

MINUTES OF THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

to the

STATE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Scotia, California

October 4, 1957

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eugene Boone at 8:30 a.m. in the Scotia Hotel. Those present were:

Advisory Committee Members

Eugene Boone, Modesto
Carl J. Avrit, Chico
Joseph J. Anderholt, Holtville
Volney H. Craig, Jr., Ventura
Joe Russ, Jr., Ferndale
Cyrille O. Faure, Porterville
Fred W. Rohnert, Hollister
Robert Couchman, San Jose

Bureau of Agricultural Education

Byron J. McMahon, chief, Sacramento
E. W. Everett, assistant chief, Sacramento
E. H. Pedersen, regional supervisor, Berkeley
George P. Couper, special Supervisor, San Luis Obispo

Others

Roland Wentzel, instructor, vo-ag, Fortuna
A. L. Fearrien, president
Humboldt County Cattlemen's Association, Hydesville

The new Advisory Committee members were introduced by Chairman Boone and by Mr. McMahon. Mr. McMahon stated that Mr. Faure had been active in the Porterville High School FFA while a high school student and following his military service has become a leading breeder of Polled Herefords. He is now secretary-treasurer of the California Polled Hereford Association. Mr. Rohnert, owner of the Waldo Rohnert Seed Company, Hollister, and an orchardist, was awarded an honorary State FFA degree in 1956. Mr. McMahon, for the benefit of the new members, reviewed the background of the other members of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Wentzel, on behalf of Mr. George Badura, district superintendent, Fortuna High School, welcomed the Advisory Committee to Humboldt County. He stated that the vo-ag department in Fortuna High School has two instructors and an enrollment of 85 boys. He said the department is well supplied with equipment and the program has been generously supported by the School Board. Principal student farm projects are in dairying, beef cattle, and potatoes, but the department's major emphasis is on dairying.

Supplementing Mr. Wentzel's remarks, Mr. Russ also welcomed the group. He reported that there are four vo-ag departments in Humboldt County High Schools. He said that 70 per cent of the County's income is from forest products and that since timber is found in range land areas, training in forestry--lumber production--is considered as important as vo-ag instruction.

Mr. Wentzel reported that the Bureau of Agricultural Education last summer presented a forestry course for vo-ag teachers at Humboldt State College.

The minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee of March 4, at El Centro were reviewed by Mr. Couchman.

Referring to the report made by Mr. Weeth at the El Centro meeting on the increasing use of sprinkler irrigation in the Coalinga area, Mr. Boone described recent sprinkler irrigation developments in the Montpelier district in Stanislaus County. This has been traditionally a grain growing district of gently rolling hills. Farmers are now installing sprinkler irrigation systems and are producing alfalfa, dry beans, and Ladino clover. No leveling is done. The irrigation water is obtained from deep wells and the sprinkler system is so managed as to secure good water penetration without runoff. He reported also that sprinkler irrigation has completely supplanted furrow irrigation in the coastal areas of Santa Cruz County in the production of Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and broccoli. (Note: A mimeographed report on the sprinkler irrigation trials on Waldo Weeth's place is available, and copies can be obtained from Dr. Verne H. Scott, Department of Irrigation, University of California, Davis.)

Mr. McMahon reported the retirement of Robert Denbigh as regional supervisor and the appointment of R. H. Pedersen to succeed him. He also reported the retirement of Howard Chappell, regional supervisor, and that he has been succeeded by Dave Graf, former vo-ag instructor at Williams High School.

Mr. McMahon advised the Committee that legislation during the last year had been generally favorable to vocational education. He said, however, that federal aid to education, particularly in schoolhouse construction, is now involved in the segregation controversy, and that existing federal aid may be threatened if segregationists insist on rejecting all federal school aid.

Mr. Everett stated that reimbursements this year averaged but \$1,430 per school, and this sum represents only 28 per cent of the excess costs of maintaining vo-ag classes. The State contribution to reimbursement is far larger than the federal contribution.

Mr. Pittman directed the Congressional Bureau of all Federal grants to states that is now in progress. Two Committee reports, one on the favorable aspects of federal aid and one on the unfavorable aspects, are scheduled to be submitted to the Congress in January. Mr. McMahon said he would advise members of the Committee as to the findings of these two Congressional Committees.

The Committee then discussed whether or not it would be preferable for the state to retain the funds now paid to the federal government for federal school aid purposes or for the state to carry on its own program independently. Mr. Everett pointed out that if federal grants in aid were discontinued there would be no U. S. Office of Education. He cited advantages of over-all supervision and the coordination of the vocational education program.

