

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
State Advisory Committee Meeting

September 11, 1959; 9:00 A.M.

Room 400, State Department of Education Building, Sacramento, California

ROLL CALL

<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Advisory Committee</u>	
Volney Craig, Jr.	
Joe Anderholt	
Earl Blaser	
Fred Rohmert	
Cyrille Faure	
Allan Grant	
Verne Hoffman, Jr.	
Milton Kidd	
<u>Bureau</u>	<u>Guest</u>
Byron J. McMahon	Wesley P. Smith
E. D. Graf	
J. Everett Walker	
R. H. Pedersen	
S. S. Sutherland	
George P. Couper	
	Robert Couchman

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Craig.

New Members

Mr. McMahon introduced the new committee members--Mr. Allan Grant, of Visalia, Mr. Verne Hoffman, Jr., of Lodi, and Mr. Milton Kidd of Modesto, and told something of their backgrounds and agricultural activities. Mr. McMahon also introduced the staff members and Mr. Wesley P. Smith, State Director of Vocational Education.

Objectives of  
State Advisory  
Committee

Mr. McMahon explained, especially for the benefit of the new members, the objectives of the Advisory Committee, which he indicated are as follows:

1. To keep the Bureau aware of basic agricultural problems and trends.
2. To help balance professional training in teaching with practical application.
3. To aid in determining emphasis in training skills needed in circumstances of constantly changing agriculture.
4. To help interpret curricula needs in farm mechanics as agriculture becomes more mechanized.
5. To provide through a lay board, a permanency of policy in agricultural education, revised from time to time to meet changing conditions.
6. To provide direct contact with the major agricultural enterprises of the state at the producer level.
7. To establish a non-professional, non-compensated agency with an influence in the councils of state affairs, for the best training program of rural youth through the public school system.



Purpose of Meetings

Chairman Craig urged all members to participate fully in all of the topics of discussion. He emphasized that this is an informal meeting designed to help the Bureau staff.

Trends and Problems in Agricultural Education

Mr. McMahon outlined briefly the recent trends in agricultural education and the problems facing many schools formerly in rural areas--urbanization, crowded classes, lack of facilities, failure of bond issues and tax overrides, lack of understanding on the part of some administrators of the purposes of vocational agriculture, and so on.

Farm-City Relationships

Mr. Couper reported on the development of a movement toward forming a rather permanent organization for farm-city relationships, of which the observance of Farm-City Week, November 20-26, would possibly be only one activity. He stated that a Farm-City Week Steering Committee is being created in each of some fifty California counties, composed of professional workers in these fields: Farm organizations, Agricultural Extension Service, agricultural commissioners, agricultural education, agricultural cooperatives, California Bankers' Association, Chamber of Commerce.

The State agency representing each of these groups has named one individual in each of the fifty counties to serve on this steering committee, and the State steering committee has named a chairman. It is the work of the steering committee to organize farmers and business men into the active committee. The steering committee remains primarily in the background, providing service and continuity.

Mr. Couper stated that Mr. McMahon had appointed one agriculture teacher to this county steering committee in each county concerned.

Members of the advisory committee emphasized at some length the growing need for long-range farm-city relationships, expressed great interest in this program, and indicated a feeling that agriculture teachers should participate. Mr. Anderholt, Mr. Craig, and Mr. Blaser spoke of various farm-city relationship programs taking place either annually, or on occasion, in their areas. Mr. Smith mentioned that perhaps the responsibility of an agriculture teacher could be broadened to "teaching" others about the problems of agriculture. Mr. Sutherland mentioned the possibility of agriculture teachers' conducting adult public forums once or twice a year on farm problems and conditions, for urban people.

Young Farmers

Mr. Grant suggested that Young Farmers should know more about adult farm organizations as part of their organized instruction program.

Farm Support Program

Mr. Faure stated that not all farmers are committed to farm support prices as the solution to their problems, but that this was the opinion of many business people. Mr. Grant stated that on a visit to the Pentagon, it was suggested that somebody should figure out how much food and fibre farmers should produce, and that farmers should be paid to produce this much, without regard to economics.



Public Relations

Mr. Kidd stated that in his long experience in legislative contacts, agriculture definitely needs more public relations.

Better Counseling

Several members of the committee mentioned that better counseling in the high schools could direct some farm boys into occupational objectives which are important to agriculture but not in production agriculture, such as agri-business, banking, law and others.

