

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

Virginia Agricultural Extension Service

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GRAND

County

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III. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY AND TYPE OF AGRICULTURE

Greene County is located in the northern piedmont section of Virginia and is bordered on the north and east by Orange and Madison, on the south and west by Albemarle and Rockingham. About 40 percent of the ninety seven thousand acres in the county is occupied by the Blue Ridge Mountains and foothills. Seventy thousand seven hundred acres make up the six hundred and sixty-two farms in the county.

The principal soil types in the county are Loyd, Starr, Cecil, and Hiwassee. By far the principle income of the county is from agriculture. A number of farmers supplement their income by working in Orange, Elkton, Madison, and Charlottesville.

There is no railroad in the county but two excellent highways bisect the county. The nearest railroad is thirteen miles from Stanardsville, the county seat.

The number of farms has declined from 701 to 662 within the five years period 1949 -54. This shows that farms are getting larger and small operators are selling out to find employment elsewhere. Of this 662 farm operators twenty fall in the group of \$25,000 or over gross receipts, compared with six, five years ago. In the lower income group (\$250. - \$1,199.) the number has decreased from 135 in 1950 to 100 in 1954. This shows a trend that gross income has increased. This is due in part to the poultry industry expanding and part to larger size farms.

The lower price for hogs and broilers about off set the increase

and turkeys. The gross income probably amounted to about the same as last year. Net income to farmers on farm products is probably less than last year due to higher production costs.

The number of turkeys produced was about the same as 1968 and levels out at about the same number as 1954 when the census reported 203,595 raised. Broiler production decreased sharply due to a sharp decline in price and the inability of feed dealers and manufacturers to finance them.

More farmers and farm women are finding part-time or full time employment off the farm for supplemental income. They are almost forced to do this to keep in step with higher costs and standards of living.

IV. COUNTY EXTENSION ORGANIZATION

The present Extension Organization consist of commodity committees, namely: Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, Agronomy, and Fair. Each committee met one or more times during the year to plan and/or carry out the Annual Extension Program.

V. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A. Agronomy

Greene is principally a livestock producing county and needs more and better hay and pasture crops. There is about 3,49 acres of pasture per animal unit, but, as pointed out by the agronomy committee too much of this is unimproved pasture and not enough supplemental summer and winter pasture to provide adequate year round forage for the livestock.

Corn yields are too low, averaging about 46 bushels per acre and small grain yields are fairly satisfactory.

As recommended by the Agronomy Committee the Extension Program was directed toward a twelve month forage program, with alfalfa and supplemental pasture filling in the gaps and increasing corn yields.

1. Forage Crops :

The agronomy committee suggested that alfalfa, "The King of the Hay Crops", should be increased by fifty acres and that corn for silage, "The King of the Silage Crops," should be increased by one hundred acres to ensure an adequate winter feed supply for the growing livestock numbers. The Extension agronomy program was directed toward meeting these goals.

The problems to be overcome in achieving these goals were: lack of interest, lack of know how, lack of capital, and the control of insects and weeds in forage crops.

To stimulate interest, news articles were devoted to this phase of the program using success stories. Publicity was given to ACP practices related to forage production.

Believing that the best means of publicity is by satisfied producers, most work was done with individual farmers. The agent gave assistance to individual farmers in selecting the right soil for alfalfa, testing soil, and giving fertilizer and lime recommendations.

One chickweed demonstration was given and eight farmers sprayed to control this pest.

A letter alerting farmers of weevil and giving recommended controls was sent to each alfalfa grower about the time weevil emerged. This has been a very satisfactory method of getting farmers to apply insecticides at the right time.

Farmers are becoming more aware of the value of improved forage crops. More improved pasture is seen each year. Alfalfa is gaining many friends. Not as many farmers as we would like are growing it but there is more acreage each year.

No additional farmers are using corn silage but those who have been using it are making greater use of it each year.

2. Grain Crops :

As small grain yields have been satisfactory (fairly) the agronomy committee felt that the Extension Program should emphasize increasing corn yields and set the goal of increasing the yields from forty six bushels per acre to sixty five bushels.

The chief problems to be overcome in attaining this goal is inadequate fertilization - especially nitrogen, poorly adapted varieties and weeds.

A news article in the local paper during April featured corn varietal and fertilizer recommendations. These recommendations were discussed with dealers who agreed to stock and advertise recommended varieties and fertilizer grades.

Judging from fertilizer and seed sales some progress is being made in increasing fertilizer applications and the use of varieties adapted to the area.

This has been a better than average corn year and farmers made satisfactory yields all over the county.

B. Livestock:

Either beef cattle, sheep, hogs or a combination of the different classes of livestock are found on most farms in Greene County. Six hundred and two farms reported owning beef cattle in 1954, five hundred and twenty reported hogs and ninety three reported owning sheep.

Sale of livestock and livestock products other than dairy accounted for approximately thirty percent of the farm income in 1954. It is estimated that income from livestock will be nearer fifty percent this year due to a higher price of beef cattle in relation to the price of other farm commodities.

