

PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA

ANNUAL REPORT

ALVIN ALLEN

ASSISTANT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENT

DECEMBER 1, 1950 to APRIL 17, 1951

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## ADULT PROGRAM

### ORGANIZATION

The assistant agent devoted  $5\frac{1}{2}$  days to this project during the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  month period. This consisted principally of extension organization and preparing monthly and weekly reports of an extension nature.

The assistant agent attended the Annual Extension Service Conference, December 5 through the 9, 1950. This conference was held at the University of Arizona campus at Tucson. The conference program was very worthwhile and the speakers made notable contributions to the conference program. It is especially worthwhile to have on the program people from the National Extension Organization who have had a great deal of experience covering extension activities and methods in several states. The round table discussion on 4-H Club work dealt with the problem of low percentage of completions by Club members during the 1949-1950 club year. This agent took part in this discussion. Results of this round table are reported in the 4-H Club section of this annual report.

During the period from December 1, 1950 to April 17, 1951, this agent has not worked with the Farm Bureau or the Southern Arizona Rabbit Breeders Association due to the press of 4-H Club duties. However, the agent did meet one time with the Southern Arizona Poultry Producers and assisted as program chairman for the evening. Mr. Harry Embleton, department head of the Poultry Husbandry Department at the University of Arizona, gave an interesting talk on the National Poultry Improvement Plan and what it means to local poultrymen. This agent showed a film on Africa and the customs of its people.

The Pima County 4-H Club Leaders Association met one time during the period but attendance was very poor. Because of this, officers were not elected as had been planned. This organization has shown increasing unwillingness to carry the initiative and has depended on the extension office to call meetings and conduct business at such meetings.

The Pima County 4-H Club Educational Committee, consisting of Mr. G. E. Blackledge, County Agent, Mr. Carlos Ronstadt, cattleman, and Mr. Donald Bell, Agricultural Secretary of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, has been active on the same basis as during the past years. The Committee has approved one loan to 4-H Club member which has already been repaid. The Pima County 4-H Educational Fund, which this group controls, has at present a balance of \$664.15. It is planned that this fund will be used in any educational way approved by the committee.

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### INFORMATION PROGRAM

The assistant agent used the radio broadcast 3 times since December 1, 1950 to contact county residents with an educational program. Most of this was of a 4-H Club nature, although some time was devoted to general farm topics of interest to local ranchers, farmers and home gardeners. The facilities of Radio Station KOPO were used. However, in January the station changed our broadcast time from 8:45 A.M. to 5:15 A.M. on Saturdays. All three extension agents felt that this time was not suitable for a farm broadcast and after one month's trial the radio station was notified that we could no longer take part in broadcasts so long as the 5:15 A.M. time was scheduled. In making these broadcasts, information provided by the Extension Information Specialist's office was supplemented by local interest news stories and information topics prepared by extension agents.

Local newspapers printed 7 articles by this agent since December 1, 1950. Five of these covered 4-H Club news and 2 were on poultry and gardening.

The assistant agent prepared 9 circular letters of which 286 copies were mailed as a means of informing county 4-H Club members and leaders of meetings, plans for 4-H programs and information on 4-H projects.

The assistant agent used kodachrome slides and educational motion pictures throughout the time covered by this report. These films covered useful material in connection with the 4-H Club program with the exception of one film on home gardening. The assistant agent made some progress in building up the kodachrome slide file showing 4-H Club members and their project activities.

Personal contacts with both adults and 4-H Club members continue to be an important means of putting across the extension information program. Office calls, as well as personal visits to the farm homes, are useful in explaining and demonstrating extension information programs.

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PROJECTS

AGRONOMY

The assistant agent devoted 6 days to the agronomy project since December 1, 1950. About 5 days of this was devoted to advising new and old cotton farmers on fertilizer recommendations, irrigation practices, soil requirements, planting data, control of Johnson grass in cotton and assistance by government agencies in clearing and developing new land for planting to cotton. The cotton project is reported in more detail in the agent's narrative report.

Approximately 1 day was devoted to advising county residents on pasture management and planting information for alfalfa and small grains.

