

County Agriculture Shows Much Progress

Agent's Annual Report Indicates Big Interest Increase in Local Farming

The annual narrative report of county agent, A. Q. Ketcher and assistant county agent, D. C. Snodgrass for the year 1940 defines considerable improvement and progress in Cherokee county farming. Especial progress has been made in several departments where stress has been placed during the year.

Special emphasis was placed on development of pasture land during the past year and a marked improvement, as well as extension, is evident. Livestock raising and breeding has increased very much, both in quantity and quality.

Farm management practices have reached a point of improvement that brought comments from several official sources. One of these was a statement by W. B. Collins, state farm management supervisor who said Cherokee county farming compared "very favorably" with other mountain counties where the same farm methods are used.

Agronomy

Cherokee county farmers were well pleased with crop yields of cereal grains during the year in spite of adverse weather conditions. The bad weather, however, brought about some very interesting demonstrations, resulting in improved practices. Those farmers who used recommended practices in use of fertilizer, seed, rotation, etc., received much higher yields than did those who did not use these practices.

In these demonstrations one farmer rotated corn with crimson clover, greatly increasing his hay production, and more than doubling production of corn per acre. Various fertilization methods were used over the four-year period, finally developing to the most productive.

In still another demonstration, a unit demonstration farmer brought the productivity of land from 20 bushels of corn per acre to over 60 bushels in a period of five years. This increase in yield was due to use of lime, legumes, and phosphate in systematic rotation.

Several demonstrations in rye were made in the county during the year with very satisfactory results. These excellent yields were a result of proper fertilization in some cases, but one showed great productivity without use of any kind of fertilizer. This crop followed a legume crop that was left on the land.

Neither wheat nor oats were produced very widely over the county, but several good demonstrations were made in each, illustrating the advantages of using certified seed. Some of these demonstrations showed an increase over home-grown seed of as high as forty percent.

Payment for soil building practices and receipt of free phosphate stimulated a great interest in seedling legumes during the past year, resulting in an enormous increase in legume acreage. In addition practically all the farmers are producing their own seed.

Many of the farmers grew lespedeza to supplement their cash income, selling the hay to dairymen at a very good price. Others raised cowpeas and soybeans, declaring better results than from lespedeza.

The number of farmers seeding crimson clover this fall has increased more than six hundred percent over former years. This is due mainly to the organization of watershed clubs and a drive by the county agents to get each farmer to seed at least one acre.

More emphasis was placed on pasture improvement this year than any other phase of the extension work among the unit and area demonstration farmers. These improvements included reseeding, fertilizing and clearing. Several excellent demonstrations were made in the county by use of lime and phosphate.

Special Crops

Ordinarily the average farmer in this county pays very little attention to special crops. Those growing Irish potatoes, however, have realized quite a bit of revenue for their efforts. These special crops are sectionalized, more or less, in production but some grow in almost any land situation under varied weather conditions. Sweet potatoes make a reasonable yield in any part of this county while Irish potatoes, cowpeas and tobacco are grown in different sections.

Very few grow sweet potatoes for profit in this county. Producers of cowpeas, however, are finding quite a great deal of cash income from the raising of cowpeas. Production of burley tobacco in this county shows a gradual decrease each year, with only thirty farmers eligible to vote in the last referendum. This is probably due to the inaccessibility of

the markets.

Horticulture

The most outstanding piece of work conducted in horticulture this year was in connection with home garden projects. A noticeable improvement was observed throughout the year in the number of gardens, the increasing number of different vegetables produced and the protecting of gardens from poultry and livestock.

The provision in the Agriculture Conservation program allowing a payment to farmers for producing a garden that meets the requirements of an approved garden, did much to stimulate interest in better home gardens. Well over 90 percent of the 1530 farms cooperating in the program was given an approved garden practice. Through the program, many of the farmers are growing fall gardens for the first time.

Exhibits at the annual Cherokee county fair showed the stimulation toward better standards in the growing of vegetables in addition to a larger variety.

Forestry

Considerable attention of the farmers of the county continues to be given to three phases of forestry: reforestation, timber stand improvement, and forest fire protection.

A total of 81,900 trees were set out in eroded lands of the county during the year, the majority of which were shortleaf pine. Fifteen farmers planted Thomas Black walnuts, the remainder being yellow poplar and white pine.

Special care is being taken in the improvements of timber stands in the county, with some 135 farmers doing satisfactory work in this line. The main activity in the large stands of shortleaf pine is thinning to give better growths a greater chance of surviving.

The very apparent shortage of forest fires during the year indicates the realization of people in this section of the value of burning permits. A larger reduction in fires is expected as a result of this interest.

Agricultural Engineering

An increasingly large number of the farmers of the county are using blue-prints for construction of new buildings, housing units, etc., as against the older method of building "as-you-go." During the past year, 80 percent of the farmers constructing new buildings used blue-prints. A total of eight homes remodeling projects were completed according to specified plans and prints were furnished for ten new dwellings.

Poultry

Recommendations for poultry raising in the county have generally followed lines of fundamentals, with results showing a constant increase in productivity and economy on the part of the poultrymen. Projects have involved better housing, better feeding and culling of bad birds.

Though the cooperation of a local hatcheryman, many bad flocks have been converted to purebred groups, with profits per bird going as high as \$1.90 each, over and above all costs.

Animal Husbandry

Good livestock and good farming have always been associated, and good farming practices in this county have resulted in a like qualification of livestock. Exhibits in the annual county fair have shown definite improvement, especially in beef cattle and dairy stock. During the past year 16 purebred sires have been placed in the county, with several other well bred sires.

