

NARRATIVE REPORT

OF

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Emergency Agricultural Assistant

ON

ORGANIZATION OF

THE FREDERICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA WHEAT PRODUCTION
CONTROL ASSOCIATION

(August 1 to October 25, 1933)

COUNTY AGENT ANNUAL REPO. IT

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1. STATUS OF COUNTY WHEN WHEAT EMERGENCY WORK STARTED

(1) Farm Organization in County

Farm Bureau with a membership of 276.
Grange with a membership of about 150.
Horticultural Society with a membership of about 50.

The Farmers Union had three branches in the county until the past couple years but is not active at present.

The Farm Bureau is new and active especially in collective buying. The Farmers Union had financial troubles recently which made many farmers fearful of any organization efforts.

There are five magisterial districts as per the map.

Opequon district was able to get one of the old District Agricultural Schools located at Middletown in 1908. In 1914 Stephens City, in the same district obtained a High School and in 1925 a department of Vocational Agriculture. The other four districts have no High School. Opequon district turned in 40% of the total applications for contracts. This response is felt to be due to the influence of agriculture in these schools has had upon the farmers. The county has had a County Agent for a short time two different times. Back Creek and Gainsboro districts are quite mountainous and the great majority of farms have ten acres or less in wheat. The valley is about half and half limestone and shale soil. The limestone is much the better corn soil but the shale sometimes equals the limestone in wheat production. About ten per cent of the cultivatable land is in fruit, almost entirely apples. Practically one third of the commercial apple crop of the state is produced in this county.

The Educational Campaign

The districts were divided into communities as shown on the map for the educational campaign. The Master of the Grange was designated leader in Middletown community, and an outstanding Farm Bureau man in the Gainsboro community and others were designated after consultation with the County Superintendent of Schools and other county officers. The leaders were seen personally and sent a circular letter explaining the proposition. They arranged for the meetings and acted as chairman at the meeting. The manager of the Farm Bureau warehouse went over his membership list and checked those who grew wheat. The county treasurer, who knows practically every farmer in the county went

over the voting list and checked those who, he thought, grew wheat. In this list we secured 700 names. Each man on the list was sent a circular letter advising him of the meeting in his community. The two Smith-Hughes teachers, attended the district meeting at Harrisburg and with their assistance, nine meetings were held the week of August 14. From the beginning and on until applications were closed articles were run in the local paper explaining the proposition. Following the meetings and application blanks and explanatory literature were mailed out. In addition, on August 5, the Grange held its annual picnic at Middletown. National Master Taber spoke and, using the wheat program as an illustration, declared that farmers must forget their love of individual accomplishment and pull together on the national program. The only trouble was that the attendance was small. At the conclusion of the program the Emergency Agent was introduced and he briefly outlined the county program. The Farm Bureau held its annual picnic August 16. Mr. D. J. Howard, District Supervisor of Agricultural Education outlined the county wheat program very forcibly at this meeting. Senator Byrd outlined the program at his picnic having been supplied the facts by the Emergency Agent. Mr. W. R. Legg, instructor in vocational agriculture at the Handley school spoke of the program before the Rotary club of Winchester and Mr. Howard arranged for the district agent, Mr. Shackelford to speak at a Kiwanis luncheon. The Emergency Agent outlined the program to the Lions club members.

Favorable and Unfavorable of Organizations and People.

Almost everyone who could help with the program helped. The county officers, the bankers, the newspaper, the farm organizations all helped. One banker expressed surprise that a wheat effort was to be made in this county saying that their farming was all orcharding. The response at the educational meetings was good but, following the meetings, some thought of objections, and, possibly for the sake of argument, strongly stated their objections. Hearers passed them on and by the time applications were ready for signature there was an undercurrent of opposition. It appears that it would have been better to have had the applications at the first meetings and had them signed. Possibly it is the same psychology as ~~with~~ life insurance or other salesman to consider the first interview the best. The strongest objection was that it would be difficult to keep from using the contracted acreage and, as it had been leased, this was morally obligatory. There was also the objection of getting tied up with the Government. One lady came to the agent and asked if it was true that if her husband signed this contract for reducing wheat she would have to get the government's permission to buy baby chicks in the spring.

Function of Local People, Committees or leaders in Developing a Temporary Organization.

