

PLAN OF WORK
COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENT
HIGHLAND COUNTY

E. B. JONES, JR. COUNTY AGENT

1954

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Highland County in agriculture is classed as a livestock economy county. Most of the income comes from the sale of cattle and sheep produced. There is a trend toward some dairying and very much of a trend toward poultry production. There is also quite a bit of hardwood lumber manufactured in the county and it is one of the few counties that manufactures maple syrup and sugar on a commercial scale. Naturally some of our people are interested in work pertaining to forestry. Highland County is also a tourist haven during the summer months because of the cool climate and beautiful scenery. Fish and wildlife are fairly plentiful and during the season many people visit the county to hunt or fish. All of these things are important in the economic well being of the county. A County Agent must plan his work along these lines.

There is 416 square miles of land in the county or approximately 264,000 acres. Of this acreage 71% is timberland including 266 acres classed as wasteland.

The population is small there being only 7,069 according to 1950 census. The wealth is not great but generally well distributed and is described as a fairly good average wealth for farm people. The income of Highland County people for the year 1952 was approximately \$3,429,000. With 7,069 population, it figures that the income per capita was \$485.00. Income figures for last year (1953) covering all citizens on farms averaged \$482 per person. So Highland Counties Rural or farm population average income is not far below the average for all farm people of the United States.

To Plan The County Plan of Work

In planning for a plan of work to best give some help to farmers or people in all phases of agriculture work in the county it has been our policy as was this year to have meetings of all the different commodity groups. These group meetings

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we held at different times during January and February to plan what line of work in each of the project activities would be the most help to the greatest number of people in that line of work. This year these groups met during January and February to make a plan. The Agronomy Committee, the Dairy Committee, the Poultry Committee, The Beef Cattle Committee, the Sheep Committee, the County 4-H Club Council and the Fall Fair Festival Committee.

A. Agronomy Work Planned

General: Highland County is classed as a livestock speciality county in that most of the farm income is derived from the sale of Beef Cattle and sheep. There is a definite trend to more poultry and definitely a trend to more dairying. Very little of the open land is suitable for row crops. Pasture and permanent meadow land make up most of the acreage of cleared land in the county. This grass and hay land is quite adapted to the production of Beef Cattle and sheep. The smaller farmers are going in for more dairying and poultry raising to supplement the Beef Cattle and sheep projects.

In a County such as this it is very necessary that we have a good agronomy program to help people learn how to grow more grass or other crops to take care of the increase in numbers of animals kept on the land. Cattle numbers have increased approximately 10% during the last ten year period and sheep numbers have increased 12%.

During the past few years our Agronomy Committee has stressed better farm practices and good management. This Committee has had liming demonstrations, fertilizer demonstrations, seeding demonstrations and all types of small grain and corn demonstrations to determine the better methods and better varieties.

Agronomy Committee members - 1954: Lewis Shumate, W. R. Hicklin, Robt. Cleek, Roy Eagle, Leslie Noyers, Leonard Hammett and Price Williams.

Time of Meeting: This Committee met on January 14th this year to discuss and make plans for Agronomy work to be done this year. In this meeting several things were

discussed that could be a project sponsored by the Agronomy Committee, as pasture fertilization contest, 100% corn contest, Hybrid corn variety demonstrations, etc. The possibility of growing Turkish tobacco in this county was discussed. It was decided the projects for this Committee to sponsor this year would be:

1. To demonstrate the soil treatment, the preparation of the seed bed and seeding practices of five acres of grassland where the grass had been destroyed by Army worms during the 1953 growing season. It was brought to the attention of this Committee that several acres of good blue grass in the Blue Grass section of the County had been ruined by the Army worm last year. The grass roots had been so damaged that it is feared that nothing but weeds and briars would appear growing there this year. If a demonstration would be of some help in showing people how to reseed this land to get it back into desirable grasses it would be a worthwhile one. Place for the demonstration was decided upon. It would be on Mr. Russell Rexrode's farm two miles above Blue Grass, Virginia. Mr. Rexrode agreed to ready the ground by disking. He would furnish the lime, fertilizer and seed necessary to do the demonstration with what help he could get with the F.M.A. Share cost plan. He would first have a complete soil test made. He would lime the soil if needed. He would use 100# of 2-12-12 with Serax added per acre. He would use a blue grass, White Dutch Clover, Orchard grass and Red top grass mixture. The seeding would be done during the second week in April as weather permitted and the committee would be on hand to help with the job. The plot of land that the demonstration would be conducted in a five acre lot just back of the Rexrodes home. It can be easily seen from the main highway and easily gotten to. To acquaint the people over the county and in the community about this demonstration we will carry at least three news articles in our county newspaper in regard to it. We will hold two field meetings during the later part of August to see the results of the grass planting.
2. It was decided by the Agronomy Committee to continue with Corn Hybrid adaptability plantings by working closely with three or four men in the county who have cooperated

