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CIRCULAR No. 133

(JULY, 1915)

THE COUNTY FARM ADVISER

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State Leader

THE FARM ADVISER MOVEMENT

For something over half a century the agricultural colleges, the experiment stations, and the national department of agriculture have been investigating questions of vital importance to the farmers of America and have accumulated a vast mass of information which, if it could be engrafted on the practices in the open country, would undoubtedly result in a great increase of our material prosperity not only through a larger production per acre but by an increased net return to the individual farmer.

Much of this agricultural information, however, has been in such form that it was difficult for farmers to obtain it or, indeed, to know of it and its practical application to their individual farms. The material was embodied in agricultural reports and bulletins which treated the facts in a broad sense, but there were few agencies at work and few men available to make the specific applications to the problems at hand.

It has been said that the agricultural institutions of the country were like a great factory grinding out a product of infinite value which has been stored in warehouses far from the consumer that the product was designed to reach. Lacking a force of retail agents, this product continued to accumulate without greatly affecting the consumer and his wants. Like the factory, the agricultural institution must have its agents close to the point of consumption so that the product may be readily placed in the hands of those who need it. These agricultural agents are now being established throughout the nation under the name of "County Farm Advisers," "County Agents," or "Farm Demonstrators." They act as the necessary force to bring the information of the agricultural colleges, experiment stations and the national department of agriculture to the specific farmer who needs it.

Some thirteen hundred counties in the United States now have farm advisers at work. Two years ago the first one of these in California was placed in Humboldt County. There are now twelve farm advisers at work in California; others will be appointed.

A FARM ADVISER—WHAT HE IS

A farm adviser is a man trained in agriculture, usually a graduate of an agricultural college, who has had some practical experience in the broad phases of agriculture and who is conversant with the particular problems that concern the locality.

Because his work depends so much for its results on the enthusiasm that he can infuse into others, he must be a man of tact, of energy, and of real desire to achieve results in his chosen field.

The farm adviser is an agent of the College of Agriculture of the University of California, in which he has academic status, and of the United States Department of Agriculture. He is placed in a county where his services are desired. His entire time and activity are spent there within the boundaries of that county. There he is the field agent of the agricultural forces of the nation.

A FARM ADVISER—WHAT HE DOES

The problem of the farm adviser is to reach those who desire his services. He gives advice on soil treatment, fertilization, crop adaptation and culture, animal husbandry and its allied phases. As he is occupied in the increase of net returns to the farmer, he is also desirous of improving those civilizing forces of the open country that come under the head of better roads, schools, churches, farmers' organizations, and marketing facilities. He studies those various activities of the farm that are known under the head of farm management, and demonstrates his better methods on the farms of those interested persons who desire to co-operate with him.

The farm adviser has an office or headquarters at some central point in the county, usually at the county seat. He may also, through the organization of the farm bureau, find it desirable to have other local or district headquarters at farm bureau centers through the county.

But necessary as are his offices and headquarters, little of his time is spent there. His work is on the farms and among the people. Day by day the farm adviser goes where he is called, advising on the various questions that come to him. When, as is sometimes the case, he meets a problem that to him is impossible of solution because of the technical phases involved, he submits it for consideration to the agricultural college or to the federal department of agriculture, the forces of both of which he has at his command.

No farm adviser ever sets his foot on the land of a man who does not want him. He visits only those farms to which he has been requested to come.

Specifically, the work of the farm adviser may be divided into four general branches, as follows:

(1) Advisory work with inquirers; that is, the answering of questions and giving of advice to those who apply.



(2) Organization work of the civilizing forces of the community—assistance to boys' agricultural clubs, farmers' organizations, schools, churches, and marketing and buying organizations.

(3) Investigation into the larger problems of farm management as applied to that specific community.

(4) Demonstration or application of these principles and practices through the co-operation of interested farmers.

The work of the farm advisor is supervised by a state leader, to whom he makes weekly reports. The state leader is appointed jointly by the College of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture.

HOW MUCH A FARM ADVISER COSTS

The farm adviser's salary is paid by the College of Agriculture of the University of California and the United States Department of Agriculture, co-operating. His expenses are paid by the board of supervisors of the county. As he is constantly traveling from place to place within the county, his expenses are heavy, comparatively speaking. Two thousand dollars a year is estimated to be necessary for the expenses of the farm adviser. These mean the maintenance of an office and office facilities, the use of an automobile for travel within the county, and the subsistence of the farm adviser while away from home.

As the value of a farm adviser increases greatly as he becomes more and more familiar and expert with the problems of the county, it is highly desirable that the work be made permanent and that no county should start such an adviser at work without intention to try the plan for at least three years.

Two thousand dollars, then, should be appropriated by the county, with the intention of at least four thousand dollars to follow at the rate of two thousand dollars a year.

Specific legislation was passed by the California Legislature of 1915 enabling Boards of Supervisors to make such appropriation, as follows:

An Act (Laws of 1915, Chapter No. 373, signed May 18, 1915) empowering County Boards of Supervisors to appropriate and use county funds for the support and maintenance of Extension Work in Agriculture in co-operation with the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of California. The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

Section 1.—The Boards of Supervisors of the respective counties within the state are hereby empowered to appropriate and use county funds in not to exceed the amount of ten thousand dollars for any one year for the support and maintenance within their respective counties of extension work in agriculture under approval of the United States Department of Agriculture and in co-operation with the University of California.

