THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FARM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AS AN ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE OF AN AREA VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

This study of adult education in agriculture is delimited to the organization and procedures necessary to the establishment of a cooperative farm management program in an Area Vocational School.

The ultimate aim of the project is to expand and promote adult education in agriculture and to extend the services of the Area Vocational School.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

"Cooperative farm management program."--A program of farm management developed cooperatively by the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Vocational Agriculture Instructors Association, and the State Department of Education designed to keep data flowing into research personnel in agricultural economics and education and materials of instruction flowing out from the department of agricultural education and the extension service to the agriculture teachers in Minnesota. (1)

"Area Vocational School."--A large unit school designed to serve a group of communities, an entire county, a group of counties, or a selected geographical area of a state and might well include portions of adjoing states. (2) The area school was further developed as a means of equalizing opportunities in vocational education, especially benefiting rural high schools and small community schools which could provide only limited and in many cases no vocational training.

"Community School."--The community school philosophy insists that public schools serving a community must provide educational opportunities for all people in the patronage area. This includes those that will remain in the community as well as those that will emigrate; adults as well as youth, farm people as well as towns people. It means that a school must enter into the mainstream of community life rather than assume a position of isolation. (1) (3)

THE PROBLEM:

This study defines the problem as to why, how and when to implement the cooperative farm management program in the Mankato, Minnesota Area Vocational School. For the purpose of sequential development the problem has been subdivided into four major areas and will be developed in the following order; program objectives, community and area need for the program, organization and administration, and instructional methods.

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

A. To pool all available resources in a common program for maximum benefit to farm people.

B. To develop more effective techniques and procedures in adult education in agriculture and improve communication between local communities, area schools, and state agriculture agencies.

C. To utilize the present established pattern of adult education as a point of departure for experimentation in new methods and mediums of instruction.

D. To develop this program into a self-sustaining and self-perpetuating system of adult education in agriculture.

E. To increase the efficiency of farm operation and raise the level of living.

F. To implement or expand the community school philosophy by providing more adequate educational opportunities for farm operators and their families.

II. COMMUNITY AND AREA NEED FOR THE PROGRAM:

A. Methods or means for determining need.
   1. Utilization of an overall planning and advisory committee.*
      a. Representative membership consisting of farm people, townspeople, educators and area legislators.
   2. Utilization of advisory council. (5)
      a. Committee membership composed of representative farmers.
   3. Surveys and type of information sought.
      a. Number of farmers in the community and area.
      b. Age and status of farmers in the community and area.
      c. Previous education.
      d. Current educational needs.
   4. Personal visitations.
   5. Consultation with state university, extension agent and state department of education.
   6. Voluntary training requests.

III. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION:

A. Financial considerations.
   1. Existing school facilities will be utilized.
   2. Instructional costs will be apportioned as per the existing state plan for vocational education.
      a. Student registration fee will cover supply costs.

---

* Committee now appointed will hold its initial meeting in the Mankato Area Vocational School on August 25, 1954.

B. Geographical area to be served by the program.
   1. Territory regularly served by the area vocational school will be covered by the program.

C. Student enrollment.
   1. Administration of the area vocational school will be responsible for student enrollment.
      a. Instructor will recommend and approve all enrollees.
   2. Maximum instructor student load will be set at approximately thirty students.

D. Course development and class scheduling.
   1. Current courses developed through the state university will be utilized, subject to local revision. (7)
      a. Courses will be reviewed and revised periodically with aid from the advisory council and field specialists.
   2. The instruction will be given throughout the year and group and individual student scheduling will be the responsibility of the instructor.
      a. It is suggested that two class meetings per month be held from November through March inclusive, and one meeting per month for the balance of the year.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

A. The employment of well-qualified, aggressive instructor will be pre-requisite to a successful program.
B. Program instruction will have its origin on the farms of students. (1)
C. The instructional program will be continuous and will utilize a variety of procedures and techniques.
D. Instruction will be based on management problems which are current and real to the student.
   1. Each student will keep a set of farm accounts.
   2. Individual on-the-farm instruction will predominate.
   3. Man-to-man approach versus the man-to-enterprise approach will be utilized.

SUMMARY

Continuous progress and improvement in agricultural procedures and methods bring problems of adjustment that cannot wait for solution upon the education of youth.

Adult education in agriculture as conducted in Minnesota is rooted in the economics of farm management. (1) Teachers who accomplish business improvements with successful farmers create results that can have far reaching consequences of value to the farmer, teacher, school, and community. In order to design and follow through on a program of farming improvements with an individual farmer, the records are essential in highlighting where and what management problems need the most attention and to evaluate progress or lack of it in making these needed improvements.

Because of the close relationships existing between the community school and the area vocational school objectives and philosophy, it is believed that an adult farm management program could be successfully conducted as an educational service of the area vocational school to attain or develop the premises set forth in this summary.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Peterson, Milo J. The Minnesota Cooperative Project in Adult Education in Agriculture. Project Report, 1953. Department of Agricultural Education, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.

2. Fern, G. H. Area Vocational Schools. Industrial Arts and Vocational Education, 33: 137-39, April, 1944.

3. Watson, Mary R. Instructional Needs that Should Be Met by the Rural Schools. Reports, Findings, and Recommendations of the Rural Life and Education Conference, Denver, April, 1946.

4. Class Report. Manual For Out of School Programs. Ved. 231, Colorado A. and M. College. Summer, 1951.

5. McFedries, W. R. Vocational Agriculture in an Area Vocational School. Master's Report. Colorado A. and M. College. 1945. 74 p.

6. Drishaus, R. A. Determining Curriculum Content For A Course in Farm Management and Agricultural Economics in Nebraska. Master's report. Colorado A. and M. College. 1938. 66 p.

7. Linn, Vernon; Paulson, Harold; Aune, Henrik J. Course of Study For Adult Farm Management Program. Three separate graduate student reports, Ag. Ed. 221, University of Minnesota. 1952-1954.