

PLAN of WORK

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

1955

FILED

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PLAN OF WORK FOR THE
COUNTY AGENT
PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
1955

General Situation

Prince Edward, located in the center of Virginia, is principally an agricultural county and is dependent largely upon farm crops, with no major industry. Its rolling topography and great variation in soil types necessitates considerable diversification in land use. Livestock industry is principally a dairy one, with some beef cattle and a small amount of poultry and hogs. Crop production includes most of the grain crops, and four kinds of tobacco: flue-cured, fire-cured, burley, and air-cured. The eastern side of the county is devoted largely to dairying and the production of flue-cured tobacco, the western side being devoted principally to general farming - with more beef cattle, some dairying, and a predominance of dark-fired tobacco. According to census, the average farm is about 100 acres.

The census also lists the county as having about 1340 farms of which some 750 or 800 are owned by white farmers. The rural population is increasing in non-farm population and decreasing in operators of farms. Crop land is about one-third of the total farm land. Timber crop is now being harvested (especially pine) faster than it is being produced.

Two years of unfavorable weather with declining farm prices (except for flue-cured tobacco) has had a somewhat depressing effect on farmers. Feed is scarce on livestock farms, and pastures are considerably below normal. Tobacco acreages of all types being reduced this year further discourages many farmers.

Therefore, the agent and advisory committees feel that the plan of work should include efforts to help farmers producing tobacco to increase poundage per acre and improve quality, - and that dairymen be encouraged to more effective management, especially of hay and pasture production and better-producing cows, - and livestock producers assisted in producing better pastures and better quality hay.

Land owners are to be encouraged to take advantage of the reforestation program offered by the ASC. This program offers special provision to those interested in producing better timber on their land.

Farmers producing the grain crops will be urged to use adapted varieties and more liberal fertilization to increase yield per acre.

The farm labor situation and heavy investment of many farmers in machinery causes increased yields per acre to be of prime importance.

No special marketing problems are to be attacked, except that tobacco producers are to be advised on presenting a better prepared product to the market.

The 4-H group is in need of particular attention and this part of the program is treated more fully under "Activities".

II. Dairy Cattle and Dairying

Situation

In Prince Edward there are now more than 3,500 cows being milked for market, either milk or cream. Dark tobacco has for generations been a cash crop here, but during the past few years because of acreage control the acreage has been getting smaller and smaller. Quite a few farms which once produced large acreages of dark tobacco have turned to whole milk production. Others are planning to produce milk or cream, to supplement the income. Prince Edward has a D.H.I.A. with about 900 cows on test. Milk is sold to five Grade A markets: Richmond, Petersburg, Farmville, Norfolk and Washington. Grade B milk is sent to South Boston and Norfolk.

Planned Activities

Dairy-Agronomy meetings with producers are planned for early spring and fall. These meetings with radio, news articles, and other local meetings, will encourage the use of better pastures, more home grown grain, and better hay crops, including more alfalfa.

The D.H.I.A. is expected to be enlarged by more members and cows on test. Annual meeting of association is scheduled for early spring. It is expected to use news articles, with radio, to emphasize the value of testing production as basis for herd improvement. In April, two or three days will be devoted to herd analysis, records. M. F. Elmore, and the agent, expect to visit herds and advise on record use. Some preliminary work is going to be done in March on artificial breeding program, scheduled to be done in cooperation with the local veterinarian and the Virginia Artificial Breeding Association.

Several producers are in the process of setting up herds and

and barns, or enlarging barns and herds. These men have asked for the assistance of the agent in both.

Pasture work is to be outlined in another section.

III. Tobacco and Other Farm Crops

Situation

Prince Edward County produced in 1951, 2,609 acres of tobacco of all kinds. It was divided as follows: burley, 59 acres (yield per acre was 1,791 pounds); fire-cured, 1,135 acres (yield per acre was 1,407 pounds); flue-cured, 1,303 acres (yield per acre was 1,266 pounds) sun-cured, 112 acres (yield per acre was 1,275 pounds).

In 1954 the allotted acreage for Prince Edward was only 1,027 acres. In other words, in the last five years the county has lost 50% of its fire-cured tobacco crop. In this situation many growers are going to have to increase their poundage per acre and improve the quality considerably, if tobacco is to remain as a reasonable part of the farm income.

Blue mold continues to be a serious handicap to growers. Black shank is widespread. Root knot is also a very serious disease problem for fire-cured tobacco growers.

