

THE BEGINNING OF EXTENSION IN GRANT COUNTY

County Board Passes Resolution

The initial step towards the hiring of an agricultural agent in Grant county was taken on November 17, 1917 during the fall session of the County Board of Supervisors with the passing of a resolution to hire an "Agricultural Representative" for a period of two years under the provisions of "Section 533q-1 and 533q-8 of the statutes and acts amendatory thereof."

The resolution expressed the need for having an agricultural agent to aid in the agricultural development of the county.

Emergency Food Agent Hired

Two applicants for the position of agricultural agent were interviewed on separate occasions following the action of the County Board. Both were offered the job and both later declined the position. On March 15, 1918, Walter Weid of Waupaca was hired to fill the position under the recommendation of K. L. Hatch, associate state agricultural extension director and Lawrence Graber of the University of Wisconsin. Weid was hired under an arrangement not originally provided for in the resolution passed by the County Board the previous November. Due to the fact that the country was in the midst of World War I at the time, the Office of county agent "was merged with that of emergency food agent and W. A. Weid was hired." Weid's salary was paid by the state and the county agreed to pay his expenses.

Nothing is recorded of the activities of the emergency food agent from the time he began his work on March 15, 1918, until his resignation on January 1, 1919. However, a subsequent report of the Agricultural Committee to the County Board stated that "While Mr. Weid has worked under great difficulties and had worked conscientiously, yet he lacked that quality of organizing, leadership and initiative which are so essential and which are the first requisites for the office." His resignation was given and accepted on January 1, 1919.

First "Real" Agricultural Agent Hired

A replacement for the position of county agricultural agent for Grant county was then hired on February 15, 1919, under the provisions originally set forth in the November, 1917, resolution of the County Board.

The man hired was George Davies, who previous to coming to Grant county was employed as emergency food agent in Sauk county.

A rather comprehensive report covering the work of Davies as Grant county agricultural agent was published by him. The report, published in bulletin form, complete with pictures and advertising, was distributed among the farmers and business people of the county. The advertising, by the way, paid for the expense of publication. A total of 5,000 copies of the report were printed.

Planning the Program

Shortly after his arrival in Grant county, Davies, in true program planning fashion, and as he himself stated, "for the purpose of better knowing the needs of the various farming sections," held a series of committee meetings in various towns throughout the county. The committees consisted usually of the town chairman and one or more farmers from each school district in the township.

At these meetings, the county agent discussed with those present some of the important problems of the community and selected those which seemed to be of more importance. According to Davies, "It was thus left for these committees to determine what in their opinion should control the county agent's activities." He further states that "These meetings resulted in a desire to cooperate on the part of the farmer and also a feeling that they were responsible for the work that was to be attempted or carried out by the county agent."

As a result of these meetings, the following lines of work were decided upon:

- I. Soils—(1) Testing for acidity; (2) Supplying pulverized lime in carlots to communities and organizing local groups of farmers to operate lime pulverers; (3) Trials and experiments in the use of commercial fertilizer, especially with corn.
- II. Field Crops—(1) A seed grain survey to be undertaken with the purpose of finding out what seeds were for sale in the farmers' hands, also what farmers wished to buy in the way of seed corn, pedigree seed grains, alfalfa and clover seeds and soybeans; (2) Grow more legumes.

- III. Livestock—(1) Improving kind and quality of cattle in the county by means of the purebred bull; (2) Organizing of cow testing associations; (3) Marketing—assist farmers in the sale and purchase of cattle; (4) Prevention and eradication of tuberculosis.
- IV. Boys and Girls Club Work—(1) Corn; (2) Pigs; (3) Baby Beef; (4) Canning and Dyeing.
- V. Orchard Work—(1) Pruning demonstrations; (2) Spraying demonstrations.
- VI. Community Meetings and Miscellaneous—(1) School socials; (2) Farmer's Clubs; (3) Breeder's meetings; (4) Cooperative Associations.