

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

For

Calendar Year 1959

<u>Major phases of project or subdivisions of project covered</u>	<u>Name of Worker</u>	<u>Percentage of time devoted to entire project by each worker</u>
General Administration and Editorial	R. D. Michael	100*
Bulletins and Circulars	A. M. Deakens Caroline J. Pace	100** 35*
Press Service and Periodicals	Mrs. Gene Moody (Vacant)	50* 100
Radio and Television	R. L. Rees	100*
Visual Aids	W. F. Bradley (Caroline J. Pace) Mrs. Hopa Banks	100* 65* 100
Motion Picture Production***	Norman E. C. Hall Leonard Pullen Theodore Klimes H. Leroy Mills	100 100 100 100

Date submitted: May 1 1959

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_ 1959

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Department

Date approved: May 4 1959

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

State Director of Extension

Date approved: MAY 19 1959

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator, Federal Extension, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

\* 25% Experiment Station

\*\* 50% Experiment Station

\*\*\* Project supported 20% by Extension Service, plus supervision.

### Situation and Analysis

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

With an identical paragraph, the plan of work for 1958 began, and was followed by statements that this department lags far behind in growth when compared with other departments, number of projects, etc. Such statements could also be repeated, even though arrangements have been made for this department to gain a half of a specialist. This addition should help materially in meeting the many requests for help in publicizing meetings, tours, demonstrations, and the like throughout the state.

The administration has been generous in replacing worn out or out-moded equipment so that mechanically our operations in photography, visual aids, motion picture production, recording and dubbing, offset printing, addressing, and related work remain at a high level of efficiency. Studies will be made of clerical operations in the use of this equipment to determine if greater efficiency is possible.

With a steady increase in specialists' activities, more and more material is written and issued for public consumption, but we are

forced to give much of this only a quick glance and some of it needs careful editing. Another editorial short-coming, by comparison with other states, is the lack of a home economics editor. With more and more rural living predicted for the future, more attention to this kind of information seems inevitable.

Although further expansion in the staff of this department will in final analysis be the answer to meeting mounting demands, there will be a continuing study of what is now being done with a view to more efficient and effective operation. Some surveys are needed to determine if we can modify or reduce the amount of periodical publications of Extension. On the other hand, there is a growing sentiment among research workers for a periodical from the Experiment Station.

More specific discussion of Extension periodicals follows.

#### Periodicals

##### Extension Service News

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

At present the News is mailed monthly to about 26,000 families. This number might well be doubled, but to do so will require the efforts of county personnel to acquaint more people with the publication, invit-

ing interested persons to request that their names be put on the list. Special work with Southwest district and county personnel to this end is planned for 1959.

#### 4-H Club Paper:

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

A chief problem has been in the mailing list, especially difficult to handle because of the large annual turnover in Club enrollment. It is being solved in several counties by mailing to agents in bulk for distribution at club meetings.

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

#### Virginia Farm Economics:

This quarterly publication goes to a select list of only about 2,000; consequently no special problem is involved. For general consumption, however, the content is frequently too difficult. Efforts will be continued to aid writers of economics material to make their writings easier to understand. Workshops that should develop following the NFAC spearhead in written communications should help materially in this and similar work.

### Readership Surveys

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

### Bulletins and Circulars

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

Much material formerly mimeographed is being converted to circulars of the regular series and produced by offset printing on our own machines. This is a desirable trend but has not lessened the mimeographing load as much as was anticipated, since more informational material is being generated. The office-type of offset machine has been so perfected that it is now much more efficient than mimeographing and produces much more attractive material. Future replacement of office duplicating machines for general service should take this situation into account.

Printing delays are in many instances a serious problem. Some of these arise because all printing is not planned very far ahead. With the help of the administration, much more planning is now being done--

perhaps as much as can be done--but emergencies continue to arise. Other delays occur because we have a large amount of material on offset plates --so much in fact that one machine often runs several weeks behind just in replenishing supplies. Still other delays arise because we must send many of our larger jobs through the state printing section for contract work. Handling editorial and printing problems over a distance of 200 miles has its drawbacks.

The current supply of Extension, Experiment Station, and USDA publications is now being kept in one general area, making the filling of orders from the counties and general requests easier to handle. Some work still needs to be done to get the Station material properly organized and inventoried, although it is now in much better shape than it has been for years.

