EXTENSION ACTIVITIES
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
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by
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September 1968
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to present a brief account of the extension activities of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University and to indicate the relationship between the extension efforts of the department and those of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at all levels of contact.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Extension Service at Michigan State University is an approximately six million dollar educational program. Approximately 375 persons are directly associated with the Michigan State University Extension Service housed both on campus and at various locations distributed throughout the state. At the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources level the Director of Extension is responsible for coordinating and implementing all extension programs and activities. To assist him in his duties and to coordinate the efforts of the field staff the administrative table of organization provides for an Associate Director of Extension and Director of Field Operations.

The 1914 Smith-Lever Act in establishing the Extension Service spelled out the purpose as "... to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same." To accomplish this purpose in the State of Michigan, the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service is organized into five major program areas with an assistant director of extension or program director
In charge of each at the college level. These program areas are:

1. Agricultural Production Technology and Business Management
2. Marketing and Utilization of Agriculture and Forest Products
3. Natural Resources
4. Family Living Education
5. 4-H Youth Programs

The collection and diffusion of information categorized into these five subject matter areas is accomplished by an approximate 255 person field staff distributed throughout each county in the state and backed up by approximately 100 specialists appointed in and working out of the various departments in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources here on the Michigan State University campus. Within the 255 person field staff ranks we find approximately the following distribution: 106 Agriculture Agents, 27 Natural Resource Agents, 11 Marketing Agents, 50 Home Agents and 61 4-H Youth Agents. These should be considered as agent equivalents since some individuals at the county staff level wear more than one hat, sharing time between different duties in the county office. In addition many of the hundred or so specialists at Michigan State share their time between extension and other duties including research and teaching.

The Michigan State University Extension Service operates within a constantly changing rural environment. This means that the Extension Service itself must be in a constant state of innovative change in order to cope with new problems as they arise and to provide continuing high level service to its rural clientele. Extension programs are accomplished at whatever level and using whatever facilities and resource material that can best accomplish the task. This means that some of the programs are operationalized at the state level while others are accomplished in
multi-county areas and still others are carried out at the county or smaller unit level. Some extension projects are tied to single specialists while others require teamwork encompassing several departments within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or even interdisciplinary efforts between colleges.

In order to reach its audience the Extension Service uses a broad range of communication channels. Personal contact by County Extension Agents and State Extension Specialists through farm visits, local or regional meetings or statewide events such as Farm Management Tours or Farmers Week held at Michigan State each year provide a very important type of communication contact. Others include newsletters, periodicals, extension exhibits at various organized functions throughout the state, radio and television programs, magazine and newspaper articles, reports and miscellaneous publications of the various departments within the college and Extension Bulletins published by the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service. The Extension Bulletins cover a wide variety of subject matter, a relatively complete categorization of which provides insight into the broad spectrum of people in rural Michigan comprising the Extension Service's clientele. Extension Bulletin subject matter includes:

1. Farm Science - bulletins written specifically for those in commercial agriculture and commodity specialties covering a more or less technical subject matter.

2. Home and Family - bulletins dealing with subjects in home economics, family living, marketing and agriculture aimed specifically at the home and family.
3. Natural Resources - bulletins designed for people interested in natural resources, resource development and conservation.

4. Marketing - information of both an economic and technical nature on marketing of agricultural products.

5. Agri-business - bulletins intended for the processors, agri-business, retailers and wholesalers of agricultural products. In addition these publications contain business or management methods applicable to the farm firm and the farm businessman.

6. Tourism and Resort - bulletins including information and recommendations applicable to tourist and resort operators.

7. Community Development - bulletins containing information on economic development, human resources, community development, codes, zoning, etc.

8. Consumer Marketing Information - information and marketing hints for consumers of food, textiles and other household items.

9. Michigan Farm Economics - a monthly publication devoted to current information on farm economics, the responsibility for publication resting with the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Finally, the Institute for Extension Personnel Development serves students and professionals interested in Cooperative Extension Service work through in-service training, evaluation research, and a masters degree program in extension education. Emphasis on professional development of extension personnel as communicators and educators is provided by in-service training for the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service staff in various educational techniques, communication skills, and the
development and use of Instructional media. They also develop and test new instructional media and methods for possible application in Extension work.

EXTENSION RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Extension Specialists are appointed in and are administratively under the jurisdiction of the various departments of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. They cooperate with the college extension administration in developing and carrying out their extension projects and programs.

In the Department of Agricultural Economics most faculty members with responsibilities for extension are jointly appointed between extension and research and/or teaching. Thus, you find Agricultural Economics faculty members who for convenience sake are pigeon holed as extension, carrying out substantial applied research programs and teaching both undergraduate and graduate classes along with their extension activities. Conversely many of the faculty members of the department on some combination of research and teaching appointments engage from time to time in activities which are clearly classifiable as extension activities so Agricultural Economics faculty members for the most part engage in all three types of activities - research, extension and teaching - with emphasis at any given moment dictated by various factors such as the state of their research efforts, departmental course load in a given quarter and their changing interests, among others.

