

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service

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1958

ESSEX

County

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TYPE OF AGRICULTURE IN ESSEX COUNTY

ESSEX COUNTY is in the NORTHERN PART of the South Eastern Section of Virginia. It is located on the Tidewater Trail, in the Rappahannock River Valley. Bounded on the south by Middlesex County, on the east by the Rappahannock River, on the west by King and Queen and on the north by Caroline Counties, respectively.

Essex County is one of the smaller counties, with three magisterial districts with a total of 160,000 acres of land within its boundary. 67.4% of the 160,000 acres is in cultivation, and the average size of the farms in Essex County is 176.0 acres, as compared with the state average of 116.8 acres according to the 1954 Census of Agriculture.

The Soils are principally of the Coastal texture, found commonly in the Tidewater section, well suited for Grain, Grasses and Livestock. General Farming is most predominant in the county. At one time truck crops, such as watermelons, fruits and tomatoes were the leading crops.

Livestock production is on the increase, there is need for better quality and larger quantity. The production of poultry is one the increase, for Eggs.

The County has two main Highways, leading in the four directions, lending aid for transporting our produce to market and also for the hauling in of manufactured product for use in the county. At one time water transportation was the sole means of transportation for all produce and product. Lumber and some lumber product are the main employment for off the Farm source of income for many workers, other seek employment in the nearby cities and return home by night.

We now have a fewer farmers living on the farm, farming for a living than ever before. The people are renting their crop lands to mechanized farmer and they are seeking employment else where, because they can not afford to purchase high cost machinery for what they have to harvest.

These clubs are concerned with community problems and progress. There are six of these clubs in the county in the thickly settled communities, representing more than two hundred and fifty families.

These clubs serve as first reading groups, many work on community projects such as use of Para Wood hours, for wine improvement of the community, use of Psychiatry Clinics for developing community leaders to help others.

Community Clubs and Leaders, con't

It is through the community clubs we are able to get a large number of our potential leaders or key people to help with the Extension Program in the community and County. There are naturally two types of leaders present in each community and neighborhood, the natural born and the self appointed. The community selected and the fellow who would like to be up front, through these community clubs by careful cooperation we have been able to get some good and reliable leaders or community workers. There are 86 adult leaders scattered over the county, that serve in more than one or more capacity. These leaders are in many cases the community officer for the club, they are also leaders who are serving in other organizations, such as; the church, school programs and such.

Where ever and when ever we find a leader exceptionally gifted in doing certain things on a certain thing well it is the policy to give him or her special training in this phase of work, for example ; take the poultry enterprise, Mrs Louise Washington ,in the Dunnsville Community is exceptionally good in poultry work, she lives it and loves it. It is the goal to help her in her weak points so that she will be able to help others.

Here is another example of leader service to her community and club, Mrs. Sadie Brooks, in the Center Cross Community , a member of the Home-makers club, served at an Upholstry Demonstration Clinic as a trainee, under two Home Demonstration Agents from adjoining Counties, at the Clinic Mrs. Brooks got first hand information by doing , and during this year she and another community member trained ten other members in doing two chairs at one members home. Information gained by these ladies we believe will help them at home and at their work.

Local leaders not only work with adults, but young men and women that desire to know, in problems that are similar to theirs, they also serve as leaders with 4-H Club work in organizational, projects and civic discussion.

MAJOR PROJECTS

SWINE SANITATION AND IMPROVEMENT:

Situation;

Looking over the 1954 Agricultural Census for Essex County we have come upon some significant factors relative to swine production in Essex County. It is reported that 198 farms reported they sold 2,929 hogs and pigs for which they received \$ 85,052.00. This amount was an increased income from 1949 by 32, 479 dollars in the county, these figures also show us that there were only 20 more farms reporting the sale of hogs and pigs than in 1949.

A further search shows that the sale of Swine in any form as an Agricultural product rates third to the sale of cattle and eggs respectively. Through observations, figures and surveys there are several factors that we believe have had much influence upon the income of the farmer in the sale of Swine.

- No 1. Too few farmers have neglected sanitation and rotation in the production of swine.
2. Too many farmers have neglected proper feeding space for their hogs and pigs, too often disregard any sanitation practices.
3. To many hogs reach maturity without any treatment for worms and parasites
4. Too many fail to recognize that breed has some thing to quality and growth of hogs.

