

VII. Economic Problems and Public Policy

We recognize a responsibility here. Farmers are concerned about these policies and problems. At this time we plan no program but will be prepared to take advantage of any opportunity offered by an organized group, which may occur during the year.

The agents will make an effort to keep informed on problems of public policy.

What we did and the results - No group activity was carried out. The agents tried to keep informed on these problems so that intelligent observation may be made when the questions arise.

VIII. Farm and Home Buildings

No special work conducted. Assistance was given individuals on problems of building and remodeling farm structures.

IX. Cooperation With Other Agencies

Maintenance basis, including regular meetings of ASCS committee, regular meetings of the Northern Neck Soil Conservation District, of which the agent is secretary. We also cooperate and do educational work for Virginia Division of Forestry, the State Department of Agriculture, and Farmers Home Administration.

X. Professional Improvement

The agents have tried to keep informed on experimental work being done at the Warsaw Research Station and by other stations of the Experiment Station. The agents have read bulletins, books and magazines in an effort to have the best information to pass on to Lancaster people.

XI. Miscellaneous

The agents have supplied personal service and information to individuals and groups not included elsewhere in this report. Examples are assistance to the Lancaster County Civil Defense, an educational program on the feed-grain program and the wheat reduction program of the ASCS.

We have assisted the Northern Neck Development Council. We have given assistance to a number of businesses which supply farmers.

What we did and the results - A group of eight Lancaster farmers visited Virginia Truck Experiment Station to see the work going on there. We also arranged for a county-wide meeting on tomato production which was very poorly attended.

We have assisted a number of farmers with problems of production and marketing of vegetable crops. Two farmers were helped in starting plastic greenhouses and one electric hot bed for use in starting early plants.

G. 4-H Clubs

We plan to enroll about 350 boys and girls in 4-H Clubs in 1961. Projects in forestry and electricity will be carried by the boys.

What we did and the results - 316 boys and girls were enrolled in 4-H Clubs in 1961. These members carried 364 projects. The boys were enrolled in electricity, forestry and wildlife.

Four-H members participated in a number of group activities including camp, National 4-H Club Week, Share-the-Fun program, exhibits, tours and radio programs.

VI. Farm and Home Management

We believe that most farmers will increase their incomes as they develop farm and home management skills. Good farm records are a necessity when adjustments are made in management. Many farmers are not keeping adequate records. Therefore, our goal is to help farmers set up and keep adequate farm records so that they will have good information on which to base management decisions.

This year we will emphasize the importance of adequate records in all of our work. In addition we will make a special effort to help six farmers set up the electronic record system.

What we did and the results - We recognized that taken as a group Lancaster farmers are having a difficult time economically. As the size of our operations get larger the importance of management in the success or failure of an operation seems to intensify. Therefore, we are trying to help farmers improve their management in all phases including the selection of enterprises, financing, selection and use of machinery, record keeping, and other phases of the management job.

D. Dairying

There are four grade A dairies in the county. These farmers have problems of their own as well as those of the industry. We expect to work with them on an individual basis trying to help them solve their problems.

What we did and the results - Work with dairymen has been on an individual basis on production problems and on a group basis on marketing problems. Production items which have received attention this year include selection of forage and forage handling equipment, the interpretation of records and the selection of cattle.

Lancaster dairymen are members of Morlan, a marketing co-operative. We continue to meet with and advise this organization.

E. Tree Fruits

There are three commercial orchards in the county with about 15,000 peach trees and some 3,000 apple trees. We work with these growers on an individual basis. We use specialist help for demonstrations and in conducting an area fruit school in the county.

What we did and the results - No special activities were conducted on tree fruits this year. We did assist growers with individual problems and arranged for the area fruit school.

F. Vegetables, Mostly Tomatoes

The decline in commercial vegetable production in the county continues. Our goal is to help those interested in such crops to make adjustments to fit the present market demand so that vegetables may contribute more farm income. As prices of field crops have declined, and as prices for heavy machinery have advanced, there seems to be some increase in interest in vegetable crops.

We expect to work individually with farmers on problems of production and marketing of tomatoes, small fruits, sweet potatoes and possibly other vegetable crops.

Two farmers have been assisted in securing commercial ewes and purebred rams. A young farmer has been assisted in starting a purebred flock of sheep. There has been no increase in the number of grain fed cattle nor in the production of feeder calves.

We have continued to cooperate with existing livestock marketing organizations including the feeder calf and feeder pig cooperatives.

The agents have given method demonstrations showing farmers how to vaccinate, castrate, clip needle teeth and other techniques of livestock management.

As more farm storage of grain facilities are placed in operation, we expect to see more interest in livestock feeding. This phase of our program should receive more emphasis in the years ahead.

