INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF
AGRARIAN AFFAIRS
Vol. III, No. 3, September 1962

Contemporary Problems in the Economics of Agriculture

Produced by the
University of Oxford Institute of Agrarian Affairs
in conjunction with the International Association
of Agricultural Economists

Price 10s. 6d. net
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON

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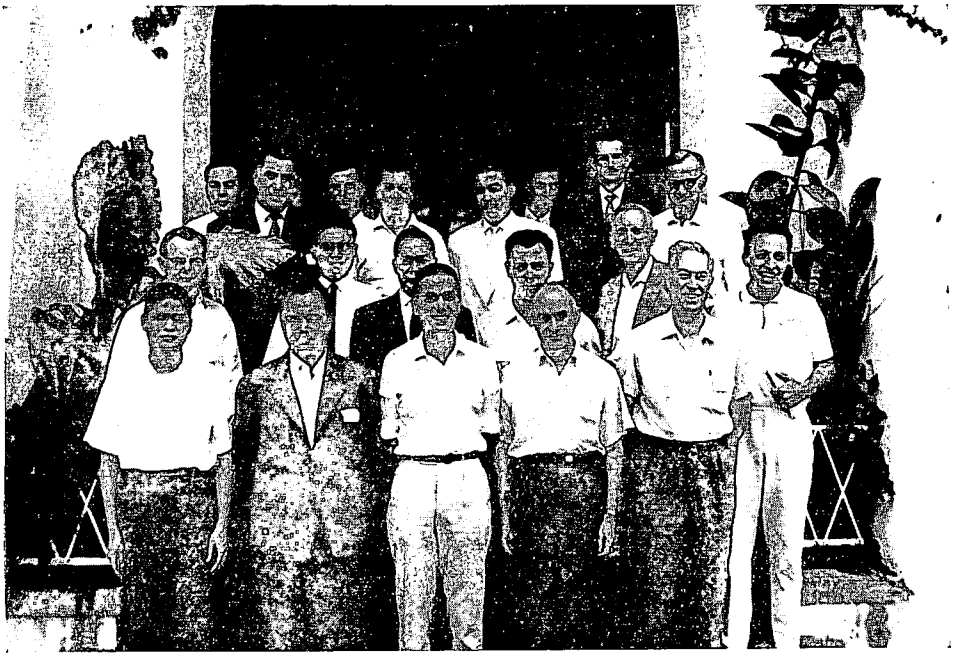
There is a strong demand for trained agricultural economists and this is likely to continue for several reasons. Well trained economists create a market for themselves through the practical value of their work. In wealthy countries there is a demand for them from private employers as well as from traditional users of their work. In less well developed countries the need for them is obvious.

Three types of training are required, (*a*) the training of graduates in general agriculture who may be employed in unspecialized advisory work or who may later specialize in one of the agricultural sciences; (*b*) the training of agricultural economists, i.e. persons who can engage in specialized professional work (they need not all have the highest degrees); (*c*) training during employment.

In view of the changing nature of the tasks performed by 'general agriculture graduates' (who now are seldom actual farmers), the growing importance of agricultural economics and the social sciences generally should be recognized. A properly balanced curriculum is needed. It should include general economics with particular emphasis on micro-economic theory, and a good course in statistics (with compulsory laboratory exercises). This course can be provided by other departments if adequate facilities are available. It is assumed that a sufficient knowledge of mathematics would be ensured. Accounting may be considered, though it would not be compulsory. The course—or courses—in agricultural economics should be allotted at least 60 or, better, 100 hours.

Comparative agriculture (agricultural geography) was considered



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useful to provide a synthesis of various analytical courses. It should be not only descriptive and historical but also normative in approach. This last point of view can only be satisfactorily used with students who have nearly completed their training.

Some rural sociology is certainly necessary in the less-developed countries for students of urban origin. In developed countries, a sociological flavour can be given to the general agricultural economics course.

On account of the differences between individual systems of education and types of work performed later, it is difficult to give a precise list of courses which should be included in a curriculum for advanced students. In fact, there is need for a 'tailor-made' type of training at this level. It should include some personal research work by the student. It is by proper choice of research projects that these personal adjustments can be provided. Research should therefore be an essential element in the training of specialists. They must have an understanding of research objectives, and they must be able to understand a general situation well enough to be able to formulate problems with proper attention to priorities. In addition to research, course work on the same subjects as during general training should be continued with added depth. For those students who will engage in technical assistance it is important that this training be broad. Students should be given every opportunity to obtain a global understanding of problems. Smaller and less fully developed countries could well co-operate in having their personnel trained at common centres.

Training during employment will almost always be necessary in many countries today because of their pressing needs and the fast changing conditions. Some of those engaged in agricultural work will have had very little training in economics, others will not even have received university training. Their training will therefore take many forms—from a few days' refresher courses to fuller training of several months.

The heterogeneity of background makes this type of teaching very difficult. Great efforts should be made to select worthy candidates of young enough age. They can sometimes be subjected to preparatory work. For instance, some reading material can be prepared and sent to them, or they can be asked to collect statistical or accounting data on well-defined questions. These data will serve as the basis for practical work during the session. The teaching should be entrusted to senior staff members of recognized pedagogic ability.

The contents of the courses should be arranged according to individual situations. Case-study methods are often interesting for those who have practical backgrounds. One should not, however, evade the responsibility of teaching theory and one must ensure co-ordination between the various techniques which are taught. Courses providing training during employment should be under the joint responsibility of both the employers and the universities. It is doubtful whether correspondence courses are effective in this work.

One of the more important considerations in selecting teaching methods and materials is that students should be taught to think rather than that they should merely absorb and memorize some courses. On this point the remarks of A. T. Mosher at the tenth conference are recommended for attention.[1] Written or oral factual material used in the teaching should be of local origin, or from areas with similar conditions and adapted to the local circumstances and problems.

If training is to be adequate in future it will require increased staffs and more funds. One important task is to convince administrators and financiers of the requirements of any improved programme.

[1] A. T. Mosher, 'Education, research and extension in agricultural economics in Asia and Latin America today' in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference of Agricultural Economists*, O.U.P., London, 1960, p. 195 et seq.