Agricultural Economics personnel cooperate directly with college extension administration in four of the five major areas with emphasis in agriculture and marketing. 4-H Youth Programs are not directly serviced
by the department. In order to carry out the extension functions of the Agricultural Economics Department three broad subject matter areas are identified - farm management, public policy and marketing. In all three - farm management, public policy and marketing - one individual assumes the role of project leader and is responsible for providing structure and coordination for the area program.

Another special area, rural manpower, is covered by a semi-autonomous unit - The Rural Manpower Center. While the director and one or two others are associated with the Center on a formal basis, their appointments are in the Agricultural Economics Department. The Center represents a focusing of interests of people from various departments and disciplines at Michigan State concerned with seasonal and full time farm labor and rural manpower problems. The Center has its own publication series of research reports, special reports and mimeos.

Farm Management Extension

Two projects in the farm management extension program provide an umbrella for the individual efforts of the departmental farm management personnel and also provide a bridge between the extension and the research groups. The one of longest standing is the TELFARM Program which was begun in 1963 with slightly over 1,000 Michigan farm cooperators and which now has an enrollment of 1,525 Michigan farm businessmen cooperators. TELFARM is a full mechanized-computerized farm and home record accounting system which provides comprehensive, and timely business records and management analysis reports to the cooperators. In addition, it provides basic and comprehensive farm management data for both research and extension efforts within the department.
With the evolution and sophistication of computer hardware it has become possible to think of computer applications in agriculture not dreamed of only a few short years ago. Therefore, with TELFARM operational and establishing the base from which to operate various management education programs, a new proposal was submitted to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to establish an Automated Farm Planning System and Consulting Service to carry the computer application to agriculture beyond the TELFARM limitations. This project was begun in 1967 and is still in the developmental stage. Many of the departmental staff have been involved over the past year in identifying problems to be considered under this project, establishing priorities and bringing together new ideas and new ways of handling the problems. Areas to be emphasized during the coming year under this project include 1) computerized farm credit and financial planning 2) division of a farm business to identify input-output measures for crop and livestock operations 3) mechanized farm budgeting 4) computerized estate planning and farm operating arrangements and 5) farm business simulation. In all of these areas the research and extension units will operate together and the concepts will be tested as the program develops. Planned for future consideration within the project are automation of counseling and consulting services in the areas of legislation, taxation, and a host of other farm operations and management decision areas. This project has strong implications for interdisciplinary efforts within and beyond the college.

Within the Agricultural Economics Farm Management Staff a wide variety of subject matter interests are found. Following is a summary of the personnel and their interest areas:
Lauren H. Brown - served as leader of Computer Center TELFARM operations during the first two years of the project. Interests: computerized forward farm planning and budgeting, crop-livestock breakdown showing investments, costs and returns for each phase of the business, dairy farm management.

John C. Doneth - Farm management project leader. Member of the Computer Steering Committee of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Interests: providing leadership in further development of TELFARM, development of the forward planning-automated consulting project, and other projects growing out of these efforts. Use of computer technology directly in the field.

Stephen B. Harsh - completing his PhD work at Cornell. Interests: relating farm level decisions to computer results, educational program efforts.

Richard T. Hartwig - responsible for farm management and TELFARM efforts and other agriculture economics activities in the Upper Peninsula. Interests: farm management in the Upper Peninsula, computerized records for pulpwood producers.

Ralph Hepp - serves as farm management specialist. Interests: computerized estate planning, swine farm management, cash flows, financial management, and insurance.

Myron P. Kelsey - serves as farm management specialist. Interests: fruit farm management, poultry farm management, leases, partnerships and legal arrangements, computerized tax consulting.

Leonard Kyle - farm management extension specialist, teaches farm management short courses. Interests: cattle feeding and beef herd management, management decisions on large and corporate farms, cash crop farming, government programs.

William Tinsley - farm management extension specialist in charge of TELFARM computer center operations during past four years. Interests: providing leadership in experimental-developmental efforts in TELFARM and computer application in other areas.

Public Policy Extension Efforts

The public policy extension unit within the department provides information by a variety of means essential for timely and informed decision making by people in rural areas.
Subject matter included in the Public Policy Program include:
1) state and local government policy on matters such as financing
local government and coordination of programs among local and state
and national units, and regulation of land use 2) programs providing
information on national policies affecting rural areas, including
agricultural commodity program, analysis of various national agriculture
policy positions, and work with persons and organizations interested
in rural area development on a broad scale, 3) international agricultural
and trade policy and analysis of various international policy and issues.

In addition, to provide a broader based, better informed leadership
in the rural areas of Michigan, a leadership development project sponsored
by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation is in its fourth year of operation. The
Kellogg Farmers Study Program is a three year study travel experience
provided for a select group of young farm businessmen with the objectives
of building a better understanding of the economic, political and social
framework of the society and using this framework to analyze the complex
problems facing agriculture and rural communities. A listing of public
policy extension unit personnel and their major areas of interest follows:

Al House - public policy extension specialist, Editor of Michigan
Farm Economics. Interests: state and local government issues,
structuring local public institutions, financing local programs,
coordination of programs among local governmental units and between
local, state and national units.

