

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

September 18, 1964
Bakersfield, California

ROLL CALL

Present:

Advisory Committee Members

Norman H. Boeger
Glen Eidman
Fred Frick
Herman M. Sperber
Willis A. Stribling
Theodore J. Todd

Bureau Staff and Guests

Byron J. McMahon
G. A. Hutchings
S. S. Sutherland
G. P. Couper

Holger Hansen
J. R. Snyder

Absent:

Allan Grant
Verne Hoffman, Jr.
Milton Kidd

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Theodore Todd at 8:30 A.M. Following a welcome from Fred Frick, the minutes of the previous meeting were summarized. The purposes of the committee were outlined by Mr. McMahon. In the discussion, it was stated that the changing program of vocational education envisions continued and expanded use of advisory committees on local and state levels and the advisory committee to the bureau will be continued.

Vocational Education
Act of 1963

Recent developments in the Vocational Education Act of 1963 were outlined by Mr. McMahon. He gave the history of the present bill and said that no money had been appropriated. He said that California had many programs ready to go when funds are available and cited examples of the kinds of programs possible in agriculture. He also said that the revisions in the Smith-Hughes and George-Barden Acts liberalize the work experience programs in agriculture. In connection with the general discussion, it was suggested that copies of the Vocational Education Act be sent to each member of the advisory committee. Copies are included with these minutes.

Mr. McMahon also said that education has an important place in the Anti-Poverty Act, but no funds have been appropriated.

MDTA

Discussion followed on some completed programs under the Manpower Development Training Act. At Visalia, three programs have been completed. Forty persons were

trained in general farm skills, 100 in pruning, and 40 in tractor operation. Information was again given on the pruning program conducted at Fresno State College and on the tractor operation program. Mr. Hutchings said that farm machinery dealers in the area loaned considerable equipment, reducing the cost of the course. Information was also given on a tractor driver program at Bakersfield, which took six weeks with 30 hours of instruction per week. One custom hay operator agreed to hire all the graduates.

Mr. Todd asked if any course had been given in truck driving, and Mr. Hutchings said there had not been any demand as yet. Mr. Todd felt there could be such a course in the Corona area.

Mr. Hutchings said that the instructors in the pruning and farm mechanics courses at Fresno State were graduates of that college and had done an excellent job.

Mr. Eidman said there was a great need for horseshoers and that a course should be offered for them.

Mr. McMahon said that a survey was being made to see how many youth trained in the agriculture classes of California high schools last spring to serve as possible crew leaders, were actually employed. Mr. McMahon said the two-weeks course was given in each high school.

Farm Foremen Training

S. S. Sutherland described a program to train 20 instructors, who in turn would train farm foremen. The original program was held at Davis from August 10 to 14. It involved the cooperation of the California Growers Employment Committee, the State Employment Service, the State Department of Education (Bureau of Agricultural Education), and the University of California.

Mr. Sutherland explained that he had had considerable experience of a like nature in the early part of World War II and had much of the material needed. He explained that the kind of program offered would also be valuable to train employers as well as foremen.

He said the farm labor committee indicated a need for training farm foremen in twenty areas of the State. Only one area is north of Sacramento. Eighteen of the men were junior college or high school teachers and two were growers. A basic principle of the program is that a good foreman can get more work out of a crew than a poor one. First, the foreman must learn how to instruct. Mr. Sutherland outlined the course. He said they were

not able to do a good job on farm safety or job analysis. He said the instructors are ready to start programs in local areas when the peak of farm employment drops off. Local programs will consist of ten meetings of two hours each. These can be given in the evenings, on Saturdays, or any other combination.

Mr. Sutherland said that a request had been made for funds to employ a man to follow through on this program. He said that he would send the outline of the material taught to the members of the committee.

Recent Developments
and Trends in Agri-
culture

Members of the advisory committee were asked to give reports on new things in their respective fields of agriculture. They reported as follows:

Fred Frick: The cattle market has recovered somewhat. A new law has slowed down imports of beef, but it is not known how effective it will be. The imports are less than a year ago but still represent eight or nine per cent of the available product sold in the United States. The government is buying meat for school lunch purposes.

