

OUTLINE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE  
SUBJECT MATTER SPECIALIST

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Term Paper

by

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In recent years the concept of role has assumed a key position in the fields of sociology, social psychology, and cultural anthropology. It is now frequently used as a central term in the study of structure and functioning of social systems as well as for the explanation of individual behavior. As our knowledge about role concept becomes more complete, it will be extremely valuable in connection with this latter point. Much of this paper will be devoted to using the role analysis for this purpose.

However, despite its widely recognized value the amount of information available and research currently underway in this field is somewhat limited. Newcomb (12) expressed this philosophy in his book when he said, "More adequate operational definitions of role are needed; our present poverty in this respect is paralleled by the paucity of systematic role research." Gross (7) believes that the postulate of role consensus, which is involved in many formulations of the role concept, is one of the reasons these problems have been neglected.

The purpose of this paper is to study the role of a subject matter specialist with the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service. His relationship with county agents, subject matter departments and Extension administration will be examined. Particular attention will be given to areas where there is apparent role conflict. Several suggestions will be offered of steps that might be taken to increase role consensus among the groups.

### A Definition of Role

Before beginning to examine the actual role of the subject matter specialist there is need for an understanding of what is meant by the term role and how it will be used in this paper. There are many definitions of role in the literature, representing different disciplines, different points of view within a single discipline, and in some cases, different formulations of an individual author. Gross (7) has grouped the definitions of role into three categories. First, are those who either equate it with or define it to include normative culture patterns. Linton (10), for example defines role as "the dynamic aspect of status." He refers to the behavior an individual must engage in to validate incumbency of a particular status. He has reference, not to the actual behavior of an occupant of a position, but to attitudes, values and behavior ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying this status. Newcomb (12) and Bennett and Tumin (1) describe role as the ways of behaving which are expected by society of any individual who occupies a certain position.

In the second category Gross has placed those definitions that treat role as an individual's definition of his situation with reference to his and others' social positions. In defining role Sargent (15) says, "A person's role is a pattern or type of social behavior which seems situationally appropriate to him in terms of the demands and expectations of those in his group." Sargent further points out that in this sense, roles "have ingredients of culture, of personal and of situational determination. But never is a role wholly cultural, wholly personal or wholly situational." This approach seems necessary for the functional application of the role concept.

The third category includes definitions which deal with role as the behavior of actors occupying social positions. A role defined in this way does not refer to normative patterns for what actors should do, nor to an actor's orientation to his own situation, but to what actors actually do as position occupants. Davis' (4) definition, "How an individual actually performs in a given position, as distinct from how he is supposed to perform, we call his role", falls in this category.

It would seem that to limit the use of role in analyzing a position to any one of the three categories exclusively would seriously handicap the researcher. Certainly to be useful one must examine what the actors actually do in their positions. However, to do this solely without examining the expectations that might have influenced their behavior would leave a major void. In explaining role behavior, and certainly in attempting to improve role behavior one must necessarily understand the underlying causes for the deviation. Therefore, while the majority of the analysis will be done by examining the actual behavior of these various groups some of the concepts implied in both the first and second categories will be used.

If systems are to function effectively and efficiently, it is important that individuals agree on role expectations. For as Bernard (2) points out a role cannot be performed alone. It must always have a counterpart. Thus confusion on the part of one role performer spreads to those who are performing with him. Gross (7) also stressed this point when he wrote "If two or more people agree with one another about what is expected of themselves, and others as incumbents of a position in a social system, then they will use common standards to evaluate each other's behavior.

If they do not agree on expectations, then they will tend to evaluate one another's behavior on the basis of different standards. If it is further assumed that an actor tends to behave in conformity with the expectations he applies to his own position then insofar as these are common standards, other actors will approve of his behavior and apply positive sanctions. Insofar as they are not common standards other actors will disapprove of his behavior and apply negative sanctions."

An expectation can be defined as an evaluative standard applied to an incumbent of a position. Expectations have two dimensions that need to be understood. The first is that of direction--or whether the expectation is for a certain behavior or against it. The second dimension is that of intensity. In other words does this expectation represent permissive behavior, suggested behavior or required behavior?

Lack of agreement on role expectation results in role conflict. In studying role conflict Jacobson, et al (8) and Seeman (16) view it as incompatible expectations perceived by the observer. Those actually involved in the conflict may or may not be aware of the discrepancy. On the other hand, Parsons (13) and Stouffer (17) consider role conflict as a situation in which the actor perceives incompatible expectations. They feel that the individual must decide on a course of action as a consequence of being aware of his exposure to contradictory expectations. For if he were unaware of the incompatible expectations, there would be no need to choose among alternatives.