Goal;

1. To establish atleast ten demonstrations over the county in
a. Sanitation b. Feeding Space c. Rotation
2. To get atleast 5 farmers to purchase high grade or Purebred boar for breeding purpose in their herd and community service.

Method of Establishing;

Through discussion with group and individual farmers over the county try to arouse interest in better and faster growing pigs and hogs where ever interest is manifested. To discuss with the farmers or farmer what he can expect to get in return for improvements in his hogs, through faster growth, and greater return for feed consumed.

Swine Sanitation and Improvement. Con't

After finding the interest of the farmer and he understands his problem we would proceed with him to furnish him with what ever information or assistance necessary to help him correct his problem if possible. If its is seeding and lining or securing better swine as foundation stock to head his herd or replace already swine on hand.

Results;

Realizing that in many instance we can not expect a farmer or a group of farmers to make all changes in one month, or year. We work towards a long time program , get first things needed first.

In the Oseana Community, working with Banks Bayton and Family, a general farmer who grows a large acreage of grain has no particular feed problem and who sell atleast 150 fat hogs each year, however' he has other problems, such as worming, and housing. Bayton used a cross between Yorkshire male and Hampshire females which are producing a very fast growing pig or shoat. He sells very few if any pigs locally, and at this time has about fifty shoats of Yorkshire and Hampshire cross ready for market.

As for feeding and grazing, Bayton has his own grain supplemented by using a little hog concentrate of 35% . For grazing he used an acre newly seeded Ladino and Alfalfa Pasture properly fertilized and Limed, and a Community Style Hog house. The pasture was reseeded in 1957 and the Hog House in 1956. In comparison we would rate Bayton's situation at the top just now but let use take in account some other situations and see what these farmers are doing about their problem.

William E. Lane, in Millers Community a young veteran and farmer has established a Spotted Poland China project in farming enterprize. Lane set up his project by purchasing two bred gilts at the Pure bred Swine Sale August 1957 at a cost of two hundred and sixteen dollars (\$216.00) a pair. unfortunately Lane lost one of his gilts in three days after purchase, However the consignee voluntarily when notified of the lost gave Lane another bred gilt 6 months later. To continue this project Lane purchased a registered Male at the August Sale of 1958 to breed to to his sows for \$ 76.00. Unlike many farmers when Lane decided that he wanted to enter into the Swine Business, he did buy the sows first and then get some Grazing started, he established the pasture first while looking around and deciding on the breed he wanted. Lane and his father are Commercial Certified Seed producer of a large seed establishment in the State.

These two farmers mentioned here are of the type who have two or more sows that produce atleast; two litters of pigs each year, on the other hand we have farmers who are ~~only~~ purchaser of pigs and shoats for home use and few to sell, they are in many cases owners of sows and boars, what ever be the case we realize that he too has his problems, to locate good pigs, secure good feed and make use of what ever feed he has on his farm.

Swine sanitation and Improvements, Con't

In dealing with the problem of Sanitation in the county two factors are taken into consideration, resources and size of enterprise. Not many farmers are of the size and do not have the resources that these farmers have but we realize that he is doing his very best with what he has and must be helped in that light, often times he is doing his very best as to what he knows, if this is the case then we help him to simply keep his present hog pen clean and to if needed worm his pigs or hogs to help him get the largest return from feed consumed

With the trend towards Commercialization in the Hog production in the State and county, many farmers are considering the business of the Sow and Pig replacement business on the farm. Where the farmer will raise pigs to the weaning age, sell them to the Pig Parlor Farmer and let him grow them out for market hogs. Four farmers have already indicated that they are making definite plans for such operation and have been approached by several grower to rear pigs for them as replacement.

Another enterprise that is new, the Purebred Feeder Pig Sale, the First such sale was held at the Local Market in October 1958, with 730 Feeder pigs sold by farmers in the area at an average of \$ 19.00 per head.

With the build up of our Swine herds we must for ever be on the look out for outbreak of Hog Cholera and other hog diseases. We can say here though, that since the introduction of the hog sanitation program in the county we have had little or no outbreaks of diseases among hogs.

Poultry Flock Improvement and Eggs.

Situation :

According to the 1954 Agricultural Census, the total returns for poultry and poultry product in Essex County rated second in farm income. With a gross return of \$ 176,449.00, there is a great demand for eggs in the county and in the area with a limited supply being produced on the farm. There is a large demand for quantity and quality fresh eggs produced in the county, there is ample home grown grain that would supplement poultry feed concentrates.

