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*California
Agriculture*

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PRESENTATION BY DEAN BROWN, PRESIDENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION, AT THE JOINT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION AND THE WESTERN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION, AUGUST 14, 1977

THE PREMISE, PROGRESS, AND PROMISE OF THE
 CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

PREMISE: California leads the nation in agricultural production and agriculture is the leading industry in the State of California.

One of the resources of California agriculture is the availability of thousands of young people who have taken advantage of the superior educational facilities in agriculture offered in the state.

Their abilities in agriculture production and management have been whetted, honed and polished but few of them had been challenged to consider the world outside of agriculture and its need for leaders.

1. Politically, agriculture has been weakened by the shift of political power to the urban populace.
2. California is the most populace city of the nation. Bridging the gaps of communications between rural and urban people is another attribute that needs to be part of the skills of agricultural leaders in California.
3. California agriculture is uniquely diverse. The state has a wide variety of crops and livestock, primarily due to the wide range of climates, soil, water and marketing patterns. This depth of diversity has been a major leadership problem for agriculture as the commonality among farmers and ranchers differs widely in the state, thus a great need for common grounds and understanding exists within agriculture.
4. The national importance and dependence on international trade is another factor that is of concern to leaders in California agriculture. Knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of the interactions among people of the world is important background for the decisions to be made by agriculture leaders in California.
5. Educationally most courses in agriculture stress science and technology. Thus, even agricultural leaders who complete degrees of higher learning generally do not have adequate training in the disciplines of general economics, government, communications, education, the arts, and sociology. Emphasis of the program is on disciplines other than agriculture.

A group within the Council of California Growers in the late 1960's hosted 30 young farmers from Michigan who were involved in an ag. leadership program sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. After showing them around the state we decided that a program of this nature should be instigated in California.

James Boswell of the Boswell Foundation offered \$75,000 on a matching basis to help start such a program in California. John Newman of the Irvine Foundation matched the \$75,000. With this seed money we traveled to Battle Creek and were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Kellogg Foundation of \$350,000 giving us a budget of \$500,000 for the first three years of the program.

A curriculum was developed by Cal Poly of San Luis Obispo with the help of Michigan State University.

Due to the range and diversity of the state it was decided to involve four universities in the program. So the University of California at Davis was selected to handle economics, Fresno State University to handle politics and government, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, to handle communications, and Cal Poly State University, Pomona, to handle sociology and arts, religion, rural-urban relationships.

In addition to the universities involved in the program, industry has joined to support the program with seminars, field trips, speakers on campus, and financial support so that we now have over 100 major donors and an annual budget of \$250,000 per year. We are currently confirming funding through Class X. At the present time, Class VII is in its second year of the program and applications for Class VIII are being received.

Kellogg's financial support ended after the program got on its feet so that the entire budget now comes solely from within California agriculture. State government supports programs at the State Capitol in Sacramento. Speaker sessions at seminars, rap sessions, fireside chats all offer excellent open discussions with leaders of government, industry, business and education.

The third part of the program is that devoted to travel, both national and international. The expenses are high but so are the returns.

National travel includes a two week period, one of which is spent in Washington, D. C. meeting with leaders of the various branches of government: Executive, Judicial, Legislative, and the news media. The second week is spent visiting areas of the United States which provide an insight into the social problems of the country, the history of the country, and in locations where trade and communication can be seen first hand.

International travel includes a three week trip to other countries of the world to learn from people to people encounters of their problems and how their concerns relate to ours. Trade, food, technology, communication, history, religion, art and political philosophy are all fields that are explored.

So you now see this program has three parts:

1. The involvement of four universities to provide the academic portion of the program.
2. The involvement of industry, agriculture, and government to provide insights, understanding, and knowledge for the development of future leaders of California agriculture.
3. Travel, national and global, to broaden the scope of the participant's education and experiences.

PROGRESS: Present program.

1. A class of thirty persons (men and women) are selected annually, 24 come from production agriculture and 6 from agri-business. We have approximately 100 to 150 applicants each year, all California residents, from ages 27 - 40. Educational background is not a prerequisite but evidence of leadership potential and involvement in local and state government and education is definitely a prerequisite.

2. The selection process is entirely separate from the sources of funding. Six statewide committees of five persons, generally composed of an educator, a farmer or rancher, an agricultural businessman, and two graduates of the program, interviews each candidate. Selection is made from this personal contact and study of a lengthy application form including four recommendations.

3. The Agricultural Leadership Program is a two year program, October through June. The first year consists of 7 seminars, Thursday through Saturday for a total of 23 days, plus national travel of 13 days.

In the second year the schedule includes 7 seminars for another 23 days plus international travel of 21 days.

4. Curriculum is the responsibility of the Dean's Educational Council, established specifically for this program. The group includes the deans of agriculture from the four cooperating universities who meet quarterly with me, the director of education and two members of each participating class.

The program focus is on issues of the state and nation in the first year and on international affairs the second year.

Coordinators on each university campus are given the overall responsibility to develop the specific seminar sessions for each campus affiliated seminar.

Policy and administration remain the responsibility of the Ag. Education Foundation.

Each participant is expected to attend all seminars. All costs are borne by the Foundation for travel, food, and lodging except for each participants transportation from his home to each seminar or departure site.

Let's go through a typical two year program:

In November the first seminar starts with a banquet dinner, including the participant and spouse.

The sessions are held in Sacramento for three days. California State University at Fresno prepares the seminar topics on government, which include:

1. Management of the economy
2. Role of money, banking and the Federal Reserve System
3. Taxation and government spending
4. Concepts of government response in manpower and unemployment
5. Land and water development, pricing and taxation

In the next months an economic seminar is held at the University of California in Davis, and, at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, closed circuit TV is used in a communications seminar stressing fundamentals of speaking and writing, use of audio-visual techniques, parliamentary procedures, principles of discussions, and public speaking techniques.

In the March seminar at Cal State University in Fresno, the class studies such topics as: political parties, formulation and passage of legislation, and problems in city government, including urban renewal, model cities, welfare, urban and rural zoning.

With this preparation, the participants take the spring travel to Washington. This year the itinerary included Houston and meetings with leaders at the Space Center, the Port of Houston, and numerous industries of the area. Also, in Washington, in preparation for their international travel next year, arrangements were made for excellent receptions at the Soviet and Romanian Embassies.

In June, the first year is concluded at Cal Poly in Pomona. The focus of this seminar is in sociology, man and his environment, problems of urban planning, including visits to Watts and study of the minority crisis. Experiences in the history of U. S. music, a play at the Los Angeles Music Center, and appreciation for the fine arts may be part of this seminar.