

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

## COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

*Virginia Agricultural Extension Service*

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1960

LUNENBURG  
County

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## FOREWORD

The following report is an attempt to give a brief summary and interpretation of significant achievements in helping Lunenburg County people solve certain problems and make adjustments to changing situations. Attention to details and routine procedures shall be limited, except to the extent that they help clarify major project activity.

Acknowledgements which the agent feels need consideration include:

-That the Extension Service is an educational service sponsored by the federal, state and county governments. The Federal Smith Lever Act which provides for the work set forth the agents job as strictly educational and shall consist of giving instruction and practical demonstrations by methods suitable to attain goals and objectives desired.

-That the total program projection is supported by a cooperative office staff (Local Home Agent and secretary), governing officials, professional workers, sponsoring businesses and friends.

-That a continuous and determined effort is made to coordinate all phases of the work with men, women and youth into a united rural and urban development program. "A realization that development of people is the end product desired in all efforts expended.

## I. COUNTY SITUATION

Lunenburg County, which is also called Free State, is located in the Southern Piedmont District of the state. It has an area of 283,520 acres of which 177,029 acres or approximately 65% were in farms according to the 1954 census of agriculture. At that time there were 1846 farms listed averaging 95.9 acres in size and \$6,039 in value of land and buildings per farm. Note: Recent figures (1959 Census of Agriculture show that there are 1432 farms, (a loss of 414) with an average size of 109.4 acres (up 13.5 acres) with value of land and buildings per farm at \$10,292 (up \$4,253).

There were 823 farms operated by colored farmers in 1954. In 1950, 339 of these were full owners, 99 part owners and 355 tenant. The full owners operated farms containing 23,480 acres, and average of 60.9 acres per farm. The total value of land and buildings show a net increase of \$487,679 between 1950 and 1954. Latest available figures showed a total population of 14,116 of which an estimated 44% or 6,211 were colored. There were 1,308 boys and girls between 10-20. Seventeen and forty one were county between the ages of 18 and 25. Note: All figures here are based on the 1950 and 1954 census reports.

The topography of the county is rolling and slopes gradually toward the southeast. The Meherrin river flows through

the southern border and the Nettoway along the northern border. Temperatures are slightly milder in the winter and slightly higher in summer when compared with state averages. Total precipitation averages about 43 inches. The last killing frost in the spring occurs about April 15 and the first killing frost in the fall about October 20, thus giving a growing season of 188 days. The principal types of soils are Appling, Durham, Cecil, Madison, Louisburg and Georgeville.

Agriculture is the principal sources of income, although manufacturing has increased during the past few years, lumber and lumber products being the most important. A new furniture factory is nearing completion and should provide employment for some 200-300 personnel with a resulting increase in total income. Flue cured tobacco supplies most of the farm income. The crop provides approximately 75% of the total income which is grown on less than 10% of the total cropland. Corn and wheat are important crops. Livestock production has been receiving greater attention recently. Fifty nine per cent of the families and unrelated individuals had less than \$2,000 annual income.

The county is largely wooded and has over 200,000 acres of commercial forest, most of which are included in farms. The total crop land in 1954 was 58,453 acres of which 16,405 acres were in pasture.

Kontridge and Victoria are the only incorporated towns with a total population of slightly less than 3000 in 1950.

Kenbridge is the fourth largest flue cured tobacco market in the state.

This data, along with local surveys, observations and records suggest an appraisal which points out certain areas needing specific attention. Among these are:

1. Proper culture of the woodland resources (200,00 acres)
2. Improved efficiency in production of products
3. Efficiency in marketing
4. Increased skill in management on farm and in home
5. Increased knowledge of skill needed and attitudes toward changes in economic, civic and social affairs.
6. Improved machinery for more cooperative actions in resolving problems
7. Increased training for better citizenship among youth, especially older youth and young men and young women's groups.

## II. COUNTY ORGANIZATION

The County Advisory Board, with representatives from the various communities has a total membership of 56 (36 men - 20 women). This group is the over-all governing body and assists with all phases of the program. They are supported by a total of 151 committee members and voluntary leaders (adult and youth). Special projects or activities of the group are recorded under miscellaneous activities. Other actions are recorded throughout the report. Special committees and groups that functioned

during the year are:

Agency Committee	4-H Junior Council
Forestry Committee	4-H Leader Council
Demonstration Community	Citizens Improvement Organization
Farm Machinery Club	