The climate and topography lends its-self well to livestock production. Much of the rolling land, too steep for row-crops, is well suited for pasture. Every farm has enough tillable land to produce feed crops for winter feeding.

The outlook, the suitability of the land and adaptability of sheep to other livestock enterprises justifies a one hundred percent increase in sheep numbers.

1. Beef Cattle:

Practically all beef production is confined to a cow and calf enterprise. Almost all farmers market their beef animals either as feeder calves or as feeder yearlings. About six farmers feed out their yearlings for slaughter sometimes if prices and feed supplies warrant feeding them.

Based on the average price of feeder calves the livestock committee estimated that it took the price of about a four hundred pound calf grading good to support a cow for a year. The committee thought that the feeder calves produced in the county would average four hundred pounds in weight and average good in grade. With this situation in mind the committee set the objective of increasing the weight and improving the grades of calves.

Problems involved are : lack of good quality fast gaining bulls, too many poor quality poor milking cows, late calving, poor winter feeding and lack of adequate grading.

A livestock school was held in March. The morning session was devoted to a tour and the practical aspects of beef husbandry. Lectures with visuals were given in the afternoon session.

The afternoon program dealt with labor saving equipment and building lay-out, increasing the percent of calf crop, use of good quality fast gaining bulls, and marketing beef cattle.

The Extension beef program has been the same for two years - that of increasing calf crop and improving quality and weight of calves. It has been plugged in the paper , in personal contacts, and in notices of bull sales.

This is not a thing that will take place in a short time. Farmers are becoming aware of the importance of weight as well as quality and several are starting to do something about it, others will follow.

2. Sheep:

There is about fifteen hundred breeding ewes

In the county owned by about ninety farmers. Because of the economic stability of sheep, the topography and climate of the county, sheep numbers could be doubled to a good advantage.

It was the opinion of the livestock committee that sheep numbers should be increased and that an educational program should be directed toward increasing numbers, better flock management, and better quality sheep.

Some of the problems involved are : Lack of interest, dogs, fences, parasites and disease control, feeding, quality, marketing wool and shearing.

Each year two or three 4-H boys are started in sheep shearing.

They are given training at shearing schools and by individual instruction. By the second or third year the ones that stick to it are pretty proficient. The shearing situation is very well taken care of in this way.

The external parasites are fairly well under control. For five years there has been an active dipping program conducted. A custom operator with a portable vat is secured to do the work. The Extension Agent lines up the flocks to be dipped. Then the operator does the dipping in about two days. Practically all the flocks in the county have been dipped at least once within the past four years.

Internal parasites are still somewhat of a problem. Publicity and demonstrations have been given but there is still a need for more work on this problem.

Sheep numbers have increased to some extent but we still need more in the county.

3. Swine:

Greene is not a commercial hog producing county; however, the majority of livestock farmers sell some hogs and this enterprise produces about one fourth of the livestock income for the county.

Greene is not a grain producing county, there is not much incentive for expansion in the swine industry. Extension's aim in this field is to do a little better job of husbandry and to promote a meat type hog.

For the most part work with hogs is done through 4-H demonstrations namely: the Sears-Roebuck Sow Chain and the market hog project. All other work has been done with the individual.

Night 4-H members have sows or sow-pigs provided by the Sears Roebuck Sow Chain Project. They are required to furnish pasture, mineral, an adequate farrowing house and to feed a balanced ration. They are offered incentive awards for doing this.

They are also required to follow all other good swine husbandry practices. The best breeding stock is secured for this project.

Four-H boys conducting the market hog project are supervised closely and improvements in management practices are recommended when needed. Members are assisted and advised on securing a good meat type pig with which to begin their project. At least ninety percent of the hogs shown in the market hog show at Orange grade U.S.T.

Four farmers were assisted individually this year in selecting and securing good meat type purebred boars.

On farmer was assisted in building a modern farrowing house.

From observation farmers are doing a better job with their hogs.

They are more conscious of the meat type and are growing the hogs out at younger ages.

6. DAIRY

Practically every farm in the county has one or more dairy cows. Six farmers are producing Grade A milk. There are no grade B producers, and with all other farms dairying is a fairly cow or cow proposition with surplus sold as cream. Three hundred ninety farmers sell cream but all of them produce cream as a sideline or secondary enterprise.

All dairies are located in the one fourth of the area where the Alberman Artificial Breeding Association services are available.

The greatest problem is low production. It is estimated that the average annual production per cow is around 6000 to 7000 pounds.

The greatest need is adequate production records to provide a basis for culling, breeding, and feeding according to production.

The object is to get each dairymen to keep individual cow production records either by a self made system, weigh-a-Day, owner-sampler or D.H.I.A.

Some headway is being made toward this objective. One of the new dairymen, who has recently moved to the county, is enrolled in D.H.I.A. At least one other is anticipating Weigh-a-Day.

As there is only six commercial dairymen in the county all work with dairy has been by personal contacts.

D. Poultry

There are fewer people engaged in the poultry production industry each year and flocks are larger each year. There are only fourteen commercial broiler producers at present and they have curtailed their operation considerably this year. The price has forced dealers (feed) to curtail their contract operations which in turn force the producer to reduce his numbers.