with the committee for the past few years and have said that they would continue to do so. They are George P. Hevener whose farm is one mile above Monterey; Hubert Hoover, Doe Hill and James Hill, Vanderpool.

Two of these men will be helped to secure a different variety from that they grew last year but a variety that we know has good possibilities in this county. George Hevener has said though that he would like to grow Wisconsin 355 as he did last year because he liked it last year even in a drought. He would like to see this Hybrid given a better test on his farm.

James Hill believes he would like to plant W. Va. H15.

Hubert Hoover will be asked to grow Ohio K34.

If the growing season is average or better this year and these fellows have a good demonstration working a field meeting will be planned for September 7th to let people study the results.

These men who grow corn hybrids in cooperation with the Agronomy Committee have exhibited a sample of their raising at our County Fair during the past two years. Their exhibits drew quite a bit of comment and interest. They will be asked to make an exhibit again this year.

For publicity on our corn hybrid demonstrations this year we will use the county newspaper. Will give at least three writeups on it during the growing season.

3. The third demonstration for the Agronomy Committee this year will be carry over from last year's committee planning. Last year L. M. Shumate had agreed with the Committee that he would demonstrate a planting of orchard grass and ladino clover. It was so dry last year that he did not get his land plowed. Lewis has agreed to do that this year. He will ready 2 acres of ground in August and will furnish the seed. The Agronomy Committee has agreed to make some provision for the fertilization. Time of Planting - in August as weather permits.

Place: Lewis Shumate's farm, 4 mi. below McDowell.

Help: The Committee members, Mr. Shumate and his son.

Publicity: Two weeks before planting the secretary will give the project and demonstration a good writeup in the county newspaper. All interested people will be

asked to attend.

B. Horticulture

We do not have a Horticulture Committee that is actually organized. We do have a lot of good workers some of them designated leaders and others not, who attend all meetings pertaining to Horticulture that are held during the year.

Another year or possibly yet this year I believe we should organize a Horticulture Committee. We have a lot of people interested in vegetables and fruits. This fact that people are interested can be claimed by the fact that more people and particularly more men attended the horticulture leader training meeting held at the Courthouse in Monterey during February this year. Seven men and eleven women attended this meeting. Mr. L. C. Beamer, Extension Specialist, gave much valuable information.

It has been our goal during the past to encourage more good potato growers to get on a certification schedule. To date only one man, he being Mr. R. H. Crummett, has gone all the way to have his potato crop certified. Others have started with it but never completed.

Mr. Paul Halterman and Mr. Abe Halterman are big potato growers and good potato growers in this county. I have talked to them this year again about having their potatoes certified this year. They gave me more encouragement that they would than they ever did before. I will follow this up and see if they will not carry out this project.

C. Beef Cattle

Our Beef Cattle Committee composed of George Reid Swecker, Russell Andrews, Leonard Hamner, Owen Hiner and Roy Robertson is our most active and most worked committee. Naturally so because beef cattle production is our big business. Practically every farmer is interested to some extent. This committee met on January 22nd. and again on February 4th to plan for this year's work.

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Livestock School

There was a lot of interest among cattle producers as well as other livestock producers that we have another Beef Cattle School during the first part of March. A request was made to the specialists who put on the school. The request was turned down this year because we had had a school last year. We were told that the same counties could not have schools every year but possibly every other year. Our Committee will make a request in the fall of this year for a school in the spring 1955.

Animal Feeder & Stocker Calf Sale

Cumulative Sale or Sales this year is a big item in the committees planning. One sale was planned for in '53 but in July after Lester Dalton became County Agent in Bath County his group asked our committee to cooperate with Bath and have two calf sales. Both groups agreed and two sales were held. The number of calves sold in each sale was so large that the market penning facilities were taxed to the hilt. Everything went off well and the two sales were successful. This year there will be more calves in Bath for Calf sales we are told and there have been more Highland County producers who would like to get in. The problem is will both counties continue to cooperate and have two sales and keep the numbers down or whether Highland will have its single sale and Bath theirs or whether the two counties cooperating will try three sales this year. It is definite that two sales will be held one on the 4th of October. The other on the 18th.

