

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

## COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

### *Virginia Agricultural Extension Service*

Charles W. Sanders

**Name**

**County**

**Title**

**Agent**

C. B. Lanford

**Assistant Agent**

**Assistant Agent**

**Assistant Agent**



1959

Hanover

County

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## County Situation

The population of Hanover County continues to increase. The population is now estimated at 28,000. Home building sites, especially sub-divisions are taking some of the good farms.

There has been an increase in the size of agricultural enterprises. This has been most noticeable in layers flocks and dairy herds.

Farm families are becoming more concerned with marketing and management problems.

As the margin of profit becomes smaller, efficient production is essential. Farmers realize this and are continuing to request production information.

## Adult Work

### Farm & Home Management Program

Fitting a farm program to available resources is the main problem with families cooperating with the program. Farmers experienced a drop in farm prices this year and need to increase efficiency to combat lower prices.

Objectives of the program were to teach farmers how to increase their income by increasing their efficiency in production and marketing.

The program was carried out for the most part by meetings and farm visits.

A two day farm and home management school was held. A series of meetings were held in two communities, with a total of 10 meetings and an attendance of 197. Kenneth Loope, Extension Farm Management Specialist, Rois Godsey, Swine Specialist, and Allan Kates, Weed Specialist, assisted in 4 of these meetings. The Tri-County Bank cooperated in the two-day school. Mr. William Gilbert, vice-president of the bank, was a member of a panel who discussed farm and home credit. The bank also furnished lunch for the group.

Farm visits was a method used to influence cooperators in analyzing their farm business and plan future operations.

A regular monthly farm and home management news letter was sent to all cooperators. This contained job reminders and management practices.

## Results:

Four farmers attended the first day of the school and five the second. Budgeting farm crops and livestock were the main topics in which the farmers participated.

One farmer participated in the Mail-in <sup>Farm</sup> Record Program.

W. M. Myers, after figuring costs and probable returns, erected 4 grain bins and a drier. He has been able to sell corn at 20¢ per bushel above market price.

L. A. Stanley sold calves in the Feeder Calf Sale for the first time.

J. W. Carr erected a bunker silo and filled it with grass and corn silage to be self-fed.

Harold Hemingway started a cage-layer operation with 2500 birds.

A. B. Sledd erected a plastic greenhouse to grow annual plants to increase her income.

Wendell Sanderson bought the top-selling bull at the Gulpeper BGIA sale.

T. H. Sydnor bought 2 ROP bulls privately to improve his herd.

Following is a progress report of the J. D. Isbell, Jr. farms (This is also Hanover County's story of an important accomplishment of the Extension Service and a farm family.)

The Joe Isbell family of Rockville community enrolled in the Farm & Home Development Program, April 1956. They have 3 children—2 girls and one boy, with one girl in school. Mr. Isbell is a full-time farmer, with experience as a farm manager, and as an operator.

They own a 185 acre farm which in 1956 had 90 acres open land of which 26 acres was permanent pasture. Most of the land is rolling, predominately cecil soil. In addition, approximately 150 acres of cropland was rented on a long-term basis.

At this time the family was completing a new house. Mr. Isbell did all the carpenter work along with help from his wife. Some of the lumber used was cut from the farm.

The gross income for 1955 was approximately \$15,000.00 from the (1) sale of eggs, (2) broilers, (3) hogs, (4) wheat, and (5) hay, these listed in the order of their importance. Eggs are sold retail and to a hatchery. He had expenses of approximately \$14,000. He was grinding and mixing feed for laying hens and hogs, using his own hammer mill and mixing with a shovel.

Livestock inventory consisted of 3 milk cows, 1 bull, 7 steers, 2 heifers, 8 beef cows, 2 sows, and 1600 laying hens.

Equipment inventory consisted of 2 tractors, combine, baler, rake, mower, 2 discs, harrow, manure loader, spreader, 2 wagons, auger, hammer mill, truck, pick-up, and power saw along with the small tools.

#### Problems in 1956

1. Soil erosion
2. Low livestock inventory
3. Hatching egg enterprise requires extra labor
4. Washing eggs by hand
5. Egg storage
6. Harvesting corn
7. Low net income
8. High machinery repairs costs

## Alternatives

1. Strip cropping or permanent pasture
2. Buying cow herd or raising own
3. Buying more equipment or hiring
4. Building egg room or selling eggs wholesale
5. Expanding hatching eggs or all retail sales
6. Selling crops or feeding
7. Expanding broilers or laying flock

After discussion with assistant county agent, Mr. Isbell figured he had enough crops to be harvested to justify the purchase of a combination combine and corn harvester. The fall of 1956 he harvested his own crop of corn before the rain and did enough custom work for other farmers to justify owning the combine. This has continued to be a profitable venture.

