

the Extension personnel. Dehorning and castrating demonstrations were held. Dairy farmers were kept informed on marketing problems and new developments.

Tobacco growers were informed on the latest production methods through meetings held in every community in the county. Crop and livestock pests and diseases were identified and control measures suggested. Soil fumigation against root knot and plantbed weed control demonstrations were put on. Demonstrations were held in connection with new corn hybrids, good pastures, the securing of alfalfa stands. News articles, radio programs, circular letters, and in addition, many meetings were held at which information of a timely nature was given on most of the problems affecting the farm people in the county.

ASC and other meeting, in cooperation with other agencies, were attended.

Help was given on the pruning, spraying and management of orchards and vineyards. Much time was devoted to assisting farm people with their home gardens, also, on home beautification including shade trees, lawns, and shrubbery.

Community improvement, men's clubs, TVA, farm and home development and program planning received considerable attention and made considerable progress.

ribbon at the District Contest. This youth has planted 13,000 pine seedlings to date.

#### VII. SUMMARY OF EXTENSION WORK, 1958

Extension work progressed nicely in Halifax County in 1958 and the Agents feel that a great deal was accomplished. Local newspapers, radio stations, T.V., and business people played a major role in the work done this year.

The 4-H program was strengthened this year due to work done by parents, adult and junior leaders, sponsors, and agents. The percentage of completion on records jumped from 51% to 73.3%.

Much time, early in the year, was devoted to Program Planning with the help and cooperation of the County Board of Agriculture and the State Extension staff. Detailed plans were worked out for incorporating the latest scientific advancement in agriculture on the major farm enterprises of the county. This information was carried to the farmers of the county through the cooperation of the press and radio, by demonstration, meetings, circular letters, individual letters and personal contacts.

Twenty-four farm families were worked with in connection with Farm and Home Development. There were three community improvement groups organized. The Chamber of Commerce furnished the prize money.

A successful feeder calf sale was held. Practically all lambs and wool were marketed cooperatively through the help of

first place in the District Judging Contest.

2. Livestock Judging

The Halifax Livestock Team consisting of four members, placed second in the District Contest and also participated in the state judging contest.

3. Egg Grading

The Egg Grading team made up of first year members, placed second in the District Contest but were unable to attend the State Contest.

4. Poultry Judging

A young ineligible team worked out and attended the District Contest for practice for a chance at the judging championship in 1959.

5. Land Appreciation

A new land appreciation team was formed and several workouts were conducted but the team was ineligible for the District Contest.

6. Public Speaking

Henry Weatherford entered the District Public Speaking Contest and won a blue ribbon. There is much interest in this project.

7. Forestry Demonstration

Donald Gordan gave a forestry demonstration on the correct ways to handle and plant pine seedlings, winning a blue

Rural Life Sunday was observed by two community 4-H clubs in which members took charge of the Sunday Service.

#### 7. Awards & Recognition Banquet

Each December, county 4-H member winners of project medals and special recognition and awards, attend the Awards and Recognition Banquet sponsored by a local bank. The occasion promotes the 4-H club program of Halifax as much as any other activity.

#### 8. Fair Exhibits

4-H club members made a larger number of exhibits in handicraft, hobbies, insect collections, crops and vegetables. Twenty 4-H dairy calves, 15 beef animals and 7 registered top market hogs and breeding gilts were exhibited. Poultry exhibits were larger than ever, accompanied by both white and brown egg exhibits. Representative samples of 4-H projects were increased during the 1958 project year.

#### 9. 4-H Electric School

An electric school was held to assemble lamps of three types for better lighting for study. Twenty-eight boys and girls assembled one or more of these lamps with the assistance of adult leaders, power suppliers and extension agents.

#### D. Judging Teams & Demonstrations

##### 1. Dairy Judging

The Halifax Dairy Judging team had several well planned workouts with three breeds of dairy cattle. The team won

Sixty-five club members and four junior leaders attended 4-H camp at Holiday Lake in June. Club members spent a profitable and enjoyable week and returned with more interest in the 4-H program.

### 3. State Short Course

Ten club boys attended the State Short Course at VPI in June. Members of the first place District Dairy Judging team and the second place livestock team competed in the state contests. Hudson Reese, winner of the leadership achievement, was elected to the office of President of the 1959 Short Course; Bobby Bagby, the All Star candidate, was taken into the All Stars at this event.

### 4. Electric Congress

Twenty-five well completed electric records were judged and Joe Burton of the Scottsburg 4-H Club was winner of the County 4-H electric contest. Joe spent a very educational and entertaining two-day trip to Richmond.