C. Poultry

Sixty-seven Lancaster farms reported selling eggs in 1959. In 1954, 196 farms reported selling eggs. Many small poultry flocks have gone out of existence. We think this trend will continue. We believe some Lancaster farmers should reappraise the laying hen enterprise in the light of recent developments.

Our goal is to help poultrymen to increase their income from poultry through efficient production practices and by helping them to market their products to the best advantage. The facilities and problems of commercial poultrymen are very different and so we expect to work with poultrymen on an individual basis.

What we did and the results - Our work this year with poultrymen has been on an individual basis trying to help the commercial producers increase their profits through more efficient management, record keeping and in trying to keep them informed on outlook information and new developments in poultry production and marketing.

No new commercial flocks were started and a few more small flocks disappeared.

While they seemed to recover in mid-summer, we think this may be a factor in the low yields this year. We had a heavy infestation of Mexican bean beetles and spotty infestations of bean leaf beetles which were defoliating beans during the time the beans were developing in the pods. We are certain this was a factor in lowering yields but we are not certain to what degree. We had high temperatures from time of pollination to bean set which may have been a factor. Varieties other than Mill and Lee gave the lowest yields. We think the Agronomy Department and the Experiment Station should keep an eye on this situation and be prepared to give help if we have trouble in 1962.

B. Livestock

In general, Lancaster farmers are not livestock minded. Only twenty farms reported selling cattle in 1959. Eighty farms reported selling hogs in 1959. We think that many Lancaster farmers need to give consideration to increasing livestock production on their farms and that a number of cash grain farmers should start in the livestock business in some form.

Our goal in 1961 is to interest farmers in some form of livestock and to help those already in the business to enlarge and improve their operations.

We expect to contact farmers through visits to the farm, through radio and newspaper. As interest is aroused we expect to take tours to see successful operations in this and surrounding counties.

What we did and the results - To interest farmers in livestock production we have recognized that each farm is different in resources and each farmer has personal likes and dislikes when it comes to livestock. Therefore, we think that individual farm visits are the most effective method of helping farmers work out the kind and type livestock operation best suited to their resources and likes. Many farmers are interested in developing livestock enterprises but are held back by lack of capital and buildings and the natural resistance to change. As indicated elsewhere in the report, two central farrowing houses have been constructed and another is definitely planned. Two new hog feeding floors were built during the year. A number of farmers were assisted in selecting commercial gilts and purebred boars to improve the breeding of their hogs.

1. Helping farmers understand fertilizer and lime requirements of the crops they produce and in interpreting test results of soil samples.
2. Helping farmers to secure the best information available on use of chemicals in crop production, weed control, insect control, disease control, and protecting the crop in storage.
3. Helping farmers make needed land adjustments, including selection of land for crops, pasture and woodland so that each acre may contribute the maximum to which it is capable in farm income. Information on outlook and market demand as well as soils information will be supplied to individuals to help in making decisions.

We expect to reach all the full time farmers with as much of this information as possible during farm visits. Many part time farmers will also get this information first hand. We expect to supplement that method with newspaper and radio, tours and demonstrations as needed.

What we did and the results - We have supplied farmers with the latest information on production of field crops including the use of fertilizer, lime, varieties, and use of chemicals. This information has been supplied in meetings, through bulletins and circulars and through individual contacts. We have tried to keep fertilizer dealers, seedsmen, and professional workers informed so that as near as possible everyone is giving out the best information available.

We have helped a number of farmers interpret soil sample results and have helped others to make land use adjustments.

Lancaster was blessed with a good corn growing season and most farmers report record yields. Some individuals are reporting yields of one hundred fifty bushels per acre, some have reported an average of better than ninety bushels per acre. We think this indicates that given a favorable season that Lancaster farmers know how to make high corn yields.

Soybean yields this year were disappointing. We are not certain what factor or factors are responsible. We had a cool, wet May and June and our soybeans were affected seriously by diseases.

Demonstrations of various treatments of cutover land and restocking have been under way for some time. However, this year, through the cooperation of the forestry committee of the Northern Neck Development Council, the Chesapeake Corporation, and the county forestry committee, a demonstration was set up on a main highway with appropriate signs showing a number of ways of restocking. A meeting will be held to see the results at this site each year for the next few years.

The forestry committee of the Northern Neck Development Council sponsored a supper meeting of business leaders which was well attended by Lancaster people. At this meeting movies and slides were shown and considerable interest was evidenced by leaders in fields other than agriculture.

Four-H club members were given elementary instruction in forestry. More than eight thousand seedlings were donated by the Virginia Division of Forestry and the 4-H Club Department to Lancaster 4-H Club members. Some of these seedlings were planted in every community in the county. We believe that this 4-H forestry program will stimulate more people and change more attitudes than any other effort made in forestry education.

