



The County Agent showing farmers how to vaccinate for Black-leg.

The most remarkable movements of present-day agriculture in America can perhaps be covered under three divisions:

First, the voluntary organization of farmers in associations or leagues; second, the boys' and girls' club and kindred movements of junior farmers; and third, the agricultural representative or county agent movement. The latter two are more or less complementary, though quite distinct and not always in harmony with the former since they are largely fostered by governments. The county agent movement is a development of the last decade, and in America mainly of the last five years. I am not certain where it originated but it has done efficient service in some European countries at least. In Ontario it began in 1907, and in the United States about the same time, though by far its greatest development on a national basis has taken place since the inception of the Democratic administration in that country and the passing of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914.

The first representatives were appointed in Ontario in 1907, and it took considerable time for them to get anything very telling done. Today there are 43, in fact there is one in every one but five counties in that province and in some counties there are two. In the United States there are 1,400 men and 500 women employed as county agents and the Department of Agriculture is increasing the number as fast as men and women with proper training can be secured. In Western Canada outside a few communities the movement is unknown to the people.

What then are agricultural representatives or county agents if this is such a significant movement?

These men are agricultural experts with scientific training and special experience, who are placed in counties or communities, where they may render every possible assistance to the farmer in increasing production, in organizing for selling or buying, in improving the social life of the community and generally assisting in directing the outstanding agricultural enterprises of that community. He is a kind of deputy minister of agriculture for his own particular district. Men of such calibre are hard to find and there are certain fundamental qualities considered in the make-up of such agents. These men are appointed by departments of agriculture.

The head of this work in Minnesota, Frank E. Balmer, outlines them as follows: 1. Experience. An agent preferably should have been reared on the farm, or have lived on a farm the year around for not less than five years since he was twelve years of age. His farm experience should be such as to show that he has been employed upon or operated a successfully managed farm, and is therefore familiar with the details of farm practice and the principles of good farm management. It is preferred, also, that an agent has had other business and executive experience.

2. Technical training. A county agent should be soundly trained in agriculture, have a broad agricultural outlook, and be an apt student of country life affairs. A full four years' course in agriculture at a good agricultural college, or equivalent experience or training is important.

3. Interest in farm life. To win and hold the respect, confidence, and friendship of farmers, an agent must have a sympathetic interest in farming and farm life; be willing to enter into situations and face difficulties that confront farmers; and be willing to actually share the life of the people with whom he works.

4. Personality. The crowning factor of an agent's success is his personality. He should have the ability to work with people, and to get people to work with each other, which means that he must possess initiative, facility in approaching farmers and other business men, and such further qualities as make for good leadership and organizing ability. He should possess maturity of judgment, sterling personal qualities, and good moral character.

What County Agents Do

Can these agents do any work of use to the average farmer? Their records are sufficient proof that

The County Agent

Who he is---What he does---Concrete results in Canada and United States

By E. A. Weir

they can. Farmers did not think so when they started and many were loath to be advised by any young college graduate. But generally the best men soon came to see that an agricultural representative was one of the most useful men in the community, that he was there to serve and not instruct and that it was good business sense to use him in every way possible. Confidence once established, many of the communities adverse to the idea at first would not part with these men and have been ready to subsidize them by considerable increases.

What then are some of the things county agents or agricultural representatives can do? I will first mention a few things and then elucidate some of these. These are taken from actual cases of what they have done. This list of course is by no means complete.

1. They may organize and conduct or assist in conducting; co-operative buying associations; co-operative selling or shipping associations; co-operative credit associations or societies; labor exchange bureaus; local telephone companies; potato or seed

done. In fact after he has secured the farmers' confidence the district representative's office becomes the clearing house for information and the centre of activity for the community. The results from this work are abundant and varied. Concrete instances are outlined. Here are a few.

In Leeds County, Ont., the district representative, W. Smith, says, "My endeavor in this county is to have a well-defined plan of campaign. The ideal is to have all our operations of any scope in the county conducted through two county organizations. These are the County Board of Agriculture, and the County Co-operative Associations. Through these county co-operative associations we are endeavoring to locate a market for quality stuff. With this market in view we do our educational work. Last year the farmers who marketed their eggs through the association received a net increase over store price of \$1,315.35, the direct result of the co-operative market. In the marketing of hogs we have shown decided benefit to the farmer. To date we have only shipped a few carloads but as a direct result of this work competitive buyers are now following the market quotations from one to two-and-a-half cents per pound closer due to the inauguration of our hog shipping association. Notwithstanding that fact we have been able to pay our members an average of 50 cents per hundred higher price than they could receive from local buyers. The same holds true in regard to the buying of grass and clover seed, etc. I could quote you other instances in connection with farm drainage surveys where the farmers estimated the value of our work to their individual farms from \$100 to \$1,000. Improvements in orchards that have never brought \$100 were made that netted returns of \$400 and \$500, this being due to the work of the district representative. I have not mentioned anything about our poultry breeding associations or dairy cattle breeding associations. As the confidence of the people is secured and we have proven to them by the working out of our various undertakings that we advocate only practical improvement the possibility of development is practically unlimited."

Helping Out The Labor Problem
The district representative in Waterloo County, Ont., J. B. Knapp, says: "The district representatives in Ontario do so many things that it is very hard to tell what their work really is. Since the war started our work has greatly increased and it is just to a stage now that a person simply has to do what is most important and let the rest go. "This summer we have been kept busy repairing government tractors. Early in the spring the government decided to buy tractors and rent them to the farmers to help out the labor shortage and increased acreage for spring and autumn crop. I have four at the present time and have been able to turn over a lot of land with them, but of course, we have our troubles. A big feature of our work this summer was the placing of farm help. A special campaign was put on in the spring to get the school boys to go out and help on the farm. These were mostly placed through the district representative's office. Besides the school boys we placed any other kind of



Students at a Seed-grain Lecture during a four weeks' short course, organized by the District representative

growers' associations; community breeding associations and assist in securing good pure-bred sires and making more uniform the livestock of the district; cow testing associations; egg circles; boys' and girls' clubs; pure-bred breeders' clubs; rural school fairs or agricultural society fairs; summer-fallow competitions; feeding livestock for profit competitions; acre-profit competitions; plowing matches; exchange bureau for stock, goods, etc.; excursions to agricultural colleges or experimental farms.

2. They may conduct: soil surveys of the district; short courses in agriculture of various lengths on livestock, field subjects, machinery, etc.; variety test of grains, grasses, potatoes, etc., most suitable to the district; fertilizer experiments; experiments for the control of plant diseases; registered seed inspection work; farm management surveys of the district; judging competitions in livestock or grain; farm boys' camps, etc.

3. They may hold demonstrations on treating grain for smut; treating potatoes for blight or rot; growing alfalfa for seed; draining low-lying land; vaccinating cattle for black leg; setting out and pruning or spraying small or tree fruits, etc.

4. They may give lectures on agriculture or other subjects in the schools, secure speakers from outside for special meetings, find sources of better seed for farmers in the community; establish local poultry breeding, fattening or killing stations; send out literature to farmers; write seasonable articles for the local or farm press; assist farmers in securing and running tractors; assist in running better farming trains; assist farmers in planting or building plans; conduct public speaking contests; visit farmers and assist on their own farms with their problems; answer inquiries for farmers direct from their office, etc.

That list should satisfy anybody. It looks like a big one and it is but all these things are being

help we could secure. I placed between 50 and 100 men on farms in Waterloo County.

"In the spring we distribute seed and eggs to

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Potato Plot from which the District representative or County Agent distributed better Seed Potatoes to the farmers through the School Fair. Registered seed is used