

## *Look Here First!*

NOT HAVING enough time is no way to identify a problem if you really wish to come to grips with a situation, according to the Quarricks in their article on "Problem Solving in Extension." As the basis for exploring the subject, they use the problems agents identified in a survey. If the Quarricks are on the right track (and they well may be), you will find yourself raising these kinds of questions as you read: Do I actually prevent the solution to some of my problems by simply misstating the problem? Do I now have or can I acquire the tools needed to deal with people-problems? Are people-problems really different from thing-problems?

You will discover Utz dealing with the people-problem idea in his article, "Agent Performance in Programming." He reports a different approach to and attitude toward people-centered programs, such as public policy, when compared to content-centered programs (agricultural production), as revealed by agent-respondents in his study. Is there really a difference in the approaches used with programs like public policy as compared to agricultural production? Can the same person comfortably and effectively deal with both types of programs? In a different vein, are agents who identify more closely with the local situation—rather than the organization—actually less effective?

Three articles in this issue are developed around rural concerns. One of these looks at poverty (or low income). Brown and Marsh demonstrate, by citing research findings, that poverty conditions vary widely from community to community—even between communities in close proximity. These findings and the analysis of such situations present the question of whether there are usable tools available to the practitioner who must program for low-income people. Are low-income people so different from everyone else that different approaches are necessary? Does each situation have to be dealt with as an entity? Are there some common denominators?

Guither reports research findings concerning a specific rural problem—families who quit farming (a look at individual families) and Hurd analyzes what he considers the public problems facing rural people (a look at institutions serving rural America). Can Extension do something about such institutions if they are failing as suggested? Should Extension concern itself with the problems faced by people who quit farming for a variety of reasons? Is there a relationship between the institutions serving rural people and their social and economic plight? Can Extension realistically assume the leadership training role suggested?

Hurd suggests some ways a professional would view and deal with problems such as those cited above. However, you may complete his article and still want to ask if Extension is a profession. Is it? Some say yes; others say no.

*The Editor*