

Book Reviews

Farm Goals in Conflict. Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Economic Development, 1963. Available from Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa. 251 pp. \$4.95.

Seldom, if ever, has there been published under one cover a more intriguing portrayal of variance in opinions regarding "farm goals." This book is a report of a symposium held in 1963 under the auspices of the Iowa Center for Agricultural and Economic Development. It is an excellent addition to the literature which has been developed by the Center and has a place on the reading list of every Extension worker. The reader who expects to find a ready-made solution to the multi-sided dilemma facing those who farm will be disappointed. On the contrary, it does exactly what the title suggests; it points up the conflict and sharpens the image of the complexity of the farm problem.

The uniqueness of the book lies in the fact that a group of capable and talented authorities from many fields were assembled and provided a platform for unbridled expression. Economists, theologians, sociologists, farm organization leaders, political scientists, educators, philosophers, researchers, and government executives expressed not only their own views but those of the groups and organizations they represent. To give an international point of view to the discussions, Professor Hofster of the Agricultural University, Wageningen, The Netherlands, presented a paper which deals with the European farm scene.

The reader who may not be too familiar with the conflicting points of view and the fact that they come from many segments of society may be surprised to find so much theology introduced into the discussions. This, however, brings into sharp focus the value systems that have come to be associated with "farm living." Those who hold to the concept that man's close association with the soil produces a superior value system are challenged by equally qualified authorities.

In a paper evaluating agricultural organizations and agencies, Professor Boulding of the University of Michigan, concludes by giving academic A-B-C grades to eight organizations, including Extension. These grades could create as much conflict among those graded as do grades traditionally given students, each of whom may also have striven valiantly for a place in the sun.

The final chapter is devoted to a dialogue among the speakers and members of the audience. If the reader has not been convinced of the

extent of disagreement among authorities up to this point, there will remain little doubt in his mind after reading this chapter.

The contents of the book are beautifully capsuled in a seven-page preview by Professors Hadwiger and Haroldson, both of Iowa State University. He who reads the preview will find a thousand impelling reasons for reading the entire book.

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Rural Life and Urbanized Society. By Lee Taylor and Arthur R. Jones, Jr., 1964. Available from Oxford Press, 417 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 493 pp. \$7.50.

This book is recommended to anyone, professional or non-professional, rural or urban, seeking more complete understanding of contemporary rural America. It is designed for easy reading and high retention, and explains the situational aspect of modern-day rural life, i.e., "what is" rather than placing very many value judgments on "what ought to be."

It includes a fresh interpretation in all aspects of the rural scene summarized in the concept "urbanized social organization"—referring to the process by which rural farm, non-farm, and suburban life have gradually come under the influence of urbanized social goals, values, and modes of organization. All regions of the United States and the span of time from medieval life (when the horse collar was the major innovation) to present rural America are covered.

The work is conveniently divided into four distinct parts. Trends are presented on the social organization and rural-urban differences. The authors say that city life began to dominate *all* American life by the twentieth century. However, they maintain that "ideas and standards of behavior that guide men in their daily lives are essentially the same, regardless of place and residence, in a city or the open country." They further emphasize that "historical family-centered social participation of farm people has diminished in importance as a distinguishing characteristic of rural life."

Government agricultural programs are characterized as a national success story. The authors suggest that the success of government programs is demonstrated by the abundance of food and clothing for the population. Agribusiness is identified as one of the major aspects of the national economy. The Land-Grant College system is characterized as constituting one of the most important adult educational institutions in the United States.

This book is commended to Extension personnel because of its factual information, the historical background of our rural society, and the completeness of its content.

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Continuing Your Education. By Cyril O. Houle, 1964. Available from McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, N. Y. 10036. 183 pp. \$4.95.

Cyril Houle's latest book speaks directly to the Extension worker concerned about his education. It offers strong support for the author's contention that adults can learn and are usually rewarded by doing so. Houle patently dispels the notion that adults who are separated in time from their years of formal education have lost learning ability.