Several meetings will have to be held during March and April of the two county committees to get this situation settled definitely.

The sales will be State sales. The committees will abide by the health laws set up by our State Veterinarian. All calves will be dehorned.

Leonard Hamner was chosen by the Calf Sale Committee at its meeting held on February 4th to act as treasurer for the Calf Sale this year.

The Committee plans to use the same workers on day of Calf Sales as last year with a few new ones added. This is known as the Calf Sale organization. Their job is to

pen and otherwise handle the cattle on Calf Sale day. They are J. O. Chestnut, G. R. Swecker, Bill Wills, R. T. Jones, Glen McLaughlin, Leslie Meyers, Frank Smith, Pete Smith and George Hevener. Benny Terry will again be auctioneer. Allen Randolph, Executive Secretary of Virginia Beef Cattle Producers Association, Curtis Mast, Extension Specialist and K. C. Williamson, Livestock Marketing Specialist, will be asked to assist in the sales.

Promotional work will mostly be carried on by the Virginia Beef Cattle Producers Association. Other advertising will be handled by the Highland County Calf Sale Committee. Cards announcing the dates of sales will be mailed from the County Agent office to all past buyers. Newspaper writeups as well as advertising blocks will be made in the Highland Recorder and the Staunton News Leader.

D. Sheep Project Planning

The Committee will sponsor the 4-H Club Lamb Show and Sale to be held on September 3 and 4th in cooperation with the Fall Fair Festival.

The Sheep Committee met in February to plan on work that this committee would sponsor during the coming year. The committee is composed of Burton Hook, Doe Hill, Va.; E. L. Armstrong, McDowell; W. B. Folks, Julian Folks, Blue Grass; Jay Hamer, Carl Armstrong and H. C. Lunsford, Monterey.

Projects decided on:

1. To have a Highland County Wool Pool

(a) Wool Pool Day - the last two Tuesdays in May and the first three Tuesdays in June or June 1, 8 and 15th.

(b) Organization to handle - Chas. Varnor, Weighmaster; Fred A. Gumm, Inspector;

A. P. Gum, Clerk & Treasurer; Russell Bird, James Bird and John Wagner help on floor.

Bids will be taken for trucking to Harrisonburg. The Pool to be handled through the United Wool Grower's Association. The County Agent is instructed to write a letter to each of the 400 odd wool producers in the county as soon as a price is decided on to give each the price that will be paid and to post the people on the dates and the hours that wool will be taken.

2. Annual Commercial Ram Sale Decided on -

The Committee decided that the logical time to hold our Commercial Ram Sale is the first Thursday in September or Thursday September 2nd this year. The Committee instructed the County Agent to notify the Secretary for the Virginia Sheep Breeder's Association, Mr. Geo. Allen, that this date would be acceptable. Mr. H. C. Lunsford was elected to act as superintendent for this sale. Purpose of the Commercial Ram Sale is to first give the commercial sheep growers in the county a convenient opportunity to purchase good registered rams of the breed of their liking to head their commercial flock. Secondly to give our purebred breeders one other place to sell their purebred stock.

By this sheep program in the county will be helped. The quality of the commercial flocks will be greatly improved over a period of years. Advertising for this sale will be through the Purebred Sheep Breeders organization and the different farm magazines. Also posters will be used around the market to advertise the sale. The auctioneer will be reminded to announce the sale at the regular auction market each week for at least one month prior to the sale.

E. Poultry

There is a definite trend in this county to some poultry production. The location gives producers a convenient poultry market. People have access also to feed agencies who will contract poultry and also give exceptionally good service in all lines pertaining to poultry production.

This type of farm activity along with beef production, sheep production, dairying and what else makes for a more diversified farm enterprise. This is especially true with the same farm owner. Realizing the importance of the poultry industry in this county we do try to help with all types of poultry problems. The personnel who make up the Poultry Committee are all poultrymen. Their names are: Russell Waggy, Chairman; Royce Arbogast, Roy Outshall, Hiner Armstrong and Robert Gallatin. This committee met February 9th this year. The committee requested that the county agent keep on hand in his office a good supply of poultry house plans of all kinds and also to keep

on hand a good supply of all poultry bulletins and leaflets so that this would be accessible to poultry producers or those prospective newcomers to the poultry business. The committee will see to it that a good poultry exhibit will be in our fall fair.