#### News Service

##### State Level

A large volume of news goes regularly to daily and weekly papers in the state, to radio stations, and to farm journals. Each week a packet of 15 or more stories goes by mail. Occasionally an Associated Press reporter visits the campus and files stories based on his interviews with agriculturalists. Special events out in the state receive as much spot news coverage as possible. Special news packets are also arranged for distribution to papers which wish to run annual farm and home editions. Although "exclusives" are not allowed, many individual

requests for information, pictures, etc., are also handled, both from newspapers and farm journals,

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

There seem to be no serious problems in the operations of our news services as to either quantity or quality. The mechanics of distribution are as efficient as we can make them.

Some attendant problems do need attention, as follows:

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

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

3. Not enough of our material is accompanied by illustrations. Suitable photographs are welcomed by news editors and add greatly to the value of information. To serve weekly papers, a mat<sup>e</sup> service is desirable, but

is expensive. We now do some illustrative service for news but our present service should be more than doubled.

#### County Level

In general, our studies show that most of the weekly papers are being well supplied with information from county offices, in addition to material from the state office. Counties near the large daily papers also make frequent use of the dailies. Here again we know of no serious problems as to quantity or quality, but there is undoubtedly room for improvement in many places. Our method has been to make individual visits to check up on weak spots and this will be intensified with the gain of one person half time in news work.

A need for workshops in news writing among Extension agents has been felt for a long time but getting them into the over-all program has not been easy. Now with the impetus given by NEAC to attending to the problems of "written communications," an indirect but effective approach to news writing problems will be provided.

#### Radio

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

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

The present tape service from V.F.I. to approximately 50 stations will be extended wherever possible, although nearly all rural areas are being reached by one or more stations using V.F.I. tapes. If there were enough manpower available, it would be very desirable to regionalize the material put on the tape service.

#### Telecasting

This means of communication has great potential for Extension if suitable hours of use can be had in competition with commercial programs. Within the limits of available personnel and time, these are plans for 1959: Continue a weekly 30-minute presentation by VFI specialists (mostly by the radio-TV specialist in 1958) over a Roanoke station, and an intermittent series over one in Norfolk. Attempt to reestablish programs by county agents over stations in Petersburg, Harrisonburg, and Bristol. Hold telecasting schools as needed. Support county workers with program suggestions, kits of visuals, and other telecasting aids. And distribute the products of the motion picture unit to TV outlets as widely and as often as the situation indicates.

### Visual Aids

1. The need for additional help in studio photography and laboratory operations has been met by the addition of student help on an hourly basis. Since demands for special copywork and studio photography as well as for developing and printing are still increasing, more of this type of help will be needed.

2. Much good material is developed by Extension specialists and Experiment Station personnel for use in the field. Some of this would lend itself to being photographed on slides or could be made suitable for photographing. Most of the material so developed is put on charts or posters and never becomes available as a slide set, with script, for use in the counties. This additional use of material has been discussed with a number of staff members, both Extension and Experiment Station, and further development will be continued as time permits.

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

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

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

6. The film library will, of course, be maintained and added to as much as possible, and the film catalog will be revised and kept up to date as frequently as possible.

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

#### Motion Picture Production

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

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

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education has been too well established to question.

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

#### Other Activities

In addition to the training work already mentioned under radio and TV, news, and visual aids, these activities will, if at all possible, be undertaken in 1959:

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

2. Arrange for a one-day or two-day on-campus session with news, radio, and TV persons interested in knowing more about VPI and its agricultural activities. This, too, has been on paper for several years, but the information staff is so much occupied with meetings arranged by other departments that it has little time for its own plans.

3. Arrange a special session between home economics specialists and women's editors of news, radio, and TV in the state. This also has been in the planning stage for a couple of years and has been discussed with home demonstration specialists, but no definite action taken although favorably considered.

4. Continue to give the best possible cooperation to other agencies, such as ASC, SCS, SC Districts, Vocational Education, State Department of Agriculture; to such Extension-related programs as safety, health, medical care, farm-city week, etc; and to savings bonds and similar worthy "drives."

5. Continue efforts to pull together in one location the various informational activities, not only of this scattered department but other related activities. The various phases of communications side--editing, news, radio, TV, photography, motion picture production, visual aids, printing, distribution--could function much more efficiently if they were housed under one roof. This department alone is in three different locations.

To this end, two members of this department served on a special committee appointed by the vice-president to study campus publications as to need and facilities for handling. This department was especially interested in the facilities angle and joined in the recommendation that all public relations activities be housed closer together. A somewhat similar gesture was made to the committee studying capital outlay needs for agriculture in a request for 11,000 square feet of space in one general location, if an additional building for the agricultural school will make this possible.