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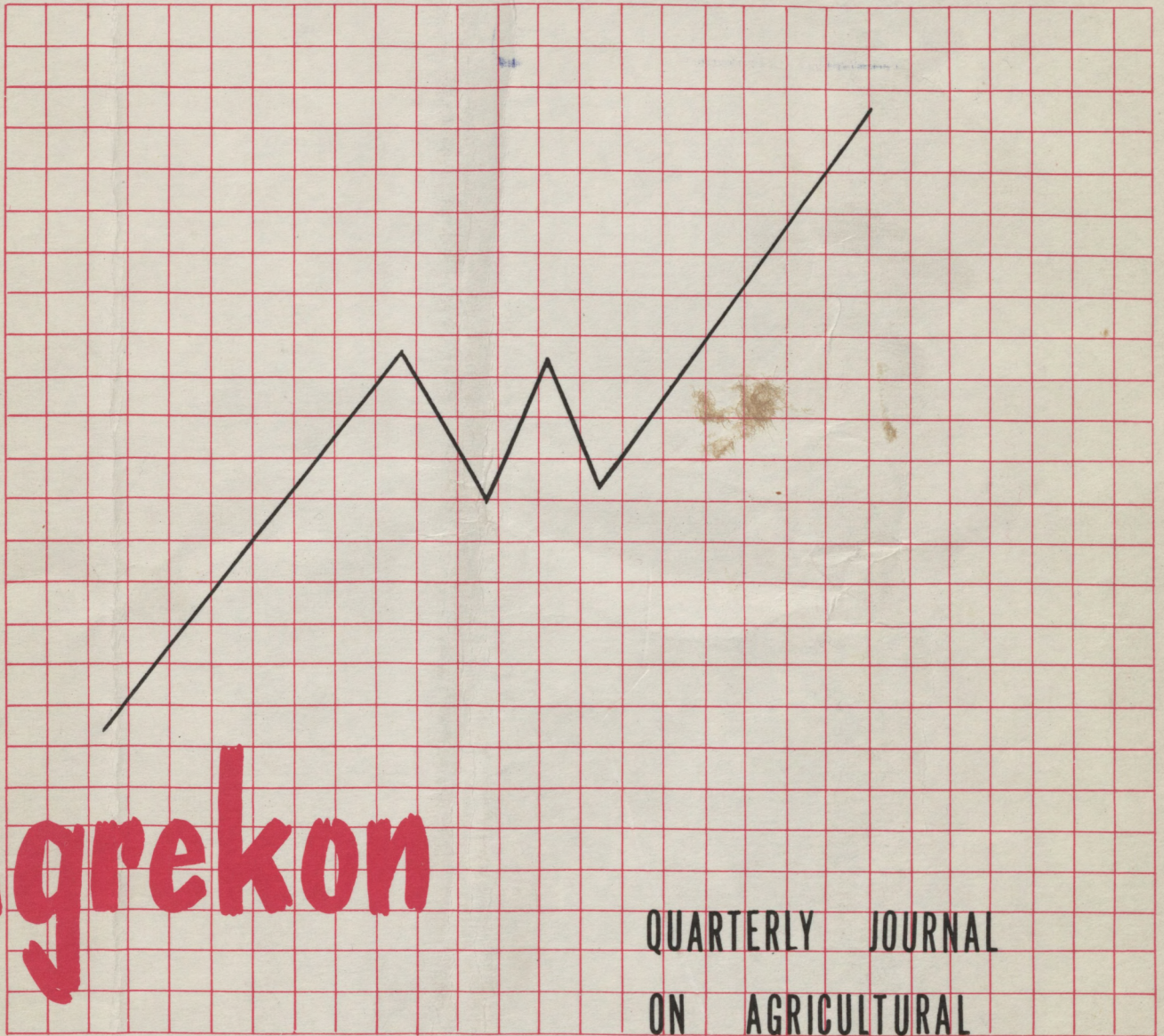
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DEVELOPMENT

by

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To start with, it is important to outline the nature and scope of the employer's task. For the purpose of this discussion the employer is regarded as those particular bodies which are primarily engaged in development-directed research in the social and economic sciences. From this it already emerges clearly that the research will fall into the applicable category and will not be concentrated on basic research. In addition, it should also be evident that a specific researcher will here find himself in a multi-discipline climate where he is one of a team of researchers.

The problem areas being investigated can frequently be regarded as a system (or a sub-system in the national context), which is then divided into its sub-systems for research purposes and in which each specific research worker finds himself, according to the nature of the sub-system. Eventually these sub-systems are again united to give a complete picture of the respective system.

It is therefore, here not so much a matter of formation of policy as such, but of research which is aimed at making possible meaningful policy formulation and/or planning. In this regard, the task of the "employer" is thus to provide the policymaker or planner with the necessary systematised information which he may then place within the national system, and on the basis of which he may then formulate or plan meaningful policy. The researcher is thus not the policymaker, although he may always, within this sub-system, indicate alternative policy possibilities or development possibilities.

In recent times a proverbial explosion has occurred in the fields of socio-economic research, both as regards the techniques and the volume of work already delivered; the question nevertheless remains whether the supply of suitable researchers has kept pace with the research requirements, as regards content and numbers. This phenomenon has caused in-service training to become an important component of the respective researchers' training.

