

1-4-63

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

December 5, 1962

TO: John V. Lenz

FROM:

  
John E. Spurlock, Asst. State Director

I thought you would be interested in Harry Tucker's final monthly report wherein he summarizes his 39 years in the Agricultural Extension Service.

As you know, Tuck has been one of the "iron men" in Extension over the years -- you will enjoy this report.

C O P Y

Farm and Home Advisor Work in California

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics  
U.S. Department of Agriculture and University of California Cooperating

Monthly Report of:

Harry B. Tucker

Sacramento County

October, 1962

39 YEARS AS AN EXTENSION AGENT

I arrived in California August 1, 1922, after graduating from Purdue University and had a job as a DNIA tester in Stanislaus County in the Crows Landing district. In fact, when I graduated from college I had accepted a position as a school teacher in Wheatland, Kansas, which is located in the northwestern part of the state. I wasn't satisfied, so when the opportunity arrived for me to get to go to California, I jumped my contract and away I came.

Don Smith, now retired, was assistant farm advisor in charge of DNIA work at that time in Stanislaus County. This was quite a new experience for me as many of the dairymen were Portugese, and I certainly couldn't talk their language. This first year in California was quite an eventful one for me since the dairymen didn't want to test, and had been signed up under pressure by the president of the Crows Landing Bank, a man by the name of George Fink. I made it even though in some instances I practically had to fight my way onto the ranch. I tested around 2,000 cows a month in 18 herds. Finished the year successfully and signed up a unit for the following year of approximately 2,500 cows. However, one morning I was doing my work in a tank house on a ranch near Crows Landing when I walked Don Smith and the late Chester Ruble, who was assistant state leader at that time for the northern central valley counties. They talked to me a few minutes about the testing program and finally asked me how I would like to be an extension agent doing 4-H Club work in Glenn County. I never had any special training but said, "If you think I can do it, I will go." So, on October 1, 1923, I became an assistant farm advisor in charge of 4-H Club work in Glenn County. Enoch Torpen, now retired, was in charge of the county at that time. I'll never forget the first farm bureau meeting that I attended and tried to make a talk (I was scared to death). Mr. Torpen had been a 4-H leader in Washington, so he was able to guide and direct me during the start of my extension career.

There were no leaders or organized clubs in the county at that time as we did the 4-H program through the farm centers and schools with no actual leaders but more or less advisors in various communities. Some 80 4-H Club members were enrolled my first year. I also secured a few local citizens to help in their respective districts.

In 1925 I wrote the first local leader project with the help of Frank Spurrier, then assistant state 4-H club leader, and Enoch Torpen. We also wrote projects under the old form known as What, When, Who for individual subjects such as dairy, sheep, swine, poultry, and clothing. The home advisor in the county trained the few volunteer leaders that supervised the girls' work, but I did all of the organization work as well as most of the supervision during the club year. We had no actual clubs at that time, but the entire program was conducted through home visits and visits to the schools where I was able to contact most of the members.



In 1927, Glenn County had a hot political race. The farm bureau was deeply involved in it. There was some opposition to the Agricultural Extension Service. While we were at the annual conference in Berkeley in January, the farm bureau voted to put the issue on the ballot. Professor Crochran, then director, did not allow us to take any part in the political issue. In fact, all of us left the county a month before the election. Since the farm bureau was split right down the middle on some county candidates, they did nothing to promote the issue on the AES. As a result, the extension issue was lost by slightly over 100 votes. Our supporters were so mortified that they got busy and were able to get a special election on the issue. Well, this time it lost by a greater margin. Extension was voted out of Glenn County, effective July 1, 1927. (THIS EVENT WAS MY MOST FORTUNATE BREAK IN MY CAREER IN AS MUCH AS I WAS SENT TO HUMBOLDT COUNTY AS AN ASSISTANT FARM ADVISOR IN CHARGE OF 4-H AND DAIRY WORK). August 1, I reported to Dr. J. W. Logan, Farm Advisor. There had been no organized club work in the county except to have a committee of dairymen for the calf and pig club work. This program was more or less maintained and supported by the Humboldt County Dairymen's Association, and in 1927 they had an enrollment of 70 members.

