

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

## COUNTY EXTENSION WORK

### *Virginia Agricultural Extension Service*

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1963

NORTHAMPTON

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**County**

I. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING AND CARRYING OUT THE EXTENSION PROGRAM

The County Home Demonstration Committee has been outstanding this year in the amount of work they have done. At their planning meeting in March, they planned for District I Federation Meeting to be held in the county in April and a tour of Wallops Station, Island, and the Virginia Truck Experiment Station at Painter, in May. In June they planned for Achievement Day and Christmas Ideas Exhibit to be held in October.

Committees, from club members, were chosen to take care of all phases of the District Federation Meeting. Approximately 345 persons attended. Dr. Wilson Bell, Dean of Agriculture, V.P.I. spoke on "Bridging the Gap" in Education. Slides were shown on the progress of the bridge-tunnel. a 4-H'er, Marlowe Cole designed a strawberry book mark and Mrs. Gwynn Shepperd, President of Jamesville H. D. Club, held a work day and together with help of members from other clubs completed 400 of these which were used to hold together programs, county reports, and song sheets.

The tour of Wallops Station and Island was most interesting and involved contacting Mr. Joseph Robbins, Administrative Management Officer, and setting up a schedule. At the Experiment Station, Dr. Mapp Dunton and Dr. R. N. Hofmaster, showed some of the work they are doing experimentally.

Leaders planned program for Achievement Day to include the 20th year of H. D. work in the county. Mr. J. N. Selby told women of his work as Soil Conservationist and showed slides of some of the work done in the two counties (Northampton and Accomack) that make up the Eastern Shore Soil Conservation District.

Committee members planned and carried out a most successful Christmas Ideas Exhibit, which was open to the public. Over 200 people attended.

Local leaders have made marked improvement, this year, in their willingness and ability to give demonstrations and speak before groups. They have taken a more active part in assisting with 4-H projects and tours.

Officers of 4-H clubs were trained in their duties by adult volunteer and junior leaders. Junior leaders have assisted junior members in project work and recreation as well as given talks and demonstrations to H. D. clubs. Older 4-H members have taken part in all Eastern Shore Honor Club activities, which ranged from recreation to study of junior leadership opportunities.

It is gratifying to know that we have leaders who have the ability and the initiative to meet the challenge of changing conditions and can adjust accordingly. We are indeed proud to have a District Home Demonstration President from our county.

Since there are so few farmers in this county (370 - 1959 Census), the County Agent is quite familiar with most of them. Under this condition, it is not difficult to locate problem areas and to know the thinking of local leaders.

The sweet potato committee has been quite active and its work is described later in this report.

The potato (Irish) marketing committee conducted an elaborate program in the spring of 1963. It attempted to establish a co-operative system of marketing on a bi-county basis. The program was abandoned however for 1963 when it was found that it was not possible to get 85% participation. The effort may or may not be resumed for 1964.

II. PROJECT AREACLOTHING

- A. Phase - Clothing
- B. Situation: Major emphasis was placed on clothing because many women owned sewing machines but had very limited knowledge as to what could be accomplished in the way of clothing construction for themselves and their families. They lacked knowledge in the selection of patterns and materials suitable for them as well as a knowledge of steps in construction which make garments appear professionally made.
- C. Objectives: To gain more knowledge in selecting patterns; improve sewing techniques and skills; save time and money, at the same time, having family well clothed.
- D. Progress: An increased interest in sewing has come about in many women, both club and non-club members. It is believed that the excellent training on Care and Use of the Sewing Machine given by Mrs. Elizabeth Spielman had much to do with this enthusiasm. In the H. D. clubs, clothing leaders spent a great deal of time and effort in preparing materials to give excellent demonstrations to their clubs.

This year, 26 tailored garments have been completed in three tailoring workshops. These were conducted by agent and five clothing committee members. Some of the suits and coats were modeled at Achievement Day, while one leader showed the inside of

tailored jacket and explained something of the work involved. Eleven of those completing garments were non-club members. Women are most conscious of how clothes should look, the need for selecting correct patterns and materials.

II. PROJECT AREAHOUSING

- A. Phase - Housing
- B. Situation: Most homemakers live in older homes with inadequate storage facilities; large rooms with no closet space and in general many are poorly planned to meet the needs of the family members.
- C. Objectives: To plan efficient organization of available closet space or new space to meet needs of family. To become familiar with new storage and closet accessories that are available.
- D. Progress: Many more are aware of the availability of various small accessories to improve storage space by addition of extra shelves or other added storage facilities. In the County Chairman's report, 67 articles were refinished; 75 shelves and porches improved and 70 closets improved. One attic was completely refinished, while two kitchens were modernized.