Gross (7) points out that when an actor perceives his exposure to a role conflict situation in which there are two incompatible expectations, A and B, there are four alternate behaviors available by means of which



he can resolve the conflict in the sense of making a decision. He may (1) conform to expectation A (of the county agent), (2) conform to expectation B (of the administration), (3) perform some compromise behavior which represents an attempt to conform in part to both expectations, or (4) attempt to avoid conforming to either of the expectations. Depending upon the individuals and the situation, reactions of all four types occur at times within the subject matter specialist staff of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

Gross (7) states that many writers in applying the role concept assume that consensus exists on the expectations applied to the incumbents of particular social positions. Certainly there is evidence to indicate that such is not the case with the subject matter specialists and their related groups. Wilkening (18) found that among the county agents consensus was lowest with respect to their relationship with state leaders and subject matter specialists. The agents further indicated that they were least satisfied with their relationships with specialists.

Durfee's (5) study gave further evidence of lack of consensus regarding expectations. He found widespread disagreement among county agents about what tasks were assigned to supervisors; and generally speaking, the study showed that the supervisors were not aware of this disagreement. His results failed to support the theory that consensus increases the longer individuals interact. His findings indicated that disagreement was just as great among employees with many years of service as among those relatively new in the position.

### The Role of the Specialist

The role of the subject matter specialist, and the apparent areas of role conflict, can best be understood by examining the position from the standpoint of (1) Status role, (2) Norms, (3) Power and (4) Sanctions.

Each of these elements will be studied, not only from the viewpoint of the specialist, but as he visualizes the expectations of the administration, the subject matter department and the county agent.

Brown and Deekens (3) point out that the Cooperative Extension Service does not fit the pattern of the formally organized bureaucracy with a hierarchy of offices in which channels of authority are clearly defined and offices have subordinate-superordinate relationships. In general the specialist feels the administration is his "boss", but directions are given by the county staff. In fact it would seem that the specialist occupies a dysfunctional position, caught between the expectations of the administration and county staff, both of whom exercise authority over the specialist, but, as will be pointed out later, in a different manner.

On pages 59 and 60 of the Extension Service Advisory Committee Report

(6) the work of the subject matter specialist is defined in five elements as follows:

- (1) Training Agents
- (2) Preparing Material
- (3) Program Guidance
- (4) Liaison
- (5) Other

The Job Description of the Subject Matter Specialist for the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service (9) states, "The specialist's



primary responsibility is the training of county Extension Workers." Dr. H. B. James, Dean of Agriculture at North Carolina State College, speaking before the Specialist staff on December 19, 1960 listed the following five functions as the major responsibilities of the Specialist:

- (1) To train county workers (Dr. James indicated that this represented the first and most important function).
- (2) Collecting information from all sources and getting this out to the county workers in a usable form.
- (3) Assist county workers in seeing and understanding their problems and help them find solutions to same.
- (4) Carry information pertaining to research needs at the county level back to the researcher on the college campus.
- (5) Advise with the teaching and research personnel on their problems.

The Job Description was presented to the specialist staff sometime ago, and discussion at that time indicated the functions as outlined were generally accepted. How completely these functions are being adhered to is apparently a different story. It is generally felt, although facts are not available to document it, that specialists accept their number one responsibility as being that of training agents. Consensus on the other functions would probably be less for Raudabaugh (14) found a lack of a definite concept of which general functions of subject matter specialists are major, which are intermediate, and which are minor. Part of the reason for failure to carry out this first function is that it is much easier for the specialist to do direct teaching than it is to train the agent. Also there exists a feeling of greater security on the part of the specialist if the agent is not nearly as well trained as he is.

however, it is felt that the most important reason why specialists do not assume greater responsibility for training agents is that many agents view the specialist's role as that of a service agency and not as a source of additional training. To support this theory I examined some of the requests for specialist assistance from the Dairy Extension Office on the County Agents 1961 Plan of Work. In the Northwestern and Southwestern districts the agents made a total of 136 requests for dairy assistance. Of this total only one request specified agent training as a part of the reason for requesting the assistance. On the other hand there were seventeen requests from these same counties for a specialist to judge a dairy show-- strictly a service type function.

