UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Extension Service, C. W. Warburton, Director
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Washington, D. C.



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Agricultural Outlook Extension Work.
A Report of the Discussions of State Representatives
Attending the 1929 National Outlook Conference
regarding Plans and Methods to be Used.

- H. M. Dixon -

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Note: The discussions included in this report were taken from stenographic notes. Since these have not been edited by the speakers, please do not quote before consulting them. H.M.D.

4698 (2-18-29)

AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK EXTENSION WORK IN FORTY-FIVE STATES, 1929

| State | State outlook report | Number of 4/ outlook meetings | Number of copies of national report wanted | Number of specialists to assist with outlook report and meetings 5/ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | Yes 2/ | 12 | 100 | 2 |
| Arkansas | " 2/ | 25 | 1,500 | 8 |
| California | " | -- | 400 | 2 |
| Colorado 3/ | | 15 | 1,200 | 12 |
| Connecticut | " | 2 | 200 | 6 |
| Delaware | " 2/ | 3 | 1,500 | -- |
| Florida | " 1/ | -- | 100 | 5 |
| Georgia | " 2/ | 25 | 2,500 | 6 |
| Idaho | Uncertain | -- | 25 | -- |
| Illinois | Yes 2/ | 15 | 2,000 | 15 |
| Indiana | " 2/ | 8 | 500 | 4 |
| Iowa | " 1/ | 30 | 800 | 12 |
| Kansas 3/ | | -- | 1,200 | 5 |
| Kentucky | " 2/ | 80 | 1,500 | 21 |
| Maine | N.E.rep.1/ | 2 | 50 | 3 |
| Maryland | Yes 2/ | -- | 25 | -- |
| Massachusetts | N.E.rep.1/ | 35 | 50 | 2 |
| Michigan.3/ | | -- | 500 | 2 |
| Minnesota | Yes 2/ | 50 | 250 | 3 |
| Mississippi | " 1/ | 4 | 2,000 | 8 |
| Missouri | No | 55 | 4,000 | 8 |
| Montana | Yes | 12 | 1,000 | 1 |
| Nebraska | " 2/ | 16 | 50 | 10 |
| Nevada | Uncertain | 3 | 250 | 4 |
| New Hampshire 3/ | | 10 | 200 | 2 |
| New Jersey | Yes 2/ | 48 | 1,500 | 3 |
| New Mexico | " 2/ | -- | 500 | 2 |
| New York | " 2/ | 60 | 1,500 | 6 |
| North Carolina | Yes | 100 | 500 | -- |
| North Dakota | " 1/ | 16 | 50 | 8 |
| Ohio | " 1/ | 105 | 600 | 4 |
| Oklahoma | " 1/ | 12 | 700 | 4 |
| Oregon | " | 17 | 1,500 | 40 |
| Pennsylvania | No | -- | 150 | -- |
| Rhode Island | N.E.rep.1/ | 10 | 200 | 1 |
| South Carolina | Yes | 2 | 200 | 2 |
| South Dakota | " 2/ | 300 | 500 | 36 |
| Tennessee | " | 10 | 300 | 12 |
| Texas | " 1/ | -- | --- | -- |
| Vermont | " 1/ | 12 | 100 | 1 |
| Virginia | " 1/ | 50 | 1,500 | 2 |
| Washington | " 2/ | 11 | 30 | 1 |
| West Virginia | " 2/ | 5 | 25 | 2 |
| Wisconsin | " 2/ | 10 | 200 | 2 |
| Wyoming | Uncertain | -- | --- | -- |

1/ Printed
2/ Mimeographed
3/ Separate commodity reports.
4/ Figures represent wide variation in conditions and kinds of meetings from State to State and are not comparable.
5/ These figures are not comparable. They only indicate how different States are planning extra help for this peak load. Some States only listed economic specialists, others subject-matter specialists, etc.

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## Plans for Disseminating Agricultural Outlook Information

J. C. Galloway -- Iowa:

Our plan for outlook work is to hold a series of 30 district meetings. These meetings are distributed over the State so that there will be three or four counties reached by each of these meetings. We are going to do this in an intensive campaign, winding all 30 of these meetings up in five days' time, using 12 specialists, two men to a crew, and routing them through five straight days, through the week of February 11. The set-up for these meetings in the field is that the county agent in each of these counties covered by the district meetings, along with members of his farm bureau board of directors, and, if possible, the economics committeemen from each township, farmers, bankers, and other business men interested in the agricultural outlook shall be invited to these meetings. These meetings are one-day affairs, starting at 10.00 a.m. and closing at 3.30 in the afternoon.

Question: Do you expect that the county agents will duplicate any of the meetings in these counties?

Answer: We are hoping that they will. The idea of these local committeemen is that they will take the material out into the local townships and in that way help the county agent put the outlook program over in an individual township.

D. C. Wood -- Missouri:

I might say that our object in the beginning was merely disseminating this information in a general way to just as many people as we could reach. We make no claims that the methods we use are what they should be, but that was our initial objective, and we jumped out to accomplish that end. From the beginning, we have attempted to do this work by regions, very much as Iowa is doing. We reach four or five counties at one regional meeting, or conference as we call them, and try to cover the entire State. We divided the State up more or less into regions, having in mind the types of farming and the density of population or importance of production. We overlapped somewhat in some territory, due to the request of specific county agents for meetings in their sections. We hold from 30 to 35 meetings in January, February, or March and about the same number in the fall, the fall meetings being commodity-outlook meetings.

