MINUTES OF THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

to the

STATE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Ontario, California
October 7, 1955

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 55, Homemaking Building, Chaffey High School, by President Waldo W. Weeth. Members of the Advisory Committee present were:

Waldo W. Weeth, Coalinga
Joseph Russ, Ferndale
Eugene Boone, Modesto
Harvey McDougal, Collinsville
J. J. Anderholt, Holtville
Volney H. Craig, Ventura
Robert Couchman, San Jose
Carl Avrit, Chico

Others present were:

Byron J. McMahon, Chief, State Bureau of Agricultural Education, Sacramento.
E. W. Everett, Assistant Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Education, Sacramento.
A. G. Rinn, Regional Supervisor, Bureau of Agricultural Education, Fresno.
M. K. Luther, Regional Supervisor, Bureau of Agricultural Education, Los Angeles.
K. B. Cutler, Regional Supervisor, Bureau of Agricultural Education, Los Angeles.
G. P. Couper, Special Supervisor, Bureau of Agricultural Education, San Luis Obispo.
Dr. D. B. Milliken, District Superintendent, Ontario High School District.

Also present during the day were:

Principal Ernest Payne, Chaffey High School.
Arnold Christen, Director of Vocational Agriculture, Chaffey High School.
Ivan Mayfield, Instructor of Vocational Agriculture, Chaffey High School.
Ernest Heald, Instructor of Vocational Agriculture, Chaffey High School.
Rex Wignall, former head of Vocational Agriculture, Chaffey High School, and now in charge of vocational counseling, Chaffey Junior College.
Charles Perrin, former instructor of Vocational Agriculture, Chaffey High School, now retired.

The Committee and others present were welcomed to Chaffey High School by Dr. Milliken, who then discussed the status of vocational agriculture in the curricula of both Chaffey Junior College and Chaffey High School. He said that his District is becoming rapidly urbanized and that the agriculture field is rapidly contracting. To justify offering instruction in vocational agriculture, there must be a sufficient enrollment. Thus far, adequate enrollment has been maintained. In the ten southern junior colleges, while general enrollment has increased greatly, the number taking vocational agriculture has decreased.

Dr. Milliken said he considered vocational agriculture to be character building by nature as well as vocational instruction, differing significantly from other vocational instruction in that regard. He discussed the factors considered by administrators in

selecting the types of vocational instruction to be offered where commerce and industry are both expanding and changing.

Mr. McMahon introduced the two new members of the Committee, Mr. Anderhold and Mr. Craig, stating that each had been highly recommended for membership on the Committee.

Mr. Couchman read the minutes of the meeting of March 18 held in Coalinga. They were ordered approved as read.

Bureau developments since the last meeting were reported by Mr. McMahon. He said the new reimbursement system has been put into effect. It is based on the premise that enrollment in vocational agriculture classes is lower than in other vocational classes, that costs of instruction exceed those of many other courses offered, that project supervision necessitates travel by instructors, and that teachers of vocational agriculture are required to work during the summer. Each of these involves added costs, which the reimbursement partially offsets.

He said that additional funds were made available during 1954-55 and increased the allocation per school by about $200. An additional allocation of perhaps $100 per school will be available for the current school year. The average allocation per school participating will be about $1400.

Mr. McMahon said the Bureau will have the opportunity on October 22 of presenting certain of the objectives of vo-ag training to an Interim Legislative Committee on Fairs and Shows. The fair and show season was very successful, the State Fair exhibit by Future Farmers being the largest ever presented.

This year, the Bureau set up its program of work so as to project it for the next five years, with the realization that some questions cannot be answered except on a year-to-year basis.

Mr. Cutler then presented a discussion of the problem of establishing general agricultural classes on the secondary level. He cited California's great population growth and the shift from agriculture to industry such as has taken place in the Los Angeles area. Production of tree crops, field crops, and meat animals is declining, while poultry, milk, truck crop, and ornamental horticulture production is being maintained or increased. School facilities are far short of needs.

The tendency, under these circumstances, is for enrollment in vocational agriculture to decrease. Where that occurs, additional students are routed into vocational agriculture to maintain teacher loads. When a large percentage of such students do not or cannot have projects, the program deteriorates.

Mr. Cutler said that it is recognized that there is need to train students for fields related to agriculture in which the knowledge of agriculture is essential. At present the agricultural colleges are supplying only one-half of the 15,000 persons needed yearly in fields related to agriculture.

In the south, the problem of increased enrollment is being dealt with in several ways, Mr. Cutler continued. The Los Angeles School District has five vo-ag programs and 63 general agricultural programs in effect. Students unfitted for vocational agriculture are routed into general agriculture. In those schools having vocational agriculture, a splendid job is being done, and in the field of general agriculture an equally fine job.