### III. MAJOR PROJECT ACTIVITY

#### A. Forestry

##### 1. WHY

Lunenburg County is largely wooded. Approximately 80% of the total land area is in commercial forest most of which is in farms. Wood using industries predict an increased demand for forest products in the future. Wood resources are being depleted much faster than efforts to maintain them for future use. Many farmers are faced with the acute problem of supplementing low incomes. In some instances it will involve getting off-farm employment. Smaller operators may have to sell out and make satisfactory arrangements of leasing crop land if other employment is found. Still other farmers can increase their income with proper cultural practices and improve the quality of species for future commercial value and use. Farmers in general have limited knowledge of the value of good forest management, limited skills for practice application, and indifferent attitudes toward the concept of applying modern techniques to the production and marketing of forest products. These are among the reasons forestry was selected as a major project in 1960.

#### WHAT

Our major objective was to diffuse information and teach skills that would increase interest in forest management.

#### HOW

The principal methods used to reach the objective were a field day meeting to show and teach practice skills, selection and training cooperators to establish 3 result demonstrations, training meetings for forestry committeemen, making free pine seedlings available to all eligible 4-H members, detailed explanations of financial and technical services available through regular channels of communication, woodland management plans for two cooperators, and organizing a county wide forestry club.

#### RESULTS

Tangible evidence of interest stimulated is indicated by the fact that thirteen 4-H'ers planted 3900 pine tree seedlings. Eight adults planted 15,000 trees. Three of these adults applied the practice of poisoning undesirable species before or immediately after planting desirable species. This was significant because these areas are typical of the majority of our woodland and besides the ACP assistance provides financial repay which practically covers the cost of the total operation. Three cooperators requested and got timber estimates for marketing purposes, a practice not commonly followed. Intangible evidence is implied in a county wide survey summary wherein 44% of returns reported increased interest in 1960.

Forestry committeeman assumed larger roles in conducting the forest project in 1960. Members of the committee conducted a field day meeting for 50 farmers, 4-H and home demonstration members while the agent attended an out of county meeting.

A county wide forestry club was organized in November with an initial membership of fifteen. The agent feels that future emphasis should be centered around the membership in this club. It is further assumed that sufficient interest has been initiated to shift objectives to that of broader practice application as a means of effective teaching. Too, a county demonstration farm seems desirable. Recognition is given to Extension Forest Specialist, Virginia Forest Service personnel, county forestry committeeman and the chief forest warden for the interest and cooperation in this area of emphasis.

#### B. Forage Crops

##### WHY

Lunenburg County is principally a cash crop enterprise area. Less than 20% of the total farm income is derived from livestock and livestock products. Soil and climate conditions are quite favorable to the production of livestock. Feed constitutes the major cost in a production program. Forage crops, and especially pastures, provide the cheapest source of feed. Many farmers don't produce sufficient livestock to supply family meat requirements. The agent feels that income from livestock and livestock products can be substantially

increased without creating unusual surplus problems.

#### WHAT

The objective in 1960 was to teach farmers the different types of pastures that may be included in an annual forage plan; to teach the importance of timing in practice application; and generally create more interest in planning better forage crop systems.

#### HOW

Annual forage crop systems were established by agency committeemen. Other principal methods were not carried out as planned. Routine efforts through regular communication channels were employed.

#### RESULTS

The agent feels that no noteworthy change was made in this project area this year. A few farmers planted one or more different types of pasture for the first time. Otherwise farmers have probably followed their general pattern in forage crop production. Weather conditions and competing work load activities were factors that interfered with project emphasis. This project will need attention next year. It seems that a few carefully selected demonstrations, strategically located and representative of farms throughout the county, would offer a principal approach to the over-all objective. Supporting methods could be selected to support these result demonstrations.

#### IV. MINOR PROJECT ACTIVITY

Note: Only statement of results included

##### A. Corn

Thirteen adult and 4-H cooperators applied 1000 pounds of fertilizer and at least 300 pounds of nitrogen top dressing on at least one acre of corn. A survey return indicates that the average per acre application of fertilizer is on the increase and may reach the desired goal of 600 pounds fertilizer and 200 pounds nitrogen top dressing before long. The major goal has been to increase yield by adding more fertilizer and thus increasing efficiency in corn production. Other areas which seem to need attention immediately include green manure crops and improved storage.

##### B. Tobacco

Sorting, grading and marketing skills received major emphasis in flue cured tobacco. No less than 60 farmers learned how to use tobacco marketing sheets - a new high. A great majority of these were in attendance at grading and sorting demonstration meetings. The agent assisted six farmers in installing proper lights for sorting.