Goal;

1. To ^{get} more and larger laying flocks established in the county where ever there is interest in the work especially for eggs.
2. To get the very best laying strain or breed obtainable for the purpose established
3. To encourage record keeping and selling of clean ,fresh eggs.

Poultry , Son't

Method of Procedure;

To work with interested families in the production of Poultry and its products to the extent of helping them first know the facts of producing, and selling. By helping them study successful and records of failures , to explain to the interested why the particular of failure is being use along with records of success. Also, help them to study the records of interested breeds and obtain all information possible on Record of Performance of the Breed the farmer is interested in.

To also work with the farmer or group of farmers in locating reliable buyers for the product produced, and especially if the product is eggs encourage them to sell nothing but clean and eggs of good quality.

Results;

On most farms in every county can be found some ham of questionable origin and records unknown, the same thing here in Essex County exists. Over a period of years we have been working to get first flocks of known origin and obtainable records of some performance, three breeds of poultry stand out in Essex County, they are Leghorn, Plymouth Rocks and New Hampshire Reds. These breeds are giving some good records, and the farmers are satisfied with their contribution to the family income.

There are several farmers who are really making some noticeable records and are producing the quality product. Take the family of Mr and Mrs William H. Washington, of the Dunnsville Community. The Washington family consist of two adults , one son and two adopted children, they live on a small farm, they do general farming with some livestock for home use and for market and 850 laying hens.

About five years ago the Washingtons attempted to raise Chickens and turkeys on the same ground and in close quarters, each year they would report a large lost of hens to Black Head Disease contracted from the turkeys, after some study and contact with Mr. A.L. Dean, Associate Director of Poultry Husbandry at V.P.I. Blacksburg, Va. who recommended to go out of Turkey production or out of Poultry production because the two enterprises would not pay on the same farm. At the end of the year the Washingtons decided to give up turkeys and place more time and interest in the production of eggs. Already with a good Home Market for their eggs , in 1957 they had 175 N.H.Red as their farm flock, in 1957 spring they increased their flock by 500 H.N. Leghorn layers and this time the Washingtons with replacements of the same breed they have 700 Leghorn and 150 N.H.Red.

The Washington's Laying house was enlarged to accommodate these additional and they have automatic fountains, and swinging metal feeders. Seventy five percent of the house is made of Aluminum Sheet Tin, framed on Home Crown Locust post. With a nest ratio of one to five .By the return of warm weather in 1959 they will have completed their Egg cooling room according to instruction and will be producing Clean Eggs that will meet the standard requirements.

poultry, can't

Results;

With the Washington family there exist an unwritten contract with a local feed store and Egg buying Station that the station will buy all the eggs they can produce. Going over all sales slips for the family from January 1, 1958 thru October 31st. The Agents Office found that they had sold to the grading station 7,943 dozen eggs or 264 cases and 23 dozen at a gross income of \$ 3,210.97 with a feed cost of \$ 7.50 a day or during the same time of ten months of \$ 2,100.00 giving them an income net of \$ 1,110.97 or \$ 111.09 per month. In addition to this sale to the grading station the family sell locally to home customers at least two cases per week at \$ 15.00 per case or .50 cent per dozen the year round.

With the Washington family certain things are a necessity so far as these eggs are concerned, they must be gathered atleast twice a day, washed in a special washing compound and crated each day, this is usually taken care of during the late evening or shortly after supper. The eggs are picked up each Tuesday by a special truck.

This case of egg production is one of the two in the county when you come to eggs in cases and hens by the hundred. In the Center Cross Community the family of Mr and Mrs William Harris is similiar, only it is very new , just one year old , began in May 1958. The Harris' are retired people of above 65 years , who wanted some thing to do other than to just sit around and hold their hands they said, being country borned and being active they decided to raise a few hens and sell a few eggs. This is their third year in the county and first year in poultry with more than 50 hens. Just now they have 460 HN Leghorn hens producing 32 dozen eggs per day or more than a case per day. The Harris family has a total of 900 hens and pullets that will be in full production by the beginning of the year.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Situation;

In reading the 1950 Census of Population, Volume 11, on Characteristics of the Population, Part 46 for Virginia. Which states that in Essex County 68.7 % of the Population has than \$ 2,000.00 income and that the largest number of families and unrelated individuals have an income that range from \$ 500.00 to \$ 999.00 per year. This is also true according to the census, that the largest number of individuals in the county according to ages fall in the group from 10 to 14 years of age. Keeping this in mind, that this is the group often is the most crowded for sleeping space.