About one-half of the schools in the south have school farm facilities. The purpose of these, originally to serve as farm laboratories, is being gradually broadened to provide for cooperative farm projects. While individual projects are encouraged, he said, cooperative projects in which participants gain experience in financing, in organizing, and in actual work provide excellent substitutes for individual projects.

Those on the Bureau staff recognize they must give assistance to teachers of general agriculture. At present, staff members are working on a guide for teachers of general agriculture. Mr. Cutler said that vo-ag teachers are working with nurserymen to develop work opportunities for vo-ag graduates. He thought that vo-ag departments received boys of exceptional talent as well as those of limited abilities, commenting that vo-ag teachers are trained to make useful individuals of these latter.

The meeting was then recessed to permit an inspection of the high school farm during which Mr. Christen, Mr. Mayfield, and Mr. Heald described facilities and different phases of the school's agricultural program.

The group then went to the cafeteria of Chaffey Junior College for lunch.

Upon resumption of the Committee's meeting following lunch, Mr. Weeth raised the question as to the percentage of vo-ag graduates qualifying for entrance in a four-year college, and the percentage of those whose vo-ag training is terminal.

This led to a general discussion of the entrance requirements of the major four-year universities, the State colleges, and the junior colleges. It was reported that entrance requirements of the University of California are expected to be modified so that students of exceptional ability may enter regardless of whether they have completed the ususal course requirements. It was also reported that a recommendation is being made to the Board of Regents that a two-year program leading to the degree of Associate in Arts be set up. During the first year, a student seeking this degree might change his course of study and enroll for a four-year degree course. Provision is also being made at the Davis campus for an entering student to make up his deficiencies in entrance requirements while carrying on his college studies.

Mr. McMahon raised the question as to whether courses in general agriculture should be offered to prevent dilution of the vo-ag program to the disadvantage of the boy with real vocational interest in agriculture. This led to a consideration of the adequacy of the vo-ag instruction.

Mr. Craig said that young men are not attracted to citrus production unless they have an interest beyond that developed during their vo-ag training. Mr. Boone commented that he had employed two young men with junior college training who proved very valuable. Mr. Anderholdt felt that many boys are receiving good training in vo-ag but that they need additional training in business practices and accounting.

Mr. McDougal remarked that "you can't train a boy for every job opportunity, but you can train him to think."

Mr. Craig stated that his firm sows, packs, and ships citrus products, and in so doing employs three classes of workers: common laborers, supervisors, and technicians. Their biggest problem is to secure satisfactory help for the supervisory jobs. Mr. Anderholt mentioned that in the Imperial Valley it is difficult to secure satisfactory help for foremen since such men need, in addition to the agricultural training and experience, familiarity with the Spanish language.

Mr. Everett then asked the question, "Should we be attempting to get more vo-ag students who can farm successfully, or should we be trying to get a larger percentage of vo-ag graduates who can qualify for college entrance than is true of a cross-section of all students?" He distributed a summary bearing on this subject. This dealt with the varying entrance requirements of the major universities, the State colleges, and junior colleges. On the basis of a sampling, which was admittedly incomplete, Everett said that from 20 to 30 percent of vo-ag graduates would qualify for entrance to Stanford or the University of California, 35 to 60 percent would qualify for entrance to the State colleges, and all would qualify for entrance to the junior colleges. He added that these figures are meaningless without having comparable figures for all high school graduates.

Mr. Everett said that in general high school vo-ag programs are so designed that graduates with good marks can meet college entrance subject requirements.

In discussing the probable success in college of vo-ag graduates, he said that student ability is of greater significance than the subjects taken in high school. He cited data showing that students having an I.Q. of 110 or better generally will graduate from college, those with an I.Q. of 95 to 109 tend to drop out in the first two years of college, and those with an I.Q. below 94 generally do not meet college entrance requirements. He said that generally on the basis of I.Q. vo-ag students tend to be representative of a cross-section of all students, or perhaps somewhat lower because there are only boys in the vo-ag program and that girls generally tend to be better students in high school than do boys.

Mr. Weeth said he had hoped that the regional supervisors might be able to say to a vo-ag teacher that unless a certain percentage of his graduates were prepared for college entrance then either he was not doing an adequate job or he was being assigned students of below-average ability. Both Mr. Everett and Mr. Rinn said the matter was not as simple as this, that there is a great variation from school to school in the number of boys who are interested in further education. Mr. Rinn said that in his region, a survey showed that from as few as 4 per cent to as many as 70 per cent of the vo-ag students in different schools were interested in higher education.

Mr. Cutler said that a survey made in his region showed that from 16.6 to 57 per cent of the vo-ag students wanted further education. Of these, 31.69 per cent wanted to go to junior college and 29.48 per cent to four-year college.