The number of cattle in California is down eleven per cent and they are probably lighter in average weight. The price of feeder cattle is favorable. The supply of calves is up five per cent. Beef consumption is up considerably (104 pounds per person per year) which is an increase of about twelve pounds. Imports still affect the cattle market but this is not the dominant factor. Meat from Argentina is not a problem as there is a meat shortage there. Meatless Tuesdays are necessary in Argentina.

Veal calves are being exported live to Italy. They will be fed out to 200 pounds or so.

The Farm Bureau Marketing Association in six counties south of Stockton and the Valley Livestock Marketing Association are forming a merger as the California Livestock Marketing Association with Mr. Frick as chairman.

Some feeders were frozen out in the recent disastrous months. They were mostly smaller operators or those with poor management or inefficient operations. The trend is to larger operations.

Herman Sperber: A family visited recently from Argentina and Brazil. They reported that in Argentina, meat is principally available for workers such as longshoremen and factory workers. It was reported that Peace Corps workers are doing an

outstanding job in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, and Peru. They were not accepted at first but stayed on the job until they were having a good effect.

Relative to the Imperial Valley, many growers turned to hay because of the labor problem and last winter's freeze. As a result, hay prices are down and there is much hay stacked. He said the cattle feed yards are in a bad way and that one large operator had lost a million dollars a year for the last two years and is on his way to losing another million.

The sugar beet crop was poor because of the freezing weather and many farmers have qualified for deficiency payments.

Labor continues to be the major problem. Since the Imperial Valley is a winter growing and harvesting area, they cannot count on student labor.

Mr. Sperber said he had planted about 400 acres of Sonora alfalfa for seed and got a good yield (500 pounds per acre) but most farmers did not get a good yield.

He had seen a mechanical lettuce harvester operating experimentally in the Salinas Valley, but it is "several years away." He said it would not work in the Imperial Valley because they have to water so frequently. It would cut wheel or track trenches eighteen inches deep.

Willis Stribling: The prime problems in the nursery business are propagation and inspection. It is possible to ship to 40 states more easily than to many California counties. Problems are in propagating virus-free stock and in certification of the kinds of root stock used.

Exporting has become more profitable. There is a market in South America and in Europe for new varieties of fruit, nuts, and grapes. American corporations are setting up operations in European Common Market countries and in South America.

Fruit growers are worried about labor, and this affects the sales of fruit trees. There is much conjecture about new plantings. Sale of peach and nectarine trees is only about one-third of what it was five years ago.

Landscaping design and planting programs are tied closely to nursery production. A vocational agriculture program in high schools is essential to give students their early

acquaintance with this growing business and to actually train them in all phases of production and maintenance. Emphasis on conservation and recreation have increased the need for trained people as well as for materials. Areas such as the senior citizen and leisure world communities with planned, mass maintenance are a factor. The whole industry needs re-evaluation. Landscaped areas become overgrown and there is need to redevelop and modernize large areas.

In the landscaping design and development phases, at least a junior college education is necessary. Foremen and gardeners may come from high school graduates or even drop-outs or from currently unemployed persons.

Few high school instructors have had sufficient ornamental horticulture training and/or experience. Mr. McMahon said that through a cooperative arrangement with Cal Poly two men will be available part-time to visit high schools and work with the vo-ag instructor on course material, facilities, and a work experience program in cooperation with local nurserymen.

Citrus plantings are moving northward with one major development now in Merced County.

Mr. Eidman asked why the very poisonous oleander is extensively used in highway plantings. He said that they had lost several cattle and sheep from eating a few dry leaves. Mr. Stribling said the shrub is inexpensive to maintain - that it is usually planted in the hot valleys where, after a few years, it maintains itself without extensive irrigation. He said there was no record of any deaths from the highway plantings.

Glen Eidman: Last year was the best in ten years for the sheep business. Lamb prices were good. California may be headed for overproduction in a couple of years. Considerable mutton is shipped in from Australia, but this affects beef prices more than lamb prices because lamb is a seasonal product. Much of it goes into processed meat.

More cattle are being finished on grass and fewer in feed lots. Veal consumption is down.