Goal: To get where ever possible some additional rooms added or made habitable to relieve this crowded situation

To get more homes painted or some type of siding put on homes that have not or that are painted.

To get more families interested in installing Running Water in the Home.

Methods of Approach:

During regular visits in Community and homes where these problems exist, take notice and make mention with the family while visiting. Explain during discussion the benefits of making improvements, how it would make for better family relations and what it would do for those that are living under these abnormal conditions.

Another factor to be taken into consideration after a desire for change has been manifested, the cost of such if possible or tell the family where they can get assistance in cost estimation, labor and materials.

Results:

That happens to a families pride and their ego can not be measured in terms of dollars and cent, but home improvements can change an individuals outlook on life. This was demonstrated in three families that added one or more rooms and pointed up the same in the community. These families were upon visits eager to show their new additions or improvements. In one case this family had been sleeping in crowded quarters, when improvements were discussed, they were slow to make changes until the husband found that he could do most of the work himself, so with a little assistance the family added a room for the parents, and making more space for the children in what was a crowded house.

At a later date on visiting the home, the husband was eager to show what he had been able to accomplish with little assistance. The fact of the whole matter was that the room added was on the first floor and the husband and wife did not have to go up stairs to go to bed pleased them very much.

As for storage spaces, that is a problem that exist in most homes that were built more than ten to twenty year ago. In many home the back of the bed room door was about all the space for hanging clothes and a few hooks serves as the additional space for storage, this year ten closets were built in homes to help with the storage spaces. In one home part of a hall way was used.

Two homes are now enjoying Running water that did not have same before, one young family are building a new home with space provided for bathroom and closet space. Seven homes have been added to the newly painted or repainted lists, two with permanent sidings.

Minor Projects:

GAIL GARDNER, Miami

Situations:

Poor soil and man in accordance have long existed and will be around together for a long time. Realizing that for a farmer to get up and be a good farmer, one who is respected and as a leader he must represent his farm, with productive soils, good livestock, and good returns for his labor.

Home Improvements ,Con't

Methods of Approach;

During regular visits in Community and homes where these problems exist, take notice and make mention with the family while visiting. Explain during discussion the benefits of making improvements. How it would make for better family relations and what it would do for those that are living under these abnormal conditions.

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Results;

What happens to a families pride and their ego can not be measured in terms of dollars and cent, but home improvements can change an individuals outlook on life. This was demonstrated in three families that added one or more rooms and painted up the same in the community. These families were upon visits eager to show their new additions or improvements. In one case this family had been sleeping in crowded quarters, when improvements were discussed, they were slow to make changes until the husband found that he could do most of the work himself, so with a little assistance the family added a room for the parent, and making more space for the children in what was a crowded home.

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Two homes are now enjoying Running water that did not have same before, one young family are building a new home with space provided for Bathroom and closet space. Eleven homes have been added to the newly painted or repainted list, two with permanent sidings,

Minor Projects:

SOILS and Man;

Situation:

Poor soil and man in accordance have long existed and will be around together for a long time. Realizing that for a farmer to get up and be a good farmer, one who is respected and as a leader he must represent his farm, with productive soils, good livestock , and good returns for his labor.

Soils, con't

Goals;

1. To acquaint as many as possible with the good features of soil improvements, liming and the use of legumes.
2. To encourage soil testing as a standard to good crops.
3. Cover Crops help conserve fertility and improve the soils at the same time.

Methods of Approach;

To help stop leaching in our sandy soils encourage farmers to try to some soil building crops growing on the land the year round. To practice liming in conjunction with fertilization and rotation. To do this establish demonstrations in different communities with farmers, with rye, small grains and legumes.

Results:

1. Over the county there are 11 demonstration with small grains, liming and fertilization, three in one.
2. Cover Crops are established on ten farms to be grazed or turned under.
3. Clover Sod established on five farms for early cutting and soil building
4. Three acre plot of Alfalfa with liming, fertilizing and spraying to control insects.

Food For the Family. Home Garden

Situation:

Each year we have an increase in insects, new insecticides to combat them, each bring new problems and how to solve them. Also the limited number of vegetables grown in some gardens increase each year due to insects and lack of interest on part of the family.

Goals;

1. To establish garden demonstrations with or near disinterested families if possible base on family health and economy.
2. To establish gardens in communities based on a variety of vegetables.