Some difficulty is being encountered by dairymen in this county toward finding a market or place of disposal for lower grades of milk. A large market, formerly provided by the influx of TVA employes has left this part of the market empty and a satisfactory disposal has not yet been found.

There are five grade A dairymen in the county, all of whom expanded for this trade but are now wanting for a market. Progress is being made, however, in improvement of feeding and breeding. Three of the graded dairymen have started testing, and it is hoped that at least one of these will soon be able to sell registered cattle as well as use them for producing dairy products.

Results from using purebred beef bulls in this county is being realized more and more. This was very evident in the exhibit of 10 fine Aberdeen Angus beef calves at the state fair, all of which carried away prizes with several first. These calves were exhibited by 4-H club boys. A champion beef sire was also displayed at the fair by a county man.

Work with swine in this county has been devoted almost entirely to production for home food. Every farm home in the county averages from one to ten hogs raised for home use. Educational programs have been carried out in teaching the farmers better pork curing methods and other methods of preservation of the meat. These methods include proper cutting in order to get more from each carcass.

Farm Management

Every phase of farm management has increased considerably this year. The most noticeable results are the increased amounts of lime used. Improvements on homes and farm buildings, and the amount of work done on improving pastures.

Along with pasture improvement the interest in livestock has increased. Several farmers have bought high grade heifers for breeding purposes.

Considerable work has also been done on erosion control.

There are 62 unit demonstration farmers who kept records during the past year, and regular inspections show that the records this year far surpass those of last year. Five watersheds have also been organized and all farmers in the areas report rapid results from use of fertilizer materials afforded them through the various agriculture programs.

4-H Clubs

There are six organized 4-H clubs in the county this year, two in high schools and four in elementary schools, with a total of 108 boys enrolled.

Largest projects undertaken by the club members this year was in beef calves, in which unprecedented records were set, not only in completion of projects, but in prizes achieved at both local and state fairs.

Both boys and girls in the clubs participated in one or more educational projects, concerning local, district and state clubs. Local projects of club members included corn, rye, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, home gardens, truck crops, poultry, dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine and horses.

Agriculture Conservation Program

The 1940 conservation program came nearer to meeting the needs of the local farmers than any of the previous programs. A total of 1,530 farms signed up for work in this program, and less than five percent failed to complete any work. An increased use of lime was seen by all farmers in hundreds of demonstrations over the county. Lime was used in increasing amounts and proved much greater yields in legumes. The program has had a valuable effect on practically every phase of extension work in the county.

County Fair

A total of 637 exhibitors competed for the \$1,100 premium money offered at the annual county fair this year, which operated for five full days and nights. Purely an agricultural fair, the exhibits were excellent this year and showed periodical progress in every phase of agricultural work adapted to this section.

Wildlife Conservation

In three of the watershed areas in

the county, 300 quail were released this year by an organization of local sportsmen. The farmers in the areas have agreed to feed and shelter these birds during severe cold weather. In two cases this has been done for the past three years. During the very severe winter last year, local sportsmen estimated the mortality of quail to be over 80 percent.

Land Use Planning

Land use planning was started in the county last year with mapping and classification, all work being done on a township basis. A total of 81 men and 46 women were selected on committees to carry on this work.

A county co-workers council was organized in the latter part of the year to coordinate the operations of all public groups and agencies in the county toward forwarding of the program.

Periodically, meetings are held by the committees in the communities represented in the plan, and a study is made of the problems of that community in all phases of necessary improvements. Following this recommendations are made for making these improvements.

MARBLE NEWS

Mrs. Frank Walsh was confined to her home last week with flu.

The many friends of Arthur Cooke will be sorry to hear he has been ill.

Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Queene spent Saturday in Murphy with Mrs. Sally Queene.

Miss Mildred Marr of Hendersonville and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burnett and children, Carslyn and Buddy, of East Flat Rock spent last week end here with Miss Marr's and Mrs. Burnett's father, the Rev. W. W. Marr, Mrs. Marr and their sister, Miss Margaret Marr.

Mrs. Lonnie Hunsucker spent Thursday afternoon with Quince Stiles.

Vinson Hall spent the week end in Sylva with his family.

The Home Demonstration Club met Monday at the home of Mrs. B. B. Palmer. Mrs. P. A. Arrowood, president, presided. Plans were made for the years work. Mrs. Alline King, home agent, demonstrated what could be made of native products to be sold on the market. Miss Annie C. Rowe of Raleigh visited the club and gave an interesting talk. After the meeting closed, Mrs. Palmer, hostess, served refreshments to the following members: Mrs. P. A. Arrowood, Mrs. Frank Littlejohn, Mrs. Cora Bryson, Mrs. Victor West, Mrs. Frank Walsh, Mrs. W. B. Mulkey, Mrs. Lillie Smith, Mrs. Clay Kimsey, Mrs. Edwin Barnett, Mrs. W. W. Marr, Mrs. King, Miss Amy King and Miss Rowe. The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. Lillie Smith, Monday, February 24.

Mr. and Mrs. Vinson West announced the birth of a daughter January 22.

Mrs. Lillie Smith spent last week in Knoxville with relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Barnett spent the week end in Murphy with his parents.

Inez, Grace and Emily Davis visited with Marilyn Littlejohn Saturday.

Mrs. Fred Barton has been ill at her home the past week.

Miss Bessie Barton spent Monday in Andrews.

The many friends of Mr. and Mrs. Glade West will be sorry to hear they have been ill with flu.

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