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THE PART YOUNG PEOPLE CAN TAKE IN EXTENSION PROGRAM PLANNING

A radio talk by W. A. Lloyd, Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered in the National 4-H Club radio program, February 1, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 49 associate NBC radio stations.

We hear much of agricultural planning, - of national, regional, State, and county agricultural program making. Every good farmer has a well-thought-out farming system, not only for each particular year, but also a planned rotation over a series of years.

Agricultural extension has been much given to program making. Indeed, man might be defined as the planning animal. In spite of the old Hebrew proverb that tells us to "take no thought of tomorrow," most of our time is taken up in doing just that. The Scottish poet, Bobbie Burns, thought

"The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley
An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain
For promised joy!"

But, in spite of that, we do keep on making them. Perhaps, as Kipling says, "If you can dream and not make dreams your master," it is all very well.

There is one element in our population that might be called the master planners. These are our young men and young women. They are standing on the doorstep of the future and much of their time is devoted to wondering what lies beyond. This may be merely daydreaming, but often, too, it is the serious planning of their lives. In Extension Work we are just beginning to give particular attention to this group of young men and young women from about 17 to 25 years of age that lies between boys' and girls' clubs on the one hand and the adult demonstration groups on the other. "Junior Farm and Home Demonstration Clubs," they are most aptly called, though there are a variety of local names, such as junior farm bureaus, junior adult clubs, service clubs, farm science clubs, Utopia clubs, etc. They are just beginning to be a recognized force in agricultural program making and often take a major part in planning the recreation, social and rural beautification phases of a community extension program.

In New York a committee of a Junior Farmers' Club representing four communities was called together. They spent a whole day sitting around a table in the county agricultural agent's office, discussing and listing the things which they might do. Toward the end of the meeting they selected what they thought would be most useful. These included: taking a farm inventory, keeping cost accounts on the home farm, a study of the agricultural outlook, discussion of new and improved varieties of stock, father and son partnerships, and poultry raising.

In Wisconsin 26 members of a Young Farmers' Club have organized a program for the study of legal papers relating to farming, farm debt, contracts, and farm management.

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In Hawaii, where the work with young men and young women has been on a definitely organized basis for some five years, a Junior Farm Demonstration Club composed of Japanese-American young men take charge of such rural events as Fourth of July celebration, the 50th anniversary of the coming of the Japanese to Hawaii. They are interested in coffee and sugar production. These young men like to be considered doing something worth while--a man's job.

This work with young men and young women is one of the most significant recent developments of Extension Work. What finer thing is there than the family council where father and mother, son and daughter, all make their contribution to the farm and home plans; and what more pathetic thing in life is there than the young man and young woman just budding into adult life who are too much just taken for granted, who are suppressed and given no opportunity to express themselves.

In Oregon, the young people, through their clubs, demonstrated that they had a real contribution to make in the county economic planning for agriculture. In our economic and social planning for the future we would do well to make a much larger use than we are of these young men and young women. After all, it is their world we are planning. The success of the plans now being made will largely depend on the attitude of the farmer and homemaker of tomorrow toward them. They will have a better understanding and appreciation of them if they help make them. Are the young men and women of your community an asset or a liability? Are they an organized part of the community life or are they just drifting? Perhaps, instead of being irresponsible, as they are often thought to be, they are only hungry for a little recognition-- for an opportunity to do their part in community planning and community work. Like livestock in that critical period between hay and grass, if not given attention they may be found leaping over the traditional fences. Give them a chance to dream and a chance to help make their dreams come true.

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