Methods of Approach;

A Home Garden of some kind is found on most all farms in Essex County, some are large and include many varieties of vegetables, on other farms that garden in just a garden planted and just a bout forgotten until some one gets hungry. This type is found too ofter with large families, the number of vegetables planted never reach more than six, with this type of garden there is little choice for selection and as the summer passes so does the garden vegetables.

With these things in mind as we travel and work in the county, we are for ever looking for little tips and slants that might be used to get more varieties of vegetables in the home gardens. Ten to fifteen years ago Collards in a garden were looked upon as hog food and not very desirable for human consumption. To help remove this attitude a plan was worked out with one of the seed stores in the area and as a result the store agreed to give an extra package of collard seed to each purchaser of other garden seed in the spring and summer. Another thing that helped to get new varieties established was to show the wife how to prepare the vegetables.

Results ;

Summarizing some of the undertakings in the home garden and new varieties may be listed under two heading;

1. Over a period of three years Collards are found on ~~Eleven~~ Farms.
2. Spinach and Kale is rapidly increasing over the county and members of the family are buying less from the stores.
3. Where new vegetable have been established in garden and the family is using them, there is a changed concept of certain vegetables seen in the stores and in others gardens.

4-H Club Work

The 4-H County Council;

Essex County 4-H program is set up under the standard pattern for the State, having a county council heading the local clubs. There are four 4-H Clubs this year composed of elementary and High School members. Each club has a full quota of officers, these officers make up the Council. There are 72 boys and 59 girls enrolled, which gives a total 131 members.

Goal:

a. To continue to strengthen our 4-H Club Organizations in the county through the addition of interested adult support and participation.

Methods;

To elected officers give them training in definite organizational training, in procedures and recreation. To use monthly meeting to give some project instruction and development of leadership through responsibility.

To visit as many members as possible during the year, give them individual training where needed and talk to the parent and solicit their support. To get the support of the School Officials in allowing meetings to be held at such time as their program will allow.

To use the Council to plan such functions as the club members would want to participate in and receive training if possible.

Results;

We had 137 projects carried by 131 members, with a completion of 86. These projects consisted of three in corn, 67 in Vegetable growing, thirteen in poultry, 32 in swine, 7 in Tractor Maintenance and 11 in Home Ground Beautification. 4 Boys and 1 Girl were recommended for county awards. These included crops, Garden, Meat Animals, Poultry and Tractor maintenance.

Short Course and Wild Life

Essex County council sent two boys to the Short Course, at Va. State College, Petersburg, Va. in June. They were Melvin Beale and Norman Th. Tompkins. Two to the Wild Life Conference at the Colleg, they were Robert Banks and Thomas Fortune. To the Tractor Maintenance School, Thomas Fortune, Norman Tompkins and John R. Bayton.

Red Cross Water Safety Program

For the first time in the county young people had an opportunity to learn to swim under supervision. 54 enrolled, 44 started the course and 29 received buttons and certificates. The ages ran from 6 to 29 years of age. 21 received Beginners Certificates and 8 Intermediate Certificates and Buttons.

Cooperation with Other Agencies and Organizations;

Essex County has a NFYA and FFA Chapters in the Schools made up of High School ages. All high school students at some time during their stay are exposed to some of its teaching for boy or girl. The Veteran Class used the same facilities and so do the 4-H Club members. Therefore, we work very closely to gather to help direct their programs.

Our Goal

- a. To interest all boys and girls who are qualified to pursue some line of agriculture and Home Economics.
- b. To encourage boys and girls to take advantage of the leadership training that these organizations offer.

Other Governmental Agencies

Essex County is the Headquarters for many of the Governmental Agencies that work with Farm People and have services that are needed and can be used by farmers that no extension office offers. Such as the Farmers Home Administration, Federal Crop Loan Office, A.S.C. and The Forest Service, these are just a few that farmers can use. Where ever possible we encourage the farmers to seek their help if needed.

Evaluation of the Year's Work

To sum up what the agent believes is an indication that farmers and county people appreciate the service of the Extension Service in county is that office receive a large number of visits and request for information and bulletins from research and experimental stations.

Another tangible measurement is the ever increasing number of farmers that are making use of Purebred and Quality Board and Sows, for improving their swine enterprise. Another is that we are having more request for tips in Farm Records and how they can use them to the greatest advantage on the farm and in the home.

Last tangible measurement of value of Extension Work in the county is the way farmers are thinking of the Farm and Home as a unit and striving for a better way of life.