1928. This was my first organization year. Individual clubs were set up with local leaders and in some cases we were able to secure sponsoring organizations. Through the schools I organized some 15 clothing clubs with approximately 200 girls enrolled. The leaders were trained by the specialists from the University, but it was necessary for me to do all of the organizational and supervisory work. During that year the farm bureau as such officially was buried. Humboldt County was the only county during the next many, many years that continued to operate successfully without an organized farm bureau supporting it. During the next few years, I was able to secure an enlarged enrollment in agricultural projects such as beef, sheep, swine, garden, poultry, and rabbits along with the girls' clothing program. The enrollment approximated 400 members, which is quite good considering the number of available boys and girls in rural districts at that time.

Dr. Logan had been in the County since 1920 and endeavored to secure closer cooperation of the cow testing organizations in the county, but those independent Danes would not have any part of the extension office for fear that they would loose control of their association. April, 1928, however, they allowed me to compile and print the first annual report of the cow testing associations that had ever been gotten out by the AES. Through the next 27 years my relationship was excellent with them, but all the administrative work was in the hands of the board of directors composed of nine dairymen, three elected each year. They did all the hiring and firing of testers, purchasing of equipment, and even paid the secretary-manager a small salary per unit to do this work. I assisted mainly with their monthly reports, publicity, and through personal contact with the dairymen. The written AES project for DHIA was to encourage dairymen to join the association for the improvement of the dairy herds through breeding, culling, and feeding. In the early days the most important media to reach the dairymen was newspaper publicity and home visits. Then, too, it was very necessary for the advisor to become well acquainted with the dairymen to gain their confidence. It was a long, slow, hard grind. Well, work in any educational program is that way. In 1928, the average production per cow was 325 pounds. In 1954, when I left it was 452 pounds per cow. And in 1947, we had over 6,000 cows enrolled in the DHIA program.



During the depression years our budget was in the neighborhood of \$3,200 for two men. When Dr. Logan passed away, July 1, 1932, there was quite a battle led by dairymen just to keep one man. Tom Mayhew, then assistant state leader in that district, was able to convince the supervisors and agricultural leaders that we must keep two men in the county in order to give other interests besides dairy and 4-H some assistance. We succeeded, and W. D. Pine came to the county January 1, 1933, as the director. There were just two of us in those days so the administrative work wasn't very important. Upon my arrival in 1927, Del Norte County wanted help. They decided after conferring with the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors that we should help them in dairy and 4-H and they would pay Humboldt County a sum to cover actual operating expenses while we were in that county.

Del Norte is a small county with some 125 farms. My first trip was in relation to club work and made in February, 1928. The roads were narrow, crooked, and not paved from Orick north. On that rainy February day I left at 6:00 a.m. and arrived at Presley Tryon's home at Fort Dick at approximately 6:00 p.m. that evening. Twelve hours to cover 100 miles; but, of course, that included ferrying across the Klamath River, which was at approximately one-half flood stage. What a trip! Today that distance of 100 miles is easily covered in two hours and fifteen minutes. In that county we did 4-H club work and DHIA work which included not only the actual testing but also considerable work on the improvement of pastures. It should be mentioned that Humboldt and Del Norte counties are still cooperating on a similar basis today as that which we started in 1928 except now there is a part-time secretary and a full-time man in the county.

4-H livestock projects boomed in Humboldt and Del Norte counties during the thirties and forties backed by the Humboldt County Dairymen's Association and the Board of Trade. We shipped two carloads of our best, purebred animals to the state fair in 1931. These were shipped by train, and it was quite an event for the caretakers and older club members who made the trip. In those days participation was not so prevalent as today, so we won over \$500 in prize money yearly; and to this day every year Humboldt and Del Norte counties have some fine representative animals at the state fair.

The first county club council was organized in the Spring of 1928. We never did have one in Del Norte during those early days since there were only three or four clubs, and I attended the meetings and visited the leaders each month.

