

MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE
STATE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

May 20, 1960

San Benito High School
Hollister, California

ROLL CALL

Present

Volney Craig, Ventura
Verne Hoffman, Acampo
Joseph Anderholt, Holtville
Allan Grant, Visalia
Earl Blaser, Live Oak
Milton Kidd, Modesto
Fred Rohnert, Hollister
Robert Couchman, San Jose
Byron J. McMahon, Sacramento
Don E. Wilson, San Luis Obispo
R. H. Pedersen, Oakland
George P. Couper, San Luis Obispo
H. H. Burlingham, San Luis Obispo
Dr. Gary Brown, Hollister
Louis F. Picetti, Hollister
Gordon Tibbs, Hollister
Larry Williams, Hollister
Bob Montgomery, Hollister

Absent

Cyrille Faure, Porterville

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 A.M., on May 20, 1960, by Chairman Volney H. Craig.

Recent Technical
Developments in
Agriculture

The first major items of business were presentations by Advisory Committee members of recent technical developments in agriculture, economics, farm production and marketing, and conditions and situations which could affect the instruction and counseling of farm youth. These were as follows:

Verne Hoffman - New requirements have been established for hogs to qualify as lean meat strains. Among these is the requirement that the carcass length shall be at least 29 inches and the back fat thickness shall be a maximum of 1.6 inches. Characteristics of the lean meat type have been listed. Testing stations for boars have been set up and indexing is being done. Interest centers on feeding efficiency and rate of gain. Some strains now have established a conversion rate of 2.5 pounds of feed to one pound of gain. Boars in this program are disqualified if the progeny conversion rate exceeds 3.2 pounds to one.

An effort is being made to produce a disease-free hog in order to have a low level of disease. A major problem is the respiratory disease commonly called virus pneumonia. Most hog raisers are trying to live with it by feeding antibiotics. At

the University of Nebraska a different method is being tried experimentally. Pigs are being taken from sows by Caesarian section. The sows are then sold for meat, and the pigs are raised in a clean environment.

Artificial insemination is becoming an industry practice. A commercial concern in Iowa has 100 sows signed up. Experience shows that 50 percent of the sows are settled the first time as against 67 percent where boars are used. This practice will enable more small farmers to raise lean meat type hogs.

The hog population is up slightly in California, but the State still is a hog-deficient area.

The swine kill in many areas has been so low that killing plants have had to close down because of lack of volume. Wholesalers just buy carcasses from the mid-west. Killing plants would like to have more California hogs so they could afford to keep their plants open.

Fred Rohmert - The handling of agricultural products is being speeded up, mainly through mechanization. In the seed business, customers are becoming fewer and the units larger. Corporations are expanding and cooperatives are becoming more and more important. These changes are occurring more rapidly elsewhere than in California. Cooperatives in other states are now doing a complete job of buying seed and other supplies, and marketing. The farmer is merely a producer.

The small truck farmer who used to grow a lot of produce near large population centers, has sold out to sub-dividers, moved farther out in the country, and now specializes in two or three kinds of crops. Machinery costs and capital outlay make it difficult for a boy to get into the truck crop business. It is difficult for a young man (or anyone) to borrow money on growing crops.

The subject of new crops harvesting sanitation requirements was commented upon by Messrs. Anderholt, Grant and Couchman. It was stated that in the Imperial Valley they were "beating health authorities to the punch" by installing chemical toilets and washing facilities for crews handling vegetables to be used fresh. Mr. Couchman said that the total vegetable and fruit crop industry must take the lead to insure a sanitary product to meet the aesthetic demands of the housewife, not just the demands of the law.

Earl Blaser - Major emphasis in fruit and tomato production has been placed on attempts to cut costs. Progress is being made with permanent sod on orchards. Such grasses as perennial rye, fescue and orchard grass, sometimes singly and in combination, are used. This reduces soil compaction, aids in new mechanical

harvesting such as is being tried in tomatoes, and cuts irrigation costs. A speed-up of production, encouraged by new pruning systems, is being noted in peaches with commercial yields on three-year-old orchards. Bulk handling and chemical thinning are other cost cutting programs, although chemical thinning is not "clear" on the residue problem. Returning to the subject of permanent sod in orchards and row crops, it was brought out that this provides for more mobile equipment with smaller tires.