In substance, the book offers a highly practical set of methods and strategies for the adult who wants to engage in organized learning activity. Propositions of how and why adults learn are supported by research results gleaned from observations of 470 successful adult learners. The initial chapter is an exercise in motivation in which the reader is immediately engaged in a learning activity by following the author's suggestion as to how to read the book. A key chapter, "Seven Keys to Effective Learning," illuminates a set of basic principles for the adult learner. These "keys" provide the necessary antecedents to the more specific techniques which comprise the major portion of the book.

Concentration, a central problem for most adults, receives prime attention in a discussion of the time, place, and strategy of learning. Techniques are applicable to both formal and informal study situations. The important areas of learning patterns and the ordering of study behavior are significantly treated. Among the broad array of learning techniques offered the reader, the one likely to find widest acceptance is the SQ3R basic study procedure. This technique is especially useful for reading non-fiction, particularly textbooks. It involves five steps—survey, question, read, recite, and review. The author gives a simplified explanation of the procedure and the reader is encouraged to use it while reading the book.

Two essential modes of learning, reading and writing, are treated in separate chapters. Discussion of basic considerations in getting more from reading materials and learning the art of writing is necessarily sketchy but contains much valuable content. Since most adults learn as members of groups, the chapter on "Shared Learning" is especially useful in its treatment of personal interaction. For formal learners, a separate chapter is devoted to examinations as a learning experience.

Perhaps the most insightful message drawn from this book is con-

tained in the final chapter, "A Lifetime of Learning." Continuing to learn throughout a lifetime is becoming a condition for success as an adult. By setting realistic learning goals and measuring his accomplishment, the adult may combine past experiences with new knowledge to achieve his purposes in life.

The most prominent feature of the book is reflected in the author's gift for communicating ideas in a clear, concise, and coherent manner. High readability is its distinguishing mark. With current emphasis on Extension workers continuing their education, this book merits close attention and constant use. It will be especially useful in helping others to learn. Its relevance for Extension work will no doubt make it an important reference work for agents and their clientele.

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The Science of Human Communication. Edited by Wilbur Schramm. 1963. Available from Basic Books, Inc., New York, N. Y. 158 pp. \$4.50.

Extension workers and others who constantly communicate with the public will find invaluable information in some of the research discussed in this book. They will find some answers, for example, to such questions as: How much influence do mass media exert in persuading the public—in changing their opinions and habits? What effect does an authoritative source of a communication have on the audience? Which do people remember better—material that attacks or supports their own point of view? When two sides of a controversial issue are presented successively by different communicators, is the first one more likely to win the listener over, as is often supposed? What is the effect of a fear-arousing communication on attitude and behavior change?

The Science of Human Communication is a compilation of lectures given over the Voice of America by well known scholars in communication research, presenting some of the problems and findings in particular aspects of human communication. Areas selected for the broadcasts were those where new findings were available that would be widely interesting and where outstanding scholars were available to talk about their specialties. Helpful to the reader of this collection who wishes to pursue various subjects in greater details is the list of works at the end of each chapter.

Lest the reader think of communication research as applied only to mass media, Schramm points out in the introductory chapter that such research is concerned with both mass and interpersonal communications—in fact, with all the ways in which information and ideas are ex-

changed and shared. "Communications research," says Schramm, "is concerned with how to be effective in communication, how to be understood, how to be clear, how people use the mass media, how nations can understand each other, how society can use the mass media to the greatest good, and in general how the basic process of communication works."

Chapters which hold special interest for Extension workers include "Personality as a Factor in Susceptibility to Persuasion," "The Social Effects of Mass Communication," "The Diffusion of New Ideas and Practices," "Mass Media and Personal Influence," "The Effect of Communication on Voting Behavior," and "The New 'Scientific' Rhetoric."

Four names are listed as the "founding fathers" of communications research in the United States. Their training is an indication of how communications theory and research have attracted the interest of men from a variety of fields of training. Two of the men were European-born and educated but came to this country early in their careers—Paul Lazarsfeld, a sociologist who founded the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University, and Kurt Lewin, a psychologist. The other two were Harold Lasswell, a political scientist who pioneered in the study of propaganda, and Carl Hovland, a psychologist who organized a research program on communication and attitude change at Yale.