Mr. McMahon recalled that the Smith-Hughes Act passed in 1917 was intended to assist boys 14 years or older who wanted to go into production agriculture. Since many vo-ag students cannot plan to go into production agriculture now, he said, perhaps there should be a shift in emphasis with the training being directed toward related occupations.

Mr. Boone then moved, Mr. Anderholt seconding, that this matter be held over for discussion at a subsequent meeting so that Mr. McMahon and the Bureau could bring in more specific figures as their recommendation of the percentages of vo-ag graduates who would qualify for college entrance in each of the three groups--four-year major universities, State colleges, and junior colleges--as the result of a sampling of 1955 graduates from a number of high schools. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Everett proposed that provision be made in the vo-ag department rating sheet for scoring a vo-ag department on the basis of the number of graduates qualifying for college entrance.

Mr. Luther then presented a discussion of the problem of vocational agriculture in the junior college. He said that the junior college has become a most important unit in the educational set-up. However, he commented, some view it as a college and others as a secondary school in which instruction is terminal. Under the Smith-Hughes Act, only that vocational training can be subsidized that is below college level.

Of the 62 junior colleges in California, 33 offer some type of agricultural instruction, 28 of them considering their offerings to be vocational in nature. Nine of these receive some reimbursement for their vo-ag classes.

Mr. Luther cited studies made by the State Department of Education of the courses offered by junior colleges, the types of occupations needing junior college graduates, and the background types of courses offered in agriculture.

He said that junior college instruction has three purposes: 1. Terminal training; 2. Instruction that is parallel to or preparatory for advanced college work; and 3. Training for living, as in ethics and in human relationships.

He then listed 12 advantages of junior college training that had been set forth by junior college administrators. He suggested that each person make his own evaluation of them. He listed them as follows:

1. The student receives his agricultural education in the immediate area in which he will use it.

2. The student may begin farming while still in school.

3. Supervision of instruction on the home farm project is possible when the junior college and home are close together.

4. The junior college, a locally controlled institution, can adapt its curriculum to local farming practices.

5. The agricultural education is kept practical. Instructors are in constant touch with successful farmers.

6. Farm practices are improved in the community through adult courses.

7. Classes are smaller than in college, therefore training is more effective.

8. More community citizens have the advantage of advanced training because of the proximity of the college.

9. There is greater opportunity to place graduates in employment, at least locally.

10. It can serve an exploratory or pre-vocational purpose.

11. The instruction can be offered at less expense to taxpayers and the students than in four-year colleges.

12. An opportunity for further training is provided for the student who cannot handle degree work.

He then listed six problems confronting the Bureau with regard to vo-ag instruction in junior colleges as follows:

1. Has the Bureau a responsibility to help the junior colleges maintain vo-ag enrollment?

2. Should the Bureau continue to offer services to junior colleges offering vo-ag classes, regardless of whether their instruction is of a terminal or transfer nature? How best could such service be provided?

3. Should the Bureau recommend that reimbursement of vo-ag classes in junior colleges be discontinued?

4. Are junior college adult classes the solution to our adult problem in vocational agriculture?

5. What should the Bureau's position be in regard to promotion of Young Farmer programs on the junior college level?

6. What should our long-time program be to make agricultural instruction on the junior college level truly vocational?

In the general discussion that followed, it was the consensus of those present that better vo-ag instruction on the junior college level would be provided if a few strong regional junior colleges were to specialize in this field and the other junior colleges would give up vo-ag instruction altogether. Mr. Cutler cited the work being done at Mount San Antonio College. Mr. Wignall said that the requirements of a good agricultural program cannot be met in the small junior college.

Mr. Boone proposed that the Advisory Committee seriously consider recommending that reimbursement of junior colleges offering vo-ag classes be discontinued. It was then agreed that this matter would head the agenda at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Boone then invited the Committee to hold its next meeting in the Modesto Junior College. It was moved by Mr. McDougal, seconded by Mr. Russ, and carried that this invitation be accepted. It was then agreed that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee be held April 13, 1956.

The Committee approved Mr. Boone's proposal that the Modesto Junior College Advsory Committee on Vocational Agriculture have lunch with the State Advisory Committee in Modesto at the April 13 meeting.

The topic "The Problem of Young Farmer and Adult Programs in Agriculture" which was scheduled for discussion at this meeting was held over for presentation at the Modesto meeting.

Mr. Weeth expressed to the administrators and vo-ag instructors of both Chaffey Junior College and Chaffey High School the Committee's appreciation of the invitation to meet in Ontario and of the courtesies extended during our meeting in Ontario.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectufllly submitted,

Robert Couchman
Secretary