

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Experiment Station

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, MARCH, 1913

CIRCULAR NO. 60

THE COUNTY FARM ADVISER PLAN

D. H. DOANE.

For many years the Missouri College of Agriculture has been investigating and working out the special farm problems of Missouri. During this same period of time the United States Department of Agriculture has been solving similar problems for the United States as a whole. A vast amount of valuable information has in this way been secured, and this information has been supplemented by careful studies of the methods used by successful farmers and the reasons for their success. To carry this information to the farmers of Missouri and to help to put it into actual practice on their farms, is the special function of the Farm Adviser.

This circular of information gives in some detail the plans under which Missouri counties may secure the co-operation of the Missouri College of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture in employing County Farm Advisers.

The first step in this plan was the appointment of a man to take general charge of the work and be equally responsible to the College of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This man is called the State Leader. His headquarters are at the College of Agriculture, Columbia, Mo. Counties that are considering the employment of a Farm Adviser should first communicate with the State Leader; he can be of much assistance to new counties in helping them to avoid mistakes.

1st. No work is started in any county for a term of less than three years.

2nd. The Government will pay one-fourth and the College will pay one-fourth of the total salary of an Adviser employed in co-operation with them, leaving one-half to be paid by the county.

3rd. There is a state law which makes it possible for the County Court of any county to furnish the county's part of this fund. Article VIII, Sections 701 to 706, Revised Statutes of Missouri, 1909.

4th. Those counties where the County Court assumes the county's obligations will find preference with the College and Government in this co-operation because: (a) it is desired that every farmer in the county be represented in the county's part of the financial support of the Adviser, which is done best through the County Court; and (b) it is desired that the work be on a permanent basis. This cannot be done by yearly private subscription; it can be done through the County Court.

5th. The Farm Adviser is appointed and in general directed by the College and Government through their State Leader, but appointment and direction is in each case only upon the advice and approval of the local county represented.

6th. A minimum consideration for the three years is \$6000.00. This amount is paid the Farm Adviser as salary and necessary traveling expenses in the county. Of this amount the county must raise half,—\$3000.00. These figures express the least amount to be considered, and many counties are planning to pay more. It is a wise provision.

7th. In addition to the \$3000.00 for the three years, the county must also furnish the Adviser with office and equipment, such as desk, stationery, telephone and necessary stenographic help. The Farm Adviser is required to attend a school of Instruction at Columbia, Mo., held especially for his benefit. This school will continue from one to three weeks each year. The county is expected to pay the Adviser's expenses while on this trip. Any working funds for such items as advertising, contests, displays in the office, etc., must be furnished by the county. In short the county should allow at least \$500.00 a year to cover all incidentals.

8th. To assist in raising and administering the incidental fund and to be of general help to the Farm Adviser, there should be formed in every county a County Farm Bureau. It is this organization that is the actual head of the Farm Adviser project in the county. It is the members of this bureau that the Adviser works with and through, and from this group of men comes the spirit for better agriculture that ultimately makes the success of the movement.

It is not advisable for the organizers of the bureau to complete its organization, appoint permanent officers, or adopt a constitution

until the Adviser has started his work. Its officers and directors should aid, council and encourage him and he should have a hand in selecting those who can best act in this capacity.

It should be emphasized in all cases that under no circumstances will a membership to the bureau, a donation or a subscription in any form, give any individual a special claim to the services of the Farm Adviser. He must be free at all times to carry on the work as directed by those in charge, and cannot under any conditions or circumstances be at the beck and call of those who have given a dollar or five hundred dollars. It can be generally understood, however, that the Adviser will work with those who want him to work with them, of course never bothering those who do not want him; and a good way for a farmer to be sure that the Adviser understands his wants is to pay his dollar and join the farm bureau. After he has answered all the calls and requests from the bureau members, then he will naturally turn to those who desire his services but who have not seen fit to support the work with the bureau membership fee.

The order in which Farm Advisers are assigned to counties applying for them will be determined by the completeness with which the following conditions are met.

1. The Judges of the County Court should agree to appropriate from the county's funds sufficient to pay the county's part of the salary of the Farm Adviser. This will in no case be less than \$1000.00 per year, and in many cases more.

2. A fund of at least \$500.00 per year—more is often required—must be raised in addition to the salary of the Adviser for the incidental expenses of running and maintaining the Farm Bureau.

3. The Incidental or Farm Bureau Fund should be raised by obtaining pledges from resident farmers of \$1.00 per year for three years. This pledge will eventually be the necessary membership fee to the Farm Bureau that will be formed. The larger the pledge list of actual farmers, the better.

4. The organization of the Farm Bureau should *not* be started until the Farm Adviser has been in the county long enough to become acquainted with the conditions and the people and then have a part in its organization. The working up of the interest, circulating petitions and pledges, can be handled by a temporary organization or committee.

The committee passing on the applications will consist of the President of the University of Missouri, the Director of the Experiment Station, a Representative of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the State Leader.

In all cases, the availability of state and government funds will determine the number of counties in which this work can be started.

The College and U. S. Government can not at any time obligate themselves in advance of anticipated appropriations.

From the foregoing the reader will gather the briefest outline of the proposed plan of co-operation between Government, College and Missouri Counties. These few words are not a plea for the cause nor an argument in its favor. They are intended to do little other than clearly set forth the plan of work.

By far the greatest amount of objection and antagonism to the whole Farm Adviser idea has been raised by those uninformed, or misinformed, concerning it; hence the endeavor to explain it carefully.

It should be clearly understood that no Farm Adviser will assume to give advice or assistance to any farmer not desiring it. However, the farmer who wants first-hand assistance in getting a start of alfalfa on *his* farm, or wants to know the trouble with *his* soil and the best treatment for it; the man who wants assistance in ridding *his* farm of hog cholera, black leg or some crop or orchard pest will *apply* to the Farm Adviser and a *personal trip* to the one needing individual and specific help will mean the solution of the problem. The farmer who has no *apparent troubles* but feels that there might be a way to do better sends his application to the Farm Adviser for a better system of farming. Such assistance has increased the income for individual farmers in this state from \$1500.00 to \$1800.00 in a single year.

When your child needs the services of a doctor, why not write to Chicago or Kansas City, describing the case, and ask what to do? No, you would rather have the opinion and services of a doctor on the ground, even though you know he is not as well qualified as the high-priced city specialist. The Farm Adviser is the man on the ground, not to help all Missouri farmers but to help *you* with *your* problems.