress in Richmond on September 1 and 2.

Several of the clubs had picnics during May.

Representatives of the power company assisted by giving demonstrations on electrifying lamps, fuses and wiring.

- (4) Assisted the county council in planning their program.
- (5) Furnished members with practical information and record books.
- (6) Recognized outstanding club members for their accomplishments.

(d) Results

There were 18 4-H Clubs for boys organized with an enrollment of 265. Seven of these were combination clubs with girls. During the winter and early spring several of the members discontinued. The club members carried 540 projects. Of this number, 340 projects were completed. Many of the members were interested in carrying the Safety and Electric Projects during the winter months and other types of projects during the summer such as livestock, crops and poultry. Each member was supplied with bulletins and record books according to the type of project.

The 4-H County Council met in the fall of 1954 and goals were set up for the year. They met again in the spring to check up on progress made and further their plans for activities during the remaining part of the year. A committee of the county council met twice in April to plan the Share the Fun program.

This program was held in the local theater on May 24 with approximately 225 people present. Fifty club members participated.

The breeding pig project was conducted in 1955. The gilts were judged by G. C. Price, Carroll County Agent, in December, 1954, and on the same date the agent judged the gilts in the Carroll County project. During March the agent attended a Roanoke meeting to discuss the 4-H Breeding Pig Project. This was a luncheon meeting sponsored by the Sears, Roebuck Foundation. In early May, E. M. Godsey did the final judging. Granville Bishop won first

attended the Farmers Home Administration annual Field Day on the W. L. Slaughter farm in this county. A tour of the farm was made and the various crops were discussed. There were approximately 150 farmers present.

The agent assisted with one tobacco growers' meeting at Alum Ridge in late April to discuss the 1955 marketing quota referendum.

About every means available has been used to publicize the agronomy program including timely news articles, radio and television programs.

VI. MINOR ACTIVITIES

1. 4-H Clubs

(a) Situation: Although there are 4-H Clubs in all schools in the county, we have not been able to secure leaders. No 4-H Clubs are permitted in the schools above the eighth grade. There are 18 clubs for boys with a membership of 265.

(b) Goals:

- (1) Improve quality of project work and secure a higher percentage of completions.
- (2) Have club participation at Short Course, camps, Electric Congress, Council Meetings, etc.
- (3) Encourage participation in county and state contests, particularly the pig project, calf project and WSLC Contest.
- (4) Sponsor "Share the Fun" program.

(c) Methods:

- (1) Developed better understanding and closer cooperation with parents.
- (2) Assisted club members in planning more interesting programs.
- (3) Attempted to secure leaders to assist with programs, camps and other activities.

Pasture improvement has continued at a high level. The 1955 ASC program paid the farmers approximately \$90,000 for practices carried out although a small percentage was for drainage and forestry work.

The Agronomy Committee met with 17 members present. G. R. Epperson of the VPI Agronomy Department, assisted with the discussion. This group selected certain phases of work to receive special emphasis.

A corn experiment was conducted on the George Slusher farm. This experiment was under the supervision of Dr. C. F. Genter and Ed Shulcum from the experiment station. There were 16 different varieties of hybrid corn used. This corn was harvested on September 20 and the results recorded, however, the results have not been worked up and reported back. This experiment attracted considerable attention but since the varieties were not labeled in the field, it was impossible to hold a field meeting to observe it. Another such experiment will be conducted in 1956 and the varieties will be labeled and one or more field days held.

The agent attended a meeting at Salem on December 1, 1954, at which time a discussion was held on soil types, soil analysis and factors affecting fertilization, etc. There were 454 soil samples submitted for analysis from the county during the past year.

The agent discussed corn production at the Willis Young Farmers' Club in early spring. He also discussed fertilizer analysis at a meeting at Willis. At a meeting of the Topeco Community Club, Mr. P. H. DeHart, Assistant Director, discussed fertilizer recommendations.

The agent, with other Professional Workers, attended the Field Day at VPI on May 27 and also another Field Day at VPI on September 9. The agent

(d) Results

The agronomy program has advanced rapidly in recent years. Of course, the major portion of the work was done during the winter months and early spring. During these months much work was done through the Veterans Class, Young Farmers' Clubs, Community Clubs, 4-H Clubs and other organized groups along the lines of seed varieties, fertilizer recommendations, legumes, pastures, and other management practices. The fertilizer and seed dealers were very cooperative in securing the recommended varieties for the area.

