

Agricultural Department

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Co-Operating Organizations.

U. S. Department Agriculture
State Extension Service
El Paso County Commissioners
Bartlett Pear Growers Assn.

BEST OF RELATIONS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN FARMERS OF VALLEY AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Roland Harwell, retiring director of the Agricultural Department, submits exhaustive report on splendid work performed in interest of better and more intensive farming and stock raising during year of 1919.

El Paso Poultry Assn.

El Paso Co. Bee Keepers Assn.

U. S. Reclamation Service

El Paso Valley Water Users
Assn.

Owing to the differences in organization, and the varied requirements of the several co-operating parties, in addition to the general dissimilarity existing between local agricultural problems and those of the State as a whole; extension work in El Paso County has developed along more or less peculiar lines. Serious endeavor has been made to maintain the fundamental ideas of the work, though the methods of applying these ideas have varied sufficiently to fill local requirements.

Relations between the farmers and the Chamber of Commerce have been so materially improved during the past year, that the direction of the work has ceased to be the function of any one of the co-operating organizations more directly interested financially. The Extension Service, the County, the Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Farm Bureau, have each settled on a program of real service to the community, leaving in the hands of the manager of this department the task of selecting such projects as are calculated to be most effective within the limitation of available funds.

The results of this policy are found in the close co-operation of all interested organizations and the absence of even the slightest disagreement. For this reason, more than any other, the work has made progress commensurate with possibilities. Many suggestions from all of the co-operating parties have been put into operation with most pleasing results.

In particular, attention is directed to the growth in importance of the Farm Bureau. This organization, which has been fostered almost entirely by outside financing, now occupies a definite place in rural activities. It is believed that the organization, in time, will prove the most potent factor in arriving at the complete development of project lands. Being interested solely in Agricultural improvement, its prospects for complete success are independent of many influences common in organizations having more diversity of interest.

A detailed statement of the activities of this department follows, which includes the work of the several employees. No distinction has been made as to the work performed by each. Acknowledgment is made of the faithful service of the several members of the staff who have contributed most forcibly to the success attained. It is regretted that the character of our work does not permit of translation into the dollars and cents column with any considerable accuracy.

Organization

Finance.—In the organization of extension work in El Paso County, there are six agencies contributing directly to the financial support. These agencies are as follows: U. S. Department of Agriculture; Texas Extension Service, the County of El Paso, the El Paso County Farm Bureau, and the El Paso Valley Water Users Association.

Indirectly, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, by supporting the Farm Bureau in its financial obligations to the work and by contributing office space, equipment and stenographic help, helps in the most important way to make the local office what it is. The funds of the Chamber of Commerce are contributed directly to the Farm Bureau and not to extension employees.

Office Organization.

With the requirements for special work in

view, the office organization consists of five specialists, each with a definite line of work to do. These specialists are concerned with the following:

Field and truck crops, general work—Mr. Harwell.

Soils, waters and alkali—Mr. Laferriere.

Home Economics—Miss Swift.

Irrigation Engineering—Mr. Parry.

Horticultural Work—Mr. Shadle.

Specialists in charge of the first three activities are employees of the extension service. The latter two, in order mentioned, are available through the co-operation of U. S. Reclamation Service and the State Department of Agriculture, without expense to the Extension Service or agencies interested in local financial support.

Co-operating Farm Organizations.

Another group of organizations directly interested in the betterment of agriculture has been drawn into close co-operation. By uniting in mutual support much good has been accomplished. These agencies are as follows:

El Paso County Farm Bureau.

U. S. Reclamation Service.

El Paso Valley Water Users Ass'n.

El Paso Bartlett Pear Growers Ass'n.

El Paso Poultry Association.

El Paso County Bee Keepers' Ass'n.

County Horticultural Board.

Direction of the Work.

Aside from the general supervision of the Extension Service, assistance in directing the work is given by the Agricultural Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. This committee has a membership of both farmers and business men and, in co-operation with extension employees, directs the policies of the local commercial body in-so-far as agriculture is concerned. In addition, frequent consultations are held jointly by this committee and officials of the Farm Bureau.

Farm Bureau.

When adequate finances were made available, it became possible for the Farm Bureau to operate actively. Local organizations were revived. County wide officers of the previous year were retained in order to make the organization more effective.

Farm Bureau News.

With a working reserve of some \$500.00 which had been contributed by the Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Bureau News was started in April. The publication has since been issued monthly and reaches 800 farmers in the county. It has proved self-sustaining through its advertising.

The sole object of the publication has been the betterment of agriculture and rural life. It has served admirably in holding the membership intact. Much credit to the work has resulted from placing this publication in the hands of farmers and others.

Irrigation Activities.

The Farm Bureau interested itself in securing changes in methods of arriving at irrigation charges. As a result of a series of protests, a system of monthly reports of water used were given the irrigators. This practice not only resulted in fewer mistakes in water bills but lessened considerably the wastage of water.

Measuring devices for tests were secured and installed at the request of the Farm Bureau.

Numerous miscellaneous matters with reference to irrigation were handled during the year. The Farm Bureau is now regularly consulted by agencies concerned in the administration of water matters.

Marketing.

By serving as a medium of coming in contact with the city housewives, the Farm Bureau has been able to help market perishables. The organization sold the valley peach crop by sending the buyers to the farm doors. Further service was rendered in the case of the tomato crop. Sales of the local canning plant operated by farmers were helped in the same way.

Farm Bureau Day.

As evidence to the effectiveness of the organization, 3,000 people assembled one day for pleasure and business. The program included a tractor show, educational exhibits and agricultural talks.

Johnson Grass Control.

At the Farm Bureau meeting a plan for effective control of Johnson Grass was outlined and accepted. The work will involve the co-operation of the farmer, the County and the Reclamation Service. The plans as perfected will start in the spring of next year.

Exhibits.

The Farm Bureau placed an exhibit at the Made in El Paso Show, an educational exhibit calculated to stimulate the purchase of local products. The success of the exhibit was apparent to all who attended the show. Interest was stimulated in the products of the valley canning plant.

Much miscellaneous work involving individual services to farmers has been carried on by the Farm Bureau. This work, as well as the general supervision of policies, has resulted in assuming the leadership of all agricultural activities of the county.

Better Seeds.

At the request of officials of the Farm Bureau, El Paso seed dealers have imported shipments of selected seed, which in turn have been planted with considerable success. Improvements in seed wheat, corn, and grain sorghums have been made in this way.

More striking is the activity of the organization in purchasing cotton seed requirements. Following a decision not to use local cotton seed, a purchasing committee was organized with representatives spread over the county. Direct purchases of 6 carloads of desirable seed has resulted in a saving of \$3600 to the farmers. It is anticipated that future purchases will bring the amount saved up to \$5,000. In addition, early purchase improved the possibility of getting choice seed and stimulated the extension of the cotton area.

Soils and Alkali Work.

History.—Due to the excessive use of irrigation water since the construction of the Elephant Butte Dam, a great part of the agricultural area in the El Paso Valley has become alkali and unfit for cultivation. This condition was brought about through the rise of underground water and the subsequent accumulation of alkali salts due to capillarity and evaporation.

The construction of open drainage canals was begun in 1918, and up to date over one half of the contemplated work in the El Paso Val-