

Report of the Department of Publicity, Extension Division,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute, from July 1, 1919 to June 30, 1920.

The purpose of the department of publicity is to furnish the people of the State with information about what the Extension Division has done, what it is doing, and what it is prepared to do. It is the function of the information service to tell the farmers of the State, by means of the printed word, what its specialists have found out from experiment and research about the best farm practices. A former secretary of agriculture stated, "If the average farmer could be induced to apply what the experts now know and what the best farmers practice, a revolution could be brought about in the agriculture of the Nation."

This information service is carried on through the daily and weekly papers of the State, through certain magazines that are published, or that have a circulation in Virginia, such as the Journal of Education, The Southern Planter, The Progressive Farmer, etc., and through its own publications; namely, the Extension Division News, Agricultural Club Letter, and the Extracts from County Agents' Reports. The scope of this plan has been so widened within the past year that practically all of the daily and weekly news papers in Virginia cooperate by giving space to matters sent out from the central office. An attempt is made to furnish the papers in every section with the kind of copy that is particularly suited to the needs of the locality in which they are published. During the year covered by this report an average of five articles per month were furnished to the daily papers and an average of three articles per month to the county papers.

Many inquiries are received by the Extension Division for information on farm and home problems. These are always answered carefully. It is reasonable to suppose that where one man or woman in a community needs information on a given subject, that his neighbors and hundreds of other people of the State should profit by the same information. The information service frequently takes such replies and outlines the gist of the matter in newspaper articles. This gives it a much wider

circulation.

Another function of the information service is to help create a demand for the service the Extension Division has to offer. This can best be done by keeping the papers posted as to the Extension Division and its activities. Speaking for the Editors of the daily and weekly papers, it may be said that as a rule they do not go after such material. They know of its existence and appreciate its worth, but it must be furnished them in a systematic way. Therefore, it is the function of the information service to make such matter available to the press; in other words, prepare it for publication.

The Extension Division News.

The Extension Division News is a monthly newspaper issued for the farmers and farm women of the State, bankers, ministers, public school superintendents and all who are interested in the betterment of conditions on the farm and in the homes of the people of Virginia, whether they live in the country or small towns of the State. It contains practical suggestions for and results of work along the various lines that the specialists and county agents are developing, and there is scarcely a line of work or endeavor that it does not touch in one way or another. It is mailed free of charge to any one who asks for it and the newspapers of the State are invited to use the material in its columns at any time and without giving credit for same. A year ago the mailing list carried the names and addresses of about 7000 representative men and women of Virginia. These names were secured from the county agents and through request from individuals or organizations. Within the past three months double the above number of names has been placed on the mailing list and the circulation of the Extension Division News is now over 15000. Very recently a request has come from an official of one of the leading railroads that the names of several thousand farmers living along the line of his road be placed on the mailing list. This list is kept up to date and whenever a copy is returned because of inability of the Post Office to deliver same, the name is promptly removed from the list.

Agricultural Club Letter.

The Agricultural Club Letter is issued monthly by the information service, the great part of the matter being prepared by the State leaders and specialists in club work. An earnest effort is made to secure articles from the club members themselves, in order that they may feel that they have a share in the making of the paper. About 12000 copies of each issue were sent out from July 1, 1919 to June 30, 1920.

The names on the mailing list include the boys and girls who are enrolled as regular members of the Agricultural and Home Economics Clubs, Farm and Home Demonstration Agents, Division school Superintendents, some teachers, and a number of people in the State who have shown their interest in Club work. The material used in the Club Letter is of the kind that interests the boys and girls in the work and imparts such information as will be useful to club members in carrying out the various projects in which they are engaged. Names are dropped from the mailing list whenever a club paper is returned; therefore there is constant revision of the mailing list and no dead names are carried.

Extracts from County Agents' Reports.