II. PROJECT AREA4-H CLUBS

- A. Phase - Securing Additional 4-H Club Leaders
- B. Situation: Some clubs are organized in county but do not have an adult leader.
- C. Objectives:
- To secure and hold volunteer leaders by developing a good leadership training program and thereby strengthening the county 4-H program.
- D. Progress:
- The new leader to assist with the "special" 4-H club at Cheriton has been most interested and doing a good job. She filled a request from one of the teachers to help with another project with all the children in a class. A new leader, or rather a very good adult volunteer leader, has returned to the county and has agreed to take up where she left off. We still lack leaders for one club since last year's leader took a cub pack instead of assisting with 4-H this year.

II. PROJECT AREA4-H CLUBS

## A. Phase - Special 4-H Club

## B. Situation:

Agents were requested three years ago to work with a special group of children at Cheriton Elementary School. These children range in grades 2 - 7 and ages 9 - 13, with varying levels of ability.

## C. Objectives:

To plan a program to meet the abilities and hold the interest of this group. To help these children learn to work together, share together and develop some coordination. To assist these children in learning simple things but important ones that will make them better members of the society in which they live.

## D. Progress:

Twenty-two children have been assisted and encouraged to use their hands in making favors, decorations, gifts, place mats, scarves, etc. At the same time, they learned to share, get along with others, and work as members of a group. School personnel seemed well pleased with progress made and asked that the program be continued this current school year. As soon as school opened I was told these special children asked when 4-H was going to start. —

Two groups are being worked with this year. One with children, ages 8 - 11, very slow; explanations have to be very simple and repeated often. The other group, ages 10 - 13, a little more ability and interest span a little longer. There are 13 in first group; 17 in the other.

II. PROJECT AREACOMMUNITY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A. Phase: Rural Area Development

B. Situation:

The work of most farmers and many non-farm people is seasonal, with the result that they are unemployed or under employed a part of each year. Gross farm income is correspondingly spasmodic. The county RAD committee has previously considered this problem and is studying possible alternatives to improve this undesirable condition.

C. Objective:

To stimulate a desire on the part of farm people for a production pattern that will alleviate the undesirable condition described above. To stimulate non-farm people engaged in seasonal work, to work toward a combination of employments and/or enterprises. Both of the above probably will result in a more total income and more human satisfactions.

D. Progress:

There have been two meetings of the selected committee in 1963. Also the Technical panel has met twice. The report, "Development Opportunities for Virginia's Eastern Shore", prepared for the Area Redevelopment Administration by the Economics Department of Old Dominion College, was reviewed and discussed at length. The group concurs with most of the recommendations made in this report.

Many aspects of the county's economy and society were discussed at length. Those present felt that the various agencies such as the Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, The Industrial Development Corporation, Agricultural Organizations, The County Planning Commission, and the County Board of Supervisors are pursuing projects that will accomplish the above objectives. They did propose that these organizations be urged to expedite their programs.

There was a proposal that the report (Development Opportunities for Virginia's Eastern Shore) be brought to the attention of as many local people as possible. The County Agent has presented a synopsis of it to three civic organizations. Other groups and individuals have been encouraged to consider and discuss the county's potential, and ways of bringing about the most desired conditions.

II. PROJECT AREA: MARKETING AND UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Phase: Sweet Potato Marketing

This county's per acre yield of sweet potatoes is near the best in the nation. Probably cost of production (per unit of products) is lower than in competing states. It should be noted, however, that yields, in some of the states south of Virginia, have been increasing, in very recent years, at a faster rate than they have here. Quality of the fresh market pack here has been improving for the past several years.

The commodity committee established the following objectives for 1963:

1. An expansion of the grower financed market promotional program.
2. A quality improvement program.
3. A program to stimulate more extensive use of storage.

Since Maryland and Virginia are producing the same type of sweet potato, growers from the two states have cooperated in their promotional efforts. In this way, their program has been enlarged and evidently is more effective.

To improve quality, an appeal has been made to growers, haulers, and packers to reduce bruising to a minimum. Posters with pictures of proper vs improper handling methods have been placed in packing houses and other places that farmers congregate. Damaged vs not damaged sweet potatoes have been exhibited in a growers meeting. The local

papers have carried articles on the subject.

The Virginia Truck Experiment Station, for two years, has been in the process of developing foundation seed that will eventually be used with the revised seed certification program.

Most people interested in this enterprise feel that an outlet is needed for oversize and off-shape sweet potatoes. Should such be developed, roots being packed for fresh market would be culled more severely, thus providing a more attractive fresh market product. For this reason, the local committee and others have been studying and investigating the possibility of establishing a plant here that would manufacture sweet potato flakes. They have determined that there is sufficient volume available. The present limiting factors are lack of the necessary capital and an assured market outlet. A solution to these problems is being sought at the present time.