PLANNED Activities

FLUE-CURED: The plans now include a campaign by radio, letter, news articles and personal assistance to have growers seed with approved and/or certified varieties. Sources of seed will be made available to all growers. Demonstrations with disease resistant varieties are planned. Odell Cook will use Cokers 139 and B. C. Bass will use Vesta 55 or Vesta 5 where black shank conditions exist.

H. H. Hubbard, Odell Cook, and L. N. Fallen and R. E. L. Jenkins will demonstrate the use of soil fumigant for control of root knot. Field demonstrations on this work will be given at farms of H. H. Hubbard and Odell Cook.

Several variety demonstrations are to be carried by growers with Virginia Gold, Hicks, and Virginia 21.

A visit to the Chatham Experiment Station by flue-cured growers is scheduled for mid-summer.

There are planned several demonstrations with insecticides on flue-cured tobacco as well as the other types. These will include DDT in plant beds, and DDE on field plants. These demonstrations will be located by the members of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Committee. A field tour is planned for early August or

late July, to see variety performance in the county. G. R. Mathews, tobacco specialist, will assist in the program. Variety and fertilizer demonstrations are planned with the assistance of E. M. Mathews, tobacco specialist at Chatham Experiment Station.

FIRE-CURED: This work is being planned with a committee of growers and will include eight to ten variety demonstrations of approved varieties. Community meetings will be held in February and March, with the assistance of G. R. Mathews, tobacco specialist. Three growers will cooperate with the agent and the experiment station in variety tests, fertilizer tests, and disease-resistant variety tests.

Communities meetings will be held to assist growers in selection of variety and suggestions on fertilization. Two field meetings are scheduled to be held in early August to observe variety and fertilizer demonstrations; also included will be a visit or field day tour to the Experiment Station, to observe its work on the tobacco. Insect control in the tobacco bed and the field will be demonstrated by the use of DDT and TDE in each important tobacco community of the county.

BURLEY: Variety demonstrations with burley, as with flue-cured and fire-cured, are planned - using such varieties as Burley 1 and 2, Ky 16, and Burley 21.

Demonstrations are planned with T. C. Hix, Leslie Harris, H. C. Cunningham, L. E. Morris.

OTHER FARM CROPS

Plans for corn, small grains and alfalfa work with farmers and merchants include radio programs to discuss varieties and basis for recommendations. Merchants are to be encouraged by visits, circular letters and news articles to stock and sell approved varieties. Farm visits for soil samples and observation and advice will be made as time permits. Farmers are encouraged to take their own soil samples and then fertilize and lime on the basis of tests. This will apply to all crops and pastures.

Community meetings are planned for March, to discuss with farmers fertilizer recommendations and varieties of spring-planted crops. In view of the increased need and use for small grain feeds, the use of approved varieties of oats will be emphasized in radio talks, news articles, and at meetings.

IV. PASTURES

Pasture work is all planned to include soil test as a basis for fertilizing. Due to the severe drought injury of pastures during the past two years, considerable radio time, news articles and circular letters will be devoted to the problem.

Due to the great variety of soils and conditions, plans are rather difficult to establish for demonstrations. The committee suggests that publicity be used to draw and attract attention to specific pasture work and its progress. They also advise that farmers be encouraged to participate in the ASC program, especially on pasture work.

It is suggested the agent render especial assistance or attention to emergency hay and grazing crops. Plans therefore call for especially prepared literature to be issued early in the spring. Dairymen and beef cattle producers will have their particular attention called to the necessity and value by news articles, circular letters, and radio.

V. FARM AND HOME DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This program is planned to represent all sections of the county, if possible; at least five of these Farm and Home programs are planned. An attempt is being made to select or secure cooperators who will be as representative as possible, and also families and farms where there is a problem which can be helped by such planning. Selection is expected to be made or done by the county and home agents with the assistance of others capable of advising.

VI. Miscellaneous

BEEF CATTLE: Producers will be encouraged to secure better sires, also to participate in a feed program stressing production. Those who can, will be invited to participate in a feeder calf marketing program. A livestock producers' meeting is scheduled for late March and another in November. These are planned to be held with the cooperation of C. C. Mast and K. C. Williamson and Dr. Kailson, all from the Extension Service of V.P.I.

FRUIT GROWERS: Meetings are planned for late February, June and October, to bring growers up to date on markets, plantings, disease and insect control, pruning, and other management problems.

