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PLAN OF WORK  
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY  
VIRGINIA

1961

December 1, 1960 - November 30, 1961

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Rockbridge County is situated in the central part of the Great Valley of Virginia with the Blue Ridge Mountains on the southeast and the Alleghany Mountains on the northwest. In 1950, there were 239,705 acres in farms, 62 percent of the county's area of 386,560 acres. According to the 1950 Census of Agriculture, there were 1,751 farms averaging 136.9 acres in size and \$9,032 in value of land and buildings.

A broad valley with elevations ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 feet lies in the center of the county, with elevations in the mountains up to 4,000 feet. In the valley, temperatures average nearly 35 degrees in January and 75 in July. Annual precipitation averages slightly above 39 inches, with the heaviest rainfall of nearly 4 inches during each of the months of June, July and August. The average date of the last killing frost in the spring is April 23 and of the first killing frost in the fall October 16. Thus, the frost-free season averages 176 days.

Rockbridge is one of the important livestock producing counties in the State. In 1949, livestock and livestock products supplied 85 percent of the value of farm products sold. Cattle is the leading source of farm income, milk ranks second and poultry third. Production of milk, chickens and turkeys has increased substantially in the past five years. Field crops, chiefly wheat, which in 1944, accounted for 23 percent of the total farm sales, have been declining rapidly as a source of farm income during the past ten years.

Agriculture is no longer dominant in the county's economy. Prior to World War II more persons were employed in agriculture than in manufacturing, but during the past ten years manufacturing has increased rapidly both in employment and value of products. Manufacturing of great variety, centered chiefly in Buena Vista, Glasgow and Lexington, gives employment to more people than any other field of work. Products include pulpwood and lumber, rayon fabrics, worsted cloth, carpets and rugs, millwork, wooden toys, tanning extract, tanned leather, kraft paper, paper products, metal casting, commercial printing, dairy products, flour, livestock feeds, soft drinks, and wood preserving. James Lees and Sons Company, Glasgow, has a unique employment policy in that it employs only people who already live in the county and are usually engaged in part-time farming. Thus, this very large producer of high quality carpets and rugs, has avoided the growth of a "factory town" and created a wholesome industry - agriculture balance.

Forests cover nearly one-half of the area of the county. There are about 80,000 acres of woodland on farms, 1,543 acres in the Blue Ridge Parkway, 42,821 acres in the George Washington National Forest, 20,077 acres in the Jefferson National Forest, and the remaining acreage in municipal watersheds and commercial forests. About 3 percent of the value of farm products sold in 1949 came from forest products.

Lexington, the county seat, had a population of about 6,000 in 1950, and is the site of Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute. Located at Buena Vista is Southern Seminary, an excellent junior college and school for girls. Rockbridge County is a famous vacation spot, and its chief

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attraction "The Natural Bridge of Virginia" is visited annually by a great number of people from throughout the world.

2. It is recognized that we face a period of transition in our farming business. During the past several years we have greatly expanded production of most food products which was absorbed at good prices for farmers when coupled with the storage program. Our farmers are now turning out meat and feed grains in record quantities, and to such an extent, that it is necessary for them to adjust production more in line with future demand.

Farmers are undergoing a squeeze, with costs rising and income going down. The well established farmers have not felt the squeeze quite as much. However, thousands of smaller farmers are in less fortunate circumstances, and they make up the vast majority of farmers and are an important part of the nation's agriculture.

The period of strain is moderate compared to the real depression of the thirties. The overall picture of farm assets and debts is favorable today. It is also true that certain lines of agriculture are less affected than others. But when all is said and done, farm prices have dropped nearly 35% since the last war, while industrial wages, prices of manufactured goods, transportation charges, taxes, and other items which make up the farmer's production costs have been rapidly rising.

Increasing pressure is being exerted upon the overall farm business because of this situation. It is sufficiently serious to become a major political issue. There is no question that it is an economic issue of sufficient proportions to merit attention on grounds of public policy.

