

VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 1930

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REPORT OF
INTERIM WORK IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS
PROJECT 2
NOVEMBER 30, 1959 TO DECEMBER 1, 1960
E. A. PRICE, EDITOR

REPORT OF
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS, EXTENSION DIVISION,
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
NOVEMBER 20, 1929 TO DECEMBER 1, 1929

The purpose of the department of publications of the Virginia extension division is to furnish information about what the extension division has done, what it is doing, and what it is prepared to do. The principal function of the information service as carried on under the supervision of the editor is to tell the farmers and farm women, and boys and girls, through the medium of the printed page, what is the latest in farm practices and housekeeping as well as housemaking.

This information service is carried on chiefly through the daily and weekly papers of the state, through farm and educational magazines that are published or that have a circulation in Virginia, and through the regular publications of the extension division; bulletins, circulars, the Extension Division News and the Agricultural Club Letter. The majority of the daily papers in Virginia and practically all the county papers in the state cooperate by giving space to matter sent out from the office at Blacksburg. An attempt is made to furnish the papers in each section of the state with the kind of copy that is suited to the locality in which they are published and that will interest the readers of the paper. The old plan of sending out material to papers regardless of whether it has any interest for the people in the community in which the paper

is published has long since been abandoned because such material almost invariably found its way to the waste basket. There are some general items of information about extension work such as changes in the staff, new appointments, resignations, etc. that are of interest in all sections of the state and these are distributed to all papers on the general mailing list. Articles about community organization, marketing and poultry seem acceptable to the papers generally throughout Virginia since these three projects concern practically all the people and are of interest to them.

It is not as difficult as has been in the past to place agricultural material in the newspapers, provided it is properly prepared, new, timely, and of interest. The papers want agricultural matter because their readers are interested in it. Problems of the farm and the home are edging more and more to be considered news and it is worth while noting that news items of an agricultural nature frequently form the basis for editorials. But with this has come an even more insistent demand on the part of editors of papers that agricultural matter must have some real news value. They are becoming increasingly careful that propaganda and purely technical and instructional matter shall not find a place in their columns. To meet this demand it is becoming more and more necessary for those who have charge of sending out copy from extension divisions, agricultural colleges, and experiment stations to be constantly on the lookout for human interest stories and stories that

tell of actual results accomplished and progress made. Since most specialists and not very many county agents appreciate this fact, it is necessary for the editor to spend considerably more time rewriting and revising articles furnished his office in order to call from them the real news that the papers and the people want.

Speaking recently on "Why an Editor?" Director C. W. Warburton said in part: "In the earlier days all too many thousands of printed pages that were for the most part unintelligible to the man whom they were designed to influence were scattered over the countryside. Experiment station and college publications too often failed to present the results of research in clear, concise, practical terms. Scientists, although prominent in their particular fields of research, were seldom expert publicists. What was needed was a person who could rescue the practical facts from obscuring and unfamiliar scientific terminology and impart them to farmers in language to which they were accustomed. The editor, as a connecting link between the man who knows and the man who wishes to know, supplied this need."

During the year covered by this report an average of seven articles per month were furnished the daily papers and about three articles per month to the county papers. The increase in matter furnished the county papers this year was due to the fact that a series of articles on cooperative marketing of tobacco were furnished county papers in the tobacco growing sections of the state. These were given full space by

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country editors because of the timeliness of the subject. Another reason for the increase was the fact that country editors welcomed, and even asked for articles during the summer and fall months on drought relief and suggestions as to what could be done to relieve the serious situation.

The above does not include matter furnished by county agents to their local papers. A careful check-up of about 66 of the 103 county papers in the state shows that there was a considerable increase in the amount of space given during the year to county agent matter.

Although the editors of all county papers in Virginia, with the possible exception of three, are friendly to extension work and willing to cooperate with the agents in their counties, this does not mean that they are willing to give space in their papers to matter furnished them by county agents if it is poorly prepared and does not have a news value. The county papers have a very limited space to devote to matter outside of purely local news and this makes it all the more necessary that the farm and home demonstration agents in the counties shall furnish their local papers with extension copy. This makes it imperative that every county farm and home demonstration agent must know how to prepare copy so that it will require little or no work on the part of the editor, must know news and news values and be able to distinguish between propaganda and news.

The editor has continued his efforts this year to help extension workers, particularly county agents, acquire working knowledge of how to prepare copy for the press. This task has been made harder by the fact that there has been a considerable turnover in the home agent force this year and a number of new agents have been employed who have had no experience or training in preparation of copy. In the case of the farm agents all but one of those employed either as agents or assistant agents during the year have been former students of the editor in his class in agricultural journalism. The publicity work done by three assistant agents, Clark, Turner and Lanford, is to be commended. Special mention should be made of the publicity work done by F. E. DeHart, who took charge in Isle of Wight county January first, and E. L. Dunton, who went to Northumberland county early in the spring. Among the home agents who are to be highly commended for publicity work during the year are Miss Marion Lawrence in Accomac, Miss Ruth Jamison in Augusta, Miss Iris Hitenour in Washington, and Miss Courtney Ferrer in Prince Edward.

