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Cooperative Extension Work in South Dakota

John S. Arnold

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Phone: 605-688-4792

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EXTENSION LEAFLET 190

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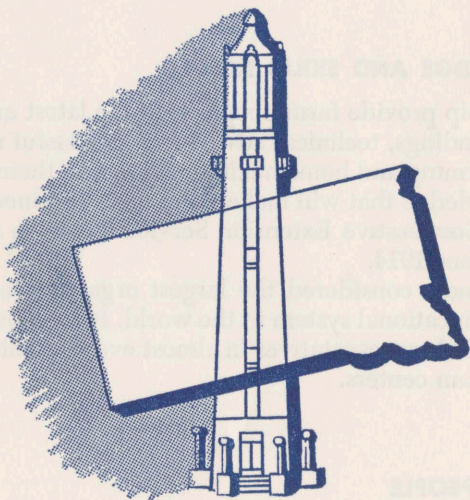
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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK

in South Dakota



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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative Extension Work In South Dakota

FOOD IS BASIC

We all know that our lives depend on a continuous and adequate supply of food and clothing. Yet seldom do we stop to realize that six-sevenths of our national population depends greatly on the ability of the other seventh to grow the products needed for food and clothing. Thus, our farmers perform a gigantic task in normal times which makes even a more valuable contribution to national security in times of emergency.

BACK OF FOOD PRODUCTION

An adequate national food and fiber supply requires well-informed, highly skilled, and energetic farm men, women and youth. It requires farm people who have a deep-seated enthusiasm for their way of life and a sound understanding of their economic and social interdependence with urban life.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED

To help provide farm people with the latest experimental findings, technical advice and successful methods of farming and homemaking, and to arm them with the knowledge that will make them well-informed citizens, a Cooperative Extension Service has been maintained since 1914.

It is now considered the largest organized out-of-school educational system in the world. It has qualified educational representatives in almost every county and some urban centers.

SERVES PEOPLE

From these local representatives—called county agents and home demonstration agents in South Dakota—farm people receive a constant flow of information on research, economics, policies and other subjects.

This information originates from South Dakota State College—the state's Land-Grant College—from other Land-Grant Colleges throughout the nation, from the United States Department of Agriculture and also from industrial research. Much of this information is scientific information from the State College Experiment Station at Brookings. Other information is based on the practical application of both current and past research everywhere.

It is adapted to local problems and used in county educational programs organized democratically with local people for the purpose of improving farming, rural life and citizenship understanding.

WHO ARE REACHED?

Nearly seven million families nation wide know how to make more scientific use of their resources, achieve a better living, and understand more intelligently their responsibilities as citizens because of their contact with county extension agents. Seven out of 10 of these families live on farms, and the other 3 live in villages or cities. Three out of every 4 rural families are regularly reached with help and guidance by county agents.

WHO ARE COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS?

South Dakota has two types of local Cooperative Extension Workers. They are the County Extension Agent (agriculture) and the Home Demonstration Agent. The County Extension Agent works on agricultural problems relating to the farm. The Home Demonstration Agent works with both rural and urban women. Both agents also work with youth, through 4-H Club programs. Some counties have assistant agents who help with the added work load brought on by modern needs in a modern world. Most county workers are located in the courthouse or Post Office at the county seat town.

BACK OF THE AGENTS

Back of the agents are the vast resources of scientific research in the state Land-Grant College, those of other states and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Agents localize, simplify, explain and demonstrate these research results and programs to farm people and others concerned in the light of current problems.

SIZE OF STAFF

To carry on this informal educational work, the Cooperative Extension Service nationally has a professional staff of almost 14,000 workers of whom 10,800 are county workers, 3,100 are on the headquarters staff at the state Land-Grant Colleges, and about 80 are in the Federal Extension Service office in Washington, D. C. South Dakota has 136 county workers and 57 on the state staff.

LOCAL LEADERS HELP PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Since the extension program is one of helping people to help themselves, local leaders play a very important part in it. A million and a quarter unpaid local leaders—leading farmers, farm women and other citizens—are serving as local leaders. They hold neighborly meetings in their communities, serve as leaders of the 90,500 4-H Clubs and the 66,500 home extension clubs, and otherwise take the lead in making agreed-on improvements in their communities under the general guidance of the county extension agents.

HOW ADMINISTERED IN STATES

The program in the United States Department of Agriculture is administered by an Administrator of Extension Work. In each state the program is administered by a cooperatively-employed State Extension director. In South Dakota, he is named by the President of S. D. State College and approved by the State Regents of Education and the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture. The State director, through the administrative framework of the Land-Grant College, then works out with county governments the joint appointment and supervision of the county extension agents.

A PARTNERSHIP AGENCY

The Cooperative Extension Service is the field arm of the State Land-Grant Colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is a partnership agency in which

the officials of government—County, State and Federal—sit in council with rural people and together analyze local conditions, take stock of their resources, and develop and help to carry out programs for the financial, educational and social benefits of the community and its individual members.

COOPERATIVELY FINANCED

The Service is cooperatively financed with Federal, State and local funds. Federal funds in South Dakota contribute 40 per cent of the total cost and are expended in line with approved cooperative projects. State government puts in 40 per cent of the total budget, and local county government sources provide the other 20 per cent.

WHAT SOUTH DAKOTA EXTENSION AGENTS DO

South Dakota agents annually make more than 275,000 personal contacts (visits to farms, people calling at their offices, telephone calls) with farm people and others interested in agriculture, homemaking and 4-H. They explain and demonstrate better practices in general educational meetings with a total attendance of 625,000. They help to train and inform 15,000 voluntary local leaders; release 10,400 educational news stories; give 1,500 radio talks and 50 television presentations; distribute 330,000 information publications; and conduct other teaching activities to get more useful, localized information on agriculture and homemaking to large numbers of people.

WORK WITH NON-FARM PEOPLE

Although the Cooperative Extension Service is usually thought of as an organization primarily devoted to rural interests, its basic law calls for the dissemination of useful information in agriculture and home economics to all people. Over 2 million, or nearly one-third of the families influenced by some phase of the Extension program, are non-farm families. Many of these live in small towns or are part-time farmers near cities. Many, however, live in cities and make use of the Extension advice regarding homemaking, con-

sumer education, gardening, lawns, shade trees, and the like. About 450,000 of the nearly 2 million members of boys' and girls' 4-H Clubs are from what the Census Bureau calls non-farm homes.

KEEPING AGENTS INFORMED

A major job of the Land-Grant College (South Dakota State College), the U. S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies that need Extension's help in explaining facts to farm and other people, is to keep county extension agents informed. On national program and policy matters, this is done through the Administrator of the Federal Extension Service to the State extension directors, who send the county extension agents the needed information and administrative instructions. In specialized subject-matter and program fields, much regular information goes from the Federal Extension specialists and field agents to state extension subject matter specialists, and thence to county extension agents. On public-information matters—both from the state and Federal sources—material is funneled through the State Extension Editor for localization and use in regular news, radio and other information services. The editor releases this material through county extension agents and direct to press, radio and other outlets.

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