

1954 PLAN OF WORK

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The long time program or objective is to have each area producing the crops for which it is best suited. The land that is suitable for corn, small grain and hay in rotation to be so used. Other land to be used in producing tree fruits, hay, grass ensilage and pasture; some for pasture only and the balance in woodland, with each area managed so as to conserve soil and water while being used for permanent and economic production of the things for which it is best suited.

This pre-supposes the production of livestock and livestock products in order to make efficient use of the forage and grain.

Rather rapid adjustment in land use has been made since 1940 in reducing acreage of row crops and increasing acreage of hay and barley. The yields per acre of all crops have been increasing steadily.

Pasture improvement was started in 1925 by former County Agent S. S. Teel, and has continued slowly but with a constantly accelerating rate ever since.

The least progress has been made in management of farm woodlands which covers approximately one half of the total area. However forest fire reduction and control has been greatly improved, through work of the Virginia Forest Service and other agencies in cooperation with the landowners.

Increased production of forage crops and pasture improvement has made possible an over 600% increase in livestock production. The good judgement and progressive outlook of farm owners has resulted in raising the quality of the livestock equally as much as the numbers have been increased.

Acreage in apple trees has greatly decreased. Over the years peach production was greatly increased. Orchard soil management is receiving more attention. This appears to be a propitious time to get out more apple trees, particularly the new red varieties.

Studies in Ohio and other states show a correlation between organic content of the soil and the volume, quality and color of the apples produced. This indicates a need for greater attention to production of cover crops in the orchards.

With this summary of the existing status of the agricultural industry in Albemarle and the progress that is being made in the overall field of improvement, it seems apparent that the Plan of Work for 1954 must be a continuation of the present program, with major emphasis on some projects; some changes in methods of approach and an increase in some activities.

AGRONOMY

On February 10th. an Agronomy Committee meeting was held, and after discussing existing conditions, previous programs and probable needs, it was agreed that our present agronomy program should be continued along present lines. The production of grain and forage crops is the basis for all production of meat animals and dairy products. The drop in beef cattle slaughter prices during the past 30 months emphasize the necessity for economic production, and as our soil types, topography and climate are best

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adapted to growing pasture, hay and ensilage crops, the production of forage crops will be stressed.

According to the 1950 Census Albemarle County has 62,541 acres of permanent pasture, plus 66,605 acres of land formerly cropped in rotation that in 1949 was used for pasture only. There were also 18,364 acres of idle crop land, making a total of 147,510 acres. Some of this should be planted to pine seedlings but the rest is available for pasture without reducing the present acreage of crops. Production on most of this land could be economically increased by from 100 to 1000 per centum by liming, fertilizing and reseeding as needed.

A good pasture system should provide, at least eight months of continuous grazing and a part of the feed needed for an additional 30 to 60 days annually. The food value of such pasture will equal that contained in an 85 bushel per acre corn crop. A continuing educational program to include pasture renovation, reseeding, fertilizing, liming, etc. to be emphasized to compensate for overgrazing during two drought years.

LEGUMES

Production of alfalfa, clovers, lespedeza, separately and in combinations with grasses will be advocated and grown in demonstrations and otherwise, for hay, ensilage and pasture. Two demonstrations comparing Williamsburg and Atlantic alfalfa with other varieties will be continued.

SMALL GRAIN

Each year as soon as the list of approved varieties of grain and other crops is received from the Agronomy Department at V.P.I. we give copies to each local seedsmen. If the seed of the approved varieties are available the seedsmen stock them and recommend them to their customers.

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CORN

The 100 Bushel Corn Club will be continued and again will be sponsored by the Albemarle Farm Bureau. It will be conducted by a committee of three farm bureau members, the vocational agricultural teachers in cooperation with the Extension Service. The Charlottesville and Albemarle Chamber of Commerce have agreed to give a \$25.00 trophy to the winner of the contest.

INSECT PESTS & CROP DISEASES

Insect pests and crop diseases are always with us but their numbers and importance vary from year to year and from farm to farm.

Usually these problems can be handled by visits to farms where trouble exists. Information given by radio, newspaper, telephone and office consultations, etc. Occasionally it is necessary to get an entomologist or a plant pathologist from V.P.I. to assist in identifying the problem and advising on control measures. One demonstration in applying an insecticide with the fertilizer for a new seeding of alfalfa, to control clover root curculio will be conducted. Demonstration in spraying alfalfa to control leaf hoppers and other insects will be conducted on two or more farms under the supervision of Dr. E. C. Turner of the Virginia Experiment Station. The Virginia Tractor Company agreed to furnish the spray machinery for this project. We also expect to assist the Experiment Station with some research on control of the blue grass bill-bug larva which seems to be greatly damaging or destroying the roots of orchard grass.

