

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

El Centro, California

March 4, 1957

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Waldo W. Weeth at 9:30 a.m. in the directors room of the Midwinter Fair, Brawley. Those present were:

Advisory Committee Members

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

Bureau of Agricultural Education

Byron J. McMahon, chief, Sacramento  
George P. Couper, special supervisor, San Luis Obispo  
M. K. Luther, regional supervisor, Los Angeles

Others

Ivan Newman, instructor, vo-ag, Imperial  
Kenneth Holmes, instructor, vo-ag, El Centro  
Max Johnson, instructor, vo-ag, El Centro  
Elvin Asher, instructor, vo-ag, Brawley  
Denzil Liston, instructor, vo-ag, Calexico  
Ed Van Dam, instructor, vo-ag, Holtville  
Dr. Nick Ittner, Meloland Station, University of California  
Dorman Stewart, manager, Midwinter Fair

Mr. Anderholt welcomed the Advisory Committee to the Imperial Valley and to the Midwinter Fair. He said this year is the 50th anniversary of the County. There are now a half-million acres under irrigation in Imperial County and 300,000 acres more to go under irrigation.

He said that the bulk of the field labor is performed by Mexican Nationals who come in under permits to work for a specific time and then return home to have their work permits renewed. Some workers live in Mexico and come into the United States to work during the day and return home at night, still having the old "crossing cards". Mr. Anderholt said that workers are paid 70 cents an hour, but that the fringe benefits including housing and transportation, etc., increase the cost to \$1 per hour. Crew foremen and tractor drivers are paid from \$1.30 to \$1.40 per hour.

Dr. Ittner described the research projects in livestock management being carried on under his direction at Meloland. He mentioned particularly the winter feed trials in which beef cattle are fed on green chopped alfalfa. Work was done last year on grain sorghum silages, but while these types produce only 15-16 tons forage per acre, the sugar sorghums yield up to 28 tons per acre. He described the experimental work on heat tolerances of livestock, grain rations to reduce body heat, open corral construction, and shallow water troughs.

Mr. Couchman summarized the minutes of the meeting of October 5, 1956 at Rio Vista.

Mr. McMahon stated that a summary of the reports given by Committee Members is being distributed to vocational agriculture teachers. He reported the retirement on February 1 of Robert Denbigh as regional supervisor and the appointment of Robert Pedersen to succeed Mr. Denbigh. Mr. Pedersen will have his headquarters in Berkeley.

Mr. McMahon then presented a report on behalf of Mr. E. W. Everett who was ill and unable to attend the Advisory Committee meeting. This was a follow-up of a report by Mr. S. S. Sutherland on a survey to determine the employment opportunities in business and industry for young men with training in vocational agriculture. He then discussed six questions with which the Bureau is concerned in planning the current vocational agriculture program for the next 10 years. Following are the six questions:

- (1) Is the vocational agriculture program training enough boys (and training them well enough) to meet the present day needs of production agriculture in California?
- (2) Is there a justifiable need for a program to provide instruction in agriculture for boys who will enter non-farm occupations which require training in agriculture? If needed, what should be included in the training and at what grade level should such training be offered?
- (3) What are valid criteria to be considered in the decision for the approval of a vocational agriculture program for reimbursement? (Or for discontinuing an existing program.)
- (4) What should be the objectives and content of courses in agriculture offered at the junior college level?
- (5) What is the need for vocational agriculture to promote and maintain young and adult farmer educational programs in agriculture?

- (6) Is there a justifiable need for instruction in general agriculture in the secondary school curriculum? If so, what should be the objectives and course content? At what grade level should it be offered?

In the general discussion that ensued, it was the consensus of Committee Members that instruction in vocational agriculture should be supplemented with instruction in business. The Committee then considered at length the question as to whether a program of this nature should be developed. It further considered the level at which instruction in "agri-business" should be given. It was moved by Mr. McDougal, seconded by Mr. Boone, and unanimously carried that the Advisory Committee recommend to the Board of Agricultural Education that instruction in "agri-business" be offered at the junior college level and in the senior year for terminal high school students, at such time as the proper program for high school seniors is available.

Fair Manager Stewart entered the meeting and welcomed those present to the Midwinter Fair. He called attention to the need to maintain Fair emphasis on agriculture and on the household arts. The meeting then recessed for luncheon and a tour of the Midwinter Fair exhibits.

On reconvening after luncheon, Chairman Weeth called for reports on agriculture trends by members of the Committee.

Mr. Avrit.... Dairy business in California is in the midst of a revolution. He said that formerly dairymen were organized only in the Southern part of the State. To establish stability in the industry, the Bureau of Milk Control was formed 20 years ago, resulting in the termination of milk price wars. He said that poor administration of the Milk Bureau since World War II had gotten dairymen into bad straits.

Recently dairymen in the South San Joaquin have formed a bargaining association with about 80 per cent of the dairymen signed up. Mr. Avrit was of the opinion that this program would spread rapidly to other areas and that it would be impossible for Northern California dairymen to remain out. He said the principal purposes of the bargaining association would be to control the milk surplus and to curb the development of new sources of grade A milk. He reported that 4,000 grade B milk producers went out of business during the year.