On one rented farm Mr. Isbell has established a system of strip cropping on 70 acres, which is doing a good job of controlling erosion. On his own farm he has converted all the land to pasture with fences so that rotational grazing can be practiced. With the land that has been cleared, he now has 110 acres of improved permanent pasture.

The assistant county agent advised Mr. Isbell of a purebred Angus herd that could be had on a share basis and he now has 59 cows belonging to Mr. Louis Reynolds. They have a 3-year agreement whereby the calves are divided in the fall of each year. Mr. Isbell is keeping his share of the heifer calves to build his own herd, this provided Mr. Isbell a beef cattle enterprise, without capital invested in foundation stock. The arrangement is working good and Mr. Isbell feels that he made a good deal.

Mr. Isbell now has 2,000 laying hens, having discontinued the hatching egg flock and broilers. He is selling eggs retail and also supplies one dairy in Richmond with carton eggs. He supplements his production with eggs from a neighbor. He makes 8 cents per dozen on this operation. He built an egg room where the temperature is controlled. He installed an egg washer and a candler and egg grader. His wife assists him with the egg handling. He is able to obtain better than market price for his eggs and is paid well for the grading, candling, and cartoning.

Mr. Isbell has increased his hog project to 5 sows and sells about 80 market hogs a year.

He has bought more equipment to do a more efficient job, some of which are self-propelled combine and corn harvester, large capacity manure spreader, grass-land drill, forage harvester, and hay baler. He has also built a machine shed and repair shop and installed a welder.

Miss Isbell has discontinued using his hammer mill and now has his feed ground and mixed by a portable mill that comes to his farm and does the job and also stores the mixed feed in bulk bins. Mr. Isbell says he saves \$20 per ton by using his own grain and buying supplement for his laying hens.

Mr. Isbell is very interested in doing a good job of management and has attended the two day Farm and Home Development schools held by the agents, with the help of Extension specialists.

Mr. Isbell now has 110 acres of open land on his farm, all in permanent pasture. He is still renting cropland and doing custom harvesting for others.

The gross income for 1958 was approximately \$30,000, with approximately \$3,500 net. Approximately \$20,000 of this gross was represented by eggs he bought and sold from his neighbor.

He has 59 Angus cows on the farm belonging to Louis Reynolds, 20 steers, 12 heifers, and 20 calves belonging to him. He has 2,000 layers and 5 brood cows.

Mr. Isbell believes he can still do a better job, and is interested in keeping records for analyzing to find out his weak and strong points. He takes part in community affairs and attends Extension meetings.

#### Agronomy

Background information on the agronomic situation in Hanover County was presented to the County Board of Agriculture. This Board deemed this field of enough importance to appoint a committee of 10 farmers to study the situation and make recommendations for a county agronomy educational program.

#### Needs:

The committee met with the County Agents and John F. Shoulders, Extension Agronomist at VPI. After reviewing the county situation the committee pointed out the following educational needs:

1. More soil samples should be taken.
2. Farmers should lime and fertilize according to soil test.
3. More chemical weed control in alfalfa and crops.
4. More alfalfa weevil control with granular heptachlor.
5. Wider use of recommended crop varieties.

#### Methods of meeting needs:

The work was carried out by:

1. Two alfalfa demonstrations showing the value of fertilizing according to soil test, the use of chemical weed control and use of granular heptachlor to control weevil. Assistance was obtained from the Plant Food Institute, the Extension Division specialists, the local fertilizer dealers and the local representative of the Soil Conservation Service.
2. Four demonstrations were set up showing the value of a new variety of soybean. The Va. Crop Improvement Association furnished the seed.
3. Seven demonstrations were set up showing the value of using the recommended analysis and amount of fertilizer according to soil test. The Plant Food Institute furnished the fertilizer and the Extension Tobacco Specialist assisted.
4. One demonstration was conducted showing the value of a new hybrid corn variety.

One community meeting was held with the Extension Weed Specialist giving the recommendations for weed control.

One newspaper article featured soil sampling along with a picture of the

county agent showing a farmer how to take a soil sample.

**Results:**

409 soil samples were submitted to the county agent. Results of these tests were sent to the farmer along with recommendations for liming and fertilizing.

There was an increase of 2548 tons of fertilizer used over last year. 219 tons of pest-mix fertilizer used, the most of which contained heptachlor to control alfalfa weevil.

**Vegetables**

**Situation:**

The Hanover County Vegetable Growers Association began <sup>its</sup> cooperative marketing service in 1958. Its first year's activity was very successful. However, only approximately 24% of the 150 members sold produce through the Association.