County Fairs - Tours and the Davis Club Convention were my most important selling tools to interest the farm youth in the program. We set up a rather complicated scoring system so as to be fair in selecting Davis Club Convention winners and, in those days, they had to have completed two project years. I also worked out an examination based on the literature sent them in the various projects which they answered by referring to the literature and returned for me to score. If a member wanted to go to Davis, he had to answer these questions as 20 points in the scoring system was allowed to this. Herewith, I believe, is the score card used.

Exhibit at County Fair	50
Interest and Attitude	20
Attendance at Meetings and Events	20
Project Examination	20
Project Book	15



This involved a large amount of work for me and the leaders before the fair and after since the club convention followed shortly thereafter. However, it was a very important tool and an effective one. In fact, the Davis Convention was the BIG PLUN that I was always dangling before them way up there in the sticks. In those days very few of those youngsters had ever been out of the county or even on a train. This was their chance. For a few years we had a special train leave Humboldt over the N.W.P. picking up other members along the way from Mendocino, Sonoma, Lake, and Napa counties. One year I had 108 4-H club members and leaders out of Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Then, the Dairymen's Associations of Humboldt and Del Norte counties paid the expenses of this trip, and they still do. The creameries of the county gave the members a sightseeing trip in and around San Francisco on the way home. What an eye-opener and trip for those youngsters from that area! Of course, today that isn't so exciting.

WAR!!!!!!! - "Food will win the war" was the cry. Enrolled some 600 youngsters in the towns of Eureka and Arcata in garden clubs. Total enrollment was around 1,300 boys and girls. Didn't have much success in training leaders to more or less supervise all of those individual clubs, so I attempted to attend all of their meetings which at times involved meeting two or three groups during one evening. Total meetings attended during those years was in the neighborhood of 200 per year and was on the go seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 or 11:00 each night.

Driving at night was really tough along the coast line. Blackout lights had to be used all of the time. So much greater time was needed to get home from meetings. I was driving around 17,000 miles a year during those days covering Humboldt and Del Norte counties, an area 190 miles long and 50 miles wide and with many unpaved roads. Drove one car, a Pontiac sedan, seven years over 120,000 miles at a cost of slightly over 2 cents a mile not including depreciation. Tires were a problem, but I was lucky to have purchased a complete set of Double Eagle Goodyears just before they were frozen. Those were retreaded four times before I got some new ones. Those were trying, hard driving years in northwestern California, but I enjoyed them.

1947, illness. The old boy begins to crack up. Uremic poisoning struck just before the county fair, but I thought nobody could carry on. So, I went through the Humboldt and Del Norte fairs plus the Davis Convention before I could take time out for the operation. Even though I took many pills during that period, my doctor said I was quite lucky to have lived through it. He also said that was the major cause of my present heart affliction.

Due to my illness, it was necessary to secure another farm advisor to take over the 4-H program in the counties. Just to illustrate the strength and popularity of the 4-H program in the counties; when W. D. Pine appeared before the board of supervisors and told them the situation, their comments were: "Get another man. Tucker should be relieved. He is working too hard; besides the 4-H program is by far the best and most important phase of the Agricultural Extension Service." Walt Fieg, now 4-H advisor in Humboldt County, came to relieve me. In the following year Aloha Oha was secured to conduct the girls' 4-H program. Enrollment was increased only slightly to around 700; but naturally a better organization, training of leaders, and more effective 4-H program resulted.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, JANUARY 1, 1955 to OCTOBER 1, 1962 - Due to health problems accumulated during the years, it was deemed wise for me to take another position. However, it was very pleasing to me when our people and supervisors in Humboldt and Del Norte counties urged me to remain even though I couldn't do much work. However, after my having been so active in that county, I felt it unwise as someone sooner or later would be talking about me as just drawing my salary. So, I selected the Sacramento public service position as my move as I had known John Spurlock for a number of years and felt he could guide, direct, and teach me the subject matter needed to fill that position satisfactorily. It was a decided change



my previous experience in Extension. Sitting in the office, making very few farm or home calls as against being in the field two-thirds of the time and contacting some 600 to 700 farmers and club members at their homes during the year. Not only was John of terrific help to me but also Gordon Morehead since the largest percentage of the questions were in his horticultural field. Telephone calls also changed materially from possibly five a day in Humboldt to 30 or 40 a day in Sacramento. However, by being tactful, understanding, sympathetic, and getting the answers, I have made the position a very important and helpful one.

