

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

PLAN OF WORK

For

COUNTY AGENT WORK - PROJECT 3

For

CALENDAR YEAR OF 1961

<u>Project Covered</u>	<u>Name of Worker</u>	<u>Percentage of Time Devoted to Entire Project by Each Worker</u>
Assistant Director	G. C. Herring	100%
District Agent	E. W. Carson	100%
District Agent	G. H. Clark	100%
District Agent	P. B. Douglas	100%
District Agent	J. B. Flora	100%
District Agent	J. B. Norment	100%
District Agent	D. T. Rogers	100%

Date Submitted March 9, 1961 Signed: George C. Herring  
Project Leader

Date Approved March 10, 1961 Signed: D. T. Rogers  
State Director of Extension

Date Approved JUN 2 1961, 1961 Signed: E. J. Wood Jr.  
Administrator of Extension  
United States Department  
of Agriculture

## I. THE PROGRAM SITUATION

The supervisory staff is deeply concerned with the problems of agriculture and solutions for them. County extension agents are urged, through county program development involving the leadership of the counties, to determine the problems of the people and seek solutions for them. It is recognized, however, that the solutions to many problems extend beyond county lines.

To provide a broader frame work in which to build future programs in resident teaching, research, and extension, an intensive study has been made of Virginia's resources by the School of Agriculture. The study is known as "Improving and Expanding V.P.I.'s Role in Virginia Agriculture and Rural Life." This is essentially program projection on a state basis.

The study analyzes the situation in the various areas, including past trends and attempts to project the future. It should provide valuable information in planning state, area, and county programs.

Progress to date consists of the accumulation of a large amount of valuable data combined into one 197-page volume of "Handbook of Information" and narrative reports dealing with the situation and trends with projections for the future in the following areas - The People, The Business of Agriculture, Plant Industry, and Animal Industry.

The most significant information in these fields was presented at meetings of the agricultural faculty in 1960. Plans are underway to present it to state leadership in 1961.

The role study, with the help of a state advisory committee, should result in better adjustment of research and educational activities of the School of Agriculture. It should also develop a better understanding of the function of the institution and its needs to the leadership of the state and the general public.

In the business of farming, the immediate future is not bright. While crops in Virginia in 1960 were generally good, realized net income was low because of high operating costs, inefficient operations, lack of resources, low prices of some commodities, and other reasons. There is little hope of improvement in 1961.

The adoption of improved practices in production which will lead to greater efficiency will be encouraged and will help farmers in many cases. However, perhaps the greatest need is for assistance in the farm management field, where the total farm situation will be studied as well as individual enterprises. Studies in the production of crops, livestock, and livestock products reveal wide ranges in production costs per unit.

Training agents in the field of farm management will be more intensive than it has been in the past.

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Other areas of need are in the field of marketing. Some of these problems will require the team approach and in most cases will have to be organized on an area basis.

The wider use of committees in counties to find out the problems of the people and develop educational programs for their solution will be encouraged by the supervisory staff. Members of this staff will correlate programs in subject matter lines when they have application to a number of counties in their districts or extend beyond district lines. They also will work closely with specialists to make best use of their services in the advancement of county or area programs.

## II. SUPERVISORY SITUATION

### A. Supervisory Structure

There are six men district agents. One change in personnel was made in 1960; J. W. Rogers retired and D. T. Rogers, County Agent, Greenville County, was appointed to the position. The number of county staffs supervised averages about sixteen, with a variation from fourteen to eighteen. The work load of district agents has increased rapidly and there is need of organizational change if they are to adequately fulfill their responsibilities. The work of district agents is coordinated by the assistant director and other members of the administrative staff.

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B. Personnel For the Job

At the beginning of the year, there were ninety-seven county agent positions with one vacancy; two county agent-at-large positions, both filled; and eighty-eight assistant county agent positions with eleven vacancies. One assistant agent was on military leave and two on educational leave.

Keeping positions filled with well-qualified workers is a serious responsibility in the supervisory field in as much as the future of the organization depends so much upon the quality of its employees at the county level. It has been difficult to fill positions in recent months because of lack of qualified applicants.

C. County Extension Organization

The size of county staffs varies from one county agent handling two counties, as in the case of Charles City and New Kent Counties, to a maximum of three and two-thirds men workers in Halifax and Pittsylvania Counties. There is an extremely wide variation in land area and in number of farm operators in Virginia counties, which accounts largely for the wide difference in size of staffs. There is also a variation in local interest and support of extension work.