Mechanical harvesting of prunes is progressing, with use of bulk bins from the orchard to the dryer. Paper mulching of tomatoes, using a punched-hole craft paper, is being tried using direct seeding. It reduces mould, controls weeds, saves water, and will save tomatoes in mechanical picking. The seedlings will come up through the holes, even if they emerge from the ground several inches away. Fall planing of sugar beets in heavy adobe soils is being tried to promote an early harvest. Some good results have been noted. Cost accounting has made foremen more efficient. The cooperative movement in production of fruits and vegetables will increase.

Question: Are there adverse effects from insects which spend a stage in the sod? Answer: This has not been a problem yet. Sod probably will increase the incidence of gophers.

Question: Will sodded orchards, etc., take more water? Answer: We probably have been over-watering before. It may take less water, but more nitrogen.

Allan Grant - Eighty-five per cent of the cotton in the valley will be on the "B" program. Growing cotton in the San Joaquin Valley looks good. Alfalfa prices are up, especially for first and second cuttings because of the pesticide problem. Grade "B" dairies in Tulare and Kings Counties are getting fewer and smaller on the west side and larger and more numerous apparently where there is more and cheaper water.

A panel in Yosemite discussed the growing problem of pesticides. President Eisenhower has named a committee of scientists to study the pesticide problem. The committee seems favorable to agriculture. There is a big "drift" problem of hydrocarbons from cotton to alfalfa or tomatoes. California uses 20 per cent of all pesticides. A question has been raised concerning a tolerance in milk of seven parts per million of hydrocarbons, the same as on alfalfa hay.

Some Grade "A" dairies are putting their wash water in the irrigation systems. Grant's own dairy is putting on one and a half million gallons per month. This puts about 50 pounds of nitrogen on each acre, and may make it necessary to change the crop rotation.

Industry is moving out into the country. Nine states have passed laws to permit cities to enter private business, issue tax free bonds, etc., as a means of attracting industry. It is something which should be watched in rural California.

Milton Kidd - Milk control is stabilizing the dairy industry, but while income is up, costs are up even more. Distributors are now only taking the contractual amount, requiring two pick-ups from the farm, the contractor, and the surplus buyer. Many producers are 25 to 50 per cent over their quota. Surplus milk is called Class 2 or Class 3, which has no reference to its quality. Borden buys much of the surplus. A Federal marketing order might keep the small producer in business. There is no such program at this time in California. The decreased sale of bulls has definitely affected the purebred cattle business.

Urban agriculture classes in Modesto high schools are doing a good job and meeting a real need.

The Feather River water plan will get its real test with the bond election in the fall. Most agricultural, civic and county agencies are for it. Organized labor has voiced opposition. Probably Little Feather River water will ever go to agriculture, which cannot meet the price competition of the city user.

Mr. Grant raised the problem of the dairy contract, which is supposed to be the property of the producer. He said good average cows with a contract are selling for as high as \$950. He said government contracts are unstable. The Vandenberg contract was cited as an example. Grant said distributors are using unscrupulous tactics relative to sale of cows with contract.

Mr. McMahon said it was the responsibility of the Bureau to make use of the fine technical information supplied by the Advisory Committee members, and see that it is passed to teachers and ultimately to students.

Mr. Grant mentioned the panel at the Young People's Leadership Conference at Seillonar as an excellent example of the interest in "Careers in Agriculture." Mention was made of a large exhibit consisting of 20 tables, plus a big display provided by International Harvester, for the 700 delegates and visitors at the recent California State Future Farmer convention at California State Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo.

Mr. Craig said that many job opportunities are going begging. People do not show interest in agri-business fields or opportunities. His firm could use half a dozen persons right now, with high school and junior college experience. Because of

Job Opportunities
in Agriculture

lack of help it is necessary to load up older employees. Most of the workers are from the mid west, first or second generation, and knew dust-bowl conditions; therefore they are glad for steady work.

