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COMMENTS ON ACTIVITIES
AT
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE FARM

By Randolph Richards
February 23, 1966

The main purpose of the College Farm should be for use as a laboratory for classes and farmer groups and for agricultural research. The various operations on the farm should be designed primarily to support teaching and experimentation, financially supporting themselves as far as feasible. It should be realized, however, that, whenever teaching and research projects are conducted, there will be some areas of farming that cannot return as much as has been spent on them.

I fully expect to witness within the next year or two the offering of a Master of Science Degree in Agriculture. I would not be in favor of allowing such a degree to be conferred upon an individual who did not conduct original research and summarize the results in a thesis. The farm, along with on-campus facilities, would serve as laboratories where these research experiments could be conducted. Until such time, the faculty members are planning research to be carried out on the farm and in on-campus laboratories.

Crops and livestock raised on the Farm should be those about which courses are taught in the department and those crops and livestock raised on farms in this area. At present there are no hogs, sheep, or poultry being produced on the College Farm. These types of livestock should be included in the farm operations. Likewise, there are no horticultural crops or tobacco being produced by the College Farm. These, too, should be added. Tobacco is the principal source of cash income on Kentucky farms.

Frequent use of the Charles L. Taylor Agriculture Center by farm groups for meetings, shows, and sales should be encouraged. The livestock, crop, and soils programs should be conducted in such a way that interested groups could profitably tour the farm and observe these operations on field trips. The methods used in the various farm operations should be those that are generally accepted and could be adapted to the average farming program. For example, providing the entire roughage ration (green chop, silage, and hay) for dairy cows in dry lot, which requires a great deal of silo and barn space, is not used by the average dairy farmer in Kentucky and should be less acceptable than the usual practice of pasturing in the summer time.

The general appearance of the farm should be considered, to provide pleasing surroundings for the personnel working on the farm and to present a welcome atmosphere for visitors. Good, simple landscaping should be practiced without expending large sums of money.

Following is a list of the various aspects of the College Farm about which I have made comments concerning the present situation and suggestions for improvement. It should be pointed out that improvements and progress may be slow and can only be realized by a coordinated effort by all concerned.
RESEARCH

Johnson grass control test plots are planned for 1966 as were conducted in 1965 in cooperation with Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Kentucky Experiment Station.

Small grain test plots are being grown on the farm by Kentucky Experiment Station.

Dr. Russell plans to have corn population and hybrid studies on the farm in 1966.

Soil fertility studies on corn and alfalfa are planned for 1966 in cooperation with Kentucky Experiment Station.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of a swine breeding stock evaluation test on the farm conducted by swine breeding organizations in this area.

Physiological and nutritional studies on dairy animals are being planned by faculty and students for 1966.

Cytogenetic studies with wheat are planned for 1966 or 1967 by Richards.

There are many avenues for establishing enlightening research with crops, soils, livestock, machinery, and farm management.

A set of scales large enough to weigh mature animals on test should be provided.

Greenhouses for crops and soils experiments should be built either on the farm or on campus.

Long range plans should be considered for providing research facilities on the farm.

PERSONNEL

Farm laborers living on farm are adequate in number.

Use is being made of student help in farming operations; this practice should be continued as it provides valuable experience for the students and labor needed on the farm. Mr. Mutter is to be commended for his management of personnel on the farm since he assumed direction of farm operations.
CROPS AND SOILS

Production was low for last two years, probably because of low levels of some soil minerals, late planting on naturally droughty College Farm soil; need to use drought resistant varieties and plant summer annuals early.

Johnson grass and nodding thistle are problem weeds; need better control of these; A. S. C. now cost-sharing in control measures of these weeds; control plots will be treated in 1966 as in 1965.

No horticultural crops or tobacco presently on farm; need to establish horticultural plot and grow one acre of tobacco; we are planning for initiation of these cropping practices in 1966.

Alfalfa weevil a problem; need to note first attack of this insect and spray immediately.

Two hives of honeybees are presently located on the farm, owned by Richards; bees should be kept on the farm for cross-pollination of crops and for observation by students.

Farm is used some by crops and soils students as a laboratory; this should be encouraged.

Evaluation of soil fertility levels and pH levels should be undertaken for the sake of efficient production and for information to be used by students in class and research.

Phosphate level of some fields is probably low; needs to be investigated and corrective maintenance practices initiated.

LIVESTOCK

Mr. Mutter is reducing dairy and beef numbers by selling inferior animals; both herds need to be reduced further.

Sheep, swine, and poultry should be included on the farm; housing for these animals should be provided.

Animals should be entered in shows and sales by students and faculty.

Dairy animals now being used by judging class for practice; judging and fitting of all farm animals by students should be encouraged.

Artificial insemination should be used on dairy cows to the exclusion of our owning a bull.

Herd replacement animals should be produced on the farm as far as is feasible, with outstanding breeding stock being purchased elsewhere from time to time.
PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Only a few ornamental plants on the farm; add some shrubs, flowers, and trees.

Housing for personnel in fair condition; aluminum siding should be installed.

Water not very satisfactory (sulfur and surface drainage pollution.) Proposed community water system should correct this.

Barns and silos sufficient in number and size; remodel one barn to accommodate sheep flock, add farrowing and feeding houses for hogs, add poultry house, build tobacco barn to house one acre of tobacco.

Roads in good condition; pave road around Mr. Sadler's house to correct dusty condition.

Proposed entrance-way plans seem satisfactory.

Encourage relocation of Kentucky Highway Department asphalt mixing operation.

Fencing in good condition; replace fences as needed.

Consider swine breeding stock testing operation on farm in cooperation with swine producers in area.

Agriculture Center being used well; needs insulation over pavilion to help reduce electric heating costs.

Consider long range plans for facilities for conducting research on farm; build greenhouses either on farm or on-campus for crops research.

Need scales large enough for weighing mature farm animals in research and for production records.

Need trucks on farm; a pick-up for the director of farm operations and a large truck for heavy farm hauling. Truck now assigned to farm director is a disgrace.

Present leasing of equipment seems satisfactory.