

Points of View



An Extension Responsibility?

Low income and socioeconomic difficulties are major problems in today's society. Whether these problems are the products of society or products of individuals within the society hasn't been determined. These difficulties have been recognized by many foundations and governmental agencies other than the Agricultural Extension Service.

If Extension jumps into these problem areas, where will it get the extra money and trained personnel needed? The average Agricultural Extension agent isn't qualified or trained in these areas. Movement into these areas calls for additional staff members.

Many agencies are already working in these areas. No doubt Extension could contribute to solving these problems, but it must not be at the expense of its other programs. By a united, coordinated effort of many agencies, with their many employees qualified in the various fields, some of these problems could be alleviated.

Extension's main efforts in this area should be directed toward the objectives outlined in the Scope Report and not toward taking on the full burden of all socioeconomic problems.

JAMES B. NEEL

Louisville, Tennessee

What Other Agencies?

"The Committee recommends that at the minimum, Cooperative Extension Service programs of youth and family education should be doubled

by 1975 and that new cooperative relationships with other agencies be developed."

This quote from *A People and a Spirit* offers Extension a great challenge. Working with agencies and groups has long been one of our strong points, but most of these units have had direct or, at least, easily discernible connections with agriculture, home economics, or 4-H. Many of these relationships have proved highly successful in furthering our own programs. Evidently, the benefits have been mutual because many of these arrangements have continued for years.

But we're facing a much bigger challenge when we try to develop working relationships with groups that know little about our special subjects and care little, at least on first introduction. One doesn't have to be a Solomon to realize we can contribute to many of the so-called quality of living programs that benefit others than the agriculturally minded. We may find that such relationships can be of value to us in developing understanding and concern for our own organization and its problems.

What might be some of the organizations we could work with for the first time? One's own knowledge and imagination can supply many of these. To the organizations sponsoring youth programs, we can draw on our years of experience to help develop specific programs. We need to realize that we can assist them in a partial manner without taking the responsibility for

an entire program. This participation might be limited to once-a-year consultation.

In many women's organizations we can use our expertise in home economics. Participation doesn't have to be the every-meeting type nor do we need to assume any responsibility for organizational tasks. Even serving as a consultant to the program committee might be our complete task.

Nearly every business group of men has some interest in agriculture, even though tenuous. If we can identify that interest, we can then use it as an approach to providing information about agriculture. Perhaps including the program chairman on our mailing list for general newsletters may be all the effort needed for certain groups.

If we take on the responsibility for more quality of living programs, we must deal with many additional organizations. Our approaches to these may be different and more limited than those with our more customary groups.

HOWARD M. DAIL

Richmond, California

Leader Needs

Volunteer 4-H leaders in Mississippi were asked to rank 25 training needs in order of importance. The results of this survey were published in the Fall 1968 issue of the *Journal of Cooperative Extension*.

How does this survey compare to the training needs of 4-H leaders in Rogers County, Oklahoma?

In early September, 1968, a 4-H leaders meeting was called to discuss 4-H enrollment, the county fair, and various other business. The leaders had no knowledge of the Mississippi study. They were asked to rank the training needs in the order that would be most useful to them as 4-H leaders. Fifty-five leaders attended the meeting. Usable data were received from 34 of the leaders.

The training items were listed as they were reported in the *Journal*. No other information was included in our survey except the leader's name and years served as a leader. This report was primarily concerned with the training needs of Rogers County 4-H leaders and

didn't involve other characteristics such as experience as a 4-H leader, sex, age, race, or occupation.

The data were analyzed as follows: the first four training selections of each leader were evaluated in an effort to identify the training items considered most important by the leaders. "Needs and interests of youth" was the item of primary concern to the Rogers County 4-H leaders with "how to obtain and keep parent cooperation" a close second.

My interpretation of the results: leaders as parents of 4-H members are concerned about the generation gap and are trying to understand actions and interests of today's youth.

For basically the same reasons leaders want to know how parents can be motivated into active participation in 4-H Club work. Therefore it is logical that the "needs and interests of youth" and "parent cooperation" received the most consideration by the 4-H leaders.

Ranking third and fourth are "planning and organizing club work" and "the duties of 4-H leaders." These are also closely related items since they involve the mechanics of 4-H Club work and are important in any leader training program.

These data indicate that parental influence on children and the involvement of other parents working with members of the 4-H Club are important training items for the 4-H leaders.

Our leader training meetings will need to reflect this desire for more information on the needs and interests of youth and obtaining and keeping parent cooperation.

BASIL MYERS

Claremore, Oklahoma

Vital Issues

Programming for the future has great appeal to me and I am highly impressed by the scope of the implications in *A People and a Spirit*. People have always been Extension's greatest resource for worthwhile programs and accomplishments. The spirit of accepting suggestions for change within Extension's structure on all levels will determine the effectiveness of the study in future programming.

It seems we have always attempted

to meet the challenges, but now it is time to take aggressive action with several vital issues:

1. Improving relationships with other agencies.
2. Stressing group dynamics, using all forms of mass media to inform publics of all levels.
3. Using new approaches to recruiting and training personnel (drawing personnel from disciplines other than home economics and agriculture; staffing to meet language needs; staffing to help families escape from poverty and ignorance; utilizing multi-county, district, and regional professionals; and employing semi-professionals from target audiences).

The most dynamic section of *A People and a Spirit* for programming for the future is "Quality of Living." It seems that Extension's whole purpose for existing is to improve the quality of living of people in all elements of society. Each family must reach its potential; and each family member must be given every possible experience that could help him develop to his potential. Educators should never rest until all persons in all problem areas have every possible experience to become good citizens. Extension must recognize that there are large segments of our society that remain unreached.

Extension can and will justify its existence in improving the quality of living in this time of extremes—extreme wealth, extreme poverty, extreme knowledge, extreme ignorance, extreme tolerance, extreme intolerance. Suggested changes must be accepted. Extension workers will recognize in quality of living programming our God-given opportunities for helping each individual develop to his potential.

The Service has risen to the educational challenge for many years. In my opinion, when we carefully study *A People and a Spirit* and take aggressive action on its recommendations, we can face the future with confidence that we are fulfilling the basic philosophy and historic precedent of the Cooperative Extension Service.

MRS. ARGEN DRAPER

Hereford, Texas

Quality of Living

The terminology used in the "Quality of Living Programs" section of *A People and a Spirit* is quite appropriate and brings to life what I believe family living programs are in Extension. Our programs are designed to be living and I am happy to see the committee feels the same as I.

Our focus of concern should be on the isolated, less advantaged, and underutilized people in society; but at the same time we must not forget those in the middle- or upper-income levels. These are the resources Extension must use in working with the minority and disadvantaged groups.

We do have a definite obligation to all people in all walks of life. But, to carry out effective programs in family living, we must have more personnel that are dedicated to the people and their problems here in the United States.

Sometimes I think we lose sight of our people and what they need because we are given definite guidelines to follow and many times these are impossible to meet due to county personnel and situations.

Extension must broaden its outlook to fields other than the art of cooking and sewing. Consumer competence and leadership development are two areas of concern that can bring about many changes in our "living programs."

We must never forget the strength that comes from our 4-H and home demonstration clubs. These have been the backbone of our programs for many years. In our concentrated efforts with other groups we should never neglect programs that develop human beings.

Leaders are most important and can serve to give Extension personnel more time in education rather than in service to the organization.

I believe the committee is right in stating that by whatever terminology our "living programs" are known we must continue to broaden our approaches to express the goals and philosophies of Extension.

MRS. SHIRLEY W. MILFORD
Nacogdoches, Texas