Mr. McMahon brought up the question of whether farm labor unionization would make a difference in the attitude of young people.

Mr. Blaser said agriculture is going to have to pay higher wages to compete with industry.

Mr. Anderholt said that too many farm boys are going to the city, while city boys, who have not found the "good life" in the city, want jobs on farms and in agriculture.

Mr. Couchman was of the opinion that part of the big problem is the attitude of persons in food production and processing. He cited a brilliant student who had no difficulty getting a big Lockheed scholarship to advance in electronics. He said there was no such program in the food industry, although it is a "billion dollar industry" in California.

In the general discussion on career opportunities, it was mentioned that there should be a comprehensive booklet on the food processing industry for school counselors, showing opportunities. Career brochures supplied by the State Department of employment, were distributed.

Mr. McMahon asked what was happening in the various high schools in the areas in which Advisory Committee members live.

Mr. Kidd reported that at Modesto there was a tendency to counsel students according to their I.Q. and where they live, rather than according to aptitudes and job opportunities.

Dr. Gary Brown said that counselors need personal contact, not just literature.

Mr. Grant said that Tulare County is a major agricultural area, with 1,800 4-H Club members and many Future Farmers. He said there was need for more talks by farm producers and food processors to student groups.

Craig said the agricultural industry misses its opportunity to present to the people of California the size of agriculture and its job opportunities. Farmers generally have a much more stable situation than industry does.

Couchman said that food processing should be taught in urban schools from which much of the work force comes.

Anderholt suggested the four-quarter system, with staggered vacations. He said in this manner farmers could hire students for part-time and vacation jobs. Now, just when the need is greatest, the student must be in school. Mr. McMahon said the idea just hasn't worked partly because of family vacation plans, etc. Dr. Brown said it was tried in some cities and generally given up.

A discussion followed on the progress in a basic curricula plan for California high school agriculture programs.

Apprenticeship
Training for
Agricultural
Workers

An apprenticeship training program for agricultural workers on the "lower levels" was discussed. It was moved, seconded, and carried that if such a program developed, it should be under the direction of the Bureau of Agricultural Education since the Bureau would be better qualified and have a better attitude. It was suggested that this might be an evening program, using qualified foremen and others as teachers.

GATA Summer Skills
and Summer Con-
ference

Mr. Burlingham spoke of the Summer Conference for Agriculture Teachers at California State Polytechnic College June 20-24 and again mentioned the core curriculum study and workshops to take place this summer. He said core subjects would be in the science of agriculture, not skills. He said a group also would be working on farm accounts teaching and techniques. He mentioned a panel on "New Patterns for Programs in Vocational Agriculture," as being one which members of the Advisory Committee might find interesting. He said that one of the developments of the "Skills Week" at Cal Poly for agriculture teachers (June 14-18) was a concentrated program on arc welding.

Master Plan for
Higher Education

Mr. McMahon explained the Master Plan for Higher Education, its purposes and background, as well as its current status.

Retirement of
Robert Couchman

A book of letters was presented to Robert Couchman, who is retiring from the Committee after having served since the inception of the Committee on May 12-13, 1953, at California State Polytechnic College, San Luis Obispo. Mr. McMahon presented a service certificate from the State Department of Education and a pen set from the California Association of Future Farmers of America.

In response, Mr. Couchman said he had tremendously enjoyed working with the advisory group.

Election of
Officers

In the election which followed, Joe Anderholt was named Chairman for the coming year, Verne Hoffman, Vice-Chairman, and Fred Rohmert, Secretary.

Time and Place
Next Meeting

The time and place of the next meeting tentatively were set as September 23, 1960, at Yuba City. The Host will be Mr. Earl Blaser. He said there was plane service to Marysville, and Mr. McMahon said there would be transportation for anyone coming to Sacramento.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with luncheon in Hollister and an interesting visit to the Rohmert seed operations east of Hollister.

Respectfully submitted.

George P. Couper,
Acting Secretary

GPC:gm
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