During the year the agent attended a one week Extension Forestry School. This school was most helpful in bringing the agent up to date on all phases of forestry.

The ASCS, through the ACP program, the Virginia Division of Forestry, and the Chesapeake Corporation all have forestry programs which help in getting the forestry job done. While the attitudes of our people are changing we still have a long way to go before our woodlands will contribute what they can and should to the economy of the county.

V. Items To Be Maintained (Special Attention in Some Phases)

A. Agronomy

Field crops, principally soybeans, corn, wheat, oats, hay and pastures contribute considerably more than half of Lancaster farm income.

Our goal is to help farmers increase their crop yields through more efficient production methods. Our efforts this year will be directed as follows:

3. The Treatment Of Woodland As Though It Were A Farm Crop

More than forty percent of Lancaster County is in woods. Practically every farm has some woodland. Most of this land is producing marketable timber at a rate of less than half of its potential.

Our goal this year will be to help farmers and others to recognize potential which this woodland has as a source of future income and in helping at least ten of them to make an actual start towards improving their woodland.

To carry out these objectives we expect to work with and through a forestry committee and with A-H Club members.

Demonstrations under way will be visited and tours conducted.

Newspaper and the radio will be used to attract the attention of the general public. This will be followed up with help on an individual basis to interested people.

The ACF, Virginia Division of Forestry, and the Northern Neck Soil Conservation District are all interested and have services to offer to help timber owners improve their stands. Publicity will be given to these services.

What we did and the results - A survey of woodland owners was made by mail to determine how many people were interested in improving their woodland. We also found out who was interested in receiving assistance or advice in making woodland improvements. About twenty-five percent of the persons receiving cards gave information and returned the questionnaire. We feel that this indicates that we need to do a better job in changing the attitude of a lot of people toward their woodland and to show them the income potential of well stocked woodland. The cards returned indicated that about twenty-five percent of our woodland owners do recognize the income potential in well stocked woodland. The replies also showed who was ready for technical assistance with problems of reforestation. Those requesting assistance are being referred to foresters of the Virginia Division of Forestry or other trained foresters.

planning and locating farrowing houses, the selection and use of equipment, the use of farrowing stalls, management of sows before and after farrowing, baby pig health, vaccination, castration, selection of breeding stock, labor-saving feeding devices, watering devices, farrowing house cleaning equipment, sanitation, parasite control, and record keeping.

What we did and the results - We decided that many Lancaster farmers were not making improvements in their methods, or buildings and equipment for producing pigs because they had not seen and had little conception of modern central farrowing houses. A tour was arranged to see modern facilities on management to the Experiment Station at Holland. Eight farmers went on this tour. Others were taken individually to farms in the area.

Two farmers have built central farrowing houses during the year and a third is in the advanced planning stage.

The campaign to help farmers improve their sow and pig management also benefited from the tours. When farmers on tour see other farmers practicing sanitation, even to requiring visitors to disinfect boots, they realize that there must be something to the sanitation theory.

An area meeting with emphasis on management of sows and litters was well attended by Lancaster farmers. The subjects were well covered by specialists from the animal husbandry department. The agents made follow-up visits to farms of those who attended this meeting and gave assistance in helping farmers adopt some of the practices discussed in the meeting.

It is believed that the production of feeder pigs is a good answer to some of the people who ask, "how can I raise my annual income", if they are willing to follow the recommended management procedures. Therefore, while we have made some progress, we think that this program should continue to receive considerable emphasis in the future.

The agricultural engineer of the power company helped during this phase of the program in planning the installation of the drying equipment and with other engineering problems.

The power suppliers, through the Virginia Farm and Home Electrification Council, sponsored an area meeting and display of grain handling equipment and storage facilities. This meeting and display was held at a central point in the area, Warsaw, and we believe that more than twenty Lancaster farmers attended, hearing the talks and seeing the products of various manufacturers.

The agents have helped individuals with selecting equipment, selecting a site, with problems of financing and have given the best information available on how to properly use the equipment.

Seventeen farmers have applied for and received storage facility loans through the ASCS office and we expect some further applications. The first farmer in the county to put in a metal bin and drier added another bin this year and expects to add a bin or bins each year until he has sufficient storage and drying facilities for his grains.

We think this program should receive major emphasis until most Lancaster farmers have adequate storage, drying, and grain handling facilities.

2. The Production of Feeder Pigs and the Feeding of Market Hogs

The demand for feeder pigs in this area is very good. The feeder pig association serving the area needs more pigs. Most pig producers in the county need to improve farrowing facilities, and adopt better management practices with their sows and pigs.

