

MINUTES OF THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
to the  
STATE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Rio Vista, California

October 5, 1956

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Waldo Weeth at 9:30 a.m. in the conference room of Rio Vista Joint Union High School. Those present were:

Advisory Committee Members

Waldo Weeth, Coalinga  
Eugene Boone, Modesto  
Harvey McDougal, Collinsville  
Carl Avrit, Chico  
Joe Russ, Jr., Ferndale  
Robert Couchman, San Jose

Bureau of Agricultural Education

Byron J. McMahon, chief, Sacramento  
E. W. Everett, assistant chief, Sacramento  
R. H. Pedersen, special supervisor, Fresno  
George P. Couper, special supervisor, San Luis Obispo  
Howard F. Chappell, regional supervisor, Sacramento  
S. S. Sutherland, teacher-trainer, U. C., Davis

Rio Vista Joint Union High School

Dan Simpson, instructor, vocational agriculture

Mr. Simpson, who has been an instructor in vocational agriculture in this school for twenty-seven years, welcomed the group on behalf of Mr. Charles R. Hale, superintendent, who was unable to be present. He said that the department, which was started in 1936, had produced twenty-eight State Farmers and several American Farmers.

The high school district, Mr. Simpson said, covers 400 square miles, some of which is marginal agricultural land and some highly productive. He mentioned that milo yields are as high as 7,000 pounds per acre. Boys in the Voag department, he said, have projects in sugar beets, dairy cattle, sheep, and beef cattle principally. The department has a strong shop program in which the students take a serious interest.

The minutes of the meeting of April 13, 1956, were then read and approved. Mr. Couper, taking note of the reference in the minutes to Mr. McMahon's remarks about juvenile delinquency, reported that a book of fiction for juvenile readers has been published in which a FFA member joins a juvenile gang. He and others voiced their feeling that references such as this are unfortunate.

Mr. McMahon read a letter from Mr. J. J. Anderholt, Advisory Committee member, saying that his campaigning for the State Assembly prevented his attendance, which he regretted. He extended an invitation to the Advisory Committee to hold its next meeting in Holtville around March 1, 1957. After discussion by the Committee, it was moved by Mr. Couchman, seconded by Mr. Russ, that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee be held in Holtville on March 4, 1957. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. McMahon reported that the Bureau's new reimbursement system was used for the first time this year and that school administrators appear well pleased with it. The amount of reimbursement is based upon the Voag instructor's travel cost in supervising home projects, his summer service, and the lower class load. The aim is, he said, for the State to pay one-half the additional costs of vocational instruction, as funds become available. Of the 233 schools having instruction in vocational agriculture, thirteen schools received one-half the additional costs, the average for all of the schools being 28 per cent of additional costs.

Mr. Everett commented that no additional funds are available for reimbursement under the new systems, the amount being \$355,000.

Mr. Chappell pointed out, in connection with remarks about the lighter teacher load in Voag classes, that the teacher's time spent in home project visits is not taken into consideration. He suggested that Voag instructors submit a weekly report of time spent on such project supervision.

Mr. McMahon and Mr. Everett then discussed the George-Barden Act appropriations which in the last several years have been increased from \$20 million annually to \$29 million annually. This increase has provided California with \$330,000 in additional funds for training in homemaking, business education, trade and industry, and vocational agriculture. Mr. McMahon said that a study is to be made of the need for workers in occupations related to agriculture in the State. What is sought is a one-year study of all types of vocational fields, including vocational agriculture, so as to anticipate the needs for workers in from ten to twenty years hence. His opinion was that the main training problem is in general agriculture, not vocational agriculture.

Mr. McMahon reported on his participation in a conference and plant inspection sponsored by the Thor Power Tool Company at Huntley, Illinois. The firm has established a research center to develop tools and equipment to serve farmers. He reported on conversations with others at the affair on integration in the South, on Midwest farm economy, and the Federal farm program.

