

THE WEST CENTRAL SCHOOL AND STATION  
AS A REGIONAL CENTER FOR ANALYSIS OF FARM RECORDS  
IN THE WEST CENTRAL AREA

A colloquium paper  
printed for  
Agricultural Education 232

by  
Ralph E. Smith

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Science  
Summer - 1955

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Statement of the Problem	1
II. The Purpose of This Paper	3
III. Some Suggested Procedures	4
The role of the Vocational Agricultural Instructor in the Cooperative Farm Management Service.	
The Summary of Completeness of the Forty-Seven Record Books Submitted for Analysis in 1955 at the West Central School.	
Suggested Schedule of Visitation to the Farmer for the Purpose of Aiding in Entering Basic Infor- mation Needed for Analysis.	
Closing the Farm Account Book Prior to sending it to the Analysis Center.	
IV. The Experiences and Suggestions as a Result of the First Year's Analysis at the West Central School and Station.	10
Personnel, Office Space and Equipment.	
Order of Procedure in Analyzing Account Books.	
Completed Forms Illustrating the Analysis in Detail and Comparison of this Example to the 1955 West Central Analysis Report.	
V. Summary	22

## CHAPTER III

## SOME SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

The role of the Vocational Agriculture Instructor  
in the Cooperative Farm Management Service

It will not be the primary purpose of this paper to justify or promote the Minnesota Vo-Ag Cooperative Farm Management Service. This has been ably handled up to the present time by Mr. Lauren Granger, Coordinator of the Program, under the supervision of Doctor Milo Peterson, Head of the Agricultural Education Department at the University of Minnesota. Several papers have been written giving adequate coverage to the value of analysis of farm records in any given community. It is the opinion of the author that good farm records with their subsequent analysis form the core content of a good farm management program.

It will be the purpose of this paper to relate the observations and suggestions by the author in the first year of analysis at the West Central School and Station at Morris, Minnesota. These observations and suggestions will be in two general categories: (1) suggestions to the Vo-Ag instructors and (2) as a possible guide to any individual organizing a similar analysis center.

It goes without saying that the key men in the Farm Management Program are the Vo-Ag instructors. They must assume the responsibility of giving the individual farmer sufficient aid to present a complete book for analysis and they must in most cases carry the analysis report back to the farmer. This report should serve as the basis for the future planning and operation by the particular individual. Has there ever been an educational program

with as sound an approach to the problems of the individual farmer as this one? A Vo-Ag instructor can now obtain one of the fundamental tools of farm planning - the analysis of local farm records.

The sending in of complete, accurate records should be of primary concern to the instructor for two main reasons. First, the accuracy and validity of the analysis is dependent upon the farm records submitted. In the second place the cost of analysis increases when books are not complete and it becomes necessary to write, phone or travel for additional information. It was our experience at Morris this year that we did not operate efficiently at times because information was lacking in certain farm records. We at the Regional Center and the Vo-Ag Instructors should strive to keep down all unnecessary costs in the analysis procedure.

Summary of Completeness of the Forty-Seven Record Books  
Submitted for Analysis in 1955  
at the West Central School and Station

The following table lists the degree of completion both as to number and percentage of the 47 record books received at the West Central School this year.

TABLE I

Complete and accurate Inventories	34	72%
Cash Expenses and Cash Receipts	41	87%
Complete Crop Data	44	94%
Crop and Feed Checks Completed	41	87%
Livestock Reports	45	96%
Family Living from the Farm	40	85%
Household and Personal Expenses	20	43%
Net Worth	27	57%

### Family Living from the Farm

In the forty-seven books received in 1955, only forty had completed the family living from the farm. This is an important item as it contributes directly to the labor earnings of the operator. If these accounts are not complete and accurate, the true labor earnings of the operator are not reflected.

### Household and Personal Expenses

Twenty of the forty-seven books had complete household and personal expenses. A farm operator should be educated to realize the importance of the personal accounts as well as the accounts of the farm business. The two may be very closely related and often the success or failure of a farm operation is directly connected to the household and personal expenditures.

### Net Worth

In the first year of analysis there were twenty-seven books that had complete records of assets and liabilities. This is a reasonable average for the first year but here again education is needed. The change in net worth from year to year is a very good picture of the financial progress of an individual. It behooves all of us in the Cooperative Farm Management Service to make this fact known to co-operating farmers.

In the previous section, the author has tried to point out some of the things that occurred during the first year's analysis as far as the account books are concerned. They are not peculiar to this center as the same omissions have been made in books received at the St. Paul office. The foregoing paragraphs are meant in the form of constructive criticism in the hope that the quality of records will improve in the future.

Time Consumed on Various Phases of the Analysis Procedure

TABLE II  
Time Consumed on Analysis of 47 Books at West Central School

<u>Job</u>	<u>Total Time</u>	<u>Time Per Book</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Adding Books	110 hrs.	2.3 ✓	17
FA 20, FA 21 & FA 22	187	4.0 ✓	29
Feed & Crop Checks	45	.9 ✓	7
FA 24's	140	3.0	22
Recapping	109	2.3	17
Copy Farmer's Figures in report	54	1.1	8
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTALS	645	13.6	100

TABLE III  
Cost of Analysis of 47 Books at West Central School\*

<u>Job</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Per Book</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Adding Books	\$118	\$2.51	17
FA 20, FA 21, & FA 22	209	4.45	29
Feed & Crop Checks	49	1.04	7
FA 24	153	3.26	22
Recapping	118	2.51	17
Copy Farmer's Figures in Report	59	1.26	8
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTALS	\$706	\$15.03	100

\*Rate of pay for clerk-typists - \$175 per month.

The time consumed as shown in Table II seems to be a reasonable average to expect in this type of analysis work. It must be stated that to do the job within this time allowance there cannot be too many waste motions. The efficiency of the crew improved considerably during the analysis procedure. It must also be pointed out that with forty-seven books, the time of the supervisor per book is greater than it will be with a larger number of books. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the time per book will be lessened any appreciable amount even though the crew is experienced. This is assuming that there will be a larger number of books to be analyzed next year.

The costs per book as shown in Table III are based on the starting clerk-typist rate of \$175 per month. This may be variable from one area to another, but will serve as a guide of the costs of the analysis. This includes only the cost of the salaries of the three clerk-typists of the actual analysis. It does not include the costs in preparation of the report which will be variable depending on the number of copies made.