

CARRYING THE A. & M. COLLEGE TO 164,000 OKLAHOMA FARM HOMES

A Report of the Work of the
Oklahoma Extension Service for 1934

By D. P. TRENT
Director of Extension



Groups of farm people work with county farm agents, meeting to study their problems, contribute their own experience, get new facts. The Rural Guild, Alfalfa county, shown here, meets monthly with the farm agent. Last year 58,000 meetings in Extension programs had an attendance of 1,500,000.

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The fields and the kitchens of three-fourths of the farm homes in Oklahoma—164,000 out of the 203,000—last year became a part of the campus and classrooms of the Oklahoma A. and M. college, through the activities of the Oklahoma Extension Service, a division of the college.

On farm pantry shelves stood more than 5,000,000 cans of food which farm and home demonstration agents of the Extension Service helped farm families to put there.

Nearly 200,000 acres of good farm land was saved from washing away by terracing accomplished through county farm agents.

Forty-five thousand farm boys and girls, through 4-H Club work sponsored by the farm and home demonstration agents, learned new and better farming and home making methods and acquired training which makes them useful leaders in their communities.

These are a few of the 1934 accomplishments of the Extension Service in which the Oklahoma A. and M. College and the U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperate to render practical service to farm people in meeting their everyday problems. They are services which reach beyond the relatively few students who can come to the college's formal class rooms; they carry the college to every farm and fireside.

The year just past, too, saw the Extension Service drafted by the government, through the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, for the immense task of administering the agricultural recovery programs. Nearly 200,000 contracts to adjust production of cotton, wheat or corn and hogs, or for the sale of drouth-stricken cattle, were handled in these campaigns by committees of

farmers working with county farm agents. More than 150,000 certificates of tax exemption under the Bankhead act were issued. The shock of a disastrous drouth was softened. These recovery programs will have put \$55,000,000 into the hands of Oklahoma farmers by the end of the short time yet needed to complete payments of the benefits under 1933 and 1934 programs.

Responsibility for administration of the Agricultural Adjustment programs was not invited by the Extension Service, but was accepted gladly and discharged faithfully to the trust of Oklahoma farm people and the government of the United States.

Continuance of a partnership effort between the federal government and farmers toward agricultural recovery seems certain. To participate fully in this to the advantage of Oklahoma agriculture and business, the Oklahoma Extension Service must stand prepared with personnel and facilities to undertake continuance of present programs and new ones.



The Agricultural Adjustment Administration's business agent and the farmer's advocate as well in the farm recovery programs is the county farm agent. Here J. B. Hurst, Grady county agent, delivers cotton checks. Adjustment programs are bringing \$55,000,000 to Oklahoma farmers in benefit payments under some 200,000 contracts.

Parallel with agricultural recovery programs the long-time Extension Service program of practical education in farming and homemaking must continue. Through these and other activities the farm people of the state have learned to rely very largely

upon the county agents and the Extension Service for information and leadership in agricultural movements.

Altogether, the past year has been the busiest the Oklahoma Extension Service has known. The growing responsiveness of farm people to the work of the Extension Service has demanded, even with restricted funds and facilities, an expansion in its operations. More farm families were reached and assisted than ever before. New possibilities of service yet to be realized were opened by these new contacts.

Organized Extension work was carried on in 2,785 communities. Nearly 14,000 volunteer community leaders assisted. The 58,000 meetings held were attended by 1,500,000 persons. It was the fourth year the attendance passed the million mark, but the 1934 figure exceeded that of 1933 by a quarter of a million.

The Extension Service division of the college operates under the Smith-Lever act of 1914, which authorizes the federal government, through the Department of Agriculture, to cooperate with state agricultural colleges in extending the benefits of agricultural and home economics teaching and research from the college into every farm home.

For every \$1 that Oklahoma is now contributing to this work, the federal government is contributing \$2.33. Most of the funds contributed by the federal government are required to be matched dollar for dollar by state funds.