Art Mauch - public policy project leader. Interests: national
agricultural policy and programs, resource use, human resource
development, world food questions and international trade policy.

Garland Wood - public policy extension specialist, Past director
of the Latin American Studies Center. Interests: international
trade issues, economic development.

Kellogg Farmers Study Program staff - Interests: developing leadership
in rural Michigan communities!

Myron P. Kelsey - Coordinator Group I
Glynn McBride - Coordinator Group II
David Cole - Coordinator Group III
George E. Rossmiller - Coordinator Group IV
Marketing Extension Activities

The Marketing Extension unit provides information to all levels in the agri-business complex on a variety of marketing problems and subjects including price and market outlook and long-range projections, bargaining, market structure and institutions analysis, identification of marketing action alternatives, marketing firm management, and product development to provide the basis for sounder marketing decision making. Due to the diverse nature of the subject matter and clientele in the marketing area the marketing unit does not operate under any type of encompassing project or departmental plan of work. Following is a list of marketing extension personnel and their areas of interest:

David L. Cole - Extension specialist in marketing. Interests: marketing problems in the livestock industry, bargaining in agricultural product markets, farm business management.

John N. Ferris - Extension specialist in marketing, was director of Project 80 - a projection of the rural Michigan economy to 1980. Interests: outlook and prices of agricultural products, simulation of Michigan agricultural markets, long range prediction models.

W. Smith Greg - Extension specialist in marketing. Interests: food processing industry, potentials for food processing in Michigan, minimum number, size, and location of vegetable processing plants in the United States, effect of state and local taxes on location of the fruit and vegetable industry, financial analysis and operating ratios for food processing industry categories.

Richard T. Hartwig - responsible for marketing questions in the Upper Peninsula. Interests: general marketing problems, other agricultural economics activities.

Henry E. Larzelere - Extension specialist in marketing and marketing project leader. Interests: egg and poultry marketing, consumer panel, cooperative and corporate organization analysis.


Donald J. Ricks - Extension specialist in marketing. Interests: fruit marketing and price analyses, group action alternatives in marketing for industry groups, realistic pricing for grower and processor bargaining groups, long-run price and market projections.
Mary D. Zehner - Extension specialist in marketing. Interests: consumer marketing information, consumer panel, food shopping and consumption patterns.

Rural Manpower Center

The Rural Manpower Center is committed to a program of research and extension education relative to the human factor in rural areas. The center has developed an effective working relationship with organizations, agencies, and groups who have a particular interest in rural manpower such as the Michigan Departments of Public Health, Social Welfare, Labor, Education, Agriculture and Commerce, The United Michigan Migrant Opportunities, Inc., Michigan Migrant Ministry, The Michigan Catholic Conference, The Michigan Farm Bureau, The Michigan State Horticultural Society, and the United States Departments of Agriculture and Labor. Subject matter areas of concern to the Manpower Center include agricultural labor legislation, migrant housing, the quality of farm labor, human relations and farm labor management and migrant and permanent labor family living problems, all of which have been included in the educational program through publications, workshops, conferences, classroom instruction courses and meetings of various kinds. Another subject matter receiving much attention at the present time is that of the human implications of mechanization. The Rural Manpower Center in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor is sponsoring a symposium to include agricultural engineers, horticulturists, and agriculture economists on the general subject of manpower implications of mechanization in the fruit and vegetable industry. The following is a list of departmental personnel involved in the Rural Manpower Center and their major interest areas:
Daniel W. Sturt - Director of the Rural Manpower Center. Interests: farm labor management, legislation affecting rural manpower, national labor policy.

George E. Rossmiller - Extension specialist with the Rural Manpower Center. Interests: manpower implications of technological change, computer applications to macro agricultural considerations in areas of policy, legislation, and institutions.

Allen Shapley - Extension specialist with the Rural Manpower Center has joint appointment with the Agricultural Economics Department and the Dairy Department. Interests: labor management problems on dairy farms, computer applications in labor management.

SUMMARY

This paper has been an attempt to briefly survey the extension activities of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University. It has also attempted to show the relationship between the extension efforts of the department and those of the college at all levels of contact. If summarizations and conclusions can be drawn from a paper of this kind, then the following points are presented for your consideration.

1. The extension activities of the Department of Agricultural Economics are diverse but well coordinated and integrated into the total college extension program.

2. The people involved with the extension activities within the department are both administratively and operationally an integral part of the departmental faculty and without exception have research and/or teaching duties along with their extension responsibilities.

3. The extension activities of the department are coordinated with and backed up by research activities either by individuals, or by groups of research and extension people working together on broad major projects.
It is hoped that this document will be useful reference not only during orientation but throughout your stay at Michigan State University. It may be particularly useful to you when your areas of interest and your graduate program focus to the point where you are ready to select guidance and thesis committees. Some of the people listed in their extension roles in this document will be confronting you as instructors in the classroom or via the printed word in research publications. Certainly any of them would be happy to talk to any of you on an individual basis at anytime about any of their extension, research, or teaching activities.
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