

homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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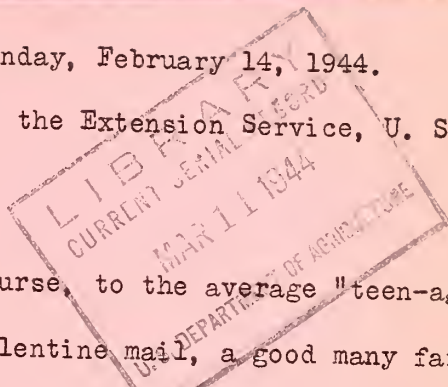
Subject: "4-H CLUB WARTIME PLANS." Information from the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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February fourteenth brings valentines, of course, to the average "teen-age" girl or boy, and this year, along with the usual valentine mail, a good many farm young people will receive some reminder of the next big 4-H club event---National 4-H Mobilization Week, March 4th to 12th. That's the annual wartime rally for the 1,700,000 farm boys and girls between 10 and 21 years old, and for those who could be carrying 4-H club projects but are not yet doing so. It's a "call to the colors" intended to stimulate these girls and boys to renew the pledges they made last year to produce "food for fighters," and to urge them to produce even more this year. It's also a chance to tell the people where club members live how much they have already done in food production and other wartime work.

Some homemakers have sons or daughters who are in clubwork, and some were themselves once club members or local leaders in this nation-wide organization that gives farm boys and girls training in agricultural and homemaking skills. Under Federal and State extension supervision, either girls or boys may carry any project in a 4-H club, such as raising livestock or poultry, gardening, canning, or food preparation. For the most part, girls select homemaking projects.

Ever since we've been at war the big emphasis in 4-H club work has been on projects connected with producing food and conserving it. These boys and girls from 10 years old and upward have raised an enormous amount of food this past year, both for home use and for market. 4-H Mobilization Week is intended to make new and bigger plans for 1944. State club leaders all over the country are getting ready for the rally on a local and on a national scale.



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For example, girls and boys who have made outstanding records during the past year will report what they have done over the radio. Some clubs will hold local rallies to recruit more members. Each present club member will try to enlist at least one new boy or girl in club work this year. And of course that means doing a little preliminary scouting now.

Club members have a motto, "To make the best better." In spite of the great quantity of food they produced last year, they will pledge themselves to grow even more this year. But let's get down to some individual reports. Some of these boys and girls have grown, canned and stored more food from their Victory gardens than many grown-ups.

How much of a garden did you yourself plant last year? How many quarts of fruits and vegetables did you can? How many bushels of potatoes and other root crops went into your cellar? One 17-year old Kentucky girl plants a 2-acre garden every year. In the past five years she has averaged more than 1400 quarts of canned fruit and vegetables, although she had to improvise her own hot-water bath canner out of a lard can and some wire. An Oklahoma girl who has kept track of her club products for 7 years has raised more than 19,000 pounds of food-stuffs in her garden in that time, and canned about 2400 quarts during these years. This girl prepared and served all the family meals last year, in addition to all her gardening and canning work.

A great many club girls of 17 and 18 are helping their mothers by taking over the family meal preparation. Here's a typical report:

"Audrey did all the cooking on the family's ranch during the summer, took part in salvage drives, helped out with the labor situation, bought War Bonds, donated books and furs to the armed forces." Audrey lives in Montana. Another girl, Priscilla, whose home is in New Hampshire, "Kept house and helped on the farm too. Her mother was ill during the summer. While still in school Priscilla

rose at five to get things done before leaving for the day. She also took over the family garden, and did a great deal of outside farm work."

And here's a North Dakota girl's record: "Dorothy(in two years) baked 1,250 loaves of bread, over 160 dozen quick breads, 130 cakes and dozens of cookies, and prepared 900 meals for a family of five. She also canned more than 300 pints of food, made 93 garments, raised 35 bushels of potatoes and 250 chickens, and planted two and three-eighths acres of garden."

These are just a few samples of what individual 4-H club girls did. When you take all the girls in a county or State, their production is impressive. Among Georgia's 65,000 4-H club members who had gardens this past year, and who pledged to raise "food for fighters", 56 girls were county winners. And these 56 girls together raised over 136,000 pounds of vegetables, and canned more than 22,000 quarts. That's an average of more than 2400 pounds of vegetables, and over 400 quarts canned by each girl. The 20,000 4-H club girls of Kentucky last year canned a million and a half quarts of food---three times what they canned the year before.

If you take them as a whole, the figures tell a story of hard work and persistence, repeated over and over, in all 48 States. 4-H club members last year raised over 5 million bushels of Victory Garden products, 9 million head of poultry, 90,000 head of dairy cattle, 600,000 head of other livestock. They canned 15 million jars of food. They also helped shorthanded farmers grow and harvest their crops. For example, in one State alone, club members put in an aggregate of over 100,000 days of emergency labor on farms needing extra help. And these records are for food production only. 4-H club members in many other types of projects have also set themselves to "make the best better."