The facility which the cooperative used in 1958 did not meet the needs of this organization. It was too small and was located in a crowded downtown area.

Too few vegetable growers use soil samples to assist in determining the proper lime and fertilizer needed to produce vegetable crops. Some producers also fail to use other modern production practices.

**Needs:**

1. Secure a better marketing facility
2. Increase the number of marketing agreements between Association and producers
3. Increase fertilization and liming practices based on soil samples.
4. Increased use of recommended varieties and practices of insect, disease, and weed control

**Goals:**

1. Improved marketing facility
2. 60% of tomatoes packed in recommended containers
3. 75% of corn packed in recommended containers
4. 30 vegetable growers taking and using results of soil samples to determine fertilizer and lime needs.

**Methods of meeting needs:**

In meeting the needs, fourteen meetings were held with members of the Vegetable Growers Association, representatives of the Virginia Division of Markets, and VPI Extension Agricultural Economists. At these meetings plans were made to finance the marketing facility, increase the number of marketing agreements, to distribute bulletins on production practices.

Vegetable committee members acted as distributors of soil sample boxes and instruction sheets.

Demonstrations on weed and nematode control were held in the vegetable growing area.

**Results:**

1. The Hanover County Vegetable Growers Association built its own

marketing facility.

2. 20% of tomatoes packed in recommended containers
3. Increased the number of marketing agreements signed to approximately 60
4. Sixty three soil samples were taken to determine the proper lime and fertilizer needs.

#### 4-H Club Work

##### 4-H Club Results:

Eighty four Hanover County 4-H Club members completed 97 projects and turned in completed record books to the county agent.

The following items were produced:

- a. 3 acres of corn
- b. 2½ acres of vegetables
- c. 7,000 trees planted
- d. 270 birds
- e. 11 dairy animals
- f. 5 beef animals
- g. 58 swine
- h. 9 rabbits
- i. 2 colonies of bees
- j. 31 articles in Farm & Home Electrification

One new community club with a husband and wife team was organized during 1959.

Seven 4-H members received training in livestock judging.

Fifteen 4-H boys received training as club officers.

All 4-H Club members received training in taking soil samples. Seven 4-H Club members took soil samples of their garden or crop project area.

Three 4-H members exhibited eight animals at the Fat Stock Show and Sale.

Seven members exhibited at the State Fair in September.

8,750 trees were planted by club members who did not turn in record books.

Eighteen 4-H Club members planted 1/8 acre plots of wildlife seed.

One 4-H boy attended the Short Course at VPI

Two 4-H junior leaders received training in 4-H camp handicraft and served as 4-H camp leaders.

23 4-H Club boys attended 4-H Camp

3 4-H Club members attended the All-Star meetings.

## Forestry

### Forestry Results:

200,000 trees planted

75 acres of forest land improved by thinning and culling

200 acres sold according to recommended practices

Eight farmers inspecting for pine sawfly

## Dairying

### Results:

1. Eight farmers vaccinating calves for Bangs for first time
2. Four dairy animal owners using artificial breeding for first time
3. Two dairymen start DHIR record keeping plans

## Livestock

### Results:

13 farmers consigned 157 calves to the Richmond Feeder Calf Sale. This is the largest number consigned for several years and was brought about by visiting farmers and urging them to sell cooperatively.

6 farmers consigned 80 yearlings to the Richmond Yearling Sale. These farmers were well satisfied with the grade and price received.

4 farmers consigned 147 pigs to the first Richmond pig sale. T. H. Sydnor, a Hanover farmer, was elected president of this organization. Members of the Board of Directors in cooperation with Extension agents conducted the sale.

4 farmers sold 48 fat steers in the Richmond Fat Cattle Sale.

In all these sales, those consigning learned the value of quality livestock and are interested in improving their herds by better feeding and pure-bred sires.

Two hundred calves vaccinated against Bangs disease.

75 calves vaccinated against blackleg.

200 swine vaccinated against cholera.

150 swine and 50 sheep treated for internal parasites.

3 pure bred cattle sires placed, and 1 herd culled as result of field trips.

## Cooperation With Other Agencies

### SGS:

The county Extension agents have worked closely with the county soil conservationist. Ascertaining county conservation needs, and making land-use plans are two areas of cooperation. These agencies also cooperated in preparing a set of slides on conservation of our natural resources.

### ASC:

The county Extension agents have cooperated with the ASC in: (1) setting

up the county nominating committees, (2) publicizing the County ASC program.

**FHA:**

Cooperation with the FHA has consisted of supplying technical, and farm management information to families covered by the FHA

**Vocational Agriculture:**

Five meetings were held in cooperation with vocational agriculture teachers in supplying technical information to farmers.