

TRAINING FOR SUCCESSFUL FARMING

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Vocation Agricultural Education Provides Training Required For Successful Farming; Efficient Farming Stressed, Technical Training Provided

MANY people today, including many farmers, believe that a person does not require special training to become a farmer, yet many very successful farmers, and others, will tell you that farming is a highly skilled occupation and that the farmer must be able to do many things and have a wide range of information in order to do them efficiently. To be successful as a farmer a person must be technically and skillfully trained. The inefficient farmers cannot stand the pressure of competition in a world which drives hard and close bargains. For that matter inefficient people in any occupation are hard pressed to maintain themselves and a decent standard of living.

The efficiency of farming is indicated by the farm labor income. Annual farm labor returns, as indicated by surveys made in 17 states during the past six years, have ranged from a loss of \$5,852 to an income for labor and management of \$19,925.

The range in cost of producing hogs among 21 Iowa producers varied from \$7.20 to \$17.66 per 100 pounds. The low cost producer received \$1.54 per bushel for corn fed and the high-cost producer received 51 cents.

Butterfat costs for a section in the middle west ranged from 24 cents to \$1.67 per pound. State averages of corn production costs ranged from 49 cents per bushel in Indiana to \$1.95 in Texas. Cotton production costs varied from 10 cents per pound to 57 cents.

The efficient farmer, the comparisons well indicate, will reap a profit where the inefficient reaps loss.

Many of our farmers are not technically and skillfully trained for the vocation of farming. No great effort is being made to maintain the productivity of big portions of our agricultural lands. Not 5 per cent of our farmers appreciate, to the fullest extent, the value of pure bred sires and pure seed. Cooperative buying and selling is not taken advantage of by a very large number of farmers. Few farm accounts and records are kept. These things are only a few of the many vital factors in farming which past generations of farmers have

failed to appreciate and understand. However, the past generation of farmers did not have the wonderful opportunities offered to our next generation of farmers, who are now in our rural and village schools.

The present day farm boy can go to a good rural or village school where he can study the business of farming under the direction of a well-trained vocational agricultural teacher. He can learn to control the economic and productive factors of farming in so far as they are controllable by man. He will learn to correlate the economic and management principles of farming with the productive.

Under the Smith-Hughes Act, departments of agriculture are encouraged and fostered in our rural schools through grants of money from the Federal government. These departments are set up to train persons who are engaged in farming or are preparing to farm.

In this country of ours 3,339 vocational agricultural schools had enrolled in training courses 90,000 all day pupils, 28,400 adults in evening classes, and 6,000 pupils in part time classes. Three hundred thousand new farmers are needed each year to fill the needs of our farm occupations. This means our schools must have in training 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 farm boys and girls each year if each is to receive two to four years of training.

Vocational agricultural departments are giving practical instruction to their pupils by basing the course of instruction on the type of farming followed in the locality where the school is located. Each student carries on a home project or does other supervised practice work. In doing the practical work on the farm the student gets the most valuable training possible through experience which develops the thinking and doing habits necessary to successfully engage in farming.

The money and property accumulations of project work has been sufficient to start many boys in the business of farming many years ahead of those who have not had projects. One boy at the end of his senior year had earned and saved,

from project work \$2000 in cash. He also owned eleven head of pure bred cattle, 30 head of hogs, and four horses. After graduation he went into partnership with his father and has the management and half interest in the farming operations of a 160-acre farm. This is only one case of many that the author knows about. The above boy would testify that education and training pay big dividends.

Every farm boy, who wants to become a farmer, should take advantage of the opportunity offered through well directed project work, and vocational agricultural instruction to get into farming.

The project work is a practice and proving grounds. Here you can make your mistakes and not suffer from them. You can get your necessary experience and serve your apprenticeship. You can earn while learning. You have every opportunity to become as successful at farming as other boys have to be successful at any other occupation.

Vocational agricultural education is for boys who like farming, who want to be farmers, who can engage in profitable project work and want an opportunity to learn farming. Other farm boys can also profit from Agricultural Education. Many boys have earned their way to and through college with agricultural projects. A year at least of agricultural education will be a valuable asset to any boy's educational equipment. The thinking and doing habits established and experience obtained make vocational agriculture valuable for those boys who do not wish to farm, but who will probably want to become bankers, merchants, county agents, teachers, preachers, country or village doctors, etc., in rural communities, agricultural districts of the state or in small towns in agricultural sections. The chief thing a farm boy should remember is that, if raised on a farm, he has 10 to 20 years of excellent experience upon which he should capitalize by choosing a vocation in agriculture or closely allied to it.