

Material for Chancellor's Report
North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service

A. Volume of Activity

The North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service conducted educational programs in all one hundred counties and the Cherokee Indian Reservation during 1984-85. Through knowledge and research findings gleaned by approximately two hundred extension specialists, educational programs were offered in four areas with percent of time in parenthesis: agriculture and natural resources (43 percent), home economics (30 percent), 4-H youth programs (22 percent), and community resource development (5 percent).

The Extension Service made over 2,349,000 contacts during the past year with North Carolinians seeking knowledge from the University system. The 4-H youth program led in total contacts with over 786,000 requests for program assistance or participation. This resulted in a program with over 130,000 members and the services of over 20,000 volunteer leaders. There was substantial involvement by parents, civic and community organizations.

The Extension Service was a valid source of consumer- and family-oriented information with over 745,000 requests for home economics information. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program reached well over 6,000 families each month with information on nutrition and food preparation. It enabled thousands of individuals with restricted income to have a higher quality of living through knowledge.

Agricultural contacts with farmers and agri-business firms were extensive. Almost eighty percent of specialist expertise is agriculturally oriented, serving agriculture, natural resources, community development and 4-H programs. Thirty percent of the requests for assistance are agriculturally oriented.

The Agricultural Extension Service receives funding from three levels of government and private contributions. The budget for the 1985 year totals slightly more than \$44 million. Of this amount 34 percent comes from federal sources, 45 percent from state, 20 percent from counties, and one percent from non-taxable sources. (Exact amounts available if desired).

B. Specific Achievements of Significance

Extension agricultural programs stressed management and marketing during the year. A series of conferences across the state taught marketing strategies for farmers including futures options, hedging, forward price contracting and quality control. A livestock marketing cooperative serving three counties was organized with Extension assistance, farmers' markets were established in four counties with fruit and vegetable revenues of \$400,000 on a benefit-cost ratio of 5.3 to 1, and the first certified USDA graded Christmas trees were marketed out of state by a marketing cooperative.

Major steps were taken to bring electronic technology to the farm operator. Through state appropriations, each county was equipped with a PC compatible computer to process the growing software being developed by extension specialists. Software programs were made available to agents and farmers on a broad scale from soybean variety selection to irrigation scheduling to swine production and analysis systems. A major program, North Carolina Extension Information Retrieval System (NEIRS) is under development which will provide detailed management knowledge to extension agents to assist farmers.

Some important new technology disseminated by the Extension system of specialists and agents charted new directions for North Carolina agriculture. Plastic mulch and drip irrigation in production of vegetables has proven to gross up to \$5,000 per acre. It can double conventional yields, hasten maturity, improve quality and conserve water supplies.

Swine specialists are helping keep North Carolina's premiere swine enterprise competitive with the Midwest. Through genetic testing, balanced rations and improved feeding methods, a pound of pork can be produced on 3.4 pounds of feed.

Extension demonstrations on 111 tobacco farms proved that through insulation and improved practices, \$100 per acre can be saved in curing costs. Many farmers save additional dollars by converting curing systems to hot water heated by wood cut from the farm woodlot.

Extension poultry specialists have pioneered a blackout (controlled) lighting program for the broiler breeder industry which produces six more hatching eggs per hen while consumption of feed is reduced by 5.1 pounds. Adoption of this by the broiler breeder industry would add \$1,750,000 in egg income while saving \$1,428,000 in feed costs.

Extension forestry specialists have field tests which prove that timber income per acre per year can be tripled with management programs which focus on regeneration, protection, stand improvement and marketing. If ten percent of the landowners adopted the practices, it would mean an additional \$80 million in annual income.

A community project involving forty-two families proved the value of water conservation. Installing low volume showerheads, faucet aerators, and toilet dams saved 67,000 gallons of water or \$140 per family per year.

Energy management demonstrations were important for North Carolinians as they pursued an increased quality of life. Twenty-two families in one county recently built energy efficient homes from the Extension plan service. The construction cost averaged \$1,000 less per dwelling than similar homes built from other plans. Three hundred limited-resource homes were weatherized with \$10,500 in reduced fuel costs.

Home economics programs contributed substantially to the quality of life of North Carolina citizens. Increasing family economic stability and security was one major program objective. The results are impressive. Over 55,000 persons reported increased financial consumer and home improvement skills and consequently an increased buying power in the marketplace. This extended income was valued at over \$2 million. Through marketable crafts and home production, over 41,000 persons increased income by \$3 million. Forty-three percent of 2,075 people who attended estate planning workshops reported reviewing and revising estate documents, 33 percent reviewed their wills, and 25 percent changed method of handling joint bank accounts.

Food production programs continued to be important to families and to achieve success. Participants in meat-buying programs reported savings of near \$250,000, over 11,000 persons maximized food dollars with nutrient-dense foods, and 27 percent of participants reported decreased grocery bills. EFNEP reported a 12 percent increase in homemakers consuming the recommended servings in each food group.

Volunteers contributed substantially to the extension of the University's knowledge base. The "Master Volunteer," an in-depth training program which asks volunteers to contribute back hours in volunteer service has been enthusiastically received in beekeeping, food preservation and gardening. Two hundred twelve Master Beekeepers were trained by Extension. In return they contributed 1,600 hours of service teaching 4,200 others interested in beekeeping.

Extension's educational program for 1984-85 has stressed the importance of coping with a distressed farm economy, improving the quality of living through individual and community problem solving, and the acquisition of life skills for the state's young people.