It is believed that most farmers of the county will be able to finance their operations during 1961 out of savings and by borrowing from local sources. Our farmers generally, during the past few years, have added to saving accounts, improved their buildings and farm land to the point they are in a fair position to meet the conditions caused by lower prices for their products.

3. The 1961 Extension Plan of Work was developed under direction of the Board of Agriculture and in cooperation with livestock and agronomy commodity committees along with special interest committees for dairying and 4-H club work. Meetings were held to discuss the 1961 outlook, to review the past and present situation, list the problems and needs of the county and make plans as to their solution.

4. Major needs of the county were determined as follows: (a) 4-H club Program (b) Improved Livestock (c) Better Marketing of Livestock (d) Agronomy and (e) Farm and Home Development Program (Farm Unit Approach).

#### 4-H Club Program

Again as in the past few years there has been increased enrollment in 4-H clubs. This presents the challenge of obtaining increased participation by club members in project work, camps, contests and the many other phases

of club work. Also there is a greater need for an adequate number of well trained leaders to lead clubs, supervise projects and help conduct other training necessary for a well rounded 4-H club program. One great problem is a low ratio of senior club members to junior club members.

The following objectives will be worked toward in promoting the 4-H club program this year:

- a. Obtain, train and use 3 more adult leaders and 5 more junior leaders by
  1. Work with adult leaders in Leader Organization.
  2. Improving the program to appeal to senior club members.
- b. Increase number of farm flock, baby beef, pasture, hay production, purebred heifer, purebred pig, and tractor projects by 50% by
  1. Use of interested adult committees such as Rockbridge Beef Committee.
  2. More participation in shows and contests.
  3. Emphasis on project in club meetings.
  4. Use of awards program.
  5. Judging teams.
- c. To increase participation in county demonstration contests by 10% over 1960, achievement records by 10% by
  1. Repeated publicity in clubs and newspapers.
  2. Arousing interest in parents.
  3. Encouraging through leaders.
  4. Training in how to give demonstrations.
  5. Special Honor Club Program on contests.
- d. To challenge more club members at camps. Increase attendance at Camp Holiday Lake by 50%, Senior Camp Farrar by 100%, and Short Course by 10% by
  1. Increased use of scholarships.
  2. Publicity by 1960 campers.
  3. Increased winners in district and state contests.
- e. To continue increase in 4-H enrollment to 1,050 by
  1. Increase interest in 4-H clubs by WLSL-TV 4-H club contest.
  2. Publicity of 4-H activities in schools.
  3. Assigning of all club members to a committee.
  4. Use of 4-H club identification card.
- f. To increase attendance at project training meetings by 50% (tractor, electric, sheep shearing) through
  1. Use of 1960 participants to explain schools.
  2. Improve programs of meetings.
- g. To properly publicize 4-H club work by
  1. Yearbook for each 4-H club member.
  2. Countywide observance of National 4-H club Week and Rural Life Sunday.
  3. Use of local and area newspapers for appropriate routine and special news stories.
  4. Float in Christmas parade.
  5. Distribute identification cards to each 4-H'er.
- h. Bring project enrollment to 85% completions by
  1. Schools on completing project records.
  2. Adult and junior leaders assisting younger members.
  3. Use of county medals and other awards.

- i. To make a conscious effort to improve the senior 4-H club program through
  1. Introduction of projects especially appealing to seniors such as Automotive Care and Safety, Career Exploration, etc.
  2. Continuing the challenge of All Star membership.
  3. Improving activities in the Honor Club and local clubs.
  4. Establishing definite responsibilities in meetings and in assisting younger 4-H members.
  5. Designating senior members as "junior leaders" for projects and activities.

#### Y.M.W. Program

The organized effort in Y.M.W. program is through the Rockbridge County All Star Organization.

