

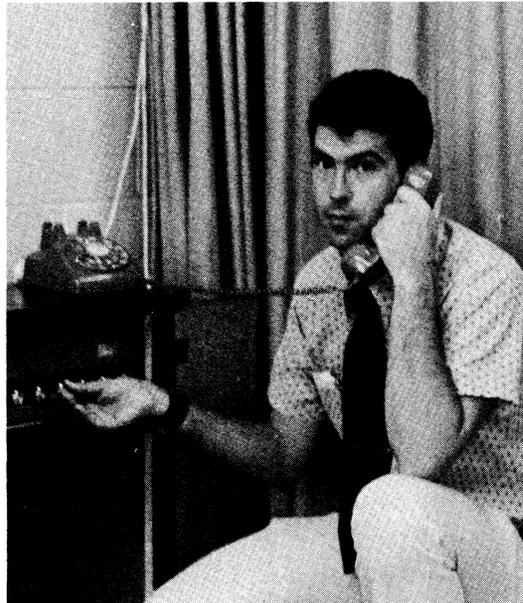
# idea corner

## Specialists Just a Phone Call Away

When timely, in-depth information is required, it's standard procedure in Extension offices to pick up the phone and dial a state Extension specialist. Why not use the same procedure during an evening meeting? Agents often possess the expertise and confidence needed to present a program of particular interest to clientele. The specialist, as part of the program, would serve as an authoritative source of recent research information and data gathered from many sources that may help the agent's clientele.

During a series of fall meetings in Orange County, Florida, specialists at the University of Florida were literally "called" on at their homes or offices during the evening to assist with the pest control programs. The evening was planned so the horticultural agent, Tom MacCubbin, would first provide a one-hour discussion on a specific topic and then, after a break, dial the state Extension specialist.

As prearranged with the specialist, 15 minutes were devoted to new products and recent developments that could be associated with the evening's topic. Time was then allotted for questions from the audience which were relayed over the phone to the specialist by the agent. A total of approximately 30 minutes was devoted to the specialist section of the program. As the specialist spoke, notes were taken by the agent on the blackboard.



For the final section of the program the agent continued to lead the discussion. This section was mainly devoted to summarizations and fielding of unanswered questions.

Bringing the specialist to the meeting was made possible by a telephone "hook-up" to the auditorium's amplification system. The county's emergency communications specialist devised the phone technique at the request of the county agent. Similar systems can be obtained through local telephone companies.

This new approach to education in Orange County was well received by clientele attending the meeting. Some brought tape recorders, one company had a secretary on hand to take notes, and others scribbled to capture the thoughts

presented during the evening. State  
*specialists were also pleased. It meant*  
they could stay home, not have to travel  
240 miles, nor expend already short funds.

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