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With few exceptions, men and women workers occupy adjoining offices. Through periodic office conferences, the work is correlated. Such correlation is particularly important in the fields of youth activity, county program development, farm and home development, and programs of a general nature such as farm and home lighting, safety, and water systems.

Because of widely varying conditions in Virginia's agriculture so far as soil, climate, crops, and enterprises are concerned, it is necessary to maintain a large specialists staff. Two part-time fruit specialists and a full-time swine specialist are located in areas of intensified production, with others located at the college.

D. Board of Agriculture and Special Interest Committee Development

A survey being taken, but not complete at this time, indicates about 80 percent of the counties have some agricultural committees which have developed long-time programs and meet each year to develop annual programs on which the agents' Plans of Work are based. Around forty-five counties have agricultural extension boards.

E. Cooperation With Other Organizations and Agencies

Excellent cooperation exists with other agencies. In many cases the personnel of other agencies is housed in the same building with Extension agents which is a distinct benefit to

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farmers and promotes good working relationships among personnel of the agencies.

Cooperation within the counties and in the state as a whole with business, civic, and industrial groups is excellent. Such groups are particularly helpful in 4-H club activities, community improvement work, and in many other phases of the Extension program.

F. Training Agents

Agents are provided opportunities for study and training which are necessary if they are to keep up with the rapidly changing conditions, the advancement in science and technology, and the use of effective teaching methods. The taking of work toward advanced degrees is encouraged but few are in a position to do so. In the cases in which agents do obtain advanced degrees, they seldom return to county positions because of better offers elsewhere.

The organization of the training program for agents was progressing nicely under the leadership of M. C. Heckel until he went on educational leave September, 1959. In his absence, his responsibilities were assigned to various committees and individuals.

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1. Situation Analysis and Program Development

While much time has been devoted to this field of training in past years at Annual Extension Conferences and district meetings, aside from that given at the New Agents' Training Schools, little attention was given it in 1960.

2. Extension Philosophy

Training in the philosophy of Extension work is given at Annual Extension Conferences, at New Agents' Training Schools and in college courses given. Agents are also provided with material on the subject from time to time. However, it appears that much of the philosophy of Extension must be gained over a period of years from being associated with other Extension workers and with farm people.

3. Teaching Methods

Teaching methods used by both agents and specialists have shown remarkable improvement over a period of years. This has been accomplished largely by training schools and by providing Extension workers with visual aid equipment and materials. County workers in many cases have also obtained visual and sound equipment from local sources.

Training schools were arranged for the entire specialist and county staffs in one phase of communications in 1958, 1959, and 1960. These have been of the workshop type and of three or four days' duration. Train-the-trainer methods were used. District agents were members of the training team.

4. Leadership Training

County program development has contributed much to training agents in using leadership effectively. District agents help agents, particularly new ones, in working with committees. Some district agents have planned area meetings which include four or five counties to help agents in the effective use of leaders in 4-H club work. Some time is also given in the New Agents' Training Schools to effective use of leaders.

5. Public Relations

The public relations inventory conducted in 1959, and followed up with one-half to one-day study of the subject at district meetings, provided excellent training on this subject. The district agents then worked with individual counties in this field.

6. Office Organization and Management

Some training is given agents in office organization and management at district meetings and the New Agents' Training School.

At three of the fall district meetings, arrangements were made to have secretaries attend for one day. The program included discussion of the extension organization, Extension philosophy, responsibilities of secretaries, and office procedures.

G. Co-ordination of Work of Specialists and Agents

Specialists' programs are expected to aid in the solution of problems which have been brought out in county program development. Programs of specialists, new or revised, are first brought to the attention of a member of the administrative staff. From this, plans are made to review the program with the district agents. This provides an opportunity for them to review the program critically before it is taken to the field.

The effects of such conferences are to: (1) get programs well thought through and organized before they are taken to the field, and (2) get approval and acceptance of the program. District agents also work with specialists in scheduling events in order to make the best use of time.

H. Other Supervisory Responsibilities

District agents must be constantly alert to problems in their district. Such problems may involve personnel relationships within the organization or with other organizations, violations of the policy and the like. At the same time, they must be alert to training needs of agents, building morale, staffing, opportunities for improving county office space and equipment, and all the things that will help to make the organization more efficient and its programs more effective.