Having done practically all the budget work in Humboldt County for years, I was able to assist and assume many minor administrative responsibilities for the directors I have served under in Sacramento County. Although the position may seem to have been a minor one, I soon realized that my presence in the office 95 per cent of the time not only relieved the other agents, but the secretaries also to some extent. These eight years have been very satisfying ones to me though many times my health has not been good, and I should have been at home. I sincerely hope that I have contributed in a small way to the high standards that the AES set and hold among the agricultural people and the business communities in California, and it is with regret that I have to retire at this time.

SUMMATION AND OBSERVATIONS - In 1923 began as a 4-H Farm Advisor without any knowledge or training for an AES position. Salary \$2200. What a difference today!

Cooperated with and worked quite closely with the Farm Bureau. In fact, our secretary was also the Farm Bureau secretary.

Detailed projects and progress reports were required.

A weekly report of activities such as farm and home visits, meetings attended, and accomplishments during the week were required.

Professor B. H. Crocheron, Director of AES and who set up Extension in California, made all administrative decisions.

Dissemination of latest research was through home meetings and Farm Bureau monthly paper. There were no commodity newsletters then. The AES state staff totaled approximately 100 people. When I attended our early conferences at Berkeley, I could call all of them by name.

In early years even though the budget may have been only from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year, it was quite often challenged by tax conscious groups (We don't need those book "learnin' guys.).

After 22 years in the service, my salary was \$3,880 per year.

In 1945 salaries began to increase due to inflation.

There was no set scale or step increases during those years. It all depended upon your supervisor, but the final figure was determined by Director Crocheron.

Following Director Crocheron's death, changes in policy and administration were rapid and in some cases not for the best interests of the AES.

The policy of writing projects and progress reports were practically abandoned, and for some years there were no definite records of work done in the county except those from monthly reports.

In my opinion it was a mistake to abandon records for farm and home visits made.



The revival of plans of work and reports of work in the present abbreviated form was an excellent idea and should be continued.

Specialization of the farm advisor in his particular field in this rapidly changing era is a necessity especially if the AES is to keep abreast of and ahead of its competitors.

In large urbanized counties I feel that Extension should maintain public service farm advisors in order to make those important contacts with urban and business people. If we don't some other agency will move in. I understand that the agricultural commissioners would like to be the director of all agricultural agencies in the county. This policy is not new; it was brought out by an agricultural commissioner from Humboldt County in a speech before the commissioners some 30 years ago at their annual convention. The Agricultural Extension Service has been good to me. I attribute my successful career to:

1. The training and guidance of those directors I worked under in the early days. Enoch Torpen in Glenn County, the late Dr. J. W. Logan in Humboldt County, and W. D. Pine in Humboldt County, with whom I worked from 1933 to 1954. He was in my mind the craftiest administrator I ever worked under. He always seemed to be able to look into the future and determine the outcome of knotty problems and was able to convince and furnish the leadership to his leading constituents in the county of that fact.
2. Ability to work and get along with people. I received many setbacks and disappointments, but I always came back with a smile and tried another approach which was usually successful.
3. Work. You can't do an extension job on an 8-hour, 5-day week. At least I never could. If one is looking for that kind of a job, they had better not start in Extension. They just can't make it successfully.
4. Leadership. You must be the "bell wether". You can't expect your trained leaders and cooperators to do all the work. You must more or less take the lead and show them that you can do the job you may be expecting your cooperators or leaders to do.
5. Today, after 39 years in Extension, I would like to accept the AES challenge again if we were able to turn back the clock. However, one would need to have more and better specialized training in the field so he would be able to compete not only with many others in the same field but also to keep abreast or ahead of our competitors. All extension personnel must have and keep this goal before them if the AES is to continue to retain its now renowned leadership in the agricultural field.

In closing with my last report, may I express my appreciation to the many, many administrators, specialists, co-workers, secretaries in the AES offices, as well as the many volunteer leaders and cooperators that have assisted, inspired, and helped me over these many, many years. May the good Lord bless them all.

HBT:ejr