### 5. Parent-Member County Picnic

During the month of June, the 4-H clubs from the county held their annual picnic at Staunton River State Park. A journalist from Peru gave an interesting talk on customs and culture of the people of Peru. The Honor Club initiation ceremony was held and new members were taken in.

### 6. Rural Life Sunday

winner was selected, a teacher helped the winner improve his act before the county 4-H Talent Contest. The Saturday before the County Contest, all winners were asked to come in to practice.

A 4-H Club member served as Master of Ceremonies, also the Wilson Memorial 4-H Club opened the contest with the Stars Spangled Banner with flutes and played several other selections during intermission. Two uniformed 4-H'ers lead the audience in the pledges to the flags. One hundred forty-four club members participated in the program and some acts included eight to ten club members. Both county newspapers and WSLG-TV took care of the publicity before and after the contest.

The contest was divided into two groups, from club members 10 through 13, and 13 through 21. Winners in the Senior division participated in the State Share-The-Pun Contest.

The Assistant Home Agent from Pittsylvanua County, the Associate 4-H Agent, and the District Agent served as judges.

The success of this activity far exceeded the expectations of the Extension personnel. Approximately 800 people attended.

This activity created a great deal of interest for club members, parents, and leaders. They are already making plans for the 1959 contest. This contest was the 4-H money making activity of the year.

## 2. Holiday Leis

### 8. 4-H Pig Project

Seven registered Hampshire gilts were donated by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce to induce 4-H members and others to produce hogs for breeding purposes to improve market type hogs of Halifax County.

#### C. Extra Curricular Activities

Halifax 4-H club members participated in many activities in addition to their regular club projects and meetings. These activities included 4-H Talent Contest, 2 forestry contests, 4-H Camp at Holiday Lake, State 4-H Short Course at VPI, 4-H Electric Congress at Richmond, Parent-Member Picnic at Staunton River Park, Awards and Recognition Banquet, Rural Life Sunday Program, fair exhibits and electric school.

##### 1. 4-H Talent Contest

The activity that perhaps created more interest and did more to publicize 4-H work in the county in 1958 was a county-wide 4-H Talent Contest. Many problems were encountered in carrying out such an activity in a county as large as Halifax's 814 square miles. Getting club members in to practice, finding a place to practice, and finding a suitable building for holding such an activity were some of the problems encountered. In February each 4-H club held its own talent contest and selected a club member. In most instances, community leaders served as judges. After the club

## 6. Entomology

Interest was shown in the collection, mounting and exhibiting of insects in 1938. Four 4-H club members turned in records worthy of merit and are working toward entomology achievement.

## 7. Achievement Records

An achievement notebook school was held to assist 12 year olds and older 4-H club members to prepare and assemble memory books for district and state competition. All 12 year old 4-H boys were urged to turn in project records and form a 4-H scrapbook.

Five 4-H boys entered achievement records who are as follows: Terry Williamson entered Field Crops achievement and is state winner and National winner and will enter leadership achievement in 1939.

Hudson Rease entered leadership achievement and won a trip to National 4-H Camp, Washington, D. C.

Richard Lucks entered a Field Crops achievement record and received a blue award.

Louis Hudson entered a neat animal achievement record and received a red award.

Berry Williamson entered an electric record in the District Electric Contest and won a blue award.

Two community 4-H clubs conducted a forest tour in connection with forest appreciation project. Interest mounts in tree planting, improving farm woods, and forest appreciation projects.

#### 4. Sears Poultry Project

This special project was highly successful again this year, 7 blue ribbons being awarded to club members doing good work in brooding, rearing, record keeping and exhibiting 3 pullets and a dozen of their eggs at the county fair. Eleven 4-H club members exhibited different breeds of their poultry at the Atlantic Rural Exposition in Richmond winning 4 blue, 2 red, 2 white and 2 pink ribbons for their efforts of special feeding and grooming of their birds for the fair.

Emphasis was placed on 4-H participation in egg production with 44 boys taking poultry as their project.

#### 5. Dairy

Considerable emphasis was placed on the dairy project to improve the dairy cattle on dairy farms and family milk supply by selecting better calves, feeding. Artificial insemination was stressed for registered dairy heifers. Thirty one 4-H club members selected and 21 completed with a good record.

Twenty calves and heifers were exhibited in two dairy shows to let others know what it takes to fit, groom and show a dairy animal. Interest runs high for an even greater number of good calves for 1959 projects this year.

experience to the member in making preparation for giving the demonstration. Parents, adult leaders and agents have given more help in project instruction to individual club members.