Ninety-nine percent of the turkeys are grown by two partnership producers. Only a few breeders and a few meat birds are grown by individuals and practically all these are on contract.

All hatching egg flocks are under contract with a hatchery. Almost all table egg flocks are under contract with a feed company, hatchery, or marketing agency.

The program objectives are to foster a sound management program and to stimulate interest in commercial eggs.

As the number of farmers engaged in poultry production is so small most of the work done in this field was done by individual contacts. Monthly letters prepared by members of the poultry department were sent to poultrymen.

Three new poultry houses were constructed this year by two farmers. Each house will house about two hundred hens. Both of these farmers are connected with a hatchery and will produce started pullets and will keep part of the pullets for layers.

E. Forestry

About one third of the land in farms is occupied by forests.

A large percent of this is cut over land that has grown back in brush or undesirable species. Over one third of all woodland is grazed. Practically all timber is sold by tract with no provisions for leaving seed trees or trees that are still making good growth.

Forestry Extension Work was to encourage better woodland management by protecting it from grazing, disposing of weed trees for fuel, or by poisoning. Selective harvesting of timber and reforestation was encouraged.

More farmers are becoming aware of the value of their forest land each year and are following better management practices. Several farmers who have sold their timber recently have had it marked, estimated and harvested selectively. About seventy-five thousand forest tree seedlings were planted in the county this year.

F. Horticulture

Horticulture in the county is limited to vegetable growing. Practically all vegetables grown are used at home. A few farmers and/or homemakers grow a little surplus for sale.

Extension teaching was aimed at insect and disease control, varieties, mulching, and winter cover crops.

Nineteen 4-H members conducted garden projects. They were given instructions in the regular club meetings and given bulletins pertaining to insect and disease control and varieties.

A monthly garden letter was sent to each person on the garden mailing list. Bulletins on garden topics were distributed to gardeners on request.

VI. FARM AND HOME DEVELOPMENT

Four farmers were worked with through the farm and home development approach this year. One was dropped during the year. This one was dropped because the family was in their late 40's or early fifties and naturally were not interested in making many big changes.

The assistance given the remaining three farms was in the area of making adjustments to keep pace with the changes in technology. Neither of these farms have had a complete farm plan.

The biggest problem, common to all the families, is getting enough basic information; namely, for the agents to assist them in making adjustments.

VII. 4-H CLUB WORK

There are one hundred and twelve boys and one hundred and seventy girls enrolled in twelve clubs distributed throughout the county.

One hundred sixty-two projects, supervised by the county agent, were conducted by one hundred and twelve boys and two girls.. Ninety-four projects were completed. Although project completions was not as high as desired the quality of project work and interest of members is improving.

Four boys and one girl showed eight baby beavers at the show in Charlottesville in April. Tommy Shelton won first place in the light hereford class and reserve champion hereford. Calvin Powell and Susan Edkins each won second place in the light and heavy hereford classes respectively. Norman Powell won a sixth place with his hereford. Other classes shown were an Angus by Susan Edkins and a Hereford by Griffin Powell.

Night 4-H's exhibited hogs in the Orange Area Market Hog Show and Sale. John Bowman won a first place, Jimmy Henshaw a second and David Bates a fourth.

Three boys entered the Area Junior Broiler Contest. David Bates, Randolph Bell and Calvin Powell won 6th., 7th. and 11th. respectively among twenty two entries.

Ten boys and fifteen girls attended 4-H camp at Holiday Lake in July. One boy attended the State 4-H Short Course at V.P.I. and was taken into the All-Star Chapter.

Three boys participated in the District Land Appreciation Contest and won second place. Because of sickness and summer school the team was not represented in the State Contest.

VIII. COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES - VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

As in past years the County Extension sponsored and promoted the Bangs Vaccination phase of the Bangs Eradication Program. Through this effort about five hundred seventy five hifers of beef and dairy herds were vaccinated. This represents approximately seventy five percent of the hifers produced in the county.

A.S.C.

The county agent attends the A.S.C. committee meetings, and assisted with developing and carrying out the 1958 program. The agent also assisted with developing and carrying out the 1959 program. The agent also assisted with the educational phase of the program.

Soil Conservation Service

There being no Soil Conservation Technician located in the county the Extension Agent acts as liaison with the work unit Technician whose office is in an adjoining county. The agent also is serving on the committee of Conservation Needs.

F.H.A.

The county agent worked with the FHA Supervisor in securing reference on Loan Applicants and obtaining committeemen to serve on the board.

Fair

Assistance was given the fair committee in planning and conducting the Greene County Fair.

IX. COOPERATIVES ASSISTED

Orange- Madison - Greene Feeder Calf Sale Association, Inc.

The county agent assisted the local feeder calf sale association with organization, finances, and business policies of Producers. A total of three hundred and three calves were sold for Greene County Farmers through the two auction sales conducted by the Association.

Orange Area Wool Pool

The agent assisted with the original organization of this pool and assisted with selling and assembling the wool for shipment. Twenty farmers sold three thousand pounds of wool through the pool.