REQUIREMENTS

On account of the multi-disciplinary nature of research on the one hand, and the fact that research on the development level revolves mainly around man on the other, specific requirements are set as regards the personal attitude of the researcher.

He must, in the first place, be able to work with a team, that is, he must be able to communicate in a suitable way with his co-researchers in related professional fields. In addition, the fact is that in this type of research, the required information is not always readily available and must then be gathered by the researchers themselves. This involves continuous contact with the persons from whom the information is obtained and it is generally known that the quality of the information thus obtained will depend on the ability of the researcher to communicate. However, the communication process does not usually end there; experience has taught that it is a continuous process which carries on after the formal research process has been completed. The researcher must be prepared to remain in contact with the users of the research results, the organisation on whose behalf the research was undertaken and the community which is influenced by the research.

Although formal attention, especially on the under-graduate level, cannot be given to this important requirement in the training programme, it is important that the person responsible for this training should be aware of this requirement, particularly with a view to the guidance to be given to post-graduate students.

UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING.

It is accepted that the training within a specific subject terrain will necessarily be influenced by the particular personnel structure and the field of interest of the persons responsible for the training; for this reason there will inevitably be differences in emphasis between the universities responsible for the training of agricultural economists. However, these differences in emphasis do not do away with the requirement that the undergraduate training should be characterised by a broad spectrum of subject selections, not necessarily with specialisation, but backed by a strong dose of agricultural economics, economics and statistics. A too machinistic approach, i.e. over-emphasising of techniques, during this training should be guarded against and particular attention should rather be given to the basics, in which the fundamental principles are very sharply imprinted around the specific study terrain.

POSTGRADUATE

Applied research on the developmental level may be divided into two broad categories, viz. research on the national level and sub-national regional research which may, alternatively, be brought down to a sectoral basis. Without further argument it should be evident that sub-national regional research and/or research on a sectoral level should be done on a priority basis, the speciality fields of the agricultural economist, who is engaged in development-directed research. For this reason it is desirable that the following subject terrains should *inter alla* figure in the course composition of the agricultural economist:

1. Development economics
2. Regional economics
3. Rural sociology
4. Welfare economics

It may also be possible to include some of these terrains in the courses already on the undergraduate level, to a varying degree. Because of the organisational structure of South Africa it is, however, necessary that this process be extendible for the benefit of the development-directed researcher at postgraduate level. The researcher in South Africa is confronted from the organisational-regulatory point of view with sub-national as well as future national entities; we have for example the White area and the homelands; within the White area we have the four provinces with their magisterial districts which form the basis for statistical information, the national physical development plan with its development regions (which are also divided on the basis of magisterial districts), the various agricultural regions which are typical of agriculture as a region-bound industry, etc.

The above-mentioned may be regarded as sub-systems of the national system; to be able to handle the linking of the sub-system within the total system a study of the developmental economics and of the regional economics is necessary. Because the agricultural economist will more specifically be concerned with the rural situation in all its manifold dimensions, a basic knowledge of rural sociology is necessary.

Even though some economists, without more ado, decry the welfare economy, it is felt that knowledge thereof creates a useful framework of thought within which a certain perspective regarding the problematics of development may be obtained.

Another facet of post-graduate training revolves round the presentation of dissertations and theses. In these is seen an instrument which may well be useful to the prospective researcher in the development terrain as a practical trial run in this field. Where the organisational structure exists at universities or elsewhere, or could even be created

on a temporary basis, it would be desirable and indeed fitting for such a student and his paper to link up as sub-project with a larger project on which a diversified team of researchers is working.

A facet of this type of research which in the nature of things cannot readily be handled within the formal training programme, concerns the legal and other regulatory measures which are relevant. It is important that the researcher should be thoroughly familiar with this aspect already at the initiation of any project. In this way he will orientate himself with the policy of the day, but if he is to seek after objectivity in his research he must not be policy-bound.

Because no two research organisations are alike in their aim and/or method of approach, each has a unique character within which such a researcher will find himself. From this it is clear that in-service training will remain an important component of the particular researcher's training. It is important that a researcher should "grow into" the research atmosphere in which he finds himself. All researchers may benefit from the inter-institutional relations and from the research taking place in South Africa through which fruitful cross-pollination may occur.

SUMMARY

1. It is here basically a matter of the requirements set for a person who joins a unit in which primarily development-directed research is being done. The main purpose here is to provide the policymaker or the planner with meaningful information with which he may formulate plans.
2. This research is normally carried out by a team, that is, in a multi-disciplinary climate, and the personality composition of such a person must therefore be so that he is able to work in a team.
3. Undergraduate training is basic - this means that such a person must be well versed in economics, agricultural economics and statistics. Specialisation on the undergraduate level is not necessary - what is rather needed, is a broad, balanced training.
4. One would like to see the following aspects built into a course at the undergraduate level:
Development economics
Regional economics
Welfare economics
Rural sociology
5. An important component of the training of such a researcher naturally evolves within his field of activity. No two research institutions are the same and it is important that a researcher should "grow into" the research atmosphere in which he finds himself.