



Ag Extension Born in 1914

The Cooperative Extension Service came into being in 1914; the name then was Agricultural Extension. The concept of such a public education program developed in the early 1900s and finally took shape with the Smith-Lever Act, passed by Congress in 1914.

An urgent need existed to carry agricultural technology directly to farmers and ranchers in the State; by the turn of the century, Arizona had programs to do this. In 1901, for example, Farmers' Institutes had started, but critics said they were too general and that the information given did not always apply locally.

Agricultural Short Courses were offered in Tucson by the College in 1913. These were popular, with about 150 participants each year. The Agricultural Demonstration Train was another extension effort that preceded the formal organization of Extension. Farmers' and Housekeepers' Week was an additional effort by the College; on the final day, participants were sometimes treated to an ostrich banquet.

With the funding from the Smith-Lever Act, the University employed Stanley F. Morse on July 1, 1914 to be superintendent of Agricultural Extension. Later in 1914-15, the College hired a livestock specialist, an agronomist, a state club (4-H) agent and county agents for Cochise, Santa Cruz and Maricopa counties. During the next two years agents were added for Graham, Greenlee, Navajo, Apache, Pinal and Coconino counties. In 1916, Estes P. Taylor was named the first director.

When Extension began, better methods of reaching people with useful, practical information were needed urgently. It was known that some

Clockwise:

William J. Pistor, College of Agriculture veterinarian, performs field surgery, late 1930's.

Pima County agent's office, 1924

Largest watermelon, 48.5 pounds, at Midsummer fair, Phoenix 1913



farmers and ranchers had mastered the art of successful farming and ranching. Often they obtained yields that were double or more than the average. Therefore, not only did people need to know about research from the College, but they also needed information about the experiences of the most successful producers.

The methods Agricultural Extension Service used in the early years relied heavily on talks, demonstrations, publications, personal visits and correspondence. Specialists worked with their disciplinary colleagues on the University campus; agents served with the people in their communities. This provided the mechanism for solving local problems on the scene; also research could be influenced to address those situations that had no quick and easy answers.

Charles U. Pickrell became one of the Arizona Extension directors who has lived on in memory. He served as director from 1937 to 1958; before that he had been both a county agent and a livestock specialist. He grew up in Arizona, one of the relatively rare faculty members able to make that claim, even 60 years ago. He received his bachelor of science in agriculture from the University in 1917; for the next two years, he served in a horse-drawn artillery unit that saw action in three major battles of world War 1.

When he returned, Arizona Extension became "Pick's" career. Those were the times when people who lived in small communities were fairly isolated, and a demonstration scheduled by an Extension agent was a welcome change from the daily routine. A visit from "Pick" was especially so, for he was not only a good teacher, but also a master storyteller. He freely admitted

Clockwise:

Rural poultry demonstration, 1920's

Graham County farmer works cotton field, 1925.

Cowboy assists stranded county agent, 1922.