Scope of Duties of Agriculture Teachers

Mr. Anderholt suggested that an agriculture teacher is now a "Jack-of-all-trades", and inquired whether or not an agriculture teacher could stick strictly to production agriculture, leaving such phases as bookkeeping, shop, and public speaking to other teachers in the school. Mr. Faure explained that the agriculture teacher has to instruct in farm record keeping at the time the FFA boy is developing his own farm account book.

New Developments and Problems in Agriculture

Members of the advisory committee commented on new developments and problems in their respective fields of major interest, as follows:

Statement by Mr. Faure

Mr. Faure stated a problem is "epizootic abortion", which occurs only where cows are moved from valley land to foothills, or the reverse. It occurs during the first six months of pregnancy, and abortion only occurs between approximately July 15 and October 15. The disease is apparently caused by a non-filterable virus. Cows have a temperature for four or five days before abortion, show milk development as in normal pregnancy. Every embryo calf has an ulcerated liver. Losses go as high as 22 per cent. The University of California has known of this for four or five years but has not been able to get much information because stockmen have been very secretive about it. Mr. Faure said that he was changing calving dates from January to June.

Statement by Mr. Kidd

Mr. Kidd reported that a major dairy problem was the amount of investment required. He said that in the midwest, some farmers living in an area were "grouping" their cows at a convenient crossroads for purposes of milking and milk pick-up, but that this would not likely happen in California. He said there is no encouragement for the small dairy farmer. Profits per cow are about equal for the large or small herd. Processors don't want to deal with the small dairyman. Mr. Pedersen asked a question concerning acreage limitation on new irrigation development. Mr. Kidd stated that this question had not yet been raised relative to State irrigation development, such as the Feather River Project, but if it became controversial it would delay the progress of such a project at least five years.

Statement by Mr. Hoffman

Mr. Hoffman said that the newest development in swine operations is an on-the-farm test consisting of four phases. First, pigs must qualify for production registry (now they are weighed at birth instead of at weaning time); second, sows must produce 9 pigs weighing 26 pounds, gilts 8 pigs weighing 22 pounds; third, pigs must qualify for the lean meat certification program--at least 15 pigs must be entered, of which 10 must be killed, with a minimum of lean meat in the rib eye and minimum on back fat depth. Fourth, pigs must also qualify under the feed conversion



formula, and the rate of gain. If the litters meet all four qualifications, the sire can be certified. Mr. Hoffman said there are only about 335,000 pigs in California, while we consume about 6,000,000 annually. California producers enjoy a 75-cent per hundred advantage. He said the Purina feeding program is growing in the south, and that vertical integration might gain in California. The same program is being instituted by Purina for beef cattle, but does not include roughage.

Statement by  
Mr. Rohnert

Mr. Rohnert reported on further development of the combination of seed producers outlined at the April meeting in Visalia. He said they had employed Dr. Pearson (who originated most of the commercial canning tomato varieties), and two other plant geneticists. They will work on the Rohnert farm, at Hollister, but the research will be for the benefit of all of the companies concerned. Mr. Rohnert said that smog and urbanization have driven vegetable production away from the coast; that the Salinas and Santa Maria Valleys were the only coastal areas left, and that the latter was giving way to Vandenburg housing needs. He said that vegetable production is also moving into the Salt River Valley in Arizona.

Statement by  
Mr. Blaser

Mr. Blaser reported on the big change in the cling peach harvest, whereby steel gondolas into which the pickers dump picking bags are used. Crews consist of 8 to 10 men who share the picking compensation equally. He said good pickers have made more than formerly. The gondola is pulled into a central plant, the peaches are "sluiced" out by water, graded by expert women, and put into 4 x 4 wooden boxes for shipment to the cannery. The cannery field lug has been eliminated. Pickers pick by color only, virtually stripping the trees. He said there was also considerable development of sprinkler irrigation for other crops on former rice land (not under allotment).

Statement by  
Mr. Anderholt

Mr. Anderholt said mechanization continues to grow in the row-crops field. He said Delta Pine cotton is now predominant in the Imperial Valley, with yields above four bales to the acre. The linters are not as good as Acala 142, nor is there as much oil in the seed. He believes these will be corrected by further plant breeding. Imperial is now the highest county in the nation in per-acre cotton yield. It is now necessary to develop their own seed-production plan. Present seed comes principally from Mississippi.