An abundance of feed was produced this year and the farmers enjoyed a very favorable growing season. Unusually high yields have been reported—a few farmers producing from 45 to 50 bushels of wheat per acre.

It is estimated that 75 to 80 per cent of the farmers are using hybrid seed corn. Corn yields have increased at least 5 bushels per acre as compared to five years ago. More farmers are using corn for silage. In 1949, 42 farmers had 150 acres while in 1954, 141 farmers had 697 acres. One rather bad practice has developed in recent years and that is an increased number of farmers are leaving their corn standing in the fall, thereby leaving the land bare during the winter months. Most farmers prefer waiting until spring and seeding oats rather than to seed their land to wheat in the fall.

Wheat acreage has gone down considerably during the last five years. In 1949, 778 farmers reported 4,268 acres while in 1954 only 374 farmers reported 1,514 acres.

In 1949, 155 farmers reported 520 acres of alfalfa while in 1954, 577 farmers reported 2,353 acres. Most farmers are expanding their alfalfa acreage each year while others are seeding for the first time. Each year, cultivated acreage is being reduced and that taken out of cultivation is seeded to either alfalfa or Ladino Clover and orchard grass.

accomplishments. The Falling Branch and Locust Grove Clubs requested the agent to supply community members with monthly garden suggestions which were supplied regularly.

2. Agronomy

(a) **Situation:** Although corn yields have increased in recent years, there is need for further improvement. Corn acreage has reduced from 7,200 acres in 1949 to 5,600 acres in 1955. Alfalfa acreage has increased from 520 acres in 1949 to 2,353 acres in 1954. Most farmers are producing sufficient roughage for their needs.

(b) Goals:

- (1) Increase alfalfa, Ladino Clover and orchard grass acreage, improve pastures and reduce cultivated acreage.
- (2) Conduct hybrid corn varietal test.
- (3) Increase acreage of corn for silage.
- (4) Organize an Agronomy Committee.

(c) Methods:

- (1) Secured soil samples for analysis.
- (2) Published seed and fertilizer recommendations and need for sufficient plant food including top dressing when necessary.
- (3) Worked closely with seed dealers in order to supply farmers with recommended varieties.
- (4) Encouraged expanded acreage of alfalfa, Ladino Clover and orchard grass.
- (5) Worked with the experiment station in conducting a local hybrid corn experimental plot.
- (6) Tour to Experiment Station at VPI in September.
- (7) Publicized the importance of harvesting hay at the proper stage of growth.

In July, Dr. Kirkpatrick, Recreation Specialist, conducted a recreation leadership meeting. Two of the clubs participated and several new games were introduced. This has meant a great deal to the recreation and entertainment part of the club meetings.

The communities were judged on October 19 and 20 with the Falling Branch Community winning first place, Locust Grove second and Topeco third. The county awards meeting was held on October 22 at which time each community gave a brief report on their club activities. Mr. R. E. Jarratt, Executive Vice President of The Bank of Floyd, presented the communities with their prize checks in the amounts of \$50, \$30 and \$20, respectively. The Falling Branch Community was judged in the area contest on November 4 and received the fifth prize of \$75 in cash at the awards meeting held in Roanoke on November 17. The area project is sponsored by the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce.

As a result of this program, many improvements have been made not only in the homes and on the farms, but community-wide improvements such as roadside beautification, picnic areas, road improvements, highway signs, church ground improvements and many others. Since these families have been working together in groups, they no longer hesitate to request specialist help when needed. Specialists have been called in at various times during the year.

Publicity has been given in the local paper as well as the area daily paper and on radio and television programs. Motion pictures and slides were taken and shown on the TV program and were shown back in two of the communities. One community club member from the winning club appeared with the agent on a TV program. Two clubs prepared radio tape recordings. All clubs participated in the enlightenment program and, of course, all clubs prepared a scrapbook which gave a rather complete picture and story of the community activities and

- (4) Planning meetings.
- (5) Training meetings.
- (6) Tours.
- (7) Radio, television and newspaper publicity.
- (8) Specialist help and educational literature.

(d) Results

This program has been one of the most important phases of the Extension Program as it involves all parts of the work in one way or another. It has resulted in bringing families together in a better fellowship, cooperative, working spirit. It has developed leadership and pride.

There were three Community Improvement Clubs actively participating in the Roanoke Area project this year. It was the fourth year of participation for two of the clubs and the third year for the other.

