

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

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Farmers Experience Hard Times - Effects of Depression Felt

The year 1933 hailed the advent of such emergency programs to meet the damaging effects of the depression, as the Farm Credit Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. These programs demanded a large portion of the time of the county agent, both that year and the next, until the general field administration of the AAA shifted to the farmers themselves, who elected their own officers to carry out the program.

Farm income had reached an alarming low in the previous year of 1932. Milk sank to ninety-five cents per hundredweight, hogs sold for \$3.00, and beef cattle dropped as low as \$2.70. In three years, from 1929 to 1932, farm prices had dropped sixty percent while the cost of farm supplies had dropped only thirty percent.

Grant County in Drought Area

Coupled with the low farm income of this period, Grant county also experienced a serious feed and seed situation because of drought conditions then prevalent in a widespread area of the country. In June of 1934, Grant county was placed in a "secondary area group" of counties to receive help from the Drought Relief Service. County director of this program was Charles Wilkins who was assisted by Ralph G. Ketterer. In all, 526 farms were assisted—twelve percent of all the farms in the county. The value of the feed, seed and temporary silos erected under the program to store emergency feed crops came to \$25,000.

Keenan Administers Emergency Programs

New terms spelled new work for county agent Jack Keenan with the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. There was Tobacco Allotment, Wheat Control, Farm Loans, Seed Loans, Flood Control, Feeder Loans, Home Loans, Chattel Mortgages, Agricultural Lime Production and the Corn Hog Production Control Program,

Loans--Feed Loans and Seed Loans were made available to farmers to aid in the purchase of needed feed and seed for crop and livestock production. A County Seed Loan Committee made up of Fred Lambert, Mt. Hope; L. D. Eastman, Lancaster; and George Whitcher, of Platteville, was appointed to handle that part of the program.

Livestock loans, sometimes known as "barnyard loans" were made available for the purchase of livestock, feed and machinery. Home loans were offered to farmers unable to meet payments on taxes and interest.

Flood Control and Reforestation--Pressure put upon the State Soil Conservation Department and the Great Lakes District resulted in a Flood Control Camp being located in Grant county. In 1933, 32 projects were completed and over 150 requests for assistance were on file. In 1935, there were two CCC (Civ. Cons. Corps) Camps located in Grant county, one at Bloomington and one at Platteville.

Production Control Programs—Of lesser importance to Grant county at the time were the Wheat Control and the Tobacco Control programs. However, there were as high as seventy-seven Grant county tobacco producers signed up under the tobacco program in 1934. Cash payments were made to farmers for acres taken out of production. Three Grant county farmers served on the Tobacco Control program committee. They were Olaf Ulve, Boscobel; J. J. Reed, Blue River; and Albert Hoffland, Montfort.

Under the Corn-Hog Program, farmers agreed to reduce corn acreage twenty percent and to reduce brood sows farrowed and the number of pigs marketed by twenty-five percent. The program was administered with the town chairman of each township being responsible for setting up "Community Organizations" within the township.

The chairmen of each of the thirty-two township committees made up the directors of the program on a county basis. The officers of the Association were elected—H. O. Wells, Livingston, President; William Frankenhoff, Boscobel, Vice President; Henry J. Belscamper, Lancaster, Treasurer; and the county agent, Secretary. The members of the County Allotment Committee were H. O. Wells, Chairman; E. E. Raisbeck, Beetown; Leslie O. Miller, Fennimore; Jay P. Martin, Bloomington; and Ed Richard, Town of Jamestown.

In 1934, there were 2,505 Corn-Hog contracts signed by Grant county farmers and 2,155 in 1935. Total payments made to these farmers came to \$1,175,000 for these two years. County agent Keenan pointed out that during 1932-33, Grant county farmers sold 320,000 hogs for a total of \$2,000,000, while in the 1934-35 period, only 200,000 hogs were marketed, but at a return of \$3,400, 000 plus the \$1,175,000 payments received from the Federal government.

The price of corn had raised from 46.5¢ per bushel in September, 1933 to 77.4¢ per bushel in September of 1934, and the price of hogs from \$3.73 to \$6.04 for the same period.

Agricultural Lime Production—This program was set up under the Wisconsin Emergency Relief Administration and was administered in the county by the County

Agricultural Committee.

The Agricultural Lime Program made available agricultural limestone to farmers at a much reduced cost. The Wisconsin Emergency Relief Administration agreed to furnish all labor and to pay one-half of the equipment rental and material cost of the lime, up to thirty cents per ton for lime sold. Total cost of lime to the farmer, per ton, under this program was from forty-five to fifty-two cents per ton.

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