Statement by  
Mr. Craig

Mr. Craig stated that the lemon industry has now completed a revolution in packing, using a "jumbo" pack in cardboard boxes. This has eliminated hand wrapping and wooden boxes. It has reduced packing house labor down to about 20 per cent of that formerly employed. He said there has been no change in picking and none is foreseen, since each lemon must be inspected for size and/or color. Immature ones go into storage for as long as six months. Preserving them properly is a vital part of the operation.



Statement by  
Mr. Grant

Mr. Grant reported that new dairy barns have a space on one side of the milking alley for 12 cows, and space on the other side for 12 more. The milker can change from side to side with little lost motion. One group of cows is being replaced while the other is being milked. One milker can handle up to 120 cows. He said the Central Valley Milk Marketing Association had failed as a bargaining agent, only resulting in more milk. In cotton, he said experiments were being made by irrigating only every other row, cutting down on water costs as well as labor, and keeping soil temperatures higher; there are no conclusive results. He said in alfalfa that Los Angeles dairymen have bought 250,000 tons less alfalfa this year than last; the reason is not clear.

Workerships in  
Santa Paula

Chairman Craig commented on the workerships in Santa Paula, which increased from six to ten this year and worked out excellently. They have given "status" to boys not eligible for high school scholarships. The employer must have a well-thought-out plan so that the boy spends his time at various learning operations, not just hoeing weeds or doing some routine job. He said it had helped in farm-city relationships, and would be expanded again next year.

Production Credit  
Plan

Mr. Grant said that Production Credit had set up a study plan to see if finances could be provided to worthy young men interested in getting into production agriculture.

Agri-Business

Mr. Pedersen said that Livermore might launch an "agri-business" program in the near future.

Letter from  
Robert Couchman

Mr. McMahon read a letter from Mr. Robert Couchman, secretary of the advisory committee, which explained his absence from the meeting. The committee asked Mr. McMahon to express their sincerest wishes for his speedy and complete recovery, and to request that he continue as a member of the committee until after the May meeting, at least, if his health would permit him to do so.

Questions of  
Agriculture  
Teachers

A few questions from agriculture teachers were presented. One dealt with the development of a "deciduous citrus" suitable for colder areas, such as the Sacramento Valley, where water is more abundant, rather than taking the water to other areas. Mr. Craig said he was not familiar with any particular program.

The next question was whether it was necessary for an agriculture teacher to go out of the state to buy feeder calves. Mr. Faure said that if the objective was to teach beef feeding, it was not necessary. He said such purchases were motivated by the "desire to win" at the stock shows. Mr. Anderholt said the Holtville Rotary Club had great difficulty buying 70 uniform calves.

The last question was whether all bull classes for juniors should be eliminated from fairs. Mr. Kidd said he did not think so. He felt that many potential herd sires might be eliminated in such a movement.

State Plan for  
Vocational  
Education

Mr. Sutherland reported on the State Plan for Vocational Education. He said the document is very brief, and if finally adopted may provide greater latitude in providing instruction for boys entering related fields.



Teacher  
Training  
Situation

Mr. Sutherland also reported on the teacher training situation. He said that while the output of the two teacher training institutions--University of California, at Davis, and California State Polytechnic College, at San Luis Obispo--about exactly equalled the demand, there are not enough good teaching prospects entering either institution. He mentioned the difficulty of agriculture teachers' keeping up to date in agricultural fields, and spoke of the need of fellowships and "back to college" programs for in-service teachers.

Farm Economics

The matter of farm financing and economics was brought up. It was pointed out that unionization of farm labor will call for increased credit. It was stated that many farmers now never expect to pay off debts--just to service them.

Local Advisory  
Committees

The status of local advisory committees was explained and the handbook on organization of local committees developed by the Bureau was distributed.

National Defense  
Act and Area  
Vocational Schools

Work of the Citizens' Committee on Education, status of the national bill for Area Vocational Schools, and agriculture's problem in serving the National Defense Act, were outlined by Mr. McMahon.

Assembly Bill 345

A brief report was made on Assembly Bill 345, providing scholarships for young people who have had some agriculture courses in high school, and who plan to enroll in a branch of the University of California, at California State Polytechnic College, at Chico State College, or at Fresno State College. It was indicated that under terms of the bill, the benefits are small, since only tuition and fees (from \$91.50 to around \$150.00 per year) can be reimbursed. It was stated that it was hoped the Act could be amended in subsequent sessions of the Legislature to provide greater incentives.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was tentatively set for May 27, 1960, at Hollister.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ George P. Couper

Acting Secretary for  
Robert Couchman, Secretary