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? Schell 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 are not large; others might have problems which might take them across county lines or across state lines. Others might be large industries, but in some cases, particular problems can be adequately served by a local staff. It seems to me that the type of problem often 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 is embarrassed sometimes when they do not know that these audiences are being served by certain University agents.
6. Some audiences might be to "pester" University staff 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 of whether or not there should be a panel on the staff who are able to deal with the special audiences.

If these audiences are served seasonally, perhaps the local agent can make the arrangements through the University for specialists' help. They are served more frequently, perhaps, would pay to include a staff person who is a "specialist in problem solution" to help these audiences satisfy their needs and to serve as a person person.

It seems to me that there would be some definite advantage in having a representative of the University local staff of agents who could deal 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 topic. This is a topic that even the recently new Extension worker has heard more than once. Like the farmer, the Extension worker must be exposed to the many different aspects of a challenge or improved method of doing what is more important.
The two positions the authors take in this finished and CES is just getting are very stimulating. I believe it is a fallacy in some of the arguments proposed to support the stand on the need for Extension may cease. The need in the number of farmers is not necessarily mean a decreased need for assistance needed by farmers. A county agent has been able to achieve the ultimate goal of all farmers all the time areas of subject matter. The demands of the remaining fewer farmers require more intensive help. The important opportunities for Extension are in providing this more intensive help. An increase in this kind of work for more specialist help may be reorganization of staffs.

Without Extension, the middle class would be at more of a disadvantage — innovators would possibly be left out. The end result might be that "survival" would still exist.

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

The statement, "the agricultural entrepreneur is at least as savvy as the average of the mill county agent" has probably caused a number to raise their eyebrows. We might reply to this jokingly by saying the TV program "Green Acres" has made some impressions. The image of the know-how of a county agent should be not only what can deliver from his own mind but the know-how that he can organize technical resource material and put it to use. It's the wisest combination of all of these resources that will enable Extension to continue to be a factor in work to provide helpful information to farmers.

The authors have pointed out two 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 univer-

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 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 influential 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 influential 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 influential 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 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 CES?” that appeared in the Winter of the Journal of Cooperative Extension. I would agree 100% that the Cooperative Extension Service with its emphasis on informal education for action is a magnificent instrument for preparing the American for participation in the educational process. I would agree also with the sentiment that this article made me think about the “Where” of the Extension Service in the long run. However, I would like to clarify what I consider a slight error in the statement that the Extension Service should be going with its programs for the future and what adjustments will be needed.

I'm sure you have already noted the typographical error on page 206 and the section “CES Is Just Starting.” The first sentence refers to almost two million acres of land in the continental United States. This would be almost two billion acres of land in the continental United States.

The following is a breakdown of the types of uses I would like to use in my work in forest resource development and it appears on page 334 in the book Renewal America’s Future published sources for the Future, Inc.

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

Total

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