Mr. Sutherland requested suggestions as to where information might be obtained on the sellers of farm real estate and buyers. He was advised to get in touch with the National Farm Loan Associations, the California Real Estate Association, agriculture teachers who have been in districts for a long time, and to see such newspapers as the Modesto Bee.

Mr. Everett then discussed THE PROBLEM OF YOUNG FARMER AND ADULT PROGRAMS IN AGRICULTURE handing each person present a prepared outline of his talk. This dealt with the Bureau's responsibility for such programs, the funds available for instruction, and the attitude of administrators. He said that while the need for such a program exists in many areas, the demand for an instructional program does not develop spontaneously.

He then discussed the responsibilities of Agricultural Extension, farm organizations, growers cooperatives, and the public schools in meeting this need. Admitting that the present program is inadequate, he pointed out that teachers are not allowed time for this kind of instruction, that many teachers are fearful of working with adults, and that administrators are not interested in undertaking such a program. He outlined the activities of the Young Farmers, of which there are not forty-eight chapters having a total of about 1,000 members.

A general discussion of this problem followed during which participants reviewed their own experiences or observations on adult classes of instruction. There was general agreement that in some areas need for organized instruction exists, that when a training program is provided interest often tends to wane, that funds for such programs are limited, and that important as follow-up work with the class members is, it is difficult and often impossible to provide for it.

It was the consensus of the group that under present circumstances, the objective should be to do the best possible job on the in-school program, expanding it wherever possible, and the Voag teacher work with Young Farmers and out-of-school groups as real needs arise in the community and as the teacher is able to devote time to these out-of-school groups without harm to the in-school program.

Mr. Everett commented that at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee Mr. Avrit had asked the question as to how the Voag program in a high school could be strengthened where the Voag teacher is not doing a satisfactory job. Mr. Everett said that he felt it inadvisable to broaden the Bureau's field of activity until this question had been answered satisfactorily. Mr. Avrit remarked that while the question had not been answered, some progress has been made in that direction.

The meeting was then recessed for lunch, the group being the guests of the local FFA chapter. The luncheon had been prepared by Homemaking teachers and mothers of chapter members, with steaks furnished by Mr. McDougal. The appreciation of the Advisory Committee was expressed to all individuals who had assisted by Mr. Weeth.

The entire group then went by automobile to Collinsville to be shown the McDougal Livestock Company operations by Mr. McDougal. He said that 41,000 head of beef were fed out by the Company last year, there being usually about 15,000 head of beef on the place at a time. Forty men are employed to feed and handle the livestock. Sixteen of these men are heads of families, for whom housing is provided. Feedstuffs are purchased within 50 miles, including the entire beet pulp output of the sugar mill at Clarksburg. The beet pulp is barged down the Sacramento River and transferred to a trench silo of 75,000 tons capacity. Grain storage silos have a capacity of 5,000 tons, but monthly grain usage runs to about 3,000 tons. The monthly feed bill averages around \$247,000. Feed costs run from 22 to 28 cents per pound of gain. The feeding charge is actual cost plus 10 per cent, plus 4 cents per head per day. This charge is about the same as it was twenty years ago, reflecting the increase in the efficiency of feeding that has offset rise in labor costs.

Upon reconvening the Committee, members then presented reports on developments in their fields of interest:

Mr. Russ...Incentives to remain in the sheep business have resulted from the government's incentive payment on wool, on which \$5 million was spent this year. Producers are allocating 1 cent a pound on lambs sold for wool and meat promotion. During last year these funds included \$800,000 for lamb promotion and \$600,000 for wool promotion. A local lamb promotion in Denver increased lamb consumption by 50 per cent. Seventy-five per cent of lamb consumption is in the East. As consumption of lamb and wool increases, it is possible that more people will be drawn into the sheep business. Seventy-five per cent of the nation's lambs are produced in the West.

