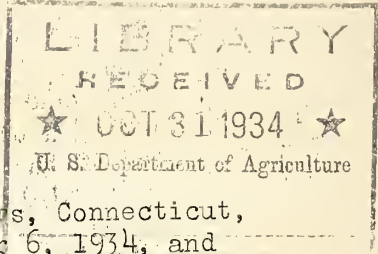


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4-H FARM MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT CLUBS

A talk by A. J. Brundage, State Club Leader, Storrs, Connecticut, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, October 6, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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In Connecticut we believe that farming will be most profitable and satisfying when the men and women who occupy the farms do so because -

1. They have intelligently chosen this mode of live,
2. Are there because they like farming,
3. Are well equipped to produce crops and animals economically, dispose of them at a profit and still have time to enjoy the other satisfactions of life, and
4. Can raise a family and educate their children as readily as the man in town and still provide a competency for their declining years.

This we appreciate is quite an order, but is a goal toward which we can work.

We believe, too, that the industry or mode of life which does not provide for the training of the oncoming generation to surpass present attainments will soon become decadent.

In 1922 when we realized that 4-H club work as we were conducting it, was not of interest to the later "teen" age boys and that in our adult Extension program there was no provision for young men in the early twenties who had not acquired farms of their own, we decided to do something about it. As a result we organized what we called "Young Farmers' Clubs."

Membership in these clubs involved the keeping of accounts on the home farm enterprise and the discussion of farm management principles in bi-monthly meetings. These clubs proved popular and gradually increased in number until 1929 when there were twenty clubs or an average of two-and-a-half groups in each county with a total enrollment of 420.

As these young farmers' clubs were the only organized groups of this nature in the state, older farmers who were interested in keeping farm accounts and learning more about farm management principles, became members. And you could not blame them - the work was fundamental and they wanted it.

Many of the young men who joined young farmers' clubs twelve years ago are still members and of course are twelve years older. As a result, we find today that our young farmers' clubs are made up largely of farmers 25 to 40 years of age, instead of the group 16 to 25 years of age which they were originally planned to serve - only about 10% of our present enrollment being under 25.

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We are proud of the results of these young farmers' clubs even though they are serving a different age group today than was originally intended. Here are some of the specific accomplishments of the past twelve years of work with these clubs -

1. More than 1,000 men of more than average ability have been associated with these clubs. In other words, at least one out of every twenty farmers in the state has kept farm accounts under supervision and received instruction in farm management principles and practices.
2. There are scores of farmers throughout the state who know as much about farm management as our specialists at the College.
3. On hundreds of farms recommended changes have brought marked transition in farming methods and have increased farm incomes.
4. Much of the basic data our farm management specialists are using today has been obtained through these clubs.
5. Today we find these men who "know their farm management" taking increased responsibility in the agricultural organizations of the state.

There are 11 of these young farmers' clubs in Connecticut at present and two farm account clubs for the "teen" and early twenty age groups. Some work in farm management has been given to older club members through our Senior 4-H clubs as well as through our summer conferences at the State College. But we are not today meeting the need for farm management instruction of our oncoming farmers in Connecticut and shall need to change our methods to provide for such instruction or accept the penalty a generation hence for our omission.

Youth is power and youth will be served. If we do not inform the most capable young men on farms today regarding the ever-changing problems confronting farmers and give them help in learning about principles of good farm management and their application, either one of two things will happen -

1. These most capable young men will leave the country for other vocations, or
2. They will remain in the country and be less efficient farmers than they are capable of being.

We cannot afford to have either of these situations become realities. This leaves us no alternative to increasing our effort at the present time to make available through 4-H Farm Management Account Clubs the help which young farmers of the state need and want.

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