During the year the editor has, as far as time and travel money permitted, continued his plan of making personal visits to the editors of the papers of the state in their offices to talk over the whole matter of extension publicity and find out as far as possible the attitude of each individual editor towards extension work and his views as to what kind of matter he wants for his particular paper. Another, and just as important, purpose of these visits has been to cultivate friendly relations between the editors and this office and there is reason to believe that this has resulted in good for the work.

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Since there is not time at the annual meeting or district meetings to give the county agents very much help in publicity, the editor has attempted during the year to aid farm and home agents through correspondence and personal visits as far as possible. However, not much of this can be done from September through December because of teaching duty, but this help will be continued during the coming year. Visits to agents are made only on request and to help the agents work out some particular problem. The annual meeting and the district meetings do afford a limited opportunity to discuss publicity questions with the agents. At the request of the district agents the editor has supplied, either the papers direct or the district agents themselves, articles about extension work to be used in papers in counties where a special effort was being made to secure appropriations. This was done in four of the Southwest counties with particularly gratifying results.

Inquiries received by the editor for specific information occasioned by articles appearing in the Extension Division News or the daily and weekly papers, are referred to the specialists whose particular line is the subject of inquiry. Since it is reasonable to suppose that where one man or woman in a community is interested in a subject that others in a section may be, the editor frequently makes such letters and the specialist's reply the basis for a newspaper article since this gives the subject under discussion a wider publicity.

Weekly field reports of the farm and home agents are gone over carefully each month and extracts showing things accomplished or good

work done are compiled. These are given to the public through The Progressive Farmer, the daily and weekly press and extension publications. These are used liberally as fillers by the county newspapers and sometimes by the dailies. In a number of instances county papers have seen fit to make them the basis of editorial comment.

Timely news articles and items of interest about extension work in general are sent the district office of the Associated Press in Richmond under a special arrangement made three years ago. This material is used on a special agricultural sheet which the AP office in Richmond furnishes to certain papers or in connection with a special agricultural service which the AP features. This gives a wider publicity to extension work in Virginia.

This year the state home demonstration agent and the editor decided to have a publicity contest for the home agents. Material which the home agents have used in publicity has been divided into three classes and these three classes will be exhibited at the agents' meeting in January when an hour's time will be given to a discussion of the several exhibits. A very complete exhibit from practically all the agents has already been received and this shows that most of the home agents are doing fine publicity work. The scope of this contest will be considerably broadened next year.

The editor continues to teach one term of each college session a three times a week class in journalism for agricultural editors. This

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was inaugurated nine years ago by the president of the college and there is reason to believe it has been helpful in the training of future county agents and Smith-Hughes teachers.

During the year the editor attended the mid-winter meeting of the Virginia Press Association, district meetings of editors and, by invitation, the meeting of the Intercollegiate Press Association at Lexington. The district meetings of editors in Virginia afford an opportunity for informal conferences that the annual meeting of the Press Association does not afford. The editor of the Virginia extension division also attended the annual meeting of the American Association of Agricultural College Editors in Washington in August and was honored with election to the presidency of that body to serve for one year.

The plan for publication of the two extension publications, the Extension Division News and the Virginia 4-H Club Letter, continued unchanged through the year but a special effort was made to improve the quality of matter carried in these publications. There have been a good many evidences of the fact that both these publications meet with the approval of those who receive them. As a matter of fact, more letters were received this year commending the Extension Division News than in any year since its publication was started. Several of the editors of agricultural journals who at first were inclined to regard the Extension Division News as a competitor of theirs have taken occasion this year to commend the work it is doing.

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THE EXTENSION DIVISION NEWS

The Extension Division News is an eight-page, thirty-two column paper issued each month for the farmers, farm women, bankers, ministers, public school teachers, Smith-Hughes teachers, state officials and all others interested in the betterment of conditions on the farms and in the homes of the state. It contains practical suggestions for the results of work done along the various lines that are being developed by extension workers. It is mailed free of charge to the names on the mailing list and the papers of the state are invited to use the material in its columns without giving credit for same if they wish. The papers quote freely from the Extension Division News, making use of such articles as may be of interest in their localities. About 40,000 thousand copies are mailed out each month.

MAILING LIST

The mailing list of the Extension Division News was made up originally from lists borrowed from various organizations in the state. Each year names have been added by individual requests, from lists furnished by county agents of representative farm men and women in their counties and from lists of members of various associations organized within the year. Second class postage rate is paid on this paper and the postmasters of the state are required to return any copies that may be undelivered. In this way we are able to keep our mailing list fairly up to date and, while it is far from perfect, it is said to be the most up to date mailing list in the state. Whenever a copy is returned because of the inability of any post office to deliver same, or for any other reason, this name is removed from the mailing list unless it de-

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velops that the wrong address has been furnished. The great problem is to avoid duplication of names and sending more than one copy to a household.

VIRGINIA 4-H CLUB LETTER

The Virginia 4-H Club Letter, a four-page, sixteen column paper, is issued monthly by the department of publications, the greater part of the matter being furnished 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 they have a share in the making of the paper. Eighteen thousand copies of the club paper were sent out each month during the time covered by this report.