While the specialists in Dairy Extension have indicated that they feel their first responsibility is to train agents, there is evidence to show that the conflicting expectations of the agents have affected their behavior. For example in May, 1958, the staff reviewed how each man had spent his time during the previous year. The summary showed an average of 12 per cent - with a range from 3 to 20 per cent - of their time in the field was used for strictly agent training. By contrast, they spent an average of 34 per cent - with a range from 20 to 43 per cent - of their field time assisting or actually conducting farmer meetings in the county. While it is true that some agent training is done by the specialist when he does direct teaching to the farmer, it is also generally accepted that this is a very inefficient method. Usually if a meeting is conducted under this pretext it is simply a way of legitimizing the specialists doing direct teaching.

In the first paragraph of the Specialist's Job Description (9) are the following statements: "One of the primary responsibilities of the specialist is to assist in program planning and develop a program within his subject matter area.---The specialist is the leader in developing and outlining a state-wide program for his respective subject matter field and in determining emphasis and direction from year to year." This function is also clearly stated in both other sources cited above.

Raudabaugh (14) found however, in Iowa that county programs were usually well planned before the services of the specialists were requested. There is evidence to indicate that the same situation often exists in North Carolina. While the specialists do some work with agents in program planning the fact that it is not considered one of our major functions by the agents is shown by the fact that in the 136 requests referred to above there was not a single request that specifically asked for assistance in program planning.

During 1956 and 1957 considerable emphasis was placed on a program known as Program Projection. This was simply long range program planning. The specialists were asked to write each county outlining background information and current trends that might be useful to the agent in conducting his program projection meeting. The unique thing about this undertaking was that this was to be a program of what the people said they wanted and where they wanted to go. The specialists were encouraged to attend these county meetings but were specifically instructed not to enter into the formal discussion. While the theory of letting the people set their goals and make the plans sounds good, it is not always realistic.

The accuracy with which they can set these goals and make their plans is directly related to how well they are informed on the problem. Certainly a specialist who isn't better informed than the average farmer has little justification for being called a specialist.

Specialists have been instructed to give priority in their work schedule to requests for assistance from the agents in their annual plan of work.

In fact, filling these requests constitutes a major portion of the program in some departments. This seems inconsistent with the instruction to "develop a program within his subject matter area and determine emphasis from year to year". For presumably these requests were made with a specific type of assistance in mind and after the agent had already decided on the emphasis he wanted to place on this particular phase of subject matter

during the year.

On page 58 of The Extension Service Advisory Committee Report (6)

the following statement appears: "Subject matter specialists are a highly important feature of Extension Service organization. Their functions are strictly 'staff' character, as distinguished from those of 'line' officers, in that they have no administrative or supervisory responsibilities."

This always makes the job of a specialist in developing and directing a state wide program more difficult and at times even impossible. For example, suppose an agent devotes little or no time to the dairy program in his county even though it may represent a sizable enterprise in the county.

The hands of the specialist, with no supervisory or administrative authority, are almost completely tied. There are a few sanctions he can apply but they are far less effective than administrative authority would be.

There are several other roles the specialist performs, some of which involve some conflict, but the above ones seem to be the most prominent and are the cause of the greatest amount of frustration.



### Norms for the Specialist

There are very definitely norms that are accepted by the Specialists themselves for performing their role. There are also other norms that, in the eyes of the specialist, are accepted by the agents, the administration and the subject matter departments that are not always in agreement with those held by the specialists. These are the incompatible expectations referred to earlier and result in role conflict.

The recent administrative change, which made the specialist group responsible administratively to the parent subject matter department, will in time clear up many areas that have been quite hazy. It was generally understood that programs should be cleared with the subject matter department, but no clear cut policy existed. Consequently, some specialists did, while others did not. The subject matter department head, lacking a clear cut administrative responsibility was in a difficult position if he desired to make major changes in the specialists program. On the one hand the specialists were told they were considered to be members of the faculty but yet were not permitted to participate in certain activities. Time will prove this to be one of the most significant moves for the Extension Service in recent years.

One of the norms, generally accepted by all concerned, but one that causes more anxiety and frustration than any other, is that all of the work of the specialist in the county must be channeled through the agent. This is particularly true where other educational or commercial interests are involved. When a highly influential farmer, whose personality happens to clash with that of the local agent, comes directly to the specialist for assistance in solving a problem on his farm, the specialist is placed in



a most difficult position. He recognizes that he is expected to work directly with farmers only after being requested by, and usually in the presence of, the agent. He also recognizes that the administration does not wish to see such an individual offended. Depending upon the particular circumstances of this situation, the specialist will take one of the four alternatives outlined above when faced with two incompatible expectations.