1. To increase interest and enrollment in their organization by:
  - a. Having group help select county All Star candidates.
  - b. Having group increase sponsorship in county programs.
  - c. Having representatives at Key Awards Banquet and Annual State meeting in Blacksburg.
2. To have one man and one woman at Y.M.W. Camp at Virginia Beach by
  - a. Publicity through All Star Organization and newspapers.

Sheep - Properly managed, good commercial flocks of sheep continue to be one of the best investments for our farmers. Efforts will be directed along the following lines in promoting the sheep numbers in the county and quality of the flocks:

- a. Have 4-H sheep club members establish flocks of breeding ewes.
- b. Furnish all farmers information on feeding, management and disease and insect control through meetings, circular letters, radio and newspaper articles.
- c. Encourage increase in sheep numbers.
- d. Assist farmers in locating flock replacements.
- e. Assist sheep growers in cooperatively marketing their wool.
- f. Have large group of 4-H club members and farmers attend sheep shearing school.
- g. Promote "Returns<sup>2</sup>per-Ewe" Contest in county.

Dairy Cattle - Even though a great deal of progress has been made in the past few years toward improving our dairy cows there remains a great deal to be accomplished. Great numbers of the cows in use both in established dairy herds and for family use have very poor production records.

The following efforts will be used in promoting the dairy industry of the county:

- a. To acquaint all farmers owning cows with the program and operations of the Rockbridge Artificial Breeding Association. This to be accomplished by means of personal contacts, community meetings, milk and cream routes, and by means of radio and newspaper articles.
- b. Increase interest in dairying through increasing 4-H dairy projects, shows and a clinic.
- c. Promote program whereby dairymen having a surplus of good heifers as result of artificial breeding program will make them available to 4-H club boys at reasonable prices.

- d. To have increased number of herds on test with Alleghany-Rockbridge D.H.I.A. and strive to have all such herds enrolled in artificial breeding program.
- e. Have active Bangs Disease Control program.
- f. All dairymen to be furnished with latest information on better management practices such as feeding, parasite and disease control, through community meetings, circular letters, personal visits, newspaper articles and radio programs.

Poultry - In recent years more of our farmers are engaging in production of broilers and turkeys. Laying flocks are on the increase as well as family flocks. Efforts to promote this important enterprise will be along the following lines:

- a. To conduct, as in past years, special 4-H poultry demonstrations.
- b. Have increased number of 4-H club members with projects.
- c. Give information on poultry production generally throughout the county by means of personal visits, meetings, circular letters (adult and 4-H), radio and newspaper articles.

#### Improved Livestock

A. As elsewhere in Virginia, Rockbridge County farmers have been increasing in livestock numbers during the past several years. With this increase in number has come only a fair amount of improvement in the quality of our livestock. The Livestock Committee members and the agents feel that major emphasis must be devoted to this matter during 1961 and succeeding years.

B. Most immediate need is determined as to the use of greater numbers of registered purebred bulls, boars and rams on herds and flocks throughout the county. Efforts will be directed toward more interest in quality livestock through 4-H purebred heifer and baby beef projects.

C. Efforts will be devoted toward acquainting livestock raisers with extra profit to be gotten from use of better sires. This is to be accomplished by demonstrations of better calves at feeder calf and lamb sales and by farm livestock tours during summer and fall. Producers of purebred livestock in the county will be urged to make available quality sires at reasonable prices. All livestock raisers will be informed of various special sales held by several breed associations and purebred breeders in nearby counties and encourage them to attend such sales.

D. The agents will cooperate with the area and local county veterinarians in establishment of an Area Brucellosis Eradication Program for Rockbridge County. It is expected that the testing program will begin about March 1 and be completed within 1 year. The agents plan to appear before the Board of Supervisors in the near future to obtain their approval of the program.

E. Program will be taken to people by means of radio, circular letters, newspaper articles, personal visits and demonstrations at sales and on farms. The goal of the Livestock Committee and agents for 1961 is that of acquainting all livestock producers with the need for better livestock and the benefits to be derived therefrom and especially to increase the number of registered purebred sires by at least ten percent.