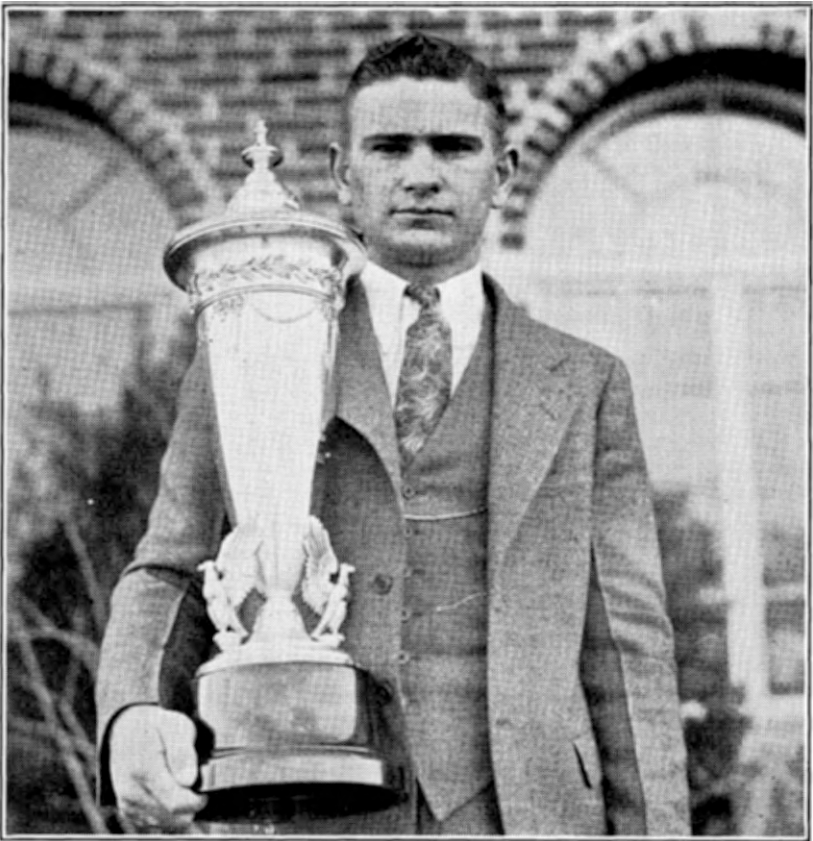
The director of the Extension Division of the college holds a position parallel to that of deans of the various schools, but he and his workers must find their "students" off the campus. The director is responsible through the president of the college to the state board of agriculture and to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Working under the director are four men district farm agents who supervise the work of county farm agents in each county. A state home demonstration agent and four women district home demonstration agents supervise the work of county home demonstration agents at present employed in 69 counties.

Also under the director are practical specialists in various farm and home enterprises, such as terracing, gardening, canning, livestock raising. State 4-H Club agents direct the program for farm boys and girls. These workers assist the county farm agents and work directly with organized groups of farm people.

From end to end, the Extension Service rule is that workers must be farm-reared, with a background of practical experience of farm problems.

Only the mobilization of community leadership and organization among farm people enables the Extension Service to meet the rising response of farm people to the opportunity which the Extension program offers them to improve their farm methods and home practices.



William Kiesel, Mayes county 4-H club boy, brought the President's trophy for best all-around boys' 4-H club project work to Oklahoma in 1934. Forty-five thousand farm boys and girls receive training similar to Kiesel's.

Each county farm agent has his County Agricultural Advisory Board composed of leading farmers and business men. Each home demonstration agent has her County Home Demonstration Advisory Board of representative farm women from the Home Demonstration Clubs. These boards meet quarterly with the agents,

discuss problems and new programs and advise with the agents. They help to reach and organize new groups of farm people.

Farm women's Home Demonstration Clubs were active in 1934 in 1,630 communities and had 29,732 members, 3,000 more than in 1933. An example of how these organized groups carry the benefits of their work to their neighbors is the fact that in most of these clubs each member pledges to pass on to some non-member, by actual demonstration or example, her own training in better home making.

This meant better gardens made by many more than the 9,000 garden demonstrators actually enrolled, and many more than the 5,000,000 jars of food reported by the women actually enrolled. Just as effectively, farm people who do not actually work with the farm agent or home demonstration agent pick up other improved farm and home practices from their neighbors who are demonstrators.