III. MAJOR SUPERVISORY ACTIVITIES FOR 1961

A. Maintaining a Staff of Qualified County Agents and Assistants

County agent positions becoming vacant will be filled from the assistant agent staff with little regard for seniority. The objective in 1961 will be to fill all assistant agent positions, except for a few which must be left open for those who are on military or educational leave, with qualified men. The major responsibilities of the supervisory staff are to secure applications, interview applicants, and make recommendations for appointment. The future of Extension work, to a large extent, is dependent upon the type of county workers employed. The employment situation appears rather unfavorable at the beginning of the year even though an improved salary scale is effective January 1.

The opportunities offered in Extension work were discussed with around thirty seniors during the fall. Those who will apply for positions will be interviewed by the district agents in February and thereafter. They will be carefully screened and positions offered to those who appear best qualified.

The salary scale effective January 1, 1961, is as follows:

<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Salary Range</u>
Agricultural Extension Agent Trainee	4512-4704-4920
Agricultural Extension Agent Associate	4704-4920-5160-5400-5640-5880
Agricultural Extension Agent	5880-6144-6432-6720-7032-7344

## B. Training Agents

With the return of the Extension Training Specialist, the training program for agents is expected to be more effective in 1961. Schools of one-week duration will be held in March and September for new agents and new specialists. It is anticipated that around thirty-five people will attend them.

The intensive training of assistant agents assigned to farm management work will continue with a week's school in May and specialists' assistance on an individual and group basis. A school of three week's duration is planned for another group of around fifteen agents next fall.

A swine school of two or three days will be held in one district and poultry schools in most of the districts. A forestry school of a week's duration is planned for fifteen to twenty agents. A two-weeks' soil school will be attended by six to eight agents. Around ten agents are expected to attend out-of-state schools, such as those at Cornell and Georgia.

Agents are given many other opportunities for training at district meetings, the Annual Extension Conference, and visits to experiment stations.

A quarterly publication, "New Developments," will be assembled and distributed through the assistant director's office by subject matter departments. Its aim is to keep agents informed on the latest research and to supply some information on Extension methods.

C. County Appropriations

Rising costs of supplies, equipment, and salaries make it important to constantly seek larger appropriations from counties. The approach will be for the district agents to contact county boards by letter in January with requested budget enclosed. In most cases an increase in the appropriation effective July 1 will be requested. The district agent will then contact board members personally, either individually or at a board meeting. District agents will confer with the administrative staff to check progress and to discuss procedures. The goal is to increase county funds for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1961, by \$10,000.

D. Office Space and Equipment

District agents will appraise office space and equipment in counties under their supervision. Office space is improved by keeping in touch with the local situation. It is expected that office space will be expanded in four or five counties in 1961. The needs for additional equipment in county offices will be constantly checked by district agents and orders placed by them.

E. Merit Ratings

District agents are required by the State Personnel Office to rate all employees under their supervision. This will be completed by April 1.

F. Evaluation

District agents went over the evaluation forms with county staffs in 1959 and 1960. They completed evaluating agents under their supervision last year. In 1961, they will review their evaluation with individual agents.

G. New Filing System for County Offices

Agents are enthusiastic about the new filing system after completion. Nearly fifty of the offices now have it in operation and the remainder will have in 1961.

H. Program Development

Long-time Program write-ups have been prepared and submitted by seventy-four counties. However, many of these counties need assistance in expanding the scope of the activity of committees, in completing their extension organization and in other respects. Training of agents in program development will be the responsibility of the training specialist with assistance of the supervisory and administrative staff members. A committee has been set up to determine training needs and develop a training program.

I. Farm and Home Development

The need for this type of work is recognized, but progress has been slow. The number of families worked with in 1960 in the unit approach was below that of 1959, although there was an increase in number of families worked with in phases of farm and home management.

Lack of training of agents, lack of assistance from the state level, and the pressure of other Extension activities seems to have retarded progress in this work. Plans have been developed to overcome some of these difficulties in 1961 and thereafter.

The plans consist of intensive training first for those who are expected to devote a major portion of their time to farm management, and use the men who appear well qualified to assist in future training programs and to assist agents in their areas. Later other groups of agents will be brought in for intensive training.

Plans also call for better organized specialists' assistance and the preparation of needed materials.

With more effective training of agents, both men and women, in management, this phase of the Extension program should progress more rapidly than it has in the past. The unit approach will be used when the qualifications of agents and the desires of the people fit the situation.

