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# The County Farm Bureau & County Agent in South Dakota

I. B. Johnson

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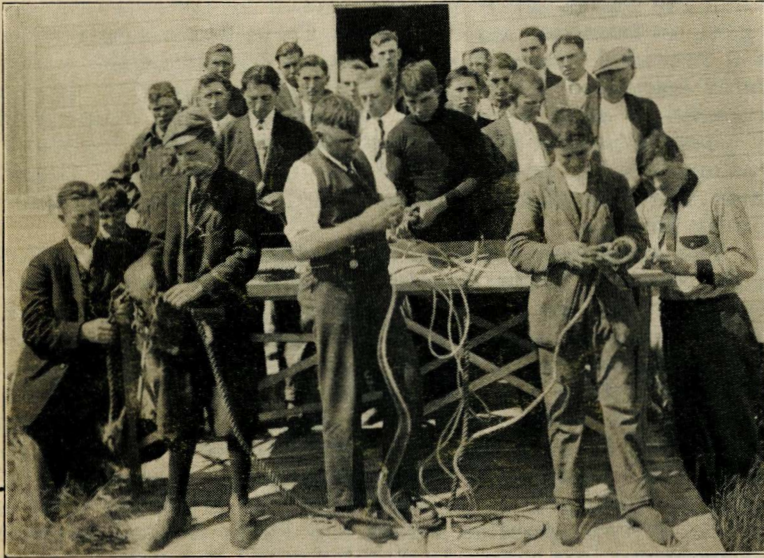
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Extension Circular No. 1

October, 1917

# The County Farm Bureau & County Agent in S. Dak.

I. B. JOHNSON  
Ass't State Leader



A Farm Bureau Activity

## EXTENSION DIVISION

Gordon W. Randlett, Director

## SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE

Brookings, South Dakota

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics. South  
Dakota State College and U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

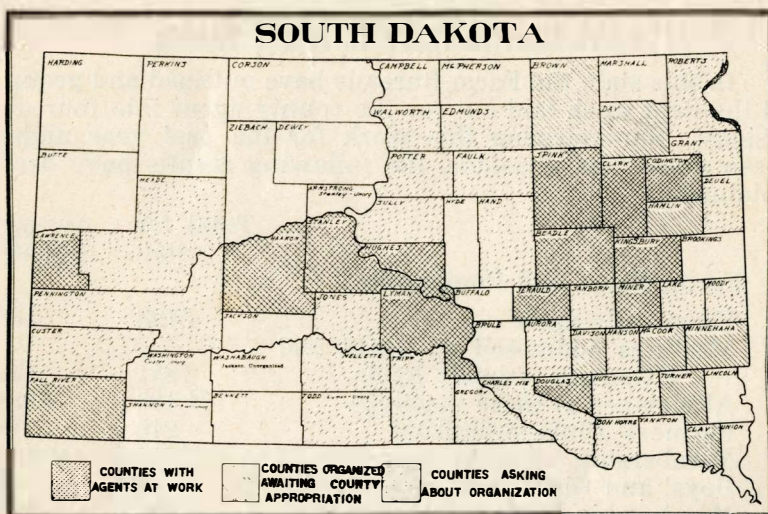
## **THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU AND THE COUNTY AGENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA**

The Farm Bureau and the County Agent movement was started in South Dakota in 1913 when Codington and Spink Counties organized for the purpose of securing the services of a County Agricultural Agent. This was two years prior to the enactment of the present South Dakota Farm Bureau law, but the farmers of those counties saw the value of Farm Bureau work and through personal efforts secured financial assistance from the county and the United States Department of Agriculture for employing a county agent. When the Smith-Lever Act was passed by Congress in 1914, it gave an immense impetus to the Farm Bureau movement, as it provided financial aid for every county in the United States organized for the work. South Dakota very quickly prepared to avail herself of the government's cooperation by passing Senate Bill No. 258 during the 1915 legislative session, thereby providing for the incorporation of County Farm Bureaus and for financial aid for each organized County Bureau.