As specialization continues and agriculture becomes more highly technical, unless some reorganization is made of personnel at the county level, there will be more and more farmers by-passing the agent. One who is forced by the nature of his responsibilities to be a generalist can not also act as a technical expert in several fields. A good illustration of this can be found in one of our eastern counties. Located in the county is just one Grade A dairy. At present however, they are milking about 600 cows, making it one of the largest and most complex operations in the state. It is unrealistic to expect that this agent, without either training or experience in dairying, can offer much help to this farmer. With only one dairyman in the county, it is probably more economical from a time standpoint to work directly with this individual than to try to train the agent.

As the "stakes get bigger" the farmer is going to be content only with the best information. Unless the specialist keeps up to date, this may even mean by-passing him and going directly to the research worker.

It may not be possible, and certainly it is questionable whether or not it is practical, to train many of our present county workers (because of their lack of previous training in the field and their present diverse responsibilities) in all phases of our dairy program. For example, we

find few agents who, after a day or two of training by the specialist, are willing to risk their judgment in helping a dairyman plan a remodeling and expansion program that involves a capital outlay of over \$25,000. The possibility must certainly be raised that this objective and our present organizational structure may not be compatible in view of the situation existing on farms today.

There are many other agencies and organizations in the field now doing intensive educational work with farmers. Vocational Agriculture teachers, Farmers Home Administration supervisors, Soil Conservation technicians, dairy plant fieldmen and a host of other commercial representatives to mention only a few. Many of these men, because of their ability to specialize in a single field, can provide real leadership in a program. To many agents, however, these men are a threat to their clientele. The one resource available to the agent that is not available to these other groups is that of the subject matter specialist.

The specialist in attempting to "develop a statewide program in his subject matter field" is inclined to want to enlist the services of as many individuals and agencies as possible. In some counties, however, the agents jealously guard their right to the exclusive services of the specialist so that little or no contact is made with this group. The specialist, knowing he must conform to the norm of working only through the agent, must be content to pass up this opportunity for help in his field.

In Extension we are constantly reminded that it is not our job to make decisions or draw conclusions for farm people. Our task is to furnish information that can be used by the individual as a basis for arriving at a decision of his own choosing. This approach, however, is not always popular with either agents or farm people. The agent is more inclined to be guilty of

violating this principle than the specialist due to the greater influence local people have on him and his program. This was illustrated by Wilkenin and Smith (19) who found in their study of Farm and Home Development Agents in Wisconsin that those agents who yielded to the expectations of local people tend to rate highest the service type of function, such as providing practical information and assisting with the solution of individual management problems. But agents who yielded to state level expectations, if a choice could be made, tended to emphasize the teaching of principles.

Statements such as, "I know you aren't supposed to recommend one brand over another, (a recognition of the norm) but if you were going to buy one, what kind would you buy?" are often posed to the specialist by the agent.

Because his farmers are not content with simply a statement of facts he wants a definite recommendation from the specialist. Perhaps a better job of presenting the basic information and outlining more clearly the alternatives would alleviate some of the problem.

In the eyes of most county workers a person should have some county experience before assuming a position as a specialist. This philosophy, while not expressed strongly, is also stated in the Specialist's Job Description (9). Since the work of the specialist, particularly if he follows the role outlined for him in the Job Description, is quite different from that of the county worker, this may not be an important factor. Certainly the equivalent time spent in taking additional technical and social training may be far more valuable to him.

As a member of the state staff the specialist is expected by the Extension Administration to support and help carry out the administrative

program, even when it may conflict with local viewpoints in some counties. So long as the policy, program or directive meets with universal acceptance the specialist will willingly help explain or interpret it. However, where there is divided opinion or an issue the specialist is likely to try to avoid becoming involved. Should he be questioned by an agent who is opposed to the viewpoint of the administration he will likely agree with the agent if he is unable to avoid committing himself. Seldom if ever, will the specialist vigorously defend the administration viewpoint since he realizes that a large share of the future success his program will enjoy in that county rests upon his ability to sell himself to the agent.

Occasionally the results of research at North Carolina State College will not agree with results obtained at other institutions. This is to be expected and will probably always be true. The specialist feels he should use the results of the best research available regardless of where it occurs. The research worker at this institution, may, however, feel that the specialist should always endorse and use the work done here at North Carolina State College. Without someone with administrative responsibility to resolve situations like this, serious difficulties can result. A situation is recalled where in one state the specialists, using results of research at another institution, were making a recommendation that was directly opposite from the results obtained by their own research staff. An open battle followed that undoubtedly left both groups considerably weaker in the eyes of the public. The administrative change previously referred to should prevent such a situation occurring in North Carolina.