##### 1. Aromatic

After three years effort one cooperator is fully prepared to produce this relatively new crop. Mr. & Mrs. J. D. Harris built a barn according to approved plans and installed a recommended heating system. Their records on a demonstration

plot indicated an acre value of \$750.00 for 1960. The key to top quality and value tobacco is proper housing and curing equipment. Two other cooperators with similar equipment had gotten no such favorable results. Special attention will be given to the Harris' and their crop next year. They are helping to introduce a supplemental cash crop that can help improve many farm income problems and add thousands of dollars to the total county income.

#### C. Community Improvement

Vegetable production for home consumption increased as a result of emphasis placed on this project in 1960. The most noteworthy accomplishment in the area involved a church consolidation meeting. Key leaders on the community improvement committee were instrumental in initiating the idea. This effort is in keeping with general emphasis over the years to get neighborhoods to combine their mental, physical and material resources for extended community development. The stated objective of this group is to unite six small churches into one unit. The extension personnel have been asked to serve in a resource capacity to provide pertinent research data, help train leaders, and assist with a process of program planning to help resolve problems involved.

#### V. Miscellaneous Project Activity

##### A. Farm And Home Development

Five individual families were given assistance with farm and home planning. Two families made a similar change as a

result of records they kept and evaluated. The specific change involved increasing volume and efficiency on farm land owned and operated before renting additional land. Each reported over-all conditions improved. A decrease in total hours required for major crops, gave more time for efficient use of time, and extra time for attention to other farm and home enterprises. See farm management below.

#### B. Farm Management

To supplement the Farm and Home Development approach, certain other phases of farm management were activated.

Among these were:

Cash Cost and Return Inventories - Economist K. E. Loope assisted the agent in making cost and return inventories on four farms covering different crop and livestock enterprises. One beef herd showed a net loss of 8 to 10 dollars per head annually. Machinery cost on one farm approximated \$45 per acre. Simplifying the rotation showed a potential \$500 increase in gross income.

Farm Record - One hundred and twenty five farm record books were distributed. Frequent reports indicate that many of these farmers improved their record keeping during the year.

Increased emphasis will be put on this phase of teaching next year.

### C. Citizens Improvement Organization

The Citizens Improvement Organization (CIO) was organized during the year. This group consists of an active membership of men between the ages of 21 and 45. Affiliated members, who serve as consultants and advisers, are older. The primary purpose of the group is to help select and train potential effective leadership for the future. The organization puts no limitation on the members by occupation, social status, or otherwise. Areas in which the group has shown interest and taken some action include:

1. Civic participation
2. Economic (Job opportunities and responsibilities)
3. Recreation
4. Individual and family securities

At least ten persons registered to vote as a result of a civic meeting held to teach the procedure. A "mock" election gave 59 persons a better understanding of the issues involved in the presidential election.

### D. Special Interest Meetings

The advisory board sponsored the following special interest meetings during the year.

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Specialist Help</u>
Family Relations	Donald R. Fessler Extension Sociologist
Social Security	Jack O'Hare, Dist. Agent
Farm Management	K. E. Locke, Ext. Economist
Weed Identification & Control	A. E. Kates, Ext. Weed Specialist

Other activities included participation in a district fair, sending delegates to state meetings and visiting experiment stations.

#### VI. Cooperation With Other Agencies

The total development of the county residents is dependent upon practices recommended by all public service agencies. Every effort is made to inform the public of the service, render service to agencies when feasible, and to establish and maintain good relations.

#### VII. 4-H CLUB WORK

The 4-H club program in Lunenburg County is conducted with the supervision and cooperation of an adult leader council and junior council. Our over-all objective is to provide opportunities which will help youth develop into more desirable citizens. Latest available figures show there are 1540 boys and girls in the county between the ages of 10 and 20. Some acknowledged problems include:

1. Inadequate parent interest and support
2. Inadequate leader interest and training
3. Low quality and quantity of work and record keeping
4. Rapid drop outs

Areas which received special attention in 1960 included:

- a. Project selection and record keeping
- b. Increased member participation at special activities
- c. Increased leader training

In addition to the general methods of procedure, special efforts included:

1. Suggesting projects that would close with an exhibit, fair, sale or contest.
2. Offering incentive awards for best kept record books.
3. Involving larger number of members in planning and carrying out special activities.