Our goal this year is to help ten pig producers improve their facilities and management.

Methods to be used include newspaper, radio, and personal contacts to acquaint farmers with the problem and what can be done to improve facilities and management. Among items to receive individual attention with individual farmers are

because commercial facilities are overtaxed. The development of livestock and poultry feeding is dependent upon the holding of more grains on the farm.

Our goal is to inform Lancaster farmers of the opportunities for increasing income through the use of modern bins, drying equipment and labor-saving devices in handling grains. We hope to help at least ten farmers to make a start towards improving their storage capacity.

Methods to be used include meetings, tours, newspaper and radio publicity. Each farmer's grain storage problem is different. We expect to help individual farmers to solve problems of financing, location, selection of equipment, selection of materials and to help them with learning how to properly use drying equipment.

What we did and the results - In 1960 a grain marketing study was made for the Northern Neck area. This study pointed out the problems farmers of the area have in marketing their grains. This report showed the need for more on-the-farm storage of grain and adequate grain driers. In February 1961 we held a meeting of farmers who produced grain for market and presented to them, in charts and graphs, the important parts of the study. At that time three farmers in the group had put in metal bins and driers. One of these farmers told the group of his one year's experience in drying corn. He pointed out that he had cleared more than thirty cents a bushel more for his corn by drying and storing.

Four Lancaster machinery dealers are agents for grain bins and grain handling equipment. These dealers were contacted by the agents and agreed to handle the equipment on as narrow margins as possible and to cooperate to the fullest in the program.

Individual farmers were taken to see bins and driers being installed and in operation.

The ASCS committee and office were at the same time informing farmers about storage facility loans and storage loans available through that office.

Two radio programs were devoted to problems of grain marketing and storage.

III. County Agricultural Problems, Needs, and Opportunities

Lancaster farm income is the main problem of Lancaster farm people. We think farm income can be raised by changing some methods and attitudes, by acquiring some new skills and by acquiring better farm management techniques. In general, we think the changes suggested below should be given consideration by Lancaster families.

1. The production and feeding of more cattle, hogs and laying hens on grain producing farms.
2. The treatment of woodland as though it were a farm crop.
3. The increasing of crop yields through more efficient production methods.
4. The development of better farm storage facilities for grain.
5. We think certain farmers should develop specialties, particularly for products with local demand or those for which local demand may be developed.
6. We think many farmers need to make land use adjustments, clearing some land for crops, putting some land now in crops to pasture or woodland.
7. We believe farm income will increase as our farmers develop improved farm management techniques including the keeping and analysis of records and the using of these records to make adjustments in their production and marketing programs.
8. As many of our farms are not large enough to be economical units under the present systems being followed we think that many of these need off farm employment, either full time or part time. We believe our whole economy would benefit if more off farm employment can be found.

IV. Items To Receive Special Baphasis In 1961

1. The Development of Better Farm Storage Facilities for Grain

Most Lancaster farms do not have adequate storage facilities on the farm. Prices of grains are depressed at harvest time

I. Description of Lancaster County

Lancaster County is located in that part of Tidewater Virginia known as the Northern Neck. It is a long, narrow county of 128 square miles. The land area is 90,830 square acres. Twenty-nine percent, or 26,730 acres, was in farms in 1959. The number of farms that year totaled 253 and they averaged 105.7 acres in size. The average value of land and buildings per farm was \$20,983.00. About half of the farms are operated on a part time basis.

The climate is mild. Frost free period averages 212 days, or from April 5th to November 3rd, and the normal precipitation exceeds forty-five inches.

In 1959, 7,237 acres of cropland was devoted to soybeans and 4,773 acres was devoted to corn. These are the two most important crops.

II. Situation (General)

The economy of Lancaster County has been built on agriculture, sea food and forest products. All of these endeavors have undergone great changes in recent years and the transition continues. As we go into the sixties many feel that all three industries are in a critical stage of change. In the county these industries are tied rather closely together. Farmers are engaged in producing and harvesting forest products and many are engaged in some form of the sea food business. Many people engaged in the sea food business also own forest or farm land. The problems of one group affect the other.

Employment opportunities in the sea food industry and agriculture are declining and we do not have sufficient forest resources to take up the slack.

Lancaster farmers in recent years have been plagued by poor weather conditions at a time when prices of the products they sell are declining and at a time when the things they buy are increasing in price. Many farmers are in debt for land, fertilizer, machinery, homes and buildings. The sea food industry has problems of declining markets due to foreign competition, labor problems and marketing problems. The forest industry has the problem of depleted woodland and changes in production and marketing which require additional capital.

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ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

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1961

Lancaster

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