A local sponsor was secured, it being The Bank of Floyd, who agreed to donate \$100 in cash prizes. Each community held their planning meetings early and began work immediately. The agent worked with various committees and offered suggestions.

Some of the activities carried on by the various clubs included such things as members bringing in gifts for a needy family and orphanage at Christmas, gift exchange, fruit baskets prepared for the sick and shut-in, regular potluck or covered dish suppers, picnics from time to time, motion pictures and slides on community improvement in the area and local community, safety films, community clean-up day, vegetable production discussions, fertilizer recommendations by Mr. P. H. DeHart, Bangs Disease progra, etc.

Eight people from the county attended the Open House program in the Newburn Community, Pulaski County, in May.

Committee, Community Clubs with their various committees, Young Farmers' Clubs, Feeder Calf Sale Committee, Milk Company Representatives, 4-H Club Council and contacts with other Professional Workers. Many discussions on various phases of work with individual farmers were considered.

The Professional Workers Council was not active this year.

A year ago, a Farmers Cooperative was organized for the purpose of purchasing high analysis fertilizers.

Other services available to the people include Vocational Agriculture and Home Economics in three high schools, Veterans Class in one school, two Young Farmer's Clubs, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration and the ASC.

V. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

1. Community Improvement Club Program

- (a) Situation: There are three Community Improvement Clubs in the county.
- (b) Goals
 - (1) Encourage rural families to work together for the development of the community.
 - (2) Promote a higher standard of living by developing a sound system of farming and improving the convenience, comfort and attractiveness of the homes.
 - (3) Develop leadership, citizenship and good will among families in the communities.
- (c) Methods
 - (1) Work with special committees.
 - (2) Discussions.
 - (3) Motion pictures and slides.

acres in 1945 to an estimated 4,000 acres this year.

Talladago soil is one of the poorer type soils and makes up a major percentage and is mainly used for pastures and woodland. Blevins, which is an average crop soil, is of course, being used for cropland. The best two cropland soils in the county are Alleghany and Raburn, however, they are relatively scarce.

Commercial vegetable production has declined in recent years due to insects, diseases and lack of labor.

Due to topography, climate and farm water supply, the county is well adapted to grazing. Approximately one-fourth of the farmers have plans under the Soil Conservation Service program and less than half of the farmers are participating in the ASC Program.

IV. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

The Extension program started in the county in 1936. For the past fifteen years the services of both a County and a Home Demonstration Agent have been available except this year there was no Home Agent from January 1 to October 1. The county personnel includes the County Agent, Home Demonstration Agent and Office Secretary.

In 1955, there were 11 4-H Clubs for boys, 15 for girls and 7 combination with a total enrollment of 265 boys and 338 girls. There are 19 Home Demonstration Clubs with a membership of approximately 500. Three Community Improvement Clubs participated in the Roanoke Area contest this year. A County Board of Agriculture was organized in February.

Work and planning with other groups was very helpful in setting up the Extension Plan of Work. These groups included the Agronomy Committee, Artificial Breeding Association, Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Wool Pool

III. BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND TYPE OF AGRICULTURE

Floyd County is one of the mountain plateau counties and lies just west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the newly formed West Central Extension District. The area is 376 sq. miles with a population of approximately 12,000 people. Of the total area, 82.5% is in farms. There are 2,160 farms now with an average size of 94 acres. There were 2,322 farms in 1950.

The county is almost entirely dependent upon agriculture for its income. Approximately 5% of the farms are operated by tenants and about half of the farms showed gross sales of less than \$600 (1950 census) and 35% contained less than 50 acres.

The elevation ranges from 2,200 to 2,800 feet. Most of the land is rather steep and relatively little level land suitable for cultivation.

Although there are no railroads, the county is well supplied with farm-to-market roads.

In 1944, there were 435 farmers selling milk as compared to 1,425 farmers in 1949. There are perhaps slightly more than that selling milk now.

The sale of whole milk amounts to approximately one-third of the total income.

The county is well supplied with milk routes.

Floyd, the county seat, is the only incorporated town and has a population of 450 people. A small shirt factory employs from 125 to 140 women and many of our people are employed in nearby towns outside the county.

Beef and dairy cattle numbers are practically the same, ranging from 12,000 to 13,000. Between 1945 and 1950, cattle and calf numbers increased from 14,532 to 23,072 and the 1954 report shows 21,236.

The acreage of corn has been decreasing for several years, however, the yields have improved. Alfalfa acreage has increased from approximately 85

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Annual Report

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service



1955

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Floyd
county