## 2. Beef Project

For those boys with beef production as a project, a Baby Beef Show and Sale was sponsored by the Danville Chamber of Commerce. 4-H club members exhibited two heifers and seven steers at this show. A number of top awards were won with these nine animals such as Grand Champion heifer, first in showmanship, and first in fitting in the two-county 4-H, FFA Baby Beef Show and Sale. Plans have been made to hold the Show and Sale in Halifax County for 1959. Twenty steers and heifers are on full feed for the spring show and sale.

## 3. Forestry Projects

A county-wide 4-H contest was sponsored locally to create interest in planting more trees. A total of 40,000 trees were planted which is 4,000 more than in 1957. Two demonstrations were held placing emphasis on selective cutting, evaluating present stands of timber and how to plant seedlings. In connection with the forestry project, 14 boys entered the tree thinning contest to improve the farm woods. One-half acre was the minimum size of woods to thin to be eligible to be in the contest. One hundred percent record completion was obtained.

#### 4. Project Planning Committee

This committee is composed of 4-H club members, parents, and leaders. The group met in July to set up the 1959 program. In April the Extension Agents discussed with the in-school clubs the project that might be taught. The club members had a month to think about these in-school projects. In July the Program Committee studied the results of the voting in the different schools and set up the program accordingly. Electricity was voted as the in-school project for the year. This group not only decided on the monthly demonstrations to be given but on all the information that went into the Yearbook.

#### B. 4-H Project Work

##### 1. In-School Project

All club members selected as their in-school project, electricity. This subject was discussed at each club meeting with special attention given to the timeliness of the discussion for each particular month. One hundred twenty electric records were completed and turned in to the County Agents' Office.

The demonstration method of teaching was used in the monthly club meetings, the club vice-president being responsible for having a club member give a demonstration each month. The agents felt that the demonstration method offered a two-fold possible program of instruction, one giving information, the other,

### 3. Honor Club

The Honor Club in Halifax County serves as the governing body for the 4-H clubs. This group met in June for a planning meeting and at this time they selected the Honor Club members to be taken in in 1958. The group also planned the county-wide picnic and the initiation ceremony for new Honor Club members taken in. The Honor Club was also represented on the project planning committee. The officers of this group are: Tevis Williamson, President; Agnes Barksdale, Vice President; Miriam Harding, Secretary; Nell Martin, Song Leader; and Dixie Gravitts, Reporter. This is a very active organization and they worked on the following goals in 1958:

- a. Give publicity during National 4-H club week.
- b. Provide more recreation for club members.
- c. Have a higher completion on 4-H records.
- d. Have Honor Club members serve as junior leaders, and have them recruit more active junior leaders.

During National 4-H Club Week a two-page spread in the county newspapers was devoted to articles by club members giving publicity to the county 4-H program. More members participated in singing songs, playing games, club picnics, talent contest, and community activities. They boys' 4-H record completion is greater than last year's. All Honor Club members served as junior leaders and most of the new Honor Club members will be Junior Leaders.

- e. Make an exhibit at County Fair.
- f. Attend all 4-H meetings.
- g. Strive to give at least one demonstration in your club.
- h. Form at least two more 4-H clubs during 1958 in communities.

The enrollment increased, more fair exhibits were made by members, and county events and club meetings had better attendance. Demonstrations were given by club members in all clubs during the year. Two community clubs are in process of being organized.

## 2. All Stars

The All Stars in Halifax County are organized and have two meetings each year. The officers are: Ann Mills - Big Chief; Cookie Armistead - Lesser Chief, Hudson Reese - Medicine Man, and Patsy Carr - Scribe. This group has helped to strengthen the Extension Program in Halifax County by serving as Junior Leaders. They help young club members in completing their records, and they sponsor the Share-The-Fun and Public Speaking Contests. Many of these boys and girls serve as 4-H counselors at camp. This group meets each December to select the All-Star candidates to be recommended for the next year. Bobby Bagby was the All Star and Louis Hudson was alternate during 1958. Five Halifax All Stars attended the All Star Banquet at Dixie Caverns; Patsy Carr presided.

Leader training meetings were held to plan programs for 1958 to meet the needs of 386 Halifax boys, this resulting in an increased enrollment over the previous year. The problem of one consolidated high school for the county tends to keep the enrollment down. For a club member to attend a meeting, he must take a class cut. However two clubs now exist at the High School. The elementary in-school club enrollment is on an upward trend. The time allotted for club members is too limited for best club work. There is a definite lack of time for recreation since the limited time must be utilized to carry on the business of the meeting. This tends to lower the interest of the club members. Plans are being initiated whereby clubs will eventually be a community project rather than part of the school system. This change will be made gradually. Two clubs are to be organized very soon.