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J. Rural Development

The rural development program will be continued in the two pilot situations, Cumberland County and the Carroll-Grayson area. The progress in each case will be strengthened and there is the possibility of expansion into other areas.

K. Youth

The district agents will take an active part in the organization of 4-H activities in their districts. Such activities include 4-H camps, district contests, training opportunities for agents, and the establishment of new types of project work. Emphasis in 1961 will be placed on further developing types of projects that will appeal to the older club members, such as Career Exploration, Town and Country Business Clubs, Automotive projects and others.

L. Federal-State Area Brucellosis Eradication Program

The first test of all cattle in counties is nearing completion with spot retests being made in some counties. County agents have been very active in this program in getting the sentiment of leadership toward the program, informing cattle owners and the general public about the disease, and developing county plans for the actual testing. The work has progressed with few complications.

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Agents also have been active in developing plans with local veterinarians for calfhood vaccination, and this will be continued in 1961.

M. State Mastitis Control Program

The control of Mastitis is recognized as largely one of prevention through good management practices. The educational program conducted in Virginia in 1960 received wide attention nationally. It will be revised and continued in 1961.

N. Swine Disease Control Program

Losses due to swine diseases and parasites are problems of long standing among swine producers of Virginia and elsewhere. The intensification of swine production on many farms under confinement systems magnifies the problems. A program for the control of swine diseases and parasites, patterned after the Mastitis Program, which will involve all agencies and organizations concerned will be developed in 1961 and thereafter. It will be developed on a pilot county basis in 1961 with expansion thereafter.

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0. Other Programs for 1961

1. Livestock and Wool Marketing

After the very successful experience in re-organizing the arrangement in wool marketing in Southwest Virginia in 1960, plans will be developed along similar lines elsewhere in the state. Work will be continued on feeder pig sales, and with feeder and fat cattle sales with the objective of improving organizational setups and management and getting wider participation of producers.

2. Forestry

The one-week training school for agents established in 1960 will be continued with wider participation and with a program better adapted to their needs. Other important activities will include expansion of work with forestry committees and adult and 4-H forestry clubs.

3. Poultry

The Poultry Department has assumed effective leadership of the poultry industry of the state. Effective educational programs on an area basis have been developed with industry participating both in planning and execution. There will be some needed reorganization of areas and agents will be provided assistance in better carrying out their role in poultry programs.

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4. Weed Control

Interest in controlling weeds with herbicides is growing rapidly. Agents with the help of the specialist will give more attention to effective programs in this field in 1961.

5. Farm Management

Specialists in Farm Management have organized the program in this field for more effective operation. The intensive training of some of the agents through Farm Management Schools started in 1960, will be continued with another group coming in next fall. The training of agents has been a weakness which has handicapped work in this field. The number of farms in the Electronic Farm Record System will expand greatly in 1961.

6. In other fields such as agronomy, agricultural engineering, plant pathology and physiology, programs will be modified to better meet the needs of the people. Teaching methods will also be changed for greater effectiveness.

IV. SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

A. Supervisory

1. Teaching

Members of the supervisory staff in past years have had teaching assignments at schools for new agents, communications schools, etc. They will be relieved of most of such duties in 1961.

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2. State and National Events

One district agent (which in some cases may be a man or a woman) is expected to attend each of the following events:

4-H Camp, Washington  
4-H Club Congress  
State 4-H Camp

3. Committee Assignments

District agents are appointed to membership on some committees on a rotation basis; on others they may be appointed because of special qualifications they may have. Some of the committees to which individual district agents will be assigned are those for Program Development, Extension Conference Program, agent training, 4-H club records, and Community Improvement Contests.

4. State Organization Meetings

District agents will attend many state meetings of commodity and business organizations and meetings of the personnel of other agencies. Occasionally they appear on the program of meetings of such organizations, but more often attendance is to keep them informed and to maintain good relationships. Among such meetings are those of the Virginia Bankers' Association, ASC Committeemen, Soil Conservation District Supervisors, State Dairyman's

Convention, Horticultural Society, Beef Cattlemen's Association, and many others.

5. District and Area Events

District agents will be called upon to attend and take part in county and area events within their district. Among them are 4-H Achievement Days, area 4-H shows and sales, meetings of commodity organizations, field days, and meetings of County Extension Boards of Agriculture. The number, place, and time of them cannot be entirely anticipated at the beginning of the year.