Because of severe drought in the spring, summer, and fall of 1963, per acre yields have been below normal, and in turn a smaller volume was stored for winter sale. The quantity stored, however, is about the same percentage of the crop as in 1962. At the end of the year, sales of storage sweetpotatoes indicates that the practice is quite profitable. No doubt, this will encourage more storage in 1964.

II. PROJECT AREA: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, MANAGEMENT, AND NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Phase: Vegetable Production

This project area was selected because it accounts for most of Northampton County's agricultural income. Gross sales of vegetables, potatoes, and sweet potatoes amount to about \$7,000,000 annually. Local people consider potatoes and sweet potatoes as vegetables and are included as such in this report.

To obtain the largest possible net profit in vegetable production is the chief objective stated by local leaders. It is also their feeling that cost can be reduced by using less inputs, at the same time not reducing quality or yields per acre. Some farmers, who in years past have obviously used inputs excessively, have seen the wisdom of changing this practice and have profited thereby.

Experiment Station data has been brought to the attention of growers and others at every opportunity. This information has been presented at public meetings, through the press, circular letters, demonstrations, and individual contacts. New growers of a particular commodity are definitely more receptive to recommendations. An effort has been made to influence farmers to respect the accuracy and validity of Experiment Station recommendations. Many groups have visited the local branch of the Virginia Truck Experiment Station to observe the work conducted there.

A warning service on the probability and possibility of disease and insect infestations has been established by the Virginia Truck Experiment Station. These warnings are passed on to growers by the County Agent immediately after they are received.

It is recognized that farmers of this county rely heavily on the advice of salesmen of fertilizer, pesticides, etc., and for this reason, a special effort has been made to influence this group. Most of them are quite cooperative, and this has been found to be an effective way to reach people. Many of these salesmen visit the Experiment Station from time to time and discuss local problems, individually, with specialists.

The increase in use of higher analysis fertilizers is a potential means of reducing production costs. It has been noted, however, that many farmers are inclined to use the same number of pounds of the higher analyses fertilizers, which in turn, actually increases cost and in many instances will reduce quality and delay maturity. A special effort has been made to influence farmers to think in terms of pounds of N., P., and K. rather than pounds of fertilizer. County leaders are aware that progress is definitely being made, that the production costs are declining, quality improving, and per acre yields increasing. They expect a continuous flow of new technology and educational effort to bring more efficient production and cheaper food for consumers.

II. PROJECT AREAOTHER ACTIVITIES

## B. Other Activities

a. Economics

Outlook information has been presented in one county-wide meeting; to a few small groups of farmers; and through many individual contacts. Several farmers have been assisted individually in making plans for their operations. Electronic farm records are being handled for two farmers.

b. Soil and Water Conservation

The County Agent is secretary of the Eastern Shore Soil Conservation District Supervisors. This group and the county A.S.C.S. Committee motivate the soil and water conserving program. Both groups have been assisted extensively.

c. Forestry

All of the forest land in this county is a part of farms. The public is becoming more conscious of its importance. The chief activities this year have been assisting individual owners with insect problems, reestablishment after harvest, and a few with plans for thinning. Programs on this subject have been presented to three civic groups. Most of this work has been done in cooperation with the Virginia Division of Forestry.

II. PROJECT AREAOTHER ACTIVITIES

## B. Other Activities

a. Home Management

Leader training by specialist and club demonstrations on "Selecting Household Cleaning Supplies" and "Short Cuts In Cleaning" provided club members with the latest information on cleaning supplies as well as how to work with the least effort. Evaluation is difficult but program was well received and favorable comments have been made about its value.

b. Tailoring

Three tailoring workshops were held with 26 tailored garments completed. These were conducted by agent and clothing committee members.

c. Nutrition

"Low Calorie Meals" was the subject for one month's demonstration. Agent provided the training; leaders gave excellent demonstrations. Interest is high on this subject and more will be included in next year's program.

d. Rural Arts

A special interest meeting was held on making patterns for hooked rugs and planning for making these rugs. Fourteen are in the process of being made.

a. Cooperation with Health Department

This activity included special sewing projects, the making of special dressings and pink puppets.

Special Santa Claus puppets were made and given to children entering the hospital during Christmas vacation.

II. PROJECT AREAUNANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES

## B. Unanticipated Activities

1. Sheep Scabies Eradication

In cooperation with State and federal veterinarians, the 66 flocks of sheep in this county were inspected for scabies. and found to be free. The County Agent assisted in training the two inspectors and handling the publicity and reports.