#### 1. County Youth Committee

The Youth Committee is composed of leaders, parents, and club members. There are eight members of this committee and they have worked this year to promote the County 4-H program. This committee met and planned the coming year's program, formulating the 4-H Yearbook. The following goals were suggested:

- a. Work toward 75% project completion.
- b. Encourage others to join 4-H club.
- c. Attend all county-wide 4-H events.
- d. Learn club pledge, colors, and motto.

development, the county agent, working with the home agent, gave individual help to each participating farm family on their planning, production and marketing program. Plans were made for systematic progress in the development of the farm plant, and meeting reasonable farm family goals. The family plans were made to fit the situation as it existed, based on the best information obtainable, with definite aims and goals in mind. To begin with, an inventory of the entire assets of the farm plant was made to be considered in working out a program for the farm.

Programs have been worked out or partially completed for most of these families, including a systematic crop rotation, fertilizing, and liming. Goals and definite plans for attaining them have been established. This program has resulted in getting families on a sounder farming and business basis and at a relative early date.

#### D. TVA

Six farms cooperated in the TVA program in 1958. These farmers were assisted with their farming program through planning field lay out, crop rotations, lime and fertilizer rates and analysis to be applied, improving pastures, and other management practices. Complete farm records are kept on each TVA farm. These six farms received 87.8 tons of TVA fertilizer for the 1958 crop year.

### VI. 4-H CLUB WORK

#### A. Organization

of Commerce, community improvement organizations were set up in five separate communities of the county. Each of these communities elected officers, appointed committees, selected community projects, set goals, and outlined their individual community boundaries. Monthly meetings were held with discussions on projects and the latest information on their execution, and means of getting work done. Each community program included recreation as a part of their program.

The aims of the community improvement groups were to build stronger communities-socially and commercially-through all the people working together in a friendly spirit of competition. The projects selected were those that the group felt were most needed in the community.

Monthly meetings were held at which timely farm and homemaking topics were discussed including the best methods for carrying out the goals set in the community. Four of these communities did an outstanding job on their program meetings, carrying through their projects, fund raising and other undertakings. The interest and work accomplished by these communities was very good. Prizes amounting to \$600 were awarded participating communities by the South Boston Chamber of Commerce.

#### C. Farm and Home Development

During the year, thirty-six farm families participated in farm and home development. Through farm and home

Farmers and 4-H club members ordered and planted approximately 84,000 tree seedlings. Ten forestry improvement demonstration farms have been started on which one or more good forestry practices are being used. Three of the demonstration farms in the county have been awarded the "Tree Farm" honor. Much remains to be done in getting a reasonable percentage of farmers to give needed attention to the forest acres of the farms. A continuation of the present program should accomplish much during the next few years.

#### 11. Home Grounds Improvement

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the demand on the Extension personnel for help on the improving or beautifying of the home grounds in the urban as well as rural areas of the county. There remains many homes, however, where the lawns, shade trees, and shrubbery receive little or no consideration. The Agents, with the help of VPI Landscaping Specialists, have devoted considerable time to assisting home owners with information on their landscaping problems.

With the help of the VPI landscape specialist, four demonstrations on home ground beautification were put on. Also detailed information on shrubbery arrangement, pruning, shade tree planting, and other home beautification problems were given at five meetings and to 400 individuals.

#### B. Community Improvement

With the sponsorship of the Halifax County Chamber

county is in some kind of forest trees made up of a wide variety of species that vary widely in their market value. The more valuable species are generally the most rapid growing. There is a good stand of good trees on one-fourth to one-third of the woodland. The remainder of the wooded area has either a poor stand or is growing trees largely of an inferior specie or both. For most localities, pine has proven to be the most profitable tree to grow due to its high market value and rapid growth. Farmers are being urged to plant and otherwise encouraged to grow the better species of pine.

The county forestry program included the securing of a full stand of the better species of trees on the wooded areas, that trees be planted to idle areas unfit for cultivation or pasture, that thinning be practiced where needed, all timber be marked and estimated by trained foresters before it is sold, and the forestry products be cut and marked by the land owner. Goals established were to get plantings made on 50 farms, destroying undesirable species and planting to desirable trees on 15 farms, and thinning on 18 farms.

With the help of the VPI Extension Forester, and sponsorship of a local business concern, demonstrations on tree planting, thinning and poisoning of undesirable trees were put on. Trees were secured for 72 farmers and 4-H club boys. The forestry improvement program was publicized through demonstrations on 20 farms, the press, over the radio, by circular letters and visits.

disease and insect control problems were discussed along with a pruning demonstration with the commercial growers in attendance. Growers, and the Agent, attended one fruit growers school. Help on thinning and spraying was given to several growers individually.