The local leaders designated willingly, did what they could to arrange for the educational meetings and to get attendance. As chairman all of them at the conclusion of the meeting expressed themselves in favor of the plan and asked all present to help explain it to those not present.

General Policies, Including Relationship of Emergency Organization to other Organizations.

The emergency organization concentrated on the wheat proposition and took no part in anything else.

Amount of Wheat in the County, etc.

The usual crop system of the county is corn, wheat, sometimes followed by wheat, and then timothy and clover, either one or two years. The mountain sections grow considerable buckwheat and the two mountain districts grow hardly enough wheat to bread them. A little soy beans and sweet clover is grown and considerable alfalfa. Fertilizer is always applied with the wheat. Sometimes corn is fertilized. There is much grazing land with its attendance beef production. Until recently sheep were numerous. Every farm has some hogs.

Total land area	275,840	acres
Proportion in farms	81.2	per cent
Total number of farms	1736	
Average size of farms	129	acres
Total acreage of wheat, 1929	13,173	
Production	159,175	
Farms reporting	738	
Acreage, 1919	25,129	
Total acreage of corn, 1929	14,845	
Swine on farms, 1930	12,094	
Beef cattle on farms, 1930	2,000	approx.

Goal Set for Sign-up and Results Achieved

In the beginning it was thought that the great majority of wheat growers would sign up but the educational meetings showed that the two mountain districts had such small individual acreage of wheat that there were only a few growers whose contracts really mattered and 60% of the acreage and production of the county was set for a goal. The acreage in 1919 was 25,129 while in 1929 it was only 13,173. Considering this ~~drop~~ and the fact that the past few years have been poor wheat years it is felt that while the 1929

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consus listed 738 wheat growers there probably are not over 500 farmers in the county now growing wheat and many of these have less than ten acres. Two hundred forty two signed applications. Of this number 239 signed contracts, two refused to sign, one because he heard the agent was getting \$14 a day, the other gave no reason. Two applications were refused. Of the 11,300 acres needed 1930-39 were contracted for, or 57.2%. Of the 192,833 bushel produced ~~in~~ in the above period 108,435 were contracted for or 56.3%.

Organization of County Wheat Production Control Association

(1) Methods Employed and Difficulties in Setting up a Permanent organization.

It became evident that the magisterial districts were the practical unit for setting up this organization and, as there was so little wheat in the two mountain districts, that these two should be combined. It was also felt that the way to get the job done was to go after it. Accordingly the necessary procedure was followed and Stonewall district organized August 25, at Welltown, Opequon August 28, at Stephens City, Shawnee August 29 at Winchester, and Back Creek-Gainsboro August 31 at Cross Junction.

(2) This gave the county four districts, twelve committeemen and a board of directors of four. Opequon, the district with the agricultural school, signed up $46,422$ ^{Bu.} Stonewall $41,677$ bushel, Shawnee, $26,980$ bushel, and Back Creek-Gainsboro, $17,370$ bushel.

(3) How officers Performed their Duties

Soon after organization of the Board held an informal meeting. About 90 growers had signed applications and it was evident that, like any other campaign, if it was to succeed it would be through personal effort. The Board, therefore, strongly urged each committeeman to get out and solicit applications. When applications closed all committeemen spent one day at the office correcting them and preparing applications for the allotment committee. Some spent a second day and the allotment committee worked two days on applications. September 15 the Board met, formally organized, set up their budget, etc. in the presence and with the assistance of Mr. Shackelford and Mr. Byrne. October 13 was contract signing day. Committeemen were at designated stations and got better than 90% signed-up. October 14 and 15 practically all committeemen and the full board worked preparing contracts for transmittal to Washington.

(4) Status of County Association

The four men on the Board are outstanding men in the county. The secretary is also a committeeman and has legal training. The budget, based on three cents per bushel, is ample for the needs of the association. All members of the association appear to think more of the proposition now than in the beginning and the organization should prove quite successful.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Educational meetings held	9	
Communities organized	4	
No. applications signed	242	
No. contracts signed	238	
Total acreage contracted	6,479	57.3%
Total bushels contracted	108,435	58.3%
County cost per bushel	3¢	

*Ground Agency
Emerg. Agric. Assn.*