

Points of View

Advantage of Local Representative

Should we attempt to service certain audiences directly from the University without an attempt to involve a local staff of agents? Scheel suggests this possibility in the Spring issue of the *Journal of Cooperative Extension*. It seems to me that our goals might be to serve our audiences, whomever they might be, with a minimum of red tape; to serve them quickly and efficiently and as economically as possible.

Potential audiences which might be served directly from the University include industry, business, governmental units, marketing organizations, transportation and many others. Some audiences serve an area much larger than a county and have problems which might take them across county lines or even across state lines. Others might be large industries, but in some cases particular problems can be adequately served by a local staff. It seems that the type of problem ought to determine who handles it, rather than the type of audience.

Merits of such a plan would include the possibility of serving specialized audiences which we are not now serving. University staff members from various departments could be available to all parts of the state.

One question which would have to be answered is the cost of the program: Is it for fee or for free? Other possible limitations might include the following: (1) Many questions involve more than one department at the University and people seeking help might feel that they were getting the runaround. (2) The contacts would have to be done by telephone, mail, or long distance travel. The University might be too far away for convenience. (3) Many audiences are not aware that the University can be of help to them. (4) There could be a possibility that University staff might have time to serve only a limited number of

such audiences. (5) The local staff might be embarrassed sometimes when they do not know that these audiences are being served by certain University departments. (6) Some audiences might be tempted to "pester" University staff members with small problems which could be answered by the local staff.

It would seem to me the frequency with which the special audiences are served would be an indication as to whether or not there should be personnel on the staff who are able to work with the special audiences.

If these audiences are served occasionally, perhaps the local agent could make the arrangements through the University for specialists' help. If they are served more frequently, perhaps we would pay to include a staff member who is a "specialist in problem identification" to help these audiences identify their needs and to serve as a liaison person.

It seems to me that there would be some definite advantage in having a local representative of the University or a local staff of agents who could work with specialized audiences, particularly in an urban county such as we have in Douglas County, Nebraska.

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Fallacy in Argument

"Whither Goest the CES?" is an appropriate challenge to an Extension worker, especially when the demand for more intensive help is increasing.

The authors of the article in the Winter issue of the *Journal of Cooperative Extension* are not discussing a new topic. This is a topic that even the relatively new Extension worker has heard more than once. Like the farmer, the Extension worker must be exposed to the many different aspects of a new challenge or improved method of doing what is more important.

The two positions the authors take (CES is finished and CES is just getting started) are very stimulating. I believe there is a fallacy in some of the arguments proposed to support the stand that the need for Extension may cease. An increase in the number of farmers does not necessarily mean a decreased demand for assistance needed by surviving farmers. A county agent has been able to achieve the ultimate of helping all the farmers all the time in all areas of subject matter. The problems of the remaining fewer farmers require more intensive help. The most important opportunities for Extension are in providing this more intensive help. An increase in this kind of help will call for more specialist help and maybe reorganization of staffs.

Without Extension, the middle class farmer would be at more of a disadvantage — innovators would possibly not. The end result might be that "survivors" would still exist.

It is true that today's farmer has more know-how. It is also true that the Extension Services is not more of the same thing. Its personnel also have more know-how — due to better education, the wealth of printed technical material, and more help from specialists with strong backgrounds in specific subject-matter areas.

The statement, "the agricultural entrepreneur is at least as savvy as the one-of-the-mill county agent" has probably caused a number to raise their eyebrows. We might reply to this jokingly by saying that the TV program "Green Acres" has made some impressions.

The image of the know-how of a county agent should be not only what he can deliver from his own mind but also the know-how that he can organize from technical resource material and specialist help. It's the wisest combination of all of these resources that will allow Extension to continue to be a leader in work to provide helpful information to farmers.

The authors have pointed out two extreme positions or roads ahead but I find it difficult to grasp what they mean by saying Extension should devote its skills and resources to a truly universal-community-wide outreach."

Our programs are designed now to serve not only farmers but industries supporting agriculture. Use is made of the on-campus personnel, Experiment Station staff, and Extension specialists to carry out the programs. I suppose the main issue posed by this article is in what way will our county and state program need to be changed.

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Questions Need Answering

The only limit on the continued increase in quality and usefulness of the *Journal* is the degree of initiative and resourcefulness of Extension personnel in seeking answers to important problems and reporting the findings.

The paper on "Agent Performance in Programming" by Alan P. Utz, Jr. in the Fall 1965 issue is an example of an excellent treatment of an important topic that points up the need for similar studies of a related problem situation. Dr. Utz reported on his study of the various kinds of forces to which agents are subjected and which influence their performance in programming.

His conclusion that "agents who think of themselves as technologists and who merely impose preconceived solutions to problems limit the scope of their programs" seems to be justified by his findings and by practical experience. Dr. Utz's treatment of this subject has helped many of us have a better understanding of this aspect of the problems facing Extension in program development.

However, the paper raises additional questions in my mind. For example, can agents who see themselves as technologists acquire a broader perspective of their role through inservice training? If so, how can a state Extension Service go about determining training needs? What kinds of training situations have proved effective in making the recipient sensitive to the need for broader programs to meet the needs of the people for whom they are developed?

These and other questions need to be answered in order that Extension agents may be provided the training and assistance that will enable them to

be effective in their program development role. Perhaps studies that focus on these questions have been conducted in other states. If so, I would encourage those making the studies to share their findings with us through the *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, as Dr. Utz and many others have done.

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Precise Role of Extension

The article by Dr. Ronald C. Powers in the Spring, 1966 *Journal* is an excellent one. It does raise a few questions as to the precise role the Extension agent should play in this process.

We have traditionally worked with influentials from the middle or upper middle class. It is this group with which we are most comfortable. In community planning it might be desirable to include representatives of the total community. Influentials from all socio-economic levels might need to be involved. These are influentials identified as such by their peers.

In a democratic society we have a responsibility to the entire community. This would imply an obligation to help with identifying influentials at all levels, assisting such a representative group with organization for effective group action, providing them with information, and assisting them through a logical problem-solving process.

If we have done this job properly, the planning group will arrive at better qualitative decisions than they would have made unassisted. These decisions should be based on their own value judgments, not those of Extension or anyone else.

Decisions made by such a group may or may not be valid in the opinions of Extension personnel or of any other professionals who may have been involved. However, decisions made by a broadly representative and well-informed group of citizens about their own community must be accepted as valid decisions for that community.

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A Slight Error

Enjoyed reading "Whither Cooperative Extension?" that appeared in the Winter issue of the *Journal of Cooperative Extension*. I would agree 100% that the Cooperative Extension Service without question is a magnificent instrument for formal education for action. I am sure that this article made all Extension workers think a little bit more deeply in regard to where the Extension Service should be going with its program for the future and what adjustments were needed.

I'm sure you have already noted a typographical error on page 28 in the section "CES Is Just Getting Started." The first sentence refers to almost two million acres of land in the continental United States. This should be almost two billion acres of land in the continental United States.

The following is a breakdown of land I like to use in my work in forest and resource development and it appears on page 334 in the book *Resources for America's Future* published by Resources for the Future, Inc.:

Cities of 2500 or more population (incl. city parks)	
Public recreation areas (excl. city parks)	
Agriculture	
Crops	40%
Pastured cropland	6%
Non-producing (farmsteads, etc.)	4%
Commercial forestry	
Grazing	
Transportation	
Reservoirs and water management	
Primarily for wildlife	
Mineral production	
Deserts, swamps, mountain tops, some non-commercial forest, etc.	
Miscellaneous and unaccounted for	
Total	

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