FAIRS: Premium lists will be made up in early spring for the Five County Fair. 4-H Clubs will be readied for work of club and individual exhibits. Tractor Driving Contest will be arranged. Other work will consist in cooperating with the association.

Lynchburg Farm Show will have exhibitions from the county if any are worthy and conditions are such as can permit entries.

OTHER MINOR WORK: This work will include cooperation with organized farm groups such as the Farm Bureau and Farmers' Union. A special program is to be worked out with the Farmville Chamber of Commerce, whereby that organization will encourage more progressive agriculture in the area. Other organizations such as Worsham

Farmers Club, Rotary, Lions, Dark-fired Tobacco Growers' Marketing Association, and many others will be assisted and cooperated with in such programs as they may have which need the agents.

The following committees are used in promoting various activities in their fields, and also serve as advisor to the agent on problems and plans:

Agronomy Committee

- B. C. Bass
- T. C. Hix
- J. A. Hines
- B. H. Cunningham
- Charles Owen
- A. E. Dunkley

Livestock Committee

- F. G. Baldwin
- J. W. Redd
- George Shorter
- R. M. Bradshaw

Dairy Committee

- John Gates
- B. C. Bass
- Hugh Jenkins
- W. L. Dickenson
- G. W. Palmer

Plans will need cooperation of the specialists from the Extension Service of V.P.I. as listed below, and probably others:

- Beef Cattle - Mast..... March and August
- Williamson..... March and August
- Westing..... September

- Dairy - - - - Ellmore..... February, May and October
- Others..... October
- E W Carson..... September

- Agronomy - -
- Dark Tobacco
- G R Mathews - February, March, May, July, September

- Flue-cured
- E M Matthews January
- G R Mathews..... July

- Pastures
- W W Lewis or
- G R Epperson..... May and July

- Miscellaneous - Shoulders..... September
- Lewis..... September

- Fruit- - - - Dreiling..... March, June and November

- Gardening - - - F H Scott..... September

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VII. 4-H Club Work

SITUATION

Club work for the past few years has been done with about 75 to 80 boys. These were enrolled in seven clubs, which met monthly in schools during the school year. This has not been too satisfactory, regarding individual project work. Also, time of meetings was not always satisfactory. Few or no clubs met in the months of June, July and August.

Therefore, in an effort to increase enrollment and reach more members the County Agent, Assistant Agent and Home Demonstration Agent, with the cooperation of the school superintendent and teachers, clubs will be organized on a basis of classes in school ... and meetings held once a month during a regular class period.

A. Project Work for Clubs

Clubs will this year all use the same project work. "Safety" is the in-school project, with awards offered the best three individuals by the local radio station and an award (free movie) offered the club doing the best over-all work. 4-H Club members are being trained in planning and putting on their own club programs -- members give an average of four short demonstrations at each club meeting on some phase of safety. Records are being stressed and time is taken to record achievements at certain club meetings.

B. Individual Projects

Boys will of course carry their individual projects. The list includes Dairy Calf
Breeding Pig
Fat Pig
Tobacco
Field Crops,
Gardens
Poultry
Forestry
Farm and Home Safety

C. 4-H County Council

The County 4-H Council will be encouraged to meet four times during the year. These meetings, it is hoped, are to be used to enlarge club activities, such as participation in National 4-H Club Week, District 4-H Camp, State 4-H Short Course, Rural Life Sunday, and club participation in the Five-County Fair. The Council is expected to be reorganized in the winter or early spring. The group will be ~~encouraged to appoint committees at that time~~ encouraged to appoint committees at that time on such activities as National 4-H Club Week and the other activities itemized above. The agents and leaders will then have definite groups to work with, and it is expected that there will be enough committees to use several leaders and most of the members of the Council.

D. Cooperation With Organizations

The 4-H Clubs and members have had the active support of the Five-

County Fair for several years. This organization provides a medium through which acknowledgement is made of exceptionally good work. This year, plans are being worked out with the Fair to enlarge the classes for exhibits, both of clubs and of members. These plans, of course, expect to benefit clubs and members in all five of the counties included in the Fair. The Fair Association is to furnish all leaders in the five counties a yearly subscription to the National 4-H Club News magazine.

Club members will also participate in contests sponsored by Sears Roebuck & Co., Va. Dark-fired Tobacco Growers' Marketing Association, Tobacco Associates, Flue-cured Tobacco Markets of Virginia, and other organizations.