Anthrax is the present major disease problem. When the incidence is low, people don't vaccinate. After stockmen get complacent, there is an outbreak every five or six years, and the disease is so virulent that common vaccines won't work. There have been considerable losses in both cattle and sheep.

Mr. Eidman said that experiments have been made in cattle by impregnating an outstanding female with ten or twelve fertile eggs, then implanting them in "any old dairy cow" to produce outstanding calves. He said that if the original female was in England or Scotland, for example, the fertilized eggs could be transplanted to a female rabbit, the rabbit shipped to the United States at a fraction of the cost of shipping the cow, and then the eggs again transplanted to dairy cows. He said this had actually not been done, but scientists know it can be done. He said baby lambs had been kept alive for three weeks in an artificial uterus.

Norman Boeger: The peach crop was one of the biggest on record and 17 per cent over estimates. There was also a big pear crop. Canneries won't buy over their contract. The price of pears was good but there were many different peach prices. Prune production was also higher than estimated.

He used the parallel flow drying process described at the spring meeting. The hottest temperature is used at the beginning of the drying rather than at the end. The drying time is cut from 24 hours to 14 hours. It is less effective at the end of the season when the prunes have less moisture. It makes a "red prune", but the meat darkens somewhat. There is some worry whether the pit is dried enough. The "dry-away" factor is 1.9.

A new dipper and filling process has been developed. The trays are locked on the car and the funnel has spouts for each of the 25 trays. They can be filled in fifteen seconds. The whole cart and trays are vibrated to move the prunes across the trays and fill them evenly and completely. In this process, the prunes stand on end, and they can get 15 per cent more prunes on each tray.

When the drying on a cart is completed, it is turned on its side and there are scrapers and sprays of water which clean all 25 trays at once. One secret of the parallel flow is to keep new trays coming into the tunnels at all times. This keeps a high moisture content in the air at the point where the air is hottest.

Work continues on pitting prunes. Fresh pitting didn't work because it is necessary to grade for sizes. The prune had to be an exact size. Now there is a pitter for dried prunes which is working well. A device will reject any prune with a fragment of a pit in it.

Theodore Todd: A school for foremen conducted in the Corona area has been successful. The youth program was valuable as much citrus labor left the community just when school was out. Sixteen boys were employed on a trial basis and were paid \$1.00 per hour during the training period. After that they were on their own on piece work. Only one boy quit. The training period lasted four days. Boys said they were satisfied with what they made on piece work. The program was successful because of a good foreman.

Frozen avocado processing is increasing, and the first carload was recently shipped east. Currently avocados are frozen as halves. Later there will be slices, chunks, and bulk avocado meat. This should stabilize the price throughout the year and make it possible to use avocados with limb-scars, etc. There will be a short crop of avocados next year and the price will be too high. The crop will be down 25 to 30 per cent.

There is currently a large surplus of lemons. Frozen lemon juice is blamed by some growers. The lemon crop will be short next year. Taxes are getting prohibitive in many lemon growing areas.

General Discussion

Mr. Hutchings said there is a dangerous trend toward single periods of agriculture with each teacher given twice as many students as before. He simply cannot supervise the projects of such numbers of students. Farm mechanics is only being offered in three of the eight schools in the Kern County District. It was agreed that with mechanization and automation, farm mechanics should be given more, rather than less, emphasis.

Mr. Hutchings said that enrollment is up in all of the high schools, showing continued interest in agriculture as a career.

Mr. Hansen also commented on some of the problems of agriculture in the district.

Mr. Hutchings reported that a woman at Hanford had willed about \$80,000 to the high school, the income of which is to be used to pay the expenses of FFA judging teams.

Mr. Eidman offered a resolution, seconded by Mr. Boeger, that farm mechanics and on-farm supervision of FFA projects and work experience are vital to the vocational agriculture program and must not be de-emphasized by high school administrations. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The group also urged Fred Frick to further encourage the Council of California Growers to continue presenting the "good image" of agriculture to combat the constant impression that agriculture is a dying industry and that there are no longer opportunities for young men in production agriculture and related enterprises.

Date and Place of
Next Meeting

The next meeting was tentatively set for Friday, March 19, 1965, in Merced.

Respectfully submitted

George P. Couper, Acting Secretary
for Verne Hoffman, Jr.