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PROJECTS (continued)

HORTICULTURE

The assistant agent devoted 9 days to the horticultural project since December, 1950. Gardening, fruit tree planting and landscaping were the major divisions under this project. This agent met with homemakers' groups twice during the period to show an educational film called "The Farm Garden". At these meetings this agent advised the 41 people who attended on soil problems and use of fertilizers in gardens. These topics were at the request of the audience, and afterwards individual questions were answered for a period of about 30 minutes. The assistant agent then demonstrated preparation of a flat for starting tomatoes from seeds.

In January this agent, assisted Mr. Harvey Tate, Extension Horticulturist, in an illustrated talk on landscaping and in demonstrating pruning of fruit trees and grapevines. Both meetings were well attended.

Questions regarding landscaping of suburban homes took a large share of the agent's time in the horticulture project. This is because of the increasing number of suburban homes in and around Tucson. Most of these are new homes on which much landscaping remains to be done.

Cottony cushion scale has already begun to cause considerable damage on Pittosporum, with some cases reported on roses also. However, the latter has not been seen by this agent. Mr. Curtis of the Federal Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine Entomologist, has advised the vidalia beetle cannot be released to control this pest until warm weather arrives. He advises using a strong stream of water to remove the adult scale and then spray the plant with a commercial product known as Vapatone. This is reputed to kill the young crawlers but will not control the adults.

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PROJECTS (continued)

POULTRY

The assistant agent devoted approximately  $3\frac{1}{2}$  days to this project during the last  $4\frac{1}{2}$  months. The nature of this work is principally advisory and consisted of helping small poultrymen with problems relating to disease control and where to purchase quality baby chicks.

It is worthwhile noting one instance of apparent toxicity from feeding sulphaquinoxiline. This was reported by the Valley View Poultry Farm on South Missiondale Road. Mr. Wesley McCartney, the manager, reported the loss of approximately 1,000 pullets, aged 5 to 6 weeks. He agreed, however, that feeding of this drug simultaneously with vaccination for Newcastle may have been a contributing factor.

Due to the press of 4-H Club work, the assistant agent has not had an opportunity to conduct the poultry housing investigation as was planned. This agent met with the Southern Arizona Poultry Producers and acted as program chairman.

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PROJECTS (continued)

DAIRY

The assistant agent devoted only 1 day to this project since December 1st and this time consisted principally of advice to newcomers who are interested in starting in the dairy business in the Tucson area. This is not an encouraging prospect and these people were advised accordingly. The dairy situation in the county has changed very little from that reported in November of 1950. However, the number of dairymen in the Pima-Pinal D.H.I.A. has shown some decrease since dairymen are very hard pressed because of the increasing costs of alfalfa hay. The price of hay on a ton lot basis in the field is now about \$34 a ton, even under favorable bargaining conditions. When transportation costs from Pinal or Maricopa county are added to this, the cost to the dairymen is somewhere between \$38 and \$42 per ton. The price he receives for his product has not raised to compensate for this increased cost. The high price of alfalfa is due almost entirely to the increased cotton acreage which has resulted in many alfalfa fields being ploughed up and planted to cotton.

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PROJECTS (continued)

RABBITS

Since this agent devoted only  $\frac{1}{2}$  day to this project since December 1, 1950, there is very little to report. Such help as was given to county residents on this project consisted of help to secure good breeding stock. One report which this agent received on April 11 is interesting and might, in the future, assist with problems in marketing rabbit meat in this locality. Mr. Phil King, 2319 N. Belvedere Ave., Tucson, reported that he received a wire from the Siebrand Bros. circus, then located at Deming, New Mexico, that they were in the market for several hundred rabbits each week. The wire did not clarify details as to price or as to the difficulty of shipping the dressed rabbits to the circus location each week. However, this unexpected outlet for rabbit meat does suggest a possibility. If local rabbit producers could be encouraged to pool their fryer rabbits and if new producers could be encouraged to join such a cooperative movement, I feel sure that a satisfactory marketing arrangement could be reached. The biggest problem is maintaining a steady supply of rabbits to satisfy such a large order. However, if contracts were signed by such large users, as a circus, to take a specified number of rabbits weekly, it would be possible for local producers to solve their other problems. I believe that this problem is worth investigating and it would be a definite boost to the local rabbit industry if some such solution can be worked out.