### Better Marketing of Livestock

A. At the present time the local auction markets are the chief outlets for the sale of livestock. It is felt that greater numbers of our livestock could be marketed to better advantage through their own cooperative organization, Shen-Valley Meat Packers, Inc., which is located in a nearby county. Since Rockbridge County is located a long distance from the plant, efforts will be made this year to establish, in cooperation with members of Shen-Valley from Augusta County, a buying station. This would be similar to the one located in Madison County which has operated successfully for the past four years. It is believed that such a buying station will increase member participation in Rockbridge County particularly from about a dozen to approximately 50 during the next two years.

B. In regards to the local county livestock market, it appears there is need for a better grading system, also, that special sale day should be emphasized for the sale of lambs. Greater numbers of farmers need to sell their improved livestock through such outlets as graded feeder calf and yearling sales and cooperative marketing plants.

C. Efforts are to be made toward establishment of special days for sale of lambs at which time they will be graded by official State Graders. Three yearling sales are planned for this fall in addition to the one graded feeder calf sale held annually. Adult classes for fed steers have been added to the Roanoke Area 4-H Show and Sale and will demonstrate for our farmers the methods and costs of full feeding operations.

D. In addition to the 4 Rockbridge County feeder calf and yearling sales held annually at Buena Vista cooperation of county growers will take place at the Roanoke-Hollins Livestock Market Spring Sale and the second feeder calf sale held at Staunton in the fall. Efforts are being made to have our farmers sell pigs through the Lynchburg feeder pig sales.

### Agronomy

Greater quantities of feed grains, hay and pasture will be needed by our farmers in 1961 to meet the needs of increased livestock numbers and shortage brought about by the drought of the past years. Emphasis will be placed on grain production, increased use of fertilizers for grain, hay and pasture production. Also increased number of 4-H pasture and hay production projects are to be obtained.

Corn - The Agronomy Committee estimates that a little greater acreage of corn will be planted in 1961 than in the past year. It is also felt that more farmers will use adapted hybrids (about 90 percent at present) and use increased amounts of fertilizer on their corn crops. The committee recommends the following methods for corn production in 1961.

- a. Use of adapted varieties by a larger number of farmers.
- b. Proper amounts of fertilizer to use in obtaining maximum yields.
- c. To encourage farmers to plant corn at proper time, at correct depth, and on land where erosion is not a serious problem.
- d. To use best possible cultural methods (make wide distribution of Circular 541 in promoting corn production).
- e. Make wide use of circular letters, meetings, newspaper and radio publicity in promoting corn production program for the county.

2. Alfalfa - In keeping with the state as a whole, the alfalfa acreage of the county is steadily increasing. While this is true there is a great need for more alfalfa for use as hay, silage and pasture. The Agronomy Committee members and agents report encouraging progress as to the number of new stands being established throughout the county and recommend the following methods for increasing production this year:

- a. Make certain that established seed dealers have on hand a sufficient supply of alfalfa seed of the varieties recommended by the Experiment Station at V.P.I. (especially the certified Williamsburg).
- b. To establish in several sections of the county demonstration seeding of Williamsburg alfalfa.
- c. To bring to the attention of farmers generally the need for more alfalfa and best means of producing this legume through use of circular letters, (alfalfa circular), meetings, newspaper and radio publicity.
- d. By means of personal visits by agents and committeemen.
- e. The restrictions on the use of heptachlor are expected to continue certainly for the spring season and present many problems to alfalfa growers.

3. Small Grain - Crops for grain prospects are not very favorable as most small grains were put in last fall rather late and following drought conditions. Winter topdressing will be especially important and is to be emphasized.