The names on the mailing list include boys and girls who are enrolled as members of the agricultural and home economics clubs, the farm and home demonstration agents, school superintendents, the newspapers, banks, teachers who request it, and certain people in the state who have shown an interest in club work. The material used is of the kind that will interest boys and girls and help them in the projects they are carrying out. Since the roster of club members changes each year, there must be complete revision of this mailing list each twelve months.

REVISION AND EDITING MATERIAL

All material prepared by specialists and agents and intended for distribution in circular or bulletin form, whether printed or mimeographed, is first submitted to the director for his approval and author-

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ation. It is then referred to the editor for editing. If the editor and the specialist who wrote the bulletin can not agree on proposed changes or any other matter connected with the bulletin, it is then referred to the director as final authority. In line with the policy now being adopted by the United States Department of Agriculture and extension divisions in other states, an attempt has been made to "popularize" all extension bulletins. This is not an easy task and calls for close cooperation and understanding between the author of any bulletin, the editor, and finally, the director.

METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION

The Extension Division News and Virginia 4-H Club Letter are distributed as outlined above. The distribution of bulletins and circulars is largely in the hands of the specialists who wrote same and are sent out to names on the mailing list of their department. Bulletins are sent on request but no attempt is made to distribute any bulletin or circular to the names on the mailing^{list}/of the Extension Division News. This would result in a waste of material and much lost action since thousands of people would receive bulletins in which they had no interest.

ORGANIZATION OF FORCE

The editor has charge of the publications as already outlined and general supervision over the force employed in sending out the Extension Division News and Virginia 4-H Club Letter. This force at present consists of one young woman who divides her time between the supervision of the mailing lists and acting as secretary to the editor, and boys who work by the hour as their services are needed in sending out the two monthly publications.

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BULLETINS

As already stated, an effort is now being made to "popularize" all bulletins in order to meet what those who have given careful study to the subject believe is a demand for agricultural matter that is less technical in nature and easily understood by the average farmer or farm woman. It is just another case of drawing a very sharp line of distinction between bulletins issued by extension divisions and colleges of agriculture and those prepared by experiment stations and research workers. Someone has characterized the extension bulletin as a popular book, the experiment station bulletin as a technical treatise or text book. Seven bulletins were issued in the twelve months covered by this report.

CIRCULARS

During the year which this report covers twenty-four circulars were published. The circulars vary in size from one to four pages and cover a variety of subjects.

The extension division does not issue what is generally known as plate material and serials, particularly to the newspapers. It has been found that the Virginia papers and agricultural journals published in this state prefer all matter sent directly to them with due regard paid to locality, seasons, etc. An effort is made to avoid duplications as far as possible in matter sent papers.

Appended hereto is a list of bulletins and circulars issued from November 20, 1929 to December 1, 1930

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PUBLICATIONS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Author</u>
114	Spray Calendar	9,000	A. E. Tuck
97	Handbook of Agronomy (Reprint)	5,000	H. E. Ryan
115	Dairy Profits by Better Feeding	5,000	F. A. Bushman
98	Poultry Judging Bulletin (Revised)	5,000	Members of Poultry Dept.
113	Norfolk Plan of Marketing Milk	5,000	G. C. Taylor
117	Leader's Manual No. 1 Home Improvement Project	500	Mary E. Settle
119	Leader's Manual No. 2 Home Improvement Project	500	Mary E. Settle

CIRCULARS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Author</u>
E-123	Salary Vouchers	5,000	
E-222	Mailing List for Virginia 4-H Club Letter	1,000	
E-27	4-H Club Secretary's Minute Books	5,000	G. A. Montgomery
	Club Song Book	15,000	
E-225	Vegetable Garden Suggestions	25,000	L. D. Dietrich
E-226	Members' Agreement	500	F. A. Bushman
E-228	4-H Garden Club Record Book	5,000	G. A. Montgomery
E-175	Personal Data Memoranda	1,000	
E-122	Weekly Field Report	10,000	
E-221	Monthly Tabulation Report	5,000	
E-21	Travel Cards	50	
E-227	4-H Club Poultry Record Book (Revised)	10,000	Poultry Department
E-220	Planning for Poultry	5,000	Hollie L. Hughes
	Record of Supplies (Cards)	1,000	
	Poultry Club Exhibit Tag (Revised)	1,000	
E-242	Better Foods Club Score	1,500	Mary E. McQueen
E-221	Community Plan of Work	5,000	E. L. Hume
E-222	Clothing Record Book	10,000	Mary E. Settle
E-225	4-H Club Home Improvement Record Book	5,000	Mary E. Settle
E-223	Farm Inventory Form	15,000	W. J. Washburn
E-120	Report Card for Club Members	10,000	
E-119	Food for Health	1,500	Maudie E. Wallace
E-120	Breakfast - Dinner - Supper	1,500	Maudie E. Wallace
E-121	Food Preservation	1,500	Maudie E. Wallace