

**ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT**

**COUNTY  
EXTENSION  
WORK**

**Virginia Agricultural Extension Service**

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**1960**

**SPRING CITY**

**County**

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I. GENERAL SITUATION

A. Size and Location

James City County is located in the Coastal Plain on what is called the lower Peninsula of Virginia between the York and James Rivers. The county lies approximately thirty-five miles east of Richmond and about the same distance west of Newport News.

The county covers approximately 182.3 square miles or 94,720 acres of which 40,412 or nearly 43 per cent is in farms. Two-thirds of the county is wooded and farms contain about 25,000 acres of woodland.

The topography is generally level with elevations ranging from sea-level to slightly more than one hundred feet.

Temperature averages forty degrees in January and seventy-seven degrees in July. The frost free growing season is approximately 202 days extending from about April 11 to October 30. Annual precipitation averages forty-seven inches. James City County is a small, long and narrow county. It is a semi-urban county which affects the agriculture in the county to a considerable extent. More of the good agricultural land is gradually being absorbed into the new sub-divisions for housing.

In this age when larger acreages are required for an efficient farm operation, James City County has very little opportunity for farmers to increase their holdings for farm purposes.

B. Type of Agriculture

There are 155 farms averaging 196.9 acres each and \$36,955.00 in value of land and buildings. Only 73 are classed as commercial farms according to the 1959 census of agriculture.

There were 26 farms with less than 10 acres each; 68 with 10 to 100 acres each; and 69 farms with over 100 acres each.

Field crops are the leading source of income to farmers representing about 41 percent of the total value of farm sales; dairying represents about 25 percent; livestock, 15 percent; vegetables, 9 percent; poultry products, 7 percent; and forest and miscellaneous products, 2 percent.

Corn, soybeans, small grains, and peanuts are the important field crops grown in the county. Hogs and beef cattle are the leading sources of livestock income. Sheep are found on a small number of farms.

Potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, cabbage and snap beans are important crops on some farms in the Toano community.

C. Population and Employment

According to the last census there were 1,097 rural farm residents and 5, 220 rural non-farm residents in the county making a total of 6,317, however, the number of rural non-farm residents has increased since the last census to the point that the total should be near 10,000 residents.

Williamsburg, the county seat, had 6,735 residents at the last census and this number has increased some, but not to the extent which it has in the county.

Most of the rural non-farm workers are employed at the various military establishments near Williamsburg or by Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated.

A chemical company recently opened in the Eastern part of the county and the shipyard at Newport News also employs some of the residents.

D. County Organization

The County Board of Agriculture is the major organization of farmers in James City County. It was organized on October 15, 1947 when a group of farmers met in the County Agent's office to discuss a plan of work for the Extension Agent; the group decided to hold a monthly dinner meeting and to discuss problems arising in agriculture. The meetings have continued on a monthly basis since that time. Farmers from each community of the county make up the membership which has averaged about thirty-five members. The County Board has functioned effectively through the years with membership open to all farmers of the county.

Many speakers from V.P.I., the Virginia Department of Agriculture, commercial companies, and other agencies have appeared on the program of this county farmers' organization.

Committees are appointed each year and assist in securing speakers, and planning programs of work in the various commodity fields.

Members of the County Board of Agriculture feel that the monthly meetings are very effective in bringing the latest agricultural information before them for open discussion and action.

Ladies organizations in the Toano, Norge area have been very cooperative in preparing and serving dinner at these monthly meetings.

Attendance at County Board of Agriculture meetings in 1960 has been somewhat lower than in 1959.

## II. MAJOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### A. Agronomy

#### 1. Situation

The latest report of the census shows that 8,576 acres of cropland was harvested in 1959 which is approximately a 700 acre decrease from 1954.

There were 2,663 acres of cropland pastured in 1959 compared to 3,394 acres in 1954. 1,342 acres of woodland was pastured in 1959 compared to 2,402 acres in 1954. 1,555 acres of cropland on 41 farms had a cover crop seeded in 1959. A decrease in acreage of all crops except soybeans and barley resulted from 1954 to 1959.

More acreage from farms in the Jamestown district is being diverted from farming and woodland to housing developments, than in the other two districts of the county.

Since most of the farm income is derived from crop production much emphasis is placed on production practices and marketing each year.

#### 2. Methods

Six monthly meetings of the James City County Board of Agriculture were devoted to some phase of crop production and marketing. These meetings were held to recognize outstanding soybean and sweet potato producers

entered in contests; receive latest results of field crop experiments from the Superintendent of the Eastern Virginia Research Station; analyze field crop and pasture fertilization and lime recommendations; evaluate insect and disease control methods of field crops; plan for grain storage and marketing program and receive the latest recommendations on seed testing and its importance.

Two other meetings were devoted to soil and water conservation and machinery efficiency in crop production and marketing.

The agent and farmers participated in an area agronomy school at which economics, crop varieties, fertilization, and weed control were topics discussed by agricultural specialist from V.P.I.

The agent and several farmers attended the annual Virginia Crop Improvement Association meeting in Richmond where much of the latest data on seed testing methods was discussed. A farmer committee met with a Virginia Department of Agriculture market representative to make suggestions on improving market reports received by crop and vegetable producers.