The accompanying map shows the interest being taken in the work in South Dakota. A number of counties have organized and are awaiting action upon the part of the county commissioners. Others are contemplating organization in the very near future, and this start, together with the extra Federal financial assistance now available for the period of the World War, will make possible either a Farm Bureau or a Food Emergency Bureau in each county in the State. The movement has been popular throughout the counties organized, as is shown by the favorable election returns of two counties where the Farm Bureau question has been put to a vote. In Spink County the vote was 2 to 1 for the Farm Bureau work, while in Lyman County a large majority of voters favored its continuance.

### **A National Movement**

The Farm Bureau work has gained the endorsement not only of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Colleges, but of the farmers, the National Grange and the agricultural press. Since the Smith-Lever Act provides financial assistance for each state, every state in the Union has now availed itself of the offer and has either passed laws pertaining to Farm Bureaus or has provided the means for the promotion of the county work. A few states are completely organized, each county having a Farm Bureau. On June 30, 1917, there were 542 counties organized in the Northern and Western states, and from August 10th to October 15th 155 additional counties availed themselves of the Food Emergency funds and perfected



county Farm Bureaus. By June 30, 1918, practically all of the counties in each state will be organized for agricultural advancement.

### Why the Movement Originated

The Farm Bureau and the county agent movement was established through demands for greater local, state and national efficiency in agricultural progress. A wealth of practical agricultural information had been collected by our farmers, our state agricultural colleges and experiment stations and the United States Department of Agriculture: this had been published in circulars and bulletins and in our agricultural journals, but still there appeared to be a popular demand for some agency to demonstrate these practices in every community, hence the organization of this movement.

Not only have our public agricultural institutions accumulated a lot of helpful farm facts, but in every rural community there are farmers who have been highly successful in the solving of some of the local farm problems and in the management of their farm business. In the same communities are other farmers who are desirous of knowing more about these successful practices and without the Farm Bureau and the County Agent there is no local agency for systematically getting these good practices to the attention of the people. Naturally, then, the farmers said: "Give us some agency that can do this work for our community. Establish a county headquarters for this agency, so that we may have a representative who looks after our community interests at all times."



## Farm Bureau Work in South Dakota

In this state the Farm Bureaus have outlined and grouped the field work laid out for the county agent into four divisions. Summarizing this work for the past year under these same four divisions, the following results have been obtained:

	Total for State	Av. per County
1. Farm, Home and Community:		
Farm calls made .....	5796	483
Meetings addressed by agent and Extension schools held .....	1841	153
Attendance at these meetings .....	71,188	5932
Farmers' Clubs organized .....	216	18
Membership in clubs .....	1765	147
Boys' and Girls' clubs organized ....	48	4
Membership in these clubs .....	1453	121
Agricultural tours arranged .....	28	2
Marketing Associations and local farmers' exchanges organized..	12	1
Value of business done by these Associations .....	\$51,853.00	\$4321.08
Silos constructed .....	24	2
2. Live Stock:		
Registered live stock obtained .....	1256	104
Cattle treated for blackleg by agent or upon his suggestion .....	9269	772
Cattle treated for anthrax by agent or upon his suggestion .....	11,620	968
Hogs vaccinated for cholera upon suggestion of county agent ....	8628	719
3. Crops:		
Acreage of crops planted follow- ing suggestion of county agent for improved production:		
Corn .....	3430	285.3
Alfalfa .....	3888	324
Wheat .....	2575	214.3
Oats .....	1150	95.8
4. Soils:		
Drainage systems planned and adopted .....	85	7
To effectively carry on the foregoing field activities the		

county agents have had to carry on a certain amount of office work with the following results:

	Total for State	Av. per County
Office calls .....	9108	759
Articles written for local press .....	354	29
Letters written to farmers .....	8705	725
Circulars sent to farmers .....	75,953	6330

### **Farm Bureau Projects Worthy of Special Mention**

In addition to the summary just presented, there are certain lines of Farm Bureau work that deserve additional mention, as:

1. The soil drainage work carried on by the Douglas County Farm Bureau, in which a drainage district comprising 500 acres was organized and the preliminary survey made by the agent.

2. The increase in alfalfa acreage brought about by the Bureaus of Spink, Hughes and Stanley Counties. The past year's work of the Hughes and Stanley Bureaus show that their efforts in securing a better market for the alfalfa seed produced by their farmers has netted the farmers in each county \$2,199.00 more for the seed than they would otherwise have received had it not been for the activities of the Farm Bureaus.