The 45,000 farm youngsters enrolled in 1934 in 1,552 4-H Clubs came from 26,922 farm homes. Trained and inspired by county farm and home demonstration agents, Oklahoma 4-H Club members have established enviable records in the national contests open to 4-H Club members from all states. Winnings last year included the President of the United States trophy for best 4-H boys' project work, the national girls' canning championship, the national poultry judging championship team, and many lesser victories. Rural leadership is rising from the ranks of these Oklahoma farm boys and girls. No other state has had as many winners in the national 4-H all-around or "leadership" contest.

Sound farming and good home making come out of the Extension program of balancing and diversifying farm enterprises, keeping up fertility of the soil, improving crops and livestock, business-like keeping of records and forward-looking marketing, raising feed and food at home, making the best family life possible out of home resources, "living at home," bringing up boys and girls capable of making and enjoying a good living on the farm.

Relief records during the past few difficult years bear this out. Almost no farm families which have worked with county farm and home demonstration agents, and whose boys and girls have been 4-H Club members, have had to seek public relief. Among those who have had to be assisted by the public, on the other hand, are very few who have ever accepted the service of Extension workers.

On 102,032 farms and in 39,132 homes there were definite improvements in practices reported as a result of the Extension program in 1934. In 1934, Extension agents helped 3,683 farmers to develop supplementary income and 1,086 families were helped similarly through developing home industries.

Reducing cash expenditures necessary for living or farm operations releases funds for better homes, clothing and education. In 1935, Extension workers helped 22,359 farmers in this way through exchange of labor or machinery, barter of products, production of a larger part of the home food supply or repair of their own machinery and buildings. In 5,824 homes, similar adjustments were assisted.



Systematic planning to meet the family's food needs is part of the Extension Service home demonstration program that helped to put more than 5,000,000 cans of food on farm pantry shelves last year. This demonstrator, Mrs. John Bauman, Jackson county, has canned food, stored vegetables and home-made cheese in her basement.

Jobless urban families going back to the soil were helped to establish themselves in 866 cases and 2,064 families on relief were helped to become self-supporting.

Upon only a few of the activities of the Extension Service can a dollars and cents value definitely be placed. However, terracing and erosion control work of the agents in 1934 was estimated to have a value of \$528,811, about \$2.50 an acre for the land reported terraced. This seems conservative in view of the fact that landowners in a survey of several states set an average

of \$8 an acre as the value terracing added to their land.

Canning and other food preservation work actually reported to agents was valued at \$1,202,907. Clothing made or renovated by demonstrators adds \$104,426. Home management improvement services were valued at \$78,623. Besides the \$211,570 worth of garden products canned by 9,000 actually enrolled in gardening (many more were assisted), \$360,120 worth of vegetables were consumed fresh and \$150,050 worth stored fresh.

The total of these items alone—and they are only a few of the activities in which Extension workers have aided farm families—runs above two million dollars.

In order to make most economical use of their time and travel, Extension workers try to work as much as possible with organized groups of farm people, but the visits to individual farms and homes have not been neglected. In 1934, agents made 75,000 personal visits to 51,000 farms and farm homes—a fourth of all the farm homes in the state—to give direct assistance to farm people in their practical problems.

A few comparative figures illustrate the growth of the response to their program which Extension workers have met in 1934.

In 1933 they wrote 165,000 personal letters in reply to requests for information; in 1934 the number rose to 365,000.

In 1933 they answered 183,000 telephone calls for information; in 1934 they received 309,000 such calls.

In 1933 the agents received 474,000 personal calls at their offices for information; in 1934 the number was 1,604,000.

In 1933 the agents distributed 505,000 bulletins dealing with farming and home-making; in 1934 they distributed 657,000 bulletins.

These figures indicate only a few high points of a program which reaches every phase of farming and home making. They do indicate that farm people have increasingly appreciated and profited by such services, that they will continue to do so, and that as it becomes possible to enlarge the Extension Service personnel and program, the demand for this constructive assistance will absorb the full capacity to render it.