One hundred and ninety five different boys and girls enrolled in eight clubs during the year. Eighty one boys and eighteen girls (98 total) received individual project instructions under the local farm agent. Projects involved included forestry, corn, garden, market hog, sweet potato, tractor maintenance, and junior leadership. Fifty three of these members completed fifty five projects. The larger portion of the completion was in projects that ended with fair exhibits and show and sales. Besides these particular projects created more parent interest and support. Typical of such interest was the market hog show and sale. All members who started the project completed, all but one exhibited at the show and sale, and parents of each member attended the one day affair. Competitive activities seem to stimulate greater response for members and parents. The 4-H project is regarded as the basic teaching and learning tool in the county program. Consequently, more effort will be given to project selections which provide optimum participation by parent, child and leader. This type of project lends itself to more accurate

record keeping, too. Estimated values and accounts are kept to a minimum since the contents of such project records are more or less absolute.

Other special activities conducted to provide learning experiences were: County wide observation of national events. National 4-H Club Week, Rural Life Sunday, and 4-H Achievement Day. Participation in district events: South Central Fair, Tractor Maintenance and Operators Clinic. Participation in state events: Short Course, Tractor Operators and Maintenance Contest, and awards program. Community tours, a county wide picnic, individual radio broadcast, and demonstrations rounded out this list of special activities. Different types of awards were distributed in an effort to recognize achievement and promote better work. High on this list is a \$100 scholarship award given to a high school graduating 4-H'er who enters college and satisfactorily completes one semesters work at an accredited institution. An effort will be made to convert annual contributions to an investment growth fund, wherein more adequate sums may be given to deserving members in the future.

The 4-H program has and will continue to receive more emphasis in the future. The agent feels that the future value of Extension will be judged largely on the value of the youth program. The increased acceptance of and participation in 4-H work has kept a steady trend upward. It would be desirable to reach a larger number of youth. Present plans to accomplish this goal is to improve the quality of project work and increase

the number of trained interested adult leaders.

#### VIII. FEATURE

Eight members of the Varricks Chapel Farm Labor and Machinery Club believe they have found a key. A key to unlock some of the labor-machinery problems they have.

The agent met with this group and discussed cost and return inventories on their machinery and crop enterprises. After a series of meetings they decided to organize a cooperative club. The expressed purpose was to pool man hour labor and purchase labor saving machinery cooperatively. The first efforts were successful. Families helped each other harvest tobacco. This cooperative venture helped them improve efficiency, cut competitive bidding for available labors, thus decreased total man hour cost. The second effort involved the purchase of a corn picker. Through their combined efforts each man was able to harvest his crop earlier and cheaper than they had in previous years at less cost per acre. Too, they were able to seed fall grain earlier, "than we ever seeded".

This idea has claimed the attention of dealers, finance agencies and other farmers in the area. Cooperative purchasing of supplies and equipment, cooperative marketing, and increased efficiency through united effort seems to be the great advantages of this idea. It could well set the example for small operators in the county and throughout the south.

## IX EVALUATION

The change in knowledge, skills and attitudes of the Extension clientele is difficult to measure. The educational process is slow. Over-all the agent feels that the program has gained prestige among all of the people. Evidences of this assumption is based on many things. First, the frequent reports or acknowledgements that practices have been applied with favorable results. Second, people say that they know more because of the extension teachings and as a result value the various efforts more favorable. Business concerns show greater interest and cooperation through sponsorship. Third, the 4-H program is gaining in popularity.

There is, however, a need to shift or vary program emphasis to propose problem resolutions brought on by the rapid changes and perplexing problems in the agricultural situation. Areas which seem to need increased attention are efficiency in Market, Distribution and Utilization, Family Living, Management on the Farm and in the Home and Community Improvement and Resource Development. Work with young men and young women's groups is inadequate. The following table is an attempted evaluation of the extent that the county program reached certain areas of the Extension program emphasis during the year. The code letters in the columns are

M = more than previous year  
S = same as previous year  
L = less than previous year

	Good	Fair	Poor
I. Efficiency in Agricultural Production-----	S		
II. Efficiency in Marketing, Distribution and Utilization -----		M	
III. Conservation, Development, and Use of Natural Resources-----		S	
IV. Management on the Farm and in the Home-----		M	
V. Family Living -----			M
VI. Youth Development -----		M	
VII. Leadership Development -----		S	
VIII. Community Improvement and Resource Development-----			M
IX. Public Affairs-----			L

The agent devoted 240 days in which 352 home visits were made; 46 radio broadcast made; 27 news articles written; 370 office calls received; 1088 bulletins distributed; 735 telephone made and received; 115 meetings held, participated in or attended; and 10 result demonstrations were supervised. The most effective teaching tools added during the year were a 35 mm camera and a slide projector.