All field reports from the agents, both white and colored, are gone over carefully by the Editor and the best in each report is noted. Particular attention is paid to human interest stories, and at the end of each month these extracts from the county agents' reports are compiled and mimeographed for distribution to the agents, specialists, newspapers and other Extension Divisions. In this way the agents are able to keep in touch with one another and those on the Eastern shore know what their brother agents in the far Southwest are doing. From these extracts selections are made from time to time and sent out to the daily and weekly newspapers so that the people of the State may know at least some of the good things that are being done.

Certain farmers in Virginia do not attend agricultural short courses,

do not subscribe to farm papers, seldom take a daily paper, and very often cannot be effectively served by the county agents. This class of farmers must be reached through the columns of the paper which they read, and that means the county weeklies. More often than not the local weekly is the one paper found in many rural homes and it is read thoroughly and with a great degree of confidence.

In order to reach these farmers, the information service of the Extension Division has made a very earnest effort to secure the friendship of the country editors. The plan for furnishing a free service has been placed before the editors at the annual meetings of the Virginia Press Association, through letters, and by personal interviews. The editor of the Extension Division belongs to the State Press Association and attends the meetings regularly twice a year. At the last three meetings of the press Association, he has been invited to explain the free service which the Extension Division is offering through the newspapers and has been assured of cooperation from practically all of the editors. He has welcomed any ideas and suggestions from the members of the association and has received many valuable hints as to how the work may be made more efficient.

In order to put the service on a business basis, material sent out is divided into three distinct classes; each class designed to meet the requirements of a certain class of papers.

The material in class number one goes out in mimeograph form to weekly papers that are equipped to set up a good deal of type. This is the largest class of matter and includes nearly everything handled in the editorial office. As a rule an article is not sent to more than one paper in the county. Exceptions to this are made for articles that have a particularly general appeal.

The material in class number two is prepared for the daily press and particular care is taken in the preparation of these articles. This matter is typewritten for each paper and release dates indicated. Except in some special cases the articles are sent exclusively to one daily in each city and are so marked.

In preparing these articles for the daily papers the news value is stressed, altho nearly all of the daily papers welcome feature articles for the Sunday issue on club work, farm and home demonstration work, etc.

Class number three consists of material prepared for the three farm papers that have the largest circulation in Virginia, also for some of the biggest agricultural journals of the country, such as The Southern Ruralist, Farm Journal, etc. These articles are prepared exclusively for each paper.

There is good reason to believe that the Extension Press service reaches with some degree of regularity, the majority of the farmers and farm women of Virginia.

Bulletins.

The general character of the bulletin series of publications remains the same each year. An effort is made to have each bulletin meet some definite demand and the subject matter of every bulletin deals with conditions that are peculiar to Virginia.

Circulars.

During the year which this report covers, 28 circulars were published. These circulars form a part of the work of the Extension Division and are usually gotten out by some one department in charge of the subject covered. The circulars have varied in size from one to four page leaflets.

Mailing List.

A general mailing list is maintained in the office carrying about 15000 names. The persons whose names are on this list receive the Extension Division News regularly each month. A mailing list of 10000 names carries the Agricultural and Home Economic Club members who receive the club papers regularly each month. It has not been deemed wise to distribute bulletins through this general mailing list of 15000, because many people would in this way receive bulletins on subjects in which they were not interested. An individual mailing list for bulletins is maintained, namely; Dairy Live Stock, Animal Husbandry, Poultry, etc. By using this

individual list for the distribution of bulletins if it is believed that greater efficiency is secured and that waste of paper, and labor on the part of the mailing force, is avoided.

Appended hereto is a list of all bulletins and circulars issued from July 1, 1919 to June 30, 1920, with number, printed, author and subject matter.

Bulletins.

	Pages.	Date Issued.
56. First Year Programs Home Dem. Clubs.-G. Townley.	16	Jan. 1920
57. Second Year Programs Home Dem. Clubs.-G. Townley.	15	" "
58. Third Year Programs Home Dem. Clubs.-G. Townley.	20	" "
59. 20 Lessons on Baby Beef Production.-J. P. Keen.	45	May "
60. 20 Lessons on Irish and Sweet Potatoes.-Marshall, Magill, & Foolsey.	42	June "
61. Livestock Judging.--R. E. Hunt.	48	" "