A small amount of market gardening is carried on, but is limited largely to the growing of sweet corn and melons. Practically all farms maintain a home vegetable garden for at least a part of the year. A wide variety of vegetables are adopted to the county and many of these can be grown over a period of many months by successive planting. Many of the home gardens however, are kept producing for only a few months of the year then turned over to weeds.

The Extension Plan of Work called for the home gardener to grow vegetables throughout the growing season, the planting of better varieties, good seed bed preparation, the application of sufficient barnyard manure, and a better analysis of fertilizers. Timely information was kept before growers through the press, by radio, circular letters, and by personal contacts. There were more and better home gardens than usual. Commercial corn growers were given help with disease control. Commercial cantaloupe growers were assisted with insect identification and control.

#### 10. Forestry

Approximately one-half of the land area of the

c. Swine

Swine production in the county has consisted largely of the production of a home meat supply however, during the past year there has been an increase in the number of commercial growers. More breeding herds of higher quality have been established and a small number of farmers keep one or two brood sows. Eight pig parlors have been built. Two graded hog sales were held. The Board of Agriculture recommended, and the county Plan of Work called for the using of breeding stock of the meat type hog, that all hogs be provided an abundance of grazing by seeding ladino clover, and that a balanced ration including minerals be provided. This improved program was followed by more farmers than ever before. There has been an increase in pastures and the time for growing hogs to butcher size has been shortened by 5 to 6 months. The improvement program was discussed at two county-wide meetings, over the radio and through the press.

9. Fruit and Vegetable Production

The number of commercial fruit growers in the county have gradually declined during recent years. Now there are six peach, two grape, and two apple commercial producers. The major problems have been the controlling of insects and diseases, proper pruning, thinning and fertilizing. The county Plan of Work proposed to give growers timely information on the problems outlined above. With the help of the Extension Horticulturist early in the year,

and individual help was given producers. The Feeder Calf Sales Committee with the help of the Extension personnel, sold 356 feeder calves through the South Boston Feeder Calf Sale.

b. Sheep

Sheep have generally been profitable for the 35 county growers during the past several years. Many growers could step up profits however, by keeping purebred bucks, culling, treating systematically against parasites, providing more high quality grazing and the better preparation of lambs and wool for market.

The Agents' Plan of Work called for the growing of sheep on more farms as a means of supplementing the income from tobacco, the using of only good pure-bred bucks, the providing of an abundance of good pasture in both summer and winter, the controlling of parasites through rotational grazing and the use of antibiotics, and the cooperative marketing of lambs and wool. Growers were reminded by letter to put the above practices in use near the time each item should be done, through news articles, radio, circular letters, and personal contacts.

One docking and castrating demonstration was held. Seven pure-bred rams were placed. Approximately 100% of the wool crop was marketed cooperatively. Around 95% of all lambs grown were marketed cooperatively. Lambs from seven adjoining counties were were also marketed with the lambs of the county.

At the present, six dairies are active members of the Halifax-Pittsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association. The artificial insemination of dairy cattle is on the increase due to the work of a good inseminator carrying on this work.

Dairy farmers and especially Grade A dairymen, are now putting up more silage and have generally made improvements in providing more and better roughage including pasture in recent years. There has been a marked increase in the number of cows bred artificially.

#### 8. Livestock

##### a. Beef Cattle

Beef cattle numbers have decreased slightly during recent years. More, better, and cheaper feed along with improved quality of breeding stock would increase profits to producers. Getting more growers to properly prepare their cattle for market and take advantage of the better marketing facilities is a need.

The county livestock program included a stepped-up feed program as outlined under field crops, the making of more silage as drought insurance and for cheaper winter feeding, the culling of low producers and replacing with good breeding cattle, properly preparing animals for market, breeding for early calves, and selling through the better markets.

During the year, four farmers secured better breeding stock. Eight dehorning and castrating demonstrations were held,

## 7. Dairying

Commercial dairying has been expanded considerably in the County within recent years. There are at present, twenty-four Grade A dairies and some 200 producers of manufacturing milk and cream. A large percentage of the 4,786 farms keep an average of two dairy cows for the home milk supply. Halifax farmers have good but limited outlets for Grade A milk. A large milk manufacturing concern has recently located in the county. It is believed that many more farmers will be selling manufacturing milk within the coming year.