The lectures in the series are stimulating reading for anyone concerned with communications. Most limited in interest, perhaps, and difficult reading, because of psychological terminology, is Charles Osgood's selection ("An Exploration in Semantic Space") which discusses the semantic differential, a communications tool that attempts to measure dimensions of meaning.

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Traditional Cultures—and the Impact of Technological Change. By George M. Foster, 1962. Available from Harper and Row Publishers, New York, N.Y. 269 pp. \$4.75.

This book is timely. Its principal concern centers on rural communities undergoing changes with developmental programs such as those of the Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, Rural Areas Development, and the United Nations. The recent passage of the Economic Opportunity Act brings to the forefront the beginning of more programs in which developmental principles suggested in the book may well apply. Despite the anthropological setting, the book presents the problem of cultural change induced by sudden technological develop-

ments. The author claims no originality for his theme. He states the cultural, social, and psychological aspects of cultural stability and change with such concepts as "barriers," "stimulants," and "motivations."

The concepts and theories give new insights into the Extension principle of basing activities and programs on the situation of communities and their people. As pointed out, culture is a controlling force that makes people behave the way they do. Thus culture takes on greater significance. The author's point of view gives educators a deeper understanding so that ways and means may be found to help bring about changes which are not in conflict with the culture of the people. Foster's emphasis is that we should build on the thought patterns, behavior, and beliefs of people. Thus, technological changes become more palatable and problems are not aggravated by misunderstandings or apathy—people make their own decisions about their own needs. The change agent receives some caution about observing the difference between his culture and the culture in which he is working. The book points out that being in the same country or of the same nationality does not always mean that an individual comes from the same culture.

The contents of the book are arranged interestingly; the logic and format keep pulling the reader into its conceptual context. The first four chapters introduce the author's concerns about technological change, his concepts of culture, some insights into traditional rural communities, and four dynamics of change. The next four chapters present a construct about change. There is one chapter on cultural barriers to change, one on social barriers, and one on psychological barriers. In the face of the imposing series of barriers, a longer chapter is devoted to what the author terms "stimulants to change."

These first eight chapters provide the basic concepts for the most valuable section of the book—the last five chapters. They supply insights into how an anthropologist works and explain his process of analysis and research techniques. The central theme is that *problem-oriented* approaches are applicable rather than *program-oriented* approaches.

The last chapter deals with a concern of all education—the ethics of planned change. In essence the author asserts that the ethic of helping people change their culture includes knowing what culture is, what its characteristics are, what it means to a society, and what its processes of change are. A possible weakness of the text from a layman's standpoint is that in no way can it be considered a pocket guide. It contains no formal lists of what to do and what not to do.

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Group Discussion—Theory and Technique. By R. Victor Harnack and Thorrel B. Fest, 1964. Available from Appleton-Century-Crofts, 440 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10016. 456 pp. \$5.00.

Discussion is a vital form of communication in a democratic society. People need to be individual and they need to relate themselves meaningfully to others. Although much has been written about discussion, the authors have taken an unusual approach and emphasis in that this book "reports a study in depth of the processes and techniques of purposeful, problem-solving communication in small, face-to-face groups."

Most of the theory and much of the practical discussion in this book is intended to help the individual diagnose the nature of group needs. Methods by which individuals can improve their participation in general and their leadership in particular in involving others in the activities of groups are discussed. These methods include things that are related to becoming a better participant, becoming a better leader, modifying the nature of the group, and moving the group to action.

"Knowledge and skill in the art of communication may well be everyone's most valuable assets," say the authors. Those factors in the group discussion situation that have a marked effect upon communication are identified and then techniques of dealing with those factors are suggested. There is an examination of the effect of intergroup relations upon the discussion process. It shows how intergroup status, climate, and control affect discussion behavior and how external task pressures affect groups. It is noted that an individual should keep his eyes and ears open and should not allow himself to get so involved in the substance of a discussion that he becomes blind to the process needs of the group.

The book is logically arranged into five parts including (1) a point of view, (2) thinking together, (3) the nature of groups, (4) participant and leader behavior, and (5) communication. Exercises at the end of each chapter will help the reader discover in "real" groups some of the concepts examined. Suggested readings are also listed following each chapter.

This book should be of real value to all Extension workers in gaining self-understanding, understanding groups, and understanding and using effective communications.

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