2. In Service Training

The County Agent received three weeks training in Farm Management at V.P.I. in the fall of 1963. This program was most challenging and will be a useful tool in this county's program.

3. Nutrition Workshop

The Nutrition Workshop, held at V.P.I. in July, was indeed a challenge to all of those attending and featured some of the most outstanding speakers in their field. The Home Demonstration agent was privileged to attend and enjoyed the workshop as well as getting to know agents from other states. The project required will be most helpful in working with people in the county.

4. 4-H Leaders Training

We were most fortunate in securing Mrs. Elizabeth Spielman, Educational Supervisor, Singer, to train 4-H and prospective leaders in Getting The Most Out of the Sewing Machine. The excellent training will be of great value to the program.

III. SUCCESS STORYSUCCESS STORY

Recognition, this year, should go to the Northampton 4-H Club. This club is composed of high school students, who meet at school after school hours. All of the members are former grade school 4-H members with long standing records of accomplishments.

This club participates actively in County Council meetings, Honor Club activities, District Contests, Short Courses and camps.

They hold their regular meeting once a month and have special call meetings when necessary to plan or promote a project. A trip to Washington, D. C. and an overnight stay at the National 4-H Center was planned and financed by the members from the sale of soup. Members met, on Saturdays during the winter, made the soup and delivered it to customers.

Proceeds from rummage sales, held this summer, profits from First Aid kits and school banners sold, plus additional "soup Saturdays" this winter will finance a trip to the World's Fair in New York, now being planned for next summer by the club.

Much credit for the accomplishments and enthusiasm of the club is due the adult volunteer leader, Mrs. W. R. Snyder. Both Mrs. Snyder and her husband, Mr. Snyder, have worked willingly and untiringly with the club. They have entertained the group with

hayrides, covered dish dinners, and loaned equipment needed to make the 4-H floats used, each year, at the annual Homecoming Football game. Mrs. Snyder has also served as assistant leader of the Eastern Shore Honor Club and this year, leader of the Northampton Honor Club.

Achievement Records have been submitted to the State by three club members. The leader has been most interested and encouraged others to enter records. Transportation is a handicap to some members that would otherwise do more junior leadership work with younger club members.

Six 4-H members attended State Short Course, one winning State Frozen Foods Contest.

Four were in District Contests, while six others went to observe, hoping to be contestants the following year. Four girls served as pages at the District Federation Meeting, held in the county in April.

Our two All Stars attended the weekend All Star Conference before Short Course in June and remained for the week, taking part in the Short Course.

We like to think that the work and experiences in the 4-H program has been instrumental in influencing two senior girls, (of 4), in the club to apply to the V.P.I. School of Home Economics for admission next year.

IV. GENERAL APPRAISAL OF PAST YEARGENERAL APPRAISAL

There can be no monotony in the Northampton County Extension program. The many planned programs plus the request for services by local people make it necessary for Extension Service personnel to spread their efforts so thin that it is difficult to give any one program the attention needed. Activities are as varied as the horizons, ranging from 4-H clubs to industrial development, and including the production and marketing of numerous agricultural commodities, problems with ornamentals, farm building and equipment, farm records, etc. At times, the County Agent feels like a juggler with a dozen objects in motion. The rapidly changing pesticide recommendations is an example of the problem encountered.

The cooperation of local people, leaders particularly, is responsible for any success of the Extension program. The specialists of the Virginia Truck Experiment Station and Extension have been of inestimable value.

This county has been until now definitely rural with a comparatively high standard of living. A bridge-tunnel will open in the spring of 1964, connecting this county with the urban area of Norfolk. Thinking people are concerned about the social and economic effects of this area becoming more accessible to the metropolitan area. To date, there are no pat answers. Extension personnel and leaders have been studying to determine potential problems and

opportunities. This subject has been discussed with civic groups, etc. in an effort to get as many people as possible to think of the possible desirable and undesirable changes. It is agreed that more planning can accentuate the desirable and minimize the undesirable.

Interest in clothing has been increasing every year. Part of this may be due to younger women joining H. D. clubs or because non-members are observing and commenting favorably on work done by club members. Some women have done excellent jobs in learning to tailor; they have not attended a workshop to make a suit or coat but to really learn tailoring techniques. They then can assist others with confidence in their ability to really help them learn what they themselves know.

Our weakest point lies in the 4-H Club program. Those leaders, we have, are willing but do not have the confidence or training to do the job alone. We need more leaders and we, ourselves, need more training to be able to satisfactorily set up effective programs for training people to be good leaders.

More interest has been shown, by club members, in house furnishings and home management. They are more interested in sister clubs as well as the Home Demonstration program on a district and state level.