### Power and Sanctions

As defined by Loomis and Beegle (11) power is control over others. It may result from authority or influence. Authority is viewed as the right to control the action of others, while influence is regarded as control over others which is of a non-authoritative nature. Influence is based upon such things as skills in human relations, past favors, superior knowledge of interrelations of members and role performance.

As pointed out above the specialist occupies a position with no administrative or supervisory responsibility. Therefore, any power he might have would fall under the heading of influence. Perhaps his greatest strength in controlling the action of agents, personnel of the subject matter department and members of the Extension Administration lies in the sometimes powerful commodity groups. Because of his close working relationship with them (in many cases he may have been instrumental in organizing the group) he is likely to have more influence with the group than any of the others mentioned.

There is little ascribed influence connected with the position of specialist. It must be achieved. Therefore, the amount of influence varies tremendously from specialist to specialist depending upon their abilities in the areas listed above. Those specialists who have been in the position for many years are likely to have more influence than those comparatively new in the work. Willingness to conform to the norms of the position as set up by the agent affects the specialist's influence. Perhaps most important of all though, is his personality, or how well he is liked by those occupying the counter position. This, unfortunately, is more important than his technical ability. Many individual cases could



be related where a specialist possessed great technical knowledge, but because he was not accepted by the agents he was relatively ineffective. Most of these same factors would apply when examining the influence of agents and subject matter department personnel on the specialists. There are many sanctions - or rewards and penalties - that these groups may apply to each other to induce compliance with the norms and objectives they have set up for the position. The administration, for example, has the effective reward of promotion and, or increased salary. They often have the opportunity of making new or special assignments that carry with them considerable enjoyment and prestige. The reverse, of course, could be used as a penalty for failure to conform to the norms. From time to time budgetary support beyond that contained in the regular budget is needed to accomplish the maximum with a program. The right to give or deny this support is a powerful sanction. One of the sanctions previously available to the administration may soon be removed or at least minimized in its importance--that of dismissal from the position. Presumably many Extension Specialists will now be granted tenure, making it more difficult to remove them from their jobs. Inasmuch as the specialist has no authority over the agent he is completely dependent upon the agent inviting him to his county. This privilege is a most effective sanction. Furthermore the specialist has no control over the percentage of resources of the county staff that will be allotted to his program. The agent can threaten or offer to adjust this amount as a means of obtaining conformity. Occasions arise in the county where the services of the specialist are needed and the fulfillment of the task will bring considerable pleasure and prestige to the specialist. For example a chance to work with a very

influential group under circumstances where the environment for success is excellent. On the other hand there are unpleasant situations where a satisfactory solution is almost impossible. The specialist can be called in to these situations and the stage so set that he will be the object of the wrath of a group of very unhappy people. The use of these situations by the agents tends to keep the specialist from "getting too far out of line".

Since the agent must rely so heavily upon a personal relationship with the agents the possibility of damaging that relationship can be a powerful threat against him. Practically all county Extension workers belong to the North Carolina County Agents Association. Basically, this is a professional organization designed to help improve their effectiveness as educators. It can be, and is, used very effectively for other purposes. There are standing committees representing most commodity programs. These committees make recommendations to the administration regarding the program in this area. A favorable report is a "feather in the cap" for the specialist, but an unfavorable one is a "black mark" against him. Through formal discussion in the association meeting or simply by word of mouth a few agents can seriously affect the reputation of a specialist who in their eyes is guilty of violating one of their norms for that position.

There are sanctions, not nearly so numerous or as effective, at the disposal of the specialist that he can apply to the agent. He can be readily available or he can be slow in getting to the county. By the nature of his position, the agent occasionally gets caught in a situation where he urgently needs help, perhaps to compensate for his lack of effort in the area prior to this time. New programs are usually launched on a

statewide basis only after a trial period in a few selected counties. Being selected to participate in one of these pilot studies is considered an honor to the county and the selection of these counties is usually in the hands of the specialist.

There are times when, because of his greater technical knowledge, the specialist may actually have more influence with a particular farmer or group than the agent himself. These are usually the more progressive and influential citizens in the county - the type that could be a valuable ally or a powerful foe.

While talking to groups of farmers and to others in the county the specialist, at his own discretion can take the opportunity to brag on the program, mildly compliment it or can actually infer that the program is behind the times. For some of the more influential specialists, perhaps due to length of service, this can be a very effective positive or negative sanction.