No funds for this work are ever accepted from other than the governmental agencies of the county, the state, and the nation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FARM ADVISER'S WORK—THE FARM BUREAU

In order to facilitate the work of the farm adviser and to conserve his time as much as possible, it is necessary that some permanent organization be in advisement with him regarding problems of the county. Such an organization is a farm bureau as formed in many parts of the United States and in twelve counties of California. At least one-fifth of the farmers of the county, as shown by the last census, should join the farm bureau and each pay \$1 a year dues.

THE WORK OF THE FARM ADVISER MAY BE DIVIDED INTO
FOUR GENERAL BRANCHES



(1) Advisory work with inquirers.

(Advising a new homesteader on the edge of the Mojave Desert, Kern County.)



(2) Organization of the civilizing forces of the community.

(Boys' Agricultural Club on a tour with the Yolo County Farm Adviser.)



(3) Investigation into the larger problems of farm management.

(The farm adviser in the bean fields of Ventura County.)



(4) Demonstration of these principles and practices through the co-operation of interested farmers.

(Demonstration of use of lime on alfalfa, Napa County.)

The county farm bureau is organized around certain local district headquarters known as "farm bureau centers"—not more than thirteen being in any one county—where the farm adviser is due on regular schedule each month. Each farm bureau center has a director elected from among its members, to serve on the board of the farm bureau and to make engagements for the services of the farm adviser. Usually each farm bureau center holds a meeting at the time of the regular monthly visit of the farm adviser in order that all may have the benefit of his discussions of local problems. Often the farm bureau engages in many other plans and projects, as discussed in Circular No. 118, "The County Farm Bureau."



Each Farm Bureau center holds a meeting at the time of the monthly visit of the farm adviser.

(Farm Bureau Center meeting, Humboldt County.)

ORGANIZATION OF THE FARM ADVISER'S WORK—DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROJECTS

In order to demonstrate certain advisable agricultural practices which he has been advocating, the farm adviser from time to time locates demonstrations of these on the farms of interested members of the farm bureau. These he visits regularly in order to direct the work and observe results. Farm bureau center meetings are frequently held at such demonstration plots in order that all the members may know of the results achieved.

County-wide campaigns for county betterment along definite agricultural lines are often projected by the farm adviser and organized through committees from the board of directors and from the farm

bureau centers. "Cow-testing associations," "boys' clubs," "hog cholera control," "squirrel extermination," "drainage control," "electric power extension," "pure-seed campaigns," and many other projects have already been undertaken by farm advisers working through the farm bureaus.

HOW TO GET A FARM ADVISER

No county is ever approached on the subject of a farm adviser, since it is believed that for the efficiency of the work there must first be a strong demand for it from the people of the county. No farm



County-wide campaigns for county betterment along definite agricultural lines are often projected by the farm adviser.

(Squirrel extermination campaign, Ventura County.)

adviser is ever projected on a community. The community must desire and seek for such an assistant.

Where the people of a county desire to secure a farm adviser, the first step to be taken is to organize a county farm bureau with at least one-fifth of the farmers of the county in its membership. Methods of forming such an organization are discussed in Circular No. 118, "The County Farm Bureau."

After organization, the farm bureau, perhaps accompanied by other interested organizations, should approach the board of supervisors and ask them to appropriate two thousand dollars a year for the expenses of the farm adviser and to embark on the project for at least three years.

Application for farm advisers should be made to the State Leader, College of Agriculture, Berkeley, California. Since funds may not be immediately available to install farm advisers and pay their salaries, applications of counties are filed in the order in which their boards of supervisors pass the necessary appropriation.

SUMMARY

1. No county is ever approached on the subject of a farm adviser. The initiative and organization must arise there.

2. No farm adviser is installed until (a) a farm bureau of definite type (see Cal. Exp. Cir. No. 118) is organized with at least one-fifth of the farmers in the county in its membership, who pay \$1 a year dues, and until (b) the Board of Supervisors appropriate \$2000 per year for the expenses (automobile, office, field subsistence, etc.) of the farm adviser and embark on the project for at least three years. No funds for this work are ever accepted from any other source than from the county, state, and national governments.

3. When these things are done, the University of California and the U. S. Department of Agriculture jointly appoint the farm adviser, pay his entire salary and supervise his work. The funds available are (1) the entire Smith-Lever appropriation for California, (2) State appropriation, (3) U. S. Department of Agriculture appropriation.

The California farm adviser's work is organized through the county farm bureau. He travels about the county on schedule, calling at each farm bureau center in turn, where he visits *only* those farms to which he has been requested to come, calls being scheduled for him in advance by the local farm bureau director. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays he holds a meeting with the center at which he is visiting, meetings at any center being always held on the same day each month. On Saturdays all farm advisers are in their offices at the county seat. On one Saturday each month the board of directors of the county farm bureau hold their meeting at the office of the farm adviser.

All farm advisers are part of the staff of the College of Agriculture and have academic status. All are agricultural college trained men who have been some years out of college. All are local representatives of the College of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture. Their business as itinerant teachers is to advise persons on the land who so request.