Improvements that will make dairying more profitable in the county, the dairy committee from the County Board of Agriculture stated, include the producing of more and higher quality pasture and hay, more silage, growing of more and better replacement heifers, the culling out of low producers and adopting of good management practices in the dairy barn. These improvements and recommendations were made available to all dairymen of the county through meetings, press, radio, and letters. Help was given dairymen on sanitation and methods used in disease prevention. Dairy specialists devoted two days to assisting the agent with meetings to which all dairymen were invited. At these meetings procedures were given on the latest feeding and management practices, and also milking and other practices that would reduce the incidence of mastitis.

## 6. Poultry

There are eight commercial laying flocks of 1,000 to 2,000 hens each and approximately 250 commercial poultry flocks keeping 100 to 500 laying hens each. There are eight commercial broiler producers. Most farmers keep a small flock of hens to supply poultry meat and eggs for home use. Many of the commercial flocks supply eggs to local hatcheries. Neither the local hatcheries or the fresh egg markets secure sufficient eggs from the area to take care of their needs. The egg marketing facilities have improved during the past year by establishing egg routes into grading and cooling facilities.

The Extension program for the year included the improving of marketing facilities, the producing of sufficient eggs to more nearly supply local hatcheries, the keeping of a sufficient number of hens in commercial flocks to make an economical unit, providing better houses, and the securing of production bred baby chicks, and better feeding. The agents, through the help of the poultry committee, carried this program to the farmers of the county through meetings, the press, radio, and by letter. Plans for poultry houses, and other equipment were supplied growers. Individual help was given growers during outbreaks of diseases. Six culling demonstrations were held. Due to improved egg prices and the reduction in tobacco acreage, eight new 1,000 to 2,000 laying houses were constructed, filled with birds and are in production.

sucker control, identification of diseases, harvesting, and the preparation for market.

Plant bed weed control demonstrations were staged in four communities. Timely information throughout the growing season on each operation at hand was publicized through the press, discussed over the radio, mailed to growers by circular letters, and personal contacts. Fertilizer and lime recommendations were made for 428 farmers as the results of soil analysis. Three soil fumigating demonstrations for the control of root knot was put on. Various tobacco diseases were identified for approximately 400 farmers in the field or at the office. Detailed information on the controlling of the major insects on topping and the controlling of suckers was mailed to each farmer of the county. Two sucker control demonstrations were staged. Three varietal demonstrations were conducted for farmers to view some of the newer varieties. The agents cooperated in a varietal evaluation project test conducted in the county by the college and tobacco companies. One-half or more of the farmers of the county followed some or all of the production recommendations made by the Extension workers. Much of the county had a good season and a good crop was grown. Due to adverse weather conditions in other parts of the county, a part of the tobacco crop was of an inferior quality. On the average, poundage and quality resulted in a satisfactory income.

efficient in that they secure yields of 1,600 pounds or more per acre of high quality leaf. The lower 25% secure 1,000 to 1,200 pounds or less per acre and that of a poorer quality. Diseases, poor cultural practices, the lack of attention at the right time, over fertilization, the use of poor and unadapted soils, the lack of rotations, and the use of poorly adapted varieties were the main factors depressing yields and money value from the lower income farms. Tobacco diseases have been on the increase in the county for many years. Blackshank and root knot took a smaller toll this year due to the cooler summer season. Insects and especially flea beetle, take a considerable toll from the tobacco crop each year.

An intensive educational campaign early in the year through a series of meetings in all sections of the county, were held for growers. Through these meetings, farmers were given the latest research findings on tobacco and how they were to be applied in order to receive the maximum income from their tobacco crop. This information began with the plant bed, was carried on through all phases of production and to the marketing of the crop. Special attention was given to plant bed weed control, varieties, the control of flea beetle and other insects, blue mold and other diseases, and the type of soil on which the crop should be grown. A soils analysis was encouraged as a basis for lime and fertilizer to be applied. Also stressed were planting dates, cultural practices, when and what to side-dress the crops with, topping, suckering,

Pasture improvement demonstrations were conducted on 14 farms. In the case of alfalfa, 21 demonstrations were conducted using the methods proven by the experiment stations to give good results. In the case of hay production in crop rotations, 8 demonstrations were conducted on the using of orchards grass with red clover or alfalfa. Information concerning the securing of good pastures, good crop rotations and the growing of good hay went to all farmers of the county through newspaper articles, over the radio, through personal contacts, and circular letters. More alfalfa is being seeded each year. Excellent stands were secured during both spring and fall. Some 8% of the farmers of the county that had not previously seeded orchards grass with lespedeza or in a rotation, made such seedings. There was a small increase in the acreage seeded to permanent pasture and also in the top dressing of pastures, alfalfa and other hay crops.