3. The forage crop and the pit silo work of the Fall River Farm Bureau with a view to furnishing a greater amount of satisfactory winter roughage for the live stock. Also the work of this Bureau in providing a reference library of farm bulletins for the rural schools of the county. The library consists of state agricultural college and U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletins that discuss farm subjects that relate to local farm problems.

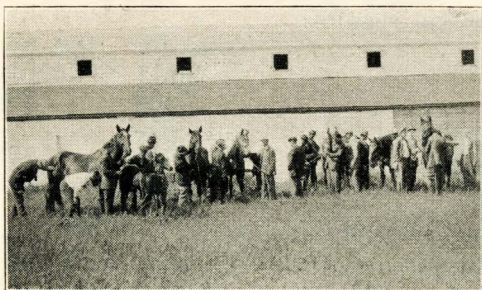
4. The potato marketing work of the Lawrence County Farm Bureau.

5. The live stock improvement work and the community cooperative action in preventing the spread of contagious live stock diseases, as represented by the activities of every county Farm Bureau in the state.

6. The farm boys' camp at the Agricultural College at Brookings, which was started and developed into an annual event by the Codington Farm Bureau.

7. The high class of boys and girls club work conducted by the Farm Bureau counties, showing that they have an average enrollment of 197 club members per county, as against 77 members in the counties not having Farm Bureaus.

8. The home canning club work conducted by the



Studying Livestock Improvement

Beadle County Bureau, in which there were six canning clubs organized, that during the season of 1917 canned 8,696 quarts of fruit, vegetables and meats.

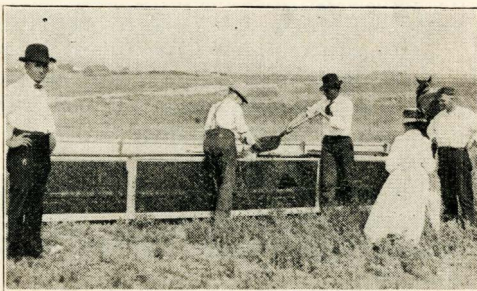
9. The development of local agricultural leadership by the Kingsbury County Farm Bureau.

10. The farm management work carried on by the Farm Bureaus showing that they have through organized effort placed on an average of 130 farm account books per county, as against 13 account books for the unorganized.

Recent reports show that for the past season the Farm Bureau counties of the state were able to secure, on an average of 230 farm laborers per county through their organization, while the counties not having Farm Bureaus only secured 85 farm laborers to the county. This service to the farmers will have still a larger bearing in 1918 when farm help will be scarcer than ever.

### **Why You Should Be a Farm Bureau Member**

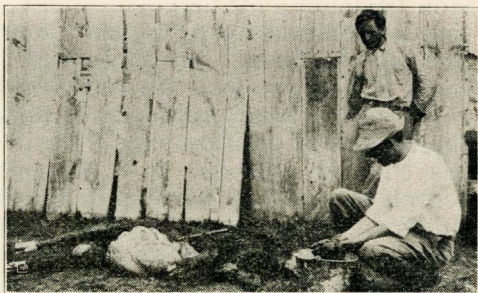
In view of these results can anyone still question the value of the Farm Bureau and county agent work? In the Farm Bureau counties every enterprising farmer should assist his Bureau by first securing membership in the organization and then by promoting its activities in his or her community. In unorganized Farm Bureau counties farmers should take immediate steps for permanent organization. Every farmer owes it to himself, his family, his farm business and his community to identify himself with a movement of this kind. The individual not only receives the direct and indirect benefit of such an organization, as is shown by the foregoing summary of one year of Farm Bureau work, but through this movement he is assisting in the advancement of the very best farm and home practices of his community and his



Grasshopper Control Work



county. By his identification with the work he is making it possible to have a local representative in his county who is continually working for the very best interests of the farm community, namely the County Agent.



