

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

Four Professors Taught a Dozen Courses, Compared to Large Research, Teaching Program Today

Darrel S. Metcalfe

The College of Agriculture of the University of Arizona opened its first term for students October 1, 1891. The Director of the Experiment Station also held the title as Dean of the College of Agriculture and the academic title, Professor of Agriculture (Agronomy).

The teaching roster included four professors in the fields of chemistry, mathematics and irrigation engineering, botany and entomology, and horticulture. As at the present, staff members were selected for their abilities in both instruction and research.

Although a full four-year course for degrees was offered when the College of Agriculture was first established, at that time there was little interest in studying for a degree in this field. However, students enrolled in other colleges of the University took courses given in the College of Agriculture, especially in the departments of chemistry and irrigation engineering, and in the biological sciences. Many of the University graduates who later became prominent in the fields of mining and engineering, education and research received instruction in Agriculture.

No High Schools 75 Years Ago

Seventy-five years ago in Arizona there were no high schools. A Preparatory Department of the University and another at the Normal School at Tempe were the only institutions that offered instruction above the eighth grade. The agriculture of the territory was not of a sufficient volume or otherwise developed to provide opportunities for technical training in Agriculture.

It was not until high schools appeared in the more prominent agricultural centers and reclamation brought a phenomenal expansion in Arizona agriculture that there was a real interest in college courses leading to a degree in agriculture. Stimu-

lated also by the many Farmers' Institutes and other agricultural means, in the year 1907-08 a two-year short course in agriculture in the then Preparatory Department of the University was offered in lieu of high school instruction from the ninth to the twelfth grades inclusive. This short course was so successful that in 1909, with legislative support, a farm was purchased for the use of agricultural instruction. It consisted of 80 acres located on Rillito Creek.

First Degree Given in '13

In 1915 the agricultural faculty moved into the present building. In 1911 a four-year course of college credit leading to degrees in agriculture was established. The first degree was awarded in 1913, the second in 1915, and eight degrees were awarded in 1916.

During the fall semester of 1959-60 there were 366 undergraduate and 125 graduate students enrolled in the College of Agriculture. Sixty Bachelor of Science degrees and 26 advanced degrees were awarded on June 1, 1960.

Many curriculum changes have been made since 1891. A review of early courses showed special prominence given to the sciences that pertain to Agriculture. A general education embraced work in mathematics, English, French, German, Spanish and the natural sciences — especially chemistry, botany, and horticulture — and particularly to the use of irrigation water. Classroom instruction was

supplemented by laboratory and field work practice.

They Had Field Work, Too

In addition to the prescribed work of 35 weeks in the University, students were required to spend three weeks during the summer at the Experimental Station and on farms of the territory, studying and practicing the details of experimental and farm work with special emphasis upon irrigation. This work was under the supervision of members of the faculty.

In contrast to 1892, when four staff members taught 13 courses, during 1959-60 over 100 staff members, all of whom also do extensive research, taught nearly 200 different courses.

Today there are 16 departments: Agricultural Biochemistry, Agricultural Chemistry & Soils, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Engineering, Agronomy, Animal Pathology, Animal Science, Botany, Dairy Science, Entomology, Horticulture, Plant Breeding, Plant Pathology, Poultry Science, Watershed Management. The Institute of Water Utilization is also a part of the College of Agriculture. In addition, there are special curricula for Farm Mechanization, Agricultural Business, Agricultural Journalism, and Preveterinary. Also, a special curriculum is being proposed for Dairy and Food Technology.

Curriculum Kept Up-to-Date

Through the years the agricultural curriculum has had many changes and has been modernized with the changing trends. It includes requirements in the biological sciences, physical sciences, social science and humanities. Provision is made for students interested primarily in agricultural research to follow a special curriculum. Today's curriculum has considerable flexibility, allowing a student to take courses in other colleges to develop a well-rounded education.

Graduate students may obtain masters and doctorate degrees under either the Plant Science Program or the Committee on Biochemistry and Nutrition. Also, a program in Animal Breeding is being proposed.

The Field Is Wide

Agriculture today is a complex and specialized industry with a wide range of career opportunities — some 500 different vocations. Graduates may find employment in farming and ranching, research, services, education, business and industry, communications, or conservation. Curricula in agriculture are designed to meet the needs of students who desire a broad knowledge of agriculture as well as those who desire greater specialization.

Dr. Metcalfe is Director of Resident Instruction in the College of Agriculture.