B. The Assistant Director

1. State Activities

Meetings of state committees, such as ASC and Soil Conservation, either attending with the director or substituting for him. Also the assistant director will attend meetings of state commodity organizations and of agricultural industry, similar to those which are attended by district agents.

2. Committee Assignments

Among the committee assignments for 1961 are Annual Extension Conference, Institute of Rural Affairs, Grain Marketing Program, Mastitis Program, Swine Disease Control Program, Chemical Residues, and Clean Grain.

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3. District Meetings of Extension Personnel

Will attend and in most cases have assignments at practically all district meetings of county extension workers which are usually two-day affairs held twice each year.

4. Assigned Responsibilities

Assembling material for "New Developments," checking penalty mail, maintaining supplies of basic material for Farm and Home Development and County Program Development, preparing special state and federal reports, summarization of FES-21 reports for Federal Office, Clearance Office - Reports Act of 1942, reviewing County Plans of Work and Annual Reports.

V. PROJECTED PROGRAM AND PERSONNEL NEEDS

The long-range objective of the supervisory staff is to have a well-trained staff of agents in each county with adequate office space and equipment. A further objective is to have long-time programs developed in each county through the involvement of people, so that their needs and opportunities will be studied and effective Extension programs planned and carried out to improve their situation.

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To attract and keep the best workers, an improved salary scale is needed and efforts will continue in that direction. Also needed is additional help on the supervisory level. The responsibilities of district agents have greatly increased through the years, particularly in the area of planning programs and activities.

Another problem needing consideration is that of providing more effective assistance to a highly specialized agriculture. The agents cannot be specialists in all fields. Some of the needs may be met by intensive training of agents in some fields. In other fields, agents can be taught to organize effective programs with extension specialists or other qualified personnel doing the teaching. Area specialists, either attached to subject-matter departments or as agents-at-large, may be the answer in some other cases.

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## VI. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- January Supervisors will assist agents with program planning procedure and Plans of Work. Attend meetings of Extension boards, contact county governing boards, attend Outlook Conference at headquarters (January 3), attend State meetings of commodity and other organizations, assist counties with Filing System. Assistant Director will get State statistical reports completed, conduct interviews with seniors, attend certain State meetings.
- February Supervisors will continue work with agents on county program development, Plans of Work. Meet with county governing boards. Attend meetings of commodity and other organizations; follow-up on Filing System. Interview seniors at headquarters (February 22). Attend administrative and supervisory staff conference (February 20-21).
- March Supervisors will attend Extension Staff Conference (March 20-23). Complete merit ratings, contact governing boards as needed. Follow-up on program planning and execution and filing system. Assistant Director will have assignment at New Extension Workers Training Conference (March 20-24).
- April General supervisory work on program planning and execution, contacting boards, and the like. Attend and assist with 4-H shows, sales, and district contests. Attend meeting of supervisors and administrative staff (April 17-18). Largely complete the employment of seniors for vacancies. Hold Spring District Meetings in some districts.
- May Complete 4-H district contests and complete plans for 4-H camps. Routine county visits to check with agents on performance. Complete check as needed on county office equipment and supplies for fiscal year. Extension staff conference (May 15-16). Select about ten agents to attend Regional Summer Schools.

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June	Begin area 4-H camps. Complete needed arrangements for and take care of special assignments, State 4-H Short Course (June 25-July 1). Routine county visits. Monthly conference of district agents and administrative staff (June 19-20).
July	Early in the month, select agents to attend Institute of Rural Affairs (July 31-August 4), and be in attendance. Continue responsibilities in connection with 4-H camps. Routine visits to counties.
August	Attend field days at experiment stations where agents and county leadership will be in attendance, attend county farm tours, Annual Extension Conference (August 21-25), 4-H Electric Congress (August 30-September 1).
September	Farm tours, 4-H shows, sales, and fairs. Virginia State Fair and Extension Staff Conference (September 18-19), New Extension Workers Conference (September 11-15).
October	Complete community improvement contests, attendance at shows, sales, achievement days. Fall District Meetings of agents. Administrative and supervisory staff conference (October 16-17). Help agents as needed with completing activities.
November	Complete Fall district meetings. Help with completion of community improvement activities, assist agents with reports, Extension Staff Conference (November 20-21). State office interview seniors for county extension positions.
December	Supervisors will complete their Annual Reports for 1961 and Plans of Work for 1962. Assist agents in planning procedure for ensuing year. State office begin summarization of county statistical reports. State office and supervisors prepare county budget requests. Administrative and supervisory staff conference.