#### 5. Tobacco

Flue-cured tobacco provides a little more than 80% of the cash income received by Halifax County farmers. The 1958 allotment under the Tobacco Production Control Program was 14,438.69 acres which was approximately the same as that allotted for 1957 but 20% less than that for the year 1956. The number of farms producing tobacco was approximately 2700. The total acres harvested was 13,568.02, and the number of acres placed in the Soil Bank was 729.82. The top 70 to 80% of the growers of the county are very

of the pastures, due to the species of pasture plants grown and the need for lime and plant food, start growth very late in the spring and cease to produce forage early in the fall as well as producing too little forage and that of a low quality. Pasture, being the cheapest feed for livestock, should receive more attention, this through the seeding of more and better pasture grasses and better pasture care all along the line. Seeding of sufficient hay crops to provide a desired rotation would require a considerable increase in hay acreage. Many farmers, during dry seasons, have little or no hay for their livestock due to their depending upon lespedeza alone. Where lespedeza is seeded alone, the ground is left bare as far as living plants needed for holding the soil through the winter and taking up available plant foods are concerned.

The Extension program was directed toward getting an increase in the acreage of both pasture and hay crops as well as increased yields by applying sufficient lime, plant food and adopting other good proven practices.

At a series of 32 meetings with approximately one-fourth of the farmers of the county attending, each step in the securing and maintaining of good pastures and hay crops was outlined. Results that might be expected, both in soil protection and increased income from added livestock, were given. The growing of more and better hay and the saving of seed from many of the hay plants was stressed.

and rates. Seed treating against smut diseases was given special emphasis this year due to an increase in the disease. Millers and seed dealers were informed of the disease situation as well as farmers, and their help in urging the treating of all seed solicited. The building or remodeling of storage facilities so as to exclude rats and insects and so as to hold the grain crop to be marketed at a time that the highest prices could be secured was urged. Information on seed bed preparation, the highest producing varieties, soil analysis and needed lime along with the amount and analysis of fertilizers, and seed treatment went out to oat and barley growers through news articles, radio, letters, and personal contacts. Plans for building and remodeling storage facilities, treating against grain insects and poisoning rats was given to farmers through the regular educational media.

Yields of all small grains were at a record high.

The acreage devoted to wheat for 1959 is up and barley acreage remains about the same as in the several past years.

#### 4. Pasture and Hay Crops

The acreage of improved pastures, hay and especially alfalfa, have been on the increase in the county for the past several years. The good pastures are restricted largely to the larger livestock and dairy farms. The majority of farms however, provide insufficient good pastures and good quality hay to adequately provide the needs of the livestock now on farms. Many

demonstrations was made available to other corn growers of the county through six field meetings at the demonstrations. Results of these demonstrations were publicized through newspaper articles, radio, by letter and through personal contacts. In addition to the demonstrations the agents made available to all growers, timely information on all phases of corn production including soil preparation, varieties, fertilization and cultivation. Per acre yields for the county this year were the highest yet achieved.

### 3. Small Grains

More profitable small grain crops could be secured by seeding during the better seeding dates, better soil preparation, the seeding in the case of oats especially of the recommended varieties, the application of more plant food, and the treating of seed against smut diseases. There has been much loss to the crop due to insect and rat damage. The acreage devoted to spring oats has increased rapidly during recent years. A more profitable oat crop is grown when seedings are made at the better fall seeding dates. A better storage and marketing program would increase the value and income from small grains.

The County Extension educational program consisted of getting timely information on improved production practices to growers throughout the year. Circular letters went to all small grain growers just before seeding time giving the better seeding dates, recommended varieties, and recommended fertilizer analysis

d. Further reducing erosion by working the land on the contour rather than up and down the slope. This problem was discussed at meetings over the county and on 28 individual farms.

Information on these problems was carried to the people through radio talks, weekly news articles, circular and personal letters, personal contacts, meetings held in every community of the county, and demonstrations.

Due to these programs which has been a part of the County Extension program for many years, there has been an upward trend in these improvements as shown by the increased crop yields as well as the general appearance of farms. Progress is also shown by the continued rise in the amount of fertilizer applied to the various crops and especially pasture and hay crops. There has been one discouraging factor--a slight decrease in the amount of lime used in the past few years.

## 2. Corn

Corn yields in the county have for years been considerably lower than the state average. This is due to the lack of needed lime and plant food, and poor cultural practices on many farms. Many demonstration farms this year secured yields of 60 to 100 bushels per acre. Corn varietal and production demonstrations were conducted on nine farms. Demonstrators had a soil's analysis made, applied needed lime and fertilizer as indicated by the test and planted recommended hybrid seed. Information on the

does most other crops adding to the erosiveness of the soil. The average farm of the county keeps a very limited number of livestock therefore, produces a rather small acreage of hay and pasture and returns little manure to the soil.