Field demonstrations were scheduled with two farmers on chemical weed control in white potato crops. A midland Bermuda pasture demonstration plot was scheduled on another farm.

Farmers were alerted to possibilities of insect damage on soybean crops and a committee made plans for securing assistance of an airplane sprayer early enough to control the insects before appreciable damage was done.

Through meetings, personal visits, letters, news articles telephone and other methods the agent assisted farmers through county organization committees to plan and carry out the Extension Agronomy program.

### 3. Results

At the beginning of the year sweet potato producers took second and third places in the adult division of the sweet potato show and sale held at the Research Station on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

This event gave much opportunity for producers to discuss varieties, production practices, disease control methods, and marketing with other producers and specialists.

Soybean producers were recognized for contest yields of over forty bushels per acre at a dinner meeting sponsored by a local bank. The Chamber of Commerce sponsored awards for winners of the contest.

Evaluation of production practices and soil samples taken from the soybean fields showed farmers the practices necessary to achieve high yields and the soil sample results showed the way to highest yields through proper liming and fertilization practices.

Through timely meetings and follow up, producers have been able to take advantage of new promising varieties in field crops and change production practices as recommended through research tests.

Through soils tests farmers have found crop land to be deficient in potash and a noted increase has been seen in the use of fertilizers high in potash particularly on crops needing this element. After continued emphasis on the need for testing soybeans in 1960 for germination percentage a considerable number of farmers used this service for the first time. This undoubtedly eliminated the need for replanting many soybean fields and unnecessary expenditures in labor, machinery and seed.

Producers indicated that after a meeting with a Virginia Department of Agriculture Marketing agent concerning improvement of market reports, these reports were much more helpful than in the past.

Soybean producers after a meeting with V.P.I. Entomologists planned for plane sprayer service and sprayed over 400 acres for control of corn earworm larvae in the early stage before appreciable damage was done.

From all indications much improvement was made in machinery and crop storage facilities, weed and insect control of all crops, and pasture and hay production and management practices.

Snows in late winter delayed crops in some areas, however, through the year crop growth has been good, and yields and quality through harvesting periods have been good.

B. Livestock and Poultry

1. General Situation

Cattle and calves on farms in 1959 according to the census totaled 2,528 compared to 3,182 in 1954; Hogs and pigs totaled 3,417 compared to 3,248 in 1954; sheep and lambs totaled 134 compared to 283 in 1954; chickens totaled 19,762 compared to 13,773 in 1954.

Seventy-four farms reported hogs and cattle in 1959 compared to 118 reporting hogs and 133 reporting cattle in 1954.

Only 55 horses and mules were reported on 31 farms in 1959 compared to 92 in 1954.

Only hogs and poultry numbers are above those recorded in the 1954 census, however, cattle numbers are expected to move to a higher level in the future.

Prices of hogs and eggs are favorable at this time and will be incentives for increased production in these enterprises.

2. Methods

The livestock committee arranged for beef cattle grading demonstrations on two farms in preparation for market cattle sales to be held in Richmond.

Veterinarians of the Virginia Department of Agriculture presented a program before the County Board of Agriculture members on Brucellosis Control methods and the Swine Health Certification program.

Beef cattle and swine specialists assisted in presenting an outlook program on livestock production before the County Board of Agriculture.

Producers were advised of area feeder pig sale schedules for one year and assisted in consignment of pigs to the sales.

The livestock committee assisted in bringing information on location of available meat-type breeding stocks before all swine producers.

The committee also assisted in setting up a schedule of farms for sheep shearers visiting the area and in notifying farmers of the schedule.

Farmers and the agent attended the annual area poultry school at Gloucester Courthouse where specialists of V.P.I. and feed company representatives discussed poultry production practices, grading, marketing and management.

Producers of livestock were informed of current research work through meetings, personal visits, letters, telephone and news articles.

Efforts were made to carry out all work through the proper committees with assistance of as many members as possible.

3. Results

As a result of grading demonstrations over fifteen producers of beef cattle were better informed of the grade of cattle being produced on farms in this area.

Through cooperation of Virginia Department of Agriculture Veterinarians, farmers are better informed on Brucellosis and other disease control methods. One farmer is participating in the Swine Health Certification program. Others are cooperating in the county-wide Brucellosis control program.

Since the program on outlook by V.P.I. specialist and follow up work producers are better able to adjust numbers of livestock to farm production capabilities and also to market demand.

Farmers were kept abreast of feeder pig sale results in Richmond and more producers are showing an interest in this outlet.

Over 400 pigs were consigned from the county during the past year by three farmers.

A number of swine producers secured meat type boars and gilts as a result of efforts by the livestock committee.

All sheep producers were scheduled for sheep shearer services during early spring.

Several farmers purchased more feeder calves than in previous years or purchased cattle for the first time planning to make use of cheap pastures and other home grown feeds.

C. 4-H CLUB PROGRAM

1. General Situation

4-H clubs were organized in six communities with a total enrollment of 77 members. Some of these members were not in organized clubs due to the fact that they lived in areas where there was no organized club.