Mr. Russ.... Sheep in the Imperial Valley play an important part in determining the price of lambs in the rest of the State. A quarter of a million lambs are shipped into the Imperial Valley to be fed each winter and are put on the market in February and March. Milk-fed lambs from Northern California start coming on the market in March. If there is an oversupply in the Imperial Valley then the price is depressed for milk-fed lambs.

Northern California sheepmen have been trying to get Imperial feeders to grade out top lambs early so as to market the fat lambs before milk-fat lambs come on the market. The 30 to 40 feeders who handle most of the lambs in the Imperial Valley have raised \$30,000 to promote consumption of lamb in the Los Angeles market. This year the American Sheep Producers Council is also going to spend some money when Imperial lambs go to market.

Mr. McDougal.... The best thing that has happened in the beef industry is the reduction of one and one-half million head. Feeder cattle prices have been higher than those for fat cattle. There will be no cattle carryover on wheat stubble.

The first six weeks of this year brought increased volume of beef slaughter in both weight and numbers. The kill has been up and replacements down. Consignment selling is slackening off. It looks as though feeding operations are expanding in California even though the State has to import feed. More advances in livestock feeding has been made in the last 5 years than in the preceding 50 years. It appears that the industry will come up to January 1, 1958 with far fewer two-year old heifers. Cattlemen are again going to press for promotional legislation.

Mr. Anderholt... The feeding of sheep and cattle in the Imperial Valley has expanded greatly since before World War II. There were 25 to 30 feed lots before the war and now there are 100. Imperial County is believed to be the leading stock feeding county in the United States. It supplies 25 per cent of the kill in the Los Angeles market.

Urban growth in the Los Angeles area is crowding out small truck garden operators and a number of these are coming into the Imperial Valley. It is likely that this type of farming will continue to increase.

There is strong opposition among produce growers to any kind of a marketing order and the result is "we plant and grow all we can and we sell what we can".

Mr. Craig... The urbanization of the Coastal Plain in Los Angeles is squeezing out the farmer and he is moving elsewhere. Smog is becoming an increasing problem as crops show susceptibility to smog damage. Water pollution and shortage are acute problems and water costs are skyrocketing, as are foreign labor costs. Large expenditures are being made to mechanize operations both in the field and packing sheds. As a result, in citrus production and packing the number of workers has been reduced by about 65 per cent. It appears that only a limited time remains for agriculture in the coastal area.

Mr. Couchman... Recent research on food consumption shows that consumers use about 1,500 pounds per year and this quantity has not changed materially since 1910. With rising incomes, consumers have shifted from cereals, potatoes, and fats to more animal products. The most significant change has been in the increase of expenditure for food services such as preparation for consumption, new packaging, and new methods of handling. The total consumption of food in the United States is almost in direct ratio to the increase in population. Between 1935 and 1955, while real per capita expenditures for food increased 68 per cent, there was only a 16 per cent increase in the consumption of farm food products. Commodity groups that fail to promote their products are falling behind in consumer use.

Mr. Boone... California produced 27 per cent more frozen fruits and vegetables in 1956 than in 1955. The increase for frozen fruit was 30 per cent for the State and 36 per cent for the United States. As a consequence, selling prices are down 7 per cent on the average. The frozen food industry is energetically trying to increase its share of the food dollar. He described the present "debacle" as a blessing in disguise and said that his own firm would be increasing its production and striving to reduce production costs. Frozen food processors feel that growers have been making unduly large profits on products for freezing and that major freezers have been going increasingly into production.

Mr. Weeth... Full-scale field tests of sprinkler irrigation in comparison with surface irrigation have been carried on with cooperation of the University of California. The purpose of the trial has been to determine comparative costs, relative water requirements, labor requirements, differences in cultural practices, differences in crop yields, and any changes in the physical structures of the soil. A 320-acre block planted in cotton, alfalfa, and milo interseeded with barley for seed production was sprinkler irrigated. A comparable area in similar crops was surface irrigated. Preliminary data on these trials shows that labor costs are

approximately the same for the two types of irrigation, power costs are approximately the same, water savings on the sprinkler irrigated fields offset the increased power usage as compared with surface irrigation. Because of more uniform application of water by sprinkling, significant increases in cotton yield were obtained. Final data on this full-scale field test is now being prepared by the University.

It is likely that from 75,000 to 100,000 acres will be sprinkler irrigated on the West side of the San Joaquin this year.

The Advisory Bureau then discussed a tentative time and place of meeting next fall. Mr. Russ invited the Committee to meet at Ferndale. It was proposed that the meeting be held sometime in the first two weeks in October with October 4 and 11 as possible dates. Mr. McMahon will communicate with members of the Committee later in the summer to determine their wishes as to place and time of meeting.

Mr. McMahon then reported that the terms of Mr. Weeth, Mr. McDougal, and Mr. Couchman had expired and that Mr. Weeth and Mr. McDougal were retiring from the Committee. He requested Committee members to suggest names of possible successors.

Mr. Weeth then called for nominations for Committee Chairman. Mr. Boone was chosen unanimously without opposition to succeed Mr. Weeth. Mr. Avrit was then unanimously chosen vice-chairman, and Mr. Couchman was unanimously re-elected Committee Secretary.

On behalf of the Bureau of Agricultural Education, Mr. McMahon then presented Certificates of Appreciation to Mr. Weeth and Mr. McDougal.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Couchman  
Secretary