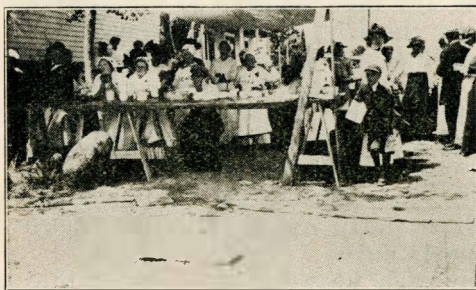
Post Mortem—Contagious Animal Disease

### **The Misunderstanding of the Work**

Experience in securing membership for the Farm Bureau has shown that there is still a slight misunderstanding of the work. A few farmers seem to feel that the county agent is a young college educated, theorist farmer without practical experience, who is employed to "show them how to farm." Had this been true, the movement would long ago have ceased to exist. South Dakota endeavors to employ farm-reared men who have had special college training and experience for agricultural leadership. County agents are not employed as agricultural experts, for they cannot be specialists in every line of farm practice, but their previous training has developed them as specialists in one or two lines of farm practice at least, and in recommending prospective men for county agent service in a community the Extension Division endeavors to submit the names of men who are especially strong in the work required to solve a few of the local agricultural problems.

### **Duties of the County Agent**

The Farm Bureau makes the final selection of a county agent, fixes his salary and outlines the work to be carried on in the county. The county agent further organizes the



Farm Bureau activities so that the organization may receive for the county the services of its own local farmers, who have successfully solved farm problems, and the services of the several specialists employed by the Extension

Mother-Daughter Canning Club



sion Division and the government to aid in the further solution of community problems. Clearly, the agent "shows no one how to farm," but endeavors through farm demonstrations to bring before the community agricultural facts that relate to the local problems; to make available to the people the results of experiments from the Experiment Stations of the country and the U. S. Department of Agriculture; to search for the best there is in the farm practices of successful farmers and give the widest publicity to their work; to inspire local leadership and develop interest among the farm boys and girls; in short, to assist in all lines of agricultural endeavor, so that the work of the Farm Bureau and other local agricultural associations develop a permanent and profitable agriculture with a high standard of community ideals.

### **Method of Forming a County Farm Bureau and Financing the County Agent Work.**

In order to organize effectively the local work of this national movement, there are, briefly, five steps necessary as set forth in our South Dakota law, in Chapters 11 of the Session Laws of 1915, Senate Bill No. 258 and Session Laws of 1916-1917, Senate Bill No. 195.

1. Fifty or more freeholders in one-third of the townships in any county must organize into a county Farm Bureau with a membership fee of \$1.00.

2. The Farm Bureau must file articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State, and a copy of the same with the county auditor. A form of these may be found on pages 10 and 11.

3. The Bureau shall petition the county commissioners for a sum not to exceed \$3,000, or where there are more than thirty townships, a sum not to exceed \$100 per township. The average annual county appropriation in South Dakota is \$1500.

4. Additional funds are then secured as follows: \$600 will be supplied either by the United States Department of Agriculture or from Smith-Lever funds; an amount equal to sixty per cent of the amount supplied by the county will be furnished by the state. On the basis of the above average county appropriation, this makes a total county budget of \$3,000 for operating expenses of the Bureau.

5. The membership annually chooses a Board of Directors which selects the County Agent with the approval of state and federal departments.

The funds available each year for the Farm Bureau movement are in a measure limited, and consequently it

may necessitate that a few counties must wait a year or more before securing a County Agent after having completed their organization. While the state law specifies that at least fifty freeholders in one-third of the townships in any county must organize into a Farm Bureau, it is best that at least 10 per cent of the farmers be members, and better still, if 25 per cent are represented in the organization. With such a county-wide movement, where each community is represented and organized, the work can be carried on more effectively. Assistance in the organization of a county may be secured from the Extension division of the Agricultural College at Brookings, by writing either the Director of Extension or the State Leader of County Agents. No county should consider a Farm Bureau organization unless the farmers themselves desire the service.



Boys From Farm Bureau Counties Visit the Agricultural College and  
Other Points of Interest in the State Under the  
Management of the County Agents.

### **Small Cost to the Farmer**

Since the organized Farm Bureau county receives both state and federal aid for county agent work, there remains but a very small cost for the local residents. Based upon a quarter section of land, the cost varies from 15 cents a quarter, as in Spink County, to 43 cents a quarter, as in Codington County, where the appropriation is \$2,500 annually, to 67 cents a quarter, as in Douglas County. On an average, it costs the organized counties through local appropriation, 25 cents per quarter section of land. In terms of farm products at present prices, it costs the owner of each 160 acres of land, nine eggs, or twelve ounces of butter fat, or ten pounds of corn, or eight pounds of wheat, or two pounds of live pork, annually, to support the movement.