Crop yields on many farms are low due to the need for lime, the application of more and a better balanced plant food and a better crop rotation. The work of the agents on soils and crops was directed to the slowing up of soil losses by means of good systematic crop rotation, the use of more cover, the addition of more lime and fertilizer and more organic matter. A chemical analysis of the soil was used as a guide to liming and fertilizing. The working of the land on the contour rather than up and down the slope and terracing were advocated.

1. Soil Improvement

The objective was the reducing of erosion and building of soil fertility.

a. Acquainting farmers with the need for and the proper methods of taking soil samples. Twenty-four meetings were held with 400 attending. Individual assistance was given to 300.

b. The value of crop rotation for building up fertility and reducing erosion. Discussions were held at 31 meetings with 434 present. Five farm demonstrations were conducted.

c. The value of applying needed lime and fertilizer. Four hundred twenty soil samples were analyzed.

Association markets 90% or better of the lambs grown, and about 100% of the wool produced. The 4-H Honor Club, the 4-H County Council, and County All-Star Chapter contribute greatly to the success of the County 4-H Club Program. Halifax is one of six counties comprising the Southside Soil Conservation District. This year the County Extension workers, in cooperation with the Halifax County Chamber of Commerce, organized and worked with five separate community improvement projects. Five farms cooperated in the cooperative TVA program.

#### V. PROJECT WORK

##### A. Soils and Field Crops

While there has been a continued improvement in soil saving and crop yields, soil improvement and economical crop yields were emphasized due to low average yields of many crops and the continued serious loss of soils from erosion. Soil losses from the county's farms continue to be serious even though much improvement has been made, due to the cultivation of large acreages to clean cultivated crops, the lack of sufficient cover for and organic matter in the soil; also, due to a considerable amount of plowing, cultivating and row layout up and down the slope rather than on the contour. Many farmers cultivate tobacco after tobacco for many years due to a shortage of high quality tobacco soils on their particular farms, resulting in severe erosion. Then too, flue-cured tobacco requires a soil somewhat lower in organic matter than

for the advancement of the county's agriculture. The following committees spent considerable time studying background and other information relating to their particular phase of the county's agriculture. By combining the recommendations of these committees a long-time County program for the advancement of the county's agriculture was formulated. These committees were field crops, forestry, dairying, poultry, gardening, and livestock. These committee recommendations were submitted to the County Board by their respective chairmen, revised and approved. The Agents' Plan of Work was taken from the recommendations of the Board of Agriculture.

Halifax and Pittsylvania Counties jointly operate a DHIA, seven members of which are Halifax County dairymen. The five organized Men's Clubs of the county hold regular monthly or semi-monthly meetings through most of the year. It is through these clubs that much of the organized discussions on agricultural improvement was conducted. The Halifax County Farm Bureau has cooperated with the Extension workers in a number of county farm improvement programs and given other valuable assistance. A Cooperative Fertilizer Purchasing Association supplies fertilizer to approximately 400 cooperating members at a considerable saving. The Southside Livestock Growers Association fostered a Feeder Calf Sale through which a considerable portion of the better feeder calves of the county were sold. The Halifax County Sheep Growers

### III. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HALIFAX COUNTY

Halifax is the fourth largest county in the state of Virginia, having an area of 814 square miles. It borders on the North Carolina line in the south-central part of the state. There are approximately 4,751 farms in the county that average 85.5 acres each in size. The topography is hilly to gentle rolling. The farms are well watered by one or more of the three rivers and other numerous streams which flow through or arise in the county. The soil types are many and varied. Much of the soil is light in color and sandy in nature therefore, making it well suited to the production of high quality flue-cured tobacco. One-half or more of the soils are heavy clay or clay loams that are adapted to the production of grain, hay, pasture and general farming. Three railroads traverse the county making rail facilities convenient to most localities. An excellent network of hard surfaced highways serve all sections of the county. South Boston, the largest town with a population of 6,057, is located five miles south of Halifax, the County Seat, which is in the center of the county.

### IV. AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE COUNTY

The County Board of Agriculture, composed of 26 members and made up of leading farmers from various sections of the county, business men, and other leading citizens, is the overall agricultural planning body for the county's agriculture. Committees of this board, early in the year, made recommendations

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HALIFAX COUNTY

1958

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Thomas E. Dinviddie, Assistant County Agent  
Johnnie E. Pittard, Assistant County Agent  
Lloyd M. Harrison, Jr., Assistant County Agent  
Richard Gregory, Assistant County Agent

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

COUNTY  
EXTENSION  
WORK

*Virginia Agricultural Extension Service*

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**County**