Mr. Avrit...The dairy business is looking up. The Los Angeles market is currently short about fifteen tankers of milk a day, and little surplus exists in Central California. Grower returns for milk are now 23 cents per 100 pounds higher in the North and in the South. As the result of a recent hearing before the Bureau of Milk Control, a 1 1/2-cent increase in returns had been passed on to producers. The GIC is attempting to organize dairy farm employees. The University of California, Davis, is now working on the development of a completely new type of milking machine that is expected to greatly reduce mastitis in dairy herds. Dairy herds are tending to increase in size.

Mr. McDougal...The prepackaging of meats is rapidly increasing in volume and will be a general practice in five years. Some meat packers are introducing automation in their killing plants, such as in the removal of hides. Packers have not made enough money in recent years to remodel packing plants, however. Prepacking is likely to be done by the meat packer, because he can do it more cheaply than can the retail butcher. There has been a tremendous improvement in the quality of beef cattle in California in recent years. Such practices as pregnancy testing of heifers will become more widely adopted to permit prompt slaughter of infertile heifers. As far as FFA and 4-H livestock projects are concerned, the stock should be purchased at regular commercial rates, and so should the feed. The project should be conducted on a regular commercial basis.

Mr. Boone...Legal requirements governing the employment of juveniles make it difficult to provide jobs for youths under the age of 18. While such youths are permitted to operate motor vehicles, on public highways, they are not permitted to work around so-called hazardous machinery. This prevents juveniles from being suitably employed when such employment would be very beneficial to them as a training experience.

Mr. Couchman...There is an increasing demand for mechanization in the harvesting of many deciduous fruit and nut crops, such as nuts, prunes, olives, and raisin and wine grapes. Greater skills are required where mechanical equipment is used, but growers see in such equipment the best hope for reducing harvesting costs. In the handling of perishable fresh fruits, improved methods of pre-cooling and refrigeration are being developed, the use of which will extend the shipping and shelf life of these products. The strawberry industry is expanding tremendously in California, with production in 1956 expected to be about 50 per cent greater than the record-breaking 1955 crop having an on-farm value of \$33,698,000.

Mr. Weath...Producers of field crops are adopting unique double-cropping practices, such as sowing grain in seed alfalfa fields. On 600 acres so cropped, 3.7 tons of barley hay was produced without any loss in alfalfa seed production. Grain yields under this cropping program have been around 3,600 pounds per acre. Meanwhile, alfalfa seed yields run about 500 to 600 pounds per acre. West Side farmers are adopting sprinkler irrigation, finding they can cover about double the acreage with the same water supply. Regardless of soil type, sprinklers permit maintenance of the irrigation schedule. Loss of livestock being fattened with a ground barley supplement led to the discovery that excessive hardness of the water predisposes stock to greatly increase water consumption. Tests showed that on hot days, stock on hard water consume five times as much water as those on soft water. Molybdenum, which is much more readily taken up from the soil by some forage plants than others, has been found to be one cause of cattle scouring.

Mr. Sutherland then presented a preliminary summary of the findings in a study being made to determine the number and kinds of positions in California commercial and industrial firms in which training in agriculture is helpful or desirable. This study is to help in planning the courses of study in vocational agriculture offered in high schools and junior colleges. Thus far, 327 agricultural business firms in fourteen cities and towns have been approached, two trained interviewers interviewing the owners and managers. These firms employ about 25,000 person, one-fifth of whom require agricultural training. Employers indicated that training in agriculture for positions of different types would vary from high school vocational agriculture to a B.S. degree or graduate degree. A great number preferred employees who also had business training. Implications of the study thus far are that farming is not the only agricultural occupation, and that a combination of agricultural and business training for their prospective employees is desired by many employers.

Mr. Sutherland said that a more complete report on this study would be presented at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

On motion of Mr. Couchman, seconded by Mr. Russ, the Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation to Mr. Simpson and Mr. McDougal for their hospitality and their part in making the day's meeting interesting and worth while.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

*Robert Couchman*

Robert Couchman  
Secretary