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF COUNTY FARM BUREAUS

### Know All Men By These Present:

That we, the undersigned, resident freeholders of the congressional townships of ..... County, South Dakota, for ourselves, our associates and successors have associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under and by virtue of the statutes and laws of the State of South Dakota, and we do hereby certify and declare as follows, to-wit:

#### First

The name of this corporation shall be .....  
County Farm Bureau.

#### Second

The purpose for which this corporation is formed is to promote county agricultural extension work; to encourage the advancement of agriculture and things pertaining thereto, including home economics; to employ a county agricultural agent; and in general to carry out all purposes as authorized by Chapter 11 of the Session Laws of the State of South Dakota, for the years 1915 and 1916-17.

#### Third

The place where the principal business of the corporation shall be transacted is ....., in the County of ....., State of South Dakota.

#### Fourth

The incorporation shall endure until terminated by operation of law, or by a majority vote of the members.

#### Fifth

There shall be no capital stock issued by said corporation, but it is and shall at all times hereafter be composed of good citizens of the county, or any non-resident owning land in the county, who sign the subscription card and pay the annual membership fee of \$1.00 and otherwise comply with these articles of incorporation and by-laws. Members moving from the county will be released upon their request.

#### Sixth

The number of the directors of this corporation shall be seven (7) and the name and residence of such who are to serve until the election of their successors are as follows:

Name

Residence

The officers of said corporation until their successors are duly elected shall be:

Name

Residence

President .....

.....

Vice President .....

.....

Secretary .....

.....

Treasurer .....

.....



### **Seventh**

The directors of this corporation shall be members of the Bureau, of lawful age, residents of ..... County, South Dakota, and shall be elected on account of their special ability to serve as leaders of the agricultural problems of the county. At every annual election, after the first election, at least fifty per cent of the directors elected for each ensuing year should be directors who had previously served for one year or more. The officers with the possible exception of the secretary, are to be elected from among the directors.

### **Eighth**

The Corporation shall have authority to adopt by-laws covering its further methods of procedure and rules for management, not inconsistent with the laws of the State of South Dakota, nor with the policies of the Extension Division of the South Dakota State College at Brookings, South Dakota.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have hereunto set our hands this ..... day of ....., 19.....

Name

Residence

### **The County Food Emergency Bureau**

One of the strongest acknowledgements possible of the effectiveness of the Farm Bureau and County Agent work was made when our government recently passed the Food Emergency Act, whereby it provided additional finances for the period of the war for hastening the development of the work in the unorganized counties. By this Act the United States Department of Agriculture pays the salary and traveling expenses of a Food Emergency Agent for each county in the State, providing the county organizes a Food Emergency Bureau of at least two hundred farmer members and provides suitable office room, office equipment for the agent and stenographic help. The membership fee has been placed at one dollar in South Dakota. In the organized Farm Bureau counties a second organization is not necessary, and the additional help can be secured as quickly as there is a local demand for it. Thus far the following Farm Bureaus have availed themselves of the additional agent, namely: Codington, Douglas, Kingsbury, Stanley and Hughes. Counties that have thus far organized Food Emergency Bureaus and asked for assistance are: Minnehaha, Deuel, Hamlin, Lake, Walworth, Grant, Aurora and Davison Counties. Several other have requested assistance for organization from the Extension Division and each request is being taken care of in its turn. Every agricultural county in the state bids fair to have either a Farm Bureau or an Emergency Bureau within the next half year.

**Geo. W. Dixon, Master of the  
South Dakota State Grange, says:**

"The National Grange and the South Dakota State Grange are strongly in favor of the County Agent plan as outlined in the Smith-Lever law. All local Granges can and will work heartily in accord with the agent in their county. His work is directly in the line of our purpose,—better agricultural conditions in all ways,—and should be taken advantage of as fully as possible."

**F. E. Peacock, President of the Douglas  
County Farmers' Union Organization, says:**

"The Douglas County Farmers' Union and all local Union men favor the Farm Bureau work. We are cooperating with our County Farm Bureau and our County Agent for the advancement of our agricultural interests. We can heartily recommend this spirit of cooperation to all Unions, both county, state and national organizations."