Some areas do not have enough interested boys and girls to have an organized club. The agents have attempted to organize in other communities, however, efforts to secure club leaders has met with little success.

4-H members attending camps and short courses in 1960 show promise in their respective communities of securing other members and encouraging greater participation in 4-H activities.

The success of the program is dependent on the amount of assistance available from leaders and in this area most adults capable of being 4-H Club leaders are already involved in other organization activities, part or full-time jobs or raising a family.

2. Methods

Six community 4-H Clubs were organized with temporary leaders.

Members were assisted in distributing 4-H calendars throughout the county.

Several members were assisted in securing livestock projects for Richmond Junior livestock show and sale.

Members and the agent attended area meat-type hog conference in Richmond.

Members were given training in land judging, poultry and egg judging, dairy judging and tractor driving in preparation for Northeast District Contests held in Richmond.

A tour of Hog Island Game Refuge and Yorktown Fisheries Laboratory in connection with the 4-H Wildlife project was made by one 4-H club.

The Agent met with Kiwanis and Chamber of Commerce Committees to determine ways in which civic clubs can help promote 4-H work.

4-H members and leaders were informed by personal visits, letters, telephone and news articles of the opportunities for improvement through participation in the 4-H club program.

### 3. Results

Membership in 4-H has decreased since clubs have been organized in the communities, but the interest of members is greater and indications are the membership will increase.

Greater participation by members in district contest was experienced.

The county quota was filled by those attending Jamestown 4-H camp.

One member attended Conservation Camp Farrar on Scholarship.

Two members attended 4-H Short Course at V.P.I. on scholarships from a local civic club.

Two members attended Senior 4-H Camp at Jamestown.

Members of two clubs erected 4-H booths at the Toano Woman's Club Fall Carnival held during Hallowe'en weekend.

The agent has worked considerably on management of the Jamestown 4-H Camp as General Manager.

This entails the opening and closing of camp spring and fall; assisting with planning the budget; hiring camp personnel, purchase and repair of equipment, upkeep of grounds and buildings, taking inventories and reporting to the 4-H Camp Board of Directors at annual and other called meetings.

D. Other Activities

1. Farm & Home Development

a. Situation and Results

An attempt was made to secure assistance for farmers on decision making, management and improved record keeping.

It is felt that a good number of farmers benefited from this assistance given in meetings, personal visits with specialists and through written communications.

One farmer was added to the list of Farm and Home Development families in 1960. All families are making satisfactory progress.

2. Forestry

a. Situation and Results

There is over 60,000 acres of forest land in James City County of which 25,000 acres is on farms.

Much of this farm woodland has been cut over and now lies idle except for scrub growth. Much emphasis has been placed on plans for an improved forestry program. Several landowners each year make some improvement in woodland acreage.

Bulldozing of fifty acres on four farms has been accomplished in 1960 through the cooperation of the Chesapeake Corporation at West Point.

The agent has worked considerably on management of the Jamestown h-M Camp as General Manager.

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The ACP program will assist in the reforestation of this bulldozed acreage and pine seedlings will be set during the coming winter months.

The 4-H Club in one community has agreed to take the forestry project in 1961. It is hoped that through the cooperative bulldozing program eventually such acreage will be in productive pine timber again.

### 3. Dairying

#### a. Situation and Results

Dairying represents a major source of income in James City County, and there are nine dairy farms in the county with eight being members of D.H.I.A. This enterprise accounts for approximately 25 percent of the total farm income.

The dairymen in working closely with the D.H.I.A. supervisor who is located in an adjoining county keep up to date on all phases of production and management.

The dairy committee working with the agent plans for any special programs or assistance needed by individual dairy farms.

Several farms in changing ownership or management have improved considerably the facilities with one new loafing barn and hay storage being constructed, one new milking parlor and an addition to another milking parlor along with the installation of a bulk tank.

The dairymen are most cooperative in working with agencies organized to assist them in any way.

4. Agencies

a. Situation and Results

A.S.C. is the only agricultural agency in James City County other than Extension and a favorable relationship exists between the personnel of these two agencies.

Requests are always referred to the proper agency and although Forestry, S.C.S., F.H.A. and other agencies have no permanent personnel located in the county, all requests are channeled to their offices serving James City County and requests in all instances have been handled promptly and with efficiency.

E. Special Accomplishments

The development of a feeder pig market for this area with bi-monthly sales scheduled at Richmond promises to be the outstanding accomplishment of producers and Extension personnel in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and auction market operators.

The demand is increasing for pigs produced and adequately protected against diseases through vaccination.

The agent was assisted by the Agricultural Engineer, Entomologist, Poultry Specialist, Horticulturist, Agricultural Economist and many others with requests pertaining to other programs and enterprises not covered previously in this report.

Programs were presented by the agent at Woman's and Garden Club meetings, and at the annual high school career day program.

Assistance was given Civil Defense officials in getting started a series of meetings to inform county people of the need for an adequate protection plan. The first meeting was held for County Board of Agriculture members.

The agent was recently designated Chairman of the County U.S.D.A. Emergency Planning Committee for the Counties of James City and York, and the Cities of Newport News and Hampton.