LAND USE

When questions arise concerning land use and erosion control we always advise the farm owner to work with the Soil Conservation District in getting a land use map prepared for his farm, and the essential erosion control practices laid out for each field. If this advice is followed we go on from

there. Otherwise it becomes a case of individual farm planning by the county agent with each farm and each field a separate problem.

As a general rule any area that is too steep, rocky or rough to permit spreading lime and fertilizer by trucks and permit mowing, should be in forest.

The kind of crops to be grown and the acreage of crops is determined by the capability of the land and the needs of the operator.

BEEF CATTLE AND SHEEP

Albemarle has become a leading beef cattle producing county in this state. In 1952 and 1953 there were an even 100 members of the Albemarle Feeder Calf Association. In addition there are several excellent registered herds of Herefords and of Aberdeen Angus cattle that are producing breeding stock and regularly making sales to breeders throughout the eastern states.

Our plans for 1954 include continued cooperation with the officers and members of the local beef cattleman's associations in their production and marketing programs; assisting with information on feeding, breeding, parasite and disease control; selection of herd sires; culling cow herds and selecting heifers for replacements, and general herd management.

F. W. Scott of North Garden has agreed to treat one half of his calf crop with Phenothiazine for worm control. Examination of fecal matter indicates that most, or possibly, all of our commercial herds are infested. After treating one half of the calves individually he plans to mix phenothiazine with the salt (1 to 10) for all the herd and compare results in 1954 with previous production and rate of gain. Each calf is weighed at regular intervals to determine rate of gain and weight-for-age.

We will also continue to help owners of small grade herds to secure good sires and carry out a sound herd improvement program which will enable them to participate in Feeder Calf Sales and other programs of the organized producers.

WOLEP

- A. Assist in purchasing good replacement ewes. Producers here prefer early, Western ewe lambs, weighing 80 to 100 pounds by July 1, instead of yearling ewes which are the later lambs of the previous year, and have requested help in getting one or more car loads in 1954.
- B. Continue to help individual sheep producers to secure good rams and to purchase ewes or select lambs from their own flocks for replacement.
- C. Continue an educational program on control of internal parasites, feeding, etc. of ewe flocks and creep feeding lambs.
- D. Help to train additional 4-H Club boys in shearing sheep for custom shearing and help in preparing wool for market and in marketing a higher quality product.

DAIRYING

Two organized programs are being conducted for the special benefit of producers of dairy cattle and dairy products. We will continue to cooperate with and assist the officers and members of these organizations with an educational program designed to promote increased membership and increase the effectiveness of each.

- A. The Dairy Herd Improvement Association which helps the commercial dairyman to produce more efficiently by supplying records on production and on feed costs for each cow in the herd as a basis for better feeding, general herd management, culling the cow herd

and selection of heifers for herd replacements.

B. Albemarle Breeding Association which makes the service of outstanding bulls available, through artificial insemination, to large and small herds within a radius of 20 miles from Charlottesville.

This program involves helping secure trained technicians to do the work; help promote an enlarged membership to finance the cost.

A meeting of a Dairymen's Committee has been planned for March 16th., with Dr. S. L. Kalison, Extension Veterinarian, to decide if a program of disease prevention can be carried out on a practical basis and if so, to plan such a program. Diseases to be considered are: mastitis and Brucellosis.

POULTRY

A committee of commercial poultrymen, mostly broiler and turkey producers met with H. L. Moore, Extension Poultry Specialist on January 27 to discuss a possible poultry program. Recent low prices of broilers and the outlook for higher production of turkeys in 1954 was pretty discouraging. The growers requested a meeting for March 3 with Dr. E. P. Johnson to discuss prevention and control of diseases, but made no other definite plans.

FORESTRY

A. Have the Extension Service Forester help at least two farmers to start a sound farm forestry program.

B. Cooperate with the State Forester's Office in promoting the planting of forest seedlings and in protecting woodland from fire and grazing.

C. Continue to urge treating forest products as a farm crop by selective cutting and progressive woodland management to perpetuate the forest and make the woodland provide it's proper part of the farm income.