Being a member of the state staff, the specialist has the opportunity of helping the administration evaluate the effectiveness of the agent. The availability of this opportunity varies with specialists and the agents realize which specialists exert more influence in this respect. Therefore, for some this would be a most effective sanction and for others not useful at all.

As a means of denying the research worker who violates a norm, the specialist may refuse to be a co-author on an Extension publication or refuse to assist him in preparing his research work in the form of an Extension publication. The research worker is highly dependent upon the specialist in becoming widely known among the producers in the commodity

group. Joint authorship of a publication could be very important to him. The specialist who wishes to reward a research worker can arrange to have him appear on the program at many important commodity meetings. More and more it is becoming important to the researcher that the commodity leaders know him and support his work. Since the specialist is more likely to have control of these groups the members of the subject matter department must seek their support through him.

#### Recommendations

From the above discussion it is apparent that there is considerable role conflict involved in the position of a subject matter specialist. While undoubtedly there will always be some conflict it is felt that certainly it can be minimized through some of the efforts to be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

There is a great need for a better understanding and acceptance on the part of the agents as to the role of the specialist. Dr. James has outlined what he considers to be their five most important functions. There can be little question, therefore, as to the role we should presently be striving to perform. As a first step it would be well for the specialist staff, the Extension administration and the Subject Matter Department Heads to fully discuss these five (and any others that they might agree on) functions, arriving at agreements as to what is implied and what is not implied in each of these duties. In the discussion, agreement needs to be reached on which duties are major, which are intermediate, and which deserve least emphasis. Included might also be a discussion on the obstacles that the specialists feel they already are or will encounter in attempting to carry out these responsibilities. Following the conference



each specialist should be instructed to review his previous year's work and total up the percentage of his time spent performing each of these duties.

Joint meetings should then be held between the specialists and the county workers. Prior to the meeting a questionnaire might be sent to the county workers asking them to list the functions of a specialist and to rank them in importance as to whether they are extremely important, very important, or less important. These should be summarized prior to the meeting. The complete lack of consensus among the agents as to what they expected of a specialist would be very revealing to the group.

It would be extremely important that at the close of these meetings, after presumably at least compromise agreement had been reached, that the administration make perfectly clear to both groups that they were expected to operate within that general framework at least until times changed so that different functions were called for.

There is merit in having overall direction of emphasis in an educational program. For example, in dairying if all counties were to stress parasite control in their calf raising program during 1961, it would probably be more effective than part of the counties doing it this year, some next year and so on. Technical changes in production, processing and marketing often make it very desirable that special emphasis be placed on a certain phase during the year. Our present program procedure makes this difficult to achieve. There is no legitimized procedure, established by the administration, for specialists making program suggestions to the counties each year.



This could be accomplished by a letter or prepared statement from the specialist outlining where the emphasis should be placed during the coming year. Presumably this can be done now but it is not a legitimized procedure and unless this function of the specialist is accepted by the agent, the specialist runs the risk of creating ill will.

The possibility of an organization of specialists, similar to that of the county agents, needs to be considered. This could lift the esprit de corps of the specialists and would give them a formal way of evaluating county program. At present there is reluctance on the part of individual subject matter specialist groups to voice complaints to the administration on the lack of effort in their field by a particular county. They feel they might be considered biased in their evaluation. The specialists, through their organization, could discuss situations such as this and if it appeared that it should be called to the attention of the administration could do so with considerably more effectiveness.

To allow for more specialization on the part of the county worker some reorganization at the county level is necessary. Obviously, a specialist in every field at the county level cannot be justified. It may be that one, or even two, of the enterprises are of sufficient importance to the county to warrant an assistant agent who would work full time in those areas. The other enterprises could probably best be served by an area specialist who might cover several counties. This move would not replace the present state staff of specialists, but would simply be a reorganization of the responsibilities and area to be covered by the individual. This would enable the worker to specialize in a field and should equip him to work with even our most advanced farmers. The chance to devote all of his

attention to a single enterprise would probably make him more receptive to being trained by the specialist. In fact, he would probably feel that the specialist's time is too valuable to him as a source of information to be wasted on a lot of direct teaching and other service tasks.

As is intimated above, the role of the specialist today is not necessarily the same role he should be performing in 1970. Therefore, studies need to be made periodically as to what changes in function seem appropriate in view of the changing situation. It has been said that the most unique thing about the Agricultural Extension Service has been its ability to change to meet new situations. This must be even more true in the future.

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