Mr. McMahon reported that enrollment is declining in agricultural colleges all over the United States. He mentioned particularly the decline in the number of trainees in the dairy industry. Mr. Rohnert mentioned that while California is the most important seed growing area in the world, no organized instruction in seed technology is offered in the state.

A general discussion of this problem ensued, after which Chairman Boone suggested that each member bring to the next Committee meeting a written report of the job opportunities existing in the industries with which he is in close contact, and the training needed to prepare for them.

Mr. Everett explained to the Committee that the whole vocational education program stems from the Smith-Hughes and the George-Barden Acts. To receive funds from these Acts, a state must have a State Plan. Such State Plans are adopted for a five-year period. The State Plan is in effect a contract with the federal government. The California Bureau is now in the process of developing a new State Plan and the Bureau desires to have it take into account the changes taking place in agriculture.

The proposed California State Plan must first be approved by the State Department of Education and then must have the approval of the U. S. Office of Education. It covers qualifications of supervisory personnel and of teachers, and stipulates what the program of instruction in high schools will be. Two points of controversy have arisen: (1) that vocational instruction must be of less than college grade; and (2) who should be permitted to take vo-ag education. Since junior college education is expanding greatly, the Bureau wishes to be permitted to offer instruction in junior colleges. The issue arises over the fact that if credits earned for junior college classes are acceptable to the University, then the work is of college grade. As to the second point, the U. S. Office of Education has the view that vo-ag instruction should be given only to boys who are farming or preparing to farm, and its interpretation would eliminate the boys planning to become farm advisors or vo-ag teachers. The Bureau has proposed the following definition of those who are eligible for vo-ag instruction: "students who are farming, preparing to farm, or preparing for occupations in which a knowledge of agriculture is essential."

On motion of Mr. Russ, seconded by Mr. Craig, the Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that the Bureau propose this broadened definition for adoption by the U. S. Office of Education in connection with California's State Plan.

Mr. McMahon then reviewed for the Advisory Committee recent developments in the pilot programs for instruction in agri-business. Four junior colleges now have pilot programs in effect, and regular instruction is offered at Mt. San Antonio, Bakersfield, Modesto, and Shasta Junior Colleges. Some work in this field is already being offered at California State Polytechnic College at San Dimas, the University of California at Davis, and the University of California at Los Angeles.

Mr. McMahon reported further on the job opportunity survey made by S. S. Sutherland and G. E. Thompson of the University of California at Davis. He presented members of the Committee with a summary of the findings on agricultural education.

Chairman Boone then called upon the two new members of the Committee to report on significant developments in their particular fields of agriculture.

Mr. Rohnert described recent trends in the commercial seed production industry. Major seed producing firms, of which there are five, each specialize in particular crops. Each specializes in developing strains or varieties of vegetables particularly adapted to a special area or use, as for example, carrots for canning, or for shipping long distances.

He stated that because of improved cultural practices, the need for vegetable seeds is tending to decrease. A pound of seed produces more food now than it did 20 years ago. California is greatly increasing the production of vegetables, at the expense of some other areas. Tomato production is greatly increasing in California, but lettuce varieties suitable for production in the East are being developed and these are causing a disturbance in Salinas, for example. Central Wisconsin is becoming an important lettuce producing area. Probably 20 to 25 per cent of the seed grown in California is exported outside the United States.

Mr. Faure reported on bull feeding trials now under way at Cal Poly. Ten purebred breeders have been participating, each supplying six bulls that have all received the same feed and been maintained under the same conditions. After an initial conditioning period all animals were weighed, and have since been weighed periodically. The purpose has been to develop animals attaining the best "weight for age" and still produce beef that is acceptable to the consumer. He said the purpose is to get rid of poor producers, dwarfism, and to secure less variation in gains. He contended that some cattle making the best showing are not the kind that are usually shown in fairs. He said that one conclusion already reached is that the beef families do the best in the environment in which they are raised.

He and Mr. Russ both contended that bulls usually offered at bull sales are too well fitted and that cattlemen would prefer to select them more nearly in working condition.

At the invitation of Mr. Craig, the Advisory Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on March 21, 1958, at Santa Paula. It was the consensus of the Committee that an effort should be made to participate in the annual conference of the California Agricultural Teachers Association at California State Polytechnic College in June. At this conference the Committee would hope to present to the vo-ag teachers a review of the problems the Advisory Committee has had under consideration.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Couchman
Secretary