F. Fall Fair Festival

The Community Fair just organized two years ago has been one of the most recent projects accomplished to benefit the Extension program in this county. We in Extension work had worked toward something of this nature for years. A Community or County Fair where all people in the County can bring the results of their labors so that others can see it really helps in encouraging others to do a better job in their line. The Fall Fair was built around the Extension programs already organized and going. Namely the 4-H Club Lamb Show and Sale, Achievement Day and the Home Demonstration handiwork exhibit. To this has been added FFA project work, an adult and youth exhibit of small grains, potatoes, poultry, sheep, some cattle, a carnival, a horse show and a tractor driving contest. More is being planned for this year.

The original sponsor of our Fair was the Chamber of Commerce. This organization folded up after the death of its very able and hard working president, Mr. C. W. Coffman. This year a new organization had to take hold. It has been a slow process to know just who or what organization would be the sponsor. Finally there has been a definite organization. Three Civic Clubs will act as Co-sponsors. The McDowell Ruritan Club, The Blue Grass Ruritan Club and the Monterey Lions Club. Each club has elected two of its members to form a Fair organization. We hope that this will be a permanent organization and will continue from year to year.

The people who make up the group are E. C. Devericks and Pat E. Maloy representing the McDowell Ruritan Club; Leonard Harner and Leslie Moyers representing the Blue Grass Ruritan Club; W. H. Terry and H. C. Lunsford, Jr. representing the Monterey Lions Club. The County Agent E. B. Jones and the Home Agent are ex-officio members. The time for the Fair this year is September 2, 3 & 4. This is a very satisfactory date as far as the Extension workers are concerned. We will have one week at home before the Fair after our Extension Conference. Also our Fair is one week ahead of the Staunton Fair just organized. The Staunton Fair as planned takes in Highland

along with these other counties. The good exhibits at our Fair can be taken to Staunton for exhibition.

The Fair Committee will meet once a month during the year to plan and do other work necessary. Practically the same people who worked at the head of the different activities last year will be asked to do so again. They are: W. K. Folks, Committee of entertaining; Mrs. Ethel High and E. L. Mackey, Food Concessions; Douglas Heble, Athletic Events; G. P. Gillespie, Property; W. K. Hicklin and Russell Bird, Joint Horse Tournament and Horse show; R. V. Buckland, Band Music; Paul L. Mauzy, Pony ride Concession; W. K. Folks and G. E. Swecker, Fat Calf Show; Julian Folks and Alfred Armstrong, Junior Sheep Show; H. C. Lunsford, Senior Sheep Show and W. J. Marshall, Crop exhibit.

Many more people in the county will have definite jobs delegated them as time goes on.

G. A. H. Club Activities Planned

The County Council met one time in January and again in February this year. Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Hammett, Senior leaders were present. Julian Folks, Junior leader was also in attendance.

It was planned:

- 1st. That four girls and two boys be selected to attend the Girl Scout Course to be held at S. F. in June.
- 2nd. The Annual G. A. H. Club Camp Day would be held June 30th. The place would be Bolar, Virginia.
- 3rd. Rural Life Sunday programs would be held in nine churches.
- 4th. Achievement Day would be held on the third of September at the time of the Fall Fair.

During the past few years the number of boys on the G. A. H. Club roll has been steadily decreasing, due to not enough time spent by the County Agent, a lack of leaders and because Club meetings were held in the Communities and not in the

school. The number of members is lacking but not the quality. We have a number of hard working and talented club boys. Some of these older boys have volunteered to help the Agent reorganize the boys program. Julian Folks, Jimmy Smith, Alfred Armstrong and Eddie Folks will help with a new program. Mr. Buckland, the School Superintendent, has agreed to let us hold club meetings in each of the three schools. This work of reorganization will be done during the spring and summer this year. By Fall we hope to have at least 150 boys on the club roll.

Joe Armstrong and Jimmy Smith will compete in the Regional Sheep Shearing Contest this year to be held in Stanton on June 10th and 11th.