- a. To conduct a midwinter and spring publicity and educational campaign on seeding oats (winter and spring varieties). Stress will be placed on the importance of proper varieties, time of seeding and adequate fertilization.
- b. Have demonstrations to show need for topdressing small grain crops with nitrogen.
- c. To bring generally to the attention of farmers the benefits to be obtained from applying nitrogen on fall seeded small grain crops. Emphasis will be placed on increasing yields and possible utilization for grazing by livestock.
- d. Recommended varieties of all small grain crops to be made available to farmers generally by farm visits, meetings, other agricultural agencies, seed fertilizer and machinery dealers, and circular letters.

4. Pasture - Better pasture planning and management are a "MUST" on the livestock farm. This becomes increasingly true when livestock members are on the increase and prices received are at lower levels. It is at a time like this that it really becomes important that meat and milk be produced at the lowest possible cost to the farmer. Winter pastures are generally the most neglected link in the year around feeding program. They offer the greatest possibility in cutting feed costs in the year ahead. Mixtures of small grains, ryegrass and clovers seeded between August 1 and September 15, and properly fertilized, will give astounding production of milk and meat for our farmers. It will mean a cut in high labor costs and expensive farm feeding can be held to a minimum. Methods to be followed in carrying out a county-wide pasture program are as follows:

- a. Pasture seeding program during spring and late summer.
- b. Demonstration seedings of tall grass - ladino pastures, (adult and 4-H). Hold field meetings in connection with demonstrations.
- c. County-wide top-dressing program for established pastures.
- d. To publish a pasture edition of the county paper.
- e. Establish demonstrations of winter pastures on sheep and dairy farms.

#### Farm and Home Development Program (Farm Unit Approach)

The farm and home development approach in extension is intended to achieve more satisfying living for farm families through intelligent planning for the future regarding the organization and operation of their farm and their home. Emphasis is placed on the future -- on planning and looking ahead -- in order to better understand the consequences or results to be expected from making various adjustments to changes affecting the farm, the home, and the family members.

There is a growing appreciation that the complexities facing modern-day farm families are such that they have to make a much more careful analysis of their problems and opportunities, and develop a more carefully outlined course of action in relation thereto, if their efforts are to be repaid with adequate economic returns and family satisfactions.

In turn extension has an obligation so to adjust and apply its educational services that it may utilize its resources most efficiently in rendering counsel and guidance to individual farm families in their efforts to cope successfully with all of their complex farm and home problems.

In Rockbridge County (a non-pilot County) The Farm and Home Development activity will be conducted this year, by the Home Demonstration Agent, County Agent and Assistant County Agent, on not more than four farms. The County Board of Agriculture and Home Demonstration Advisory Board will assist and advise the Agents in the selection of the families. While the owner-operator situation generally prevails, no doubt at least one landlord-tenant situation will be included.

#### Calendar of Work for Year

- December - Planning Extension Program and projects; 4-H club meetings and project visits; Outlook Meetings, Farm visits; Radio program; 4-H Christmas Parties; 4-H Float in Christmas Parade; Lexington-Rockbridge County Christmas Basket Program; Civic Club Meetings; 4-H Honor Club Party; All Star Organization Meeting to select All Star Candidates; Fox Rabies Control Program; News articles; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting, Training Meeting Virginia Soil Conservation District Supervisors.
- January - 4-H Club Meetings; 4-H Demonstration Contests; Project visits; Outlook Meeting; 4-H Radio program; Farm visits; Dairy Breeding Program; Commodity Committees; Tractor Maintenance Planning Meeting; Returns-Per-Ewe Contest; Dairy Short Course; 4-H Club T.V. program; 4-H County Camp planning; Fox Rabies Control Program; Countywide Agronomy School; Annual meeting Rockbridge Artificial Breeding Assoc.
- February - D.H.I.A. Annual Meeting; Feeder Calf and Yearling Sales Committee Meeting; Livestock sales and meetings; A.S.C. Planning Meeting for 1961 program; 4-H meetings and project visits; 4-H club radio program; 4-H Committee planning for National 4-H Club Week; 4-H Honor Club Meeting;

- Judge and submit 4-H Achievement Records; 4-H Camp Planning Meeting; 4-H Awards Party; Annual Plan of Work; Fox Rabies Control Program; Radio program.
- March - Farm Credit Conference; Wool Growers Meeting; News articles; Shen-Valley Annual Meeting (County); Brucellosis and Eradication Program; 4-H club meetings and project visits; Special radio program for National 4-H Club Week to include window displays, newspaper articles, bulletin board displays, school assembly programs; Conduct Tractor Maintenance School; Prepare for Baby Beef and Purebred Heifer Show; 4-H Camp Planning Meeting; Fox Rabies Control Program; County Council Meeting; Older Youth Camp Planning; Submit 4-H Achievement Records; Collect Easter Eggs for Veterans; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting; Radio program.
- April - Feeder Calf and Yearling Sales planning; 4-H and Adult Sheep Shearing School; Radio programs; District Conference; News articles; Farm visits; Brucellosis and Eradication Program; 4-H meetings and project visits; 4-H Honor Club Meeting; Tractor Operators Contest; Salem Baby Beef and Purebred Heifer Show; 4-H Club Radio program; All Star Organization Meeting; 4-H club meetings; Establish Sears Poultry Projects; Share-the-Fun Contest; Preparation for District Contests; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting.
- May - Sheep Shearing Training; Tour Professional Workers Experiment Station; Farm visits; radio programs; news articles; Brucellosis and Eradication Program; 4-H meetings and project visits; Final plans for County Camp; Special observance of National 4-H Sunday; District Contests; Observance of Rural Life Sunday; District Sheep Shearing Contest; Sign up for camps and short course; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting.
- June - County Wool Pool; 4-H Short Course V.F.I.; 4-H County Program Planning; Adult and 4-H farm visits; Brucellosis and Eradication program; 4-H lamb sale; Radio programs; news articles; Preparation for Electric School; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting; Sign-up for 4-H camp.
- July - Brucellosis and Eradication program; Farm Tour; Radio programs; Institute of Rural Affairs; news articles; 4-H Conservation Camp; County-wide Electric School; County 4-H Picnic and Rally Day; Adult and 4-H farm visits; 4-H Older Youth Camp; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting; 4-H County Camp.
- August - 4-H Club project visits; Feeder Calf and Yearling Sales planning and visits; farm visits; radio programs; News articles; Annual Extension Conference at V.P.I.; Experiment Station Field Day; Brucellosis And Eradication program; Prepare exhibits for Atlantic Rural Exposition; 4-H Electric Congress; Build Electric Exhibit; Prepare for Achievement Day; Plan and complete 4-H Yearbook for 1961-62; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting; Cattleman's tour of Virginia by Ohio farmers.

- September - Feeder Calf Sales visits and inspections; 4-H Achievement Day; Collect 4-H project record books; 4-H club meetings; Atlantic Rural Exposition; Honor Club Meeting; Community Fair; Farm visits; Feeder Calf and Yearling Sales; Radio program; news articles; Brucellosis and Eradication program; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting.
- October - Radio programs; news articles; Farm visits; Feeder Calf and Yearling Sales; 4-H Yearbook; Sign up new 4-H members; Project enrollment; Lynchburg Farm Show; County Council Meeting; Honor Club Meeting; Nominate new 4-H Honor Club members; Brucellosis and Eradication program; WSLs Contest; Club Demonstration planning meeting for vice presidents; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting.
- November - District Conference; Planning Extension Program; Farm visits; Radio programs; News articles; Annual Report; Brucellosis and Eradication Program; Distribute project record books; 4-H Radio programs; National 4-H Achievement Week; Plan for Christmas Float; Honor Club Meeting; 4-H club meetings; Complete project analysis and order County medals; Distribute project record books for 1961-62; Natural Bridge Soil Conservation District Supervisors Meeting.

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