Our method is to have delegates at these conferences. While we are trying to reach as many as possible, we want to be sure to reach the leaders and on that account we organize these conferences on the basis of appointing and inviting delegates to attend. Our method of selecting delegates is a matter of having a committee appointed by the county agent who is handling the area meeting. A local committee is selected to make all preliminary arrangements. We attempt to supply the county agent and that committee with a step-by-step detailed plan of work. We ask these committees to select delegates from a list of all the officers of the agricultural organizations within the area. We supply them with that information from our

catalog list at the station and they are to select from these officials delegates representing all commodities and all regions within the area.

We ask the local committee to arrange to notify by personal letter each delegate selected, and these expenses very often are handled by the Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, etc., and in a few cases the contributions from all of them aid in caring for postal expenses and clerical help. We then have an invitation sent to those same men from the college through the county agent and the committee. An invitation in our case through Director Mumford -- a personal invitation -- which we believe helps to bring that delegate to the conference. We, of course, prepare and supply the leader or county agent with ample publicity, some, of course, before the meeting and right up to the meeting time.

We ask these committees to make some arrangement to supply a dinner. We find that that makes quite a difference in the first place in getting the crowd and in the second place in holding them. We find that it is the best plan to have a dinner, in some cases supplied by the local committee or local citizens. In other cases where this is not possible, we supply a 50-cent dinner and have it stated in the program and in the invitation that there will be a dinner.

As to the method in which we handle the conferences, we usually use a team of two men, not that we feel that that is entirely necessary, but we want the delegates to get the idea that it is a pretty big event and in writing them in advance we try to bear down on the fact that they have a responsibility in the matter and that it is pretty important in their area. So, while we believe that one man could handle it satisfactorily, we normally use a team of two. Very often in some sections we have as many as three, occasionally four, but four are too many. As to the time of meeting, we find this difficulty in Missouri, that our county agents' programs are pretty full, and it is very difficult for us to arrange our schedule so as not to throw two large meetings within the same area too close together. We try to avoid that. Now we hold these meetings from 10.00 a.m. supposedly to 3.00 or 3.30 p.m. As a matter of fact we seldom finish before 5.00 and very often not before 6.00 p.m., but we put it out as an all-day meeting from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. We ask the leader to be prepared to appoint commodity committees in advance, committees of three who will sit through and take notes on that particular commodity while it is being discussed and then withdraw from the conference and later on be prepared to submit a report. That is the way we close our conference meetings, with the reports from these committees, and I might say that many of the reports that have been submitted are really very good. We do not ask these committees to accept our opinion -- and we do not want them to -- we want the local opinions, we want them to put local color into these reports, and these reports are used by the county agents to report the meetings to the press. We make up the outline of the meeting and the conclusions of these committees are an important part of the press article which follows the conference. This year we plan to also appoint local leaders and to hold a local leaders' training school after the conference. That means going through our programs more quickly than in the past to allow time in the afternoon for this purpose, our idea being to try to very carefully select local leaders who may later on disseminate this information in small neighborhood group meetings, with the assistance of the county agent. That will be an

experiment with us this year. Following the conference, I might say that we, of course, take an enrollment of all persons' names and addresses and keep track of all present. Following the conference, we use a chart service, that is to say, each month we get some economic information in mimeographed form and we put out these charts with the local leaders, bankers, business men, etc. We furnish them with merely the printed strips to put onto cardboard, and we specify the size of the cardboard so that it will be uniform. These will take care of about 8 sheets of mimeographed material and we run graphs from month to month. This material is sent out once a month to these local leaders or to whoever is in charge of the chart service. I might say that the chart service has not been very successful. Our follow-up has been weak, and occasionally I have found our charts behind the door in several institutions. I might speak here of some results obtained. In the first place our first year's efforts averaged an attendance of 80 delegates per meeting -- as high as 250 in a few cases, and sometimes as low as 25 to 30, but the general average was 80. During the second year's meetings our average was, as I remember, something over 90. We found that approximately 80 per cent of the original delegates returned to the second general conference, and that added a great deal to the conference. We followed the policy in our first year's work of using a great many charts and being very careful to try to explain these charts in an elementary way, and to give comprehensively how we are measuring prices, on which side of the charts the price was measured, and, if we were measuring supply, for example, our effort was to try to make it perfectly clear to everybody present what the chart meant.

During the second year's work we found that not so necessary. We found that these delegates apparently can reach out pretty quickly once they have been initiated. We also found in our second year that these old delegates who were back took a very active part in the program, and we encouraged that. We also encouraged comments, questions, and criticisms, but we tried to hold them, of course, to the subject and within reason. We had this interesting development during the seond year's conference -- we had what we might call voluntary testimonials from individuals. There is usually at these meetings some man who will get up and try to state that he is strong for the outlook work, and in a number of cases these men have voluntarily got up and tried to reduce to dollars and cents what this has meant to them individually.

From a certain area we have had this sort of reaction: In B_____ County in southeastern Missouri, where considerable sweet potatoes are raised, the county agent has been very active in outlook work and he has followed the sweet potato outlook very carefully. We made particular efforts in this case, because he was interested, to keep him pretty well informed in so far as we had information.

Last fall two buyers came into that county and had bought two carloads of sweet potatoes at 35 cents a bushel before the county agent was aware of it. The county agent had followed the situation very closely, and he did not think it was a good deal for his people. He got in touch with the sweet potato growers, and these were the only two cars that left his county that fall. He advised storing. He then put the situation up to

his growers and they followed his advice. This spring they sold at $1.75 instead of 35 cents and this meant several thousand dollars to his county, ample in other words to take care of the farm bureau work. I merely want to cite an instance or two of definite measures that county agents can take.

I will close by saying that in the fall after the survey material is out we have tried to hold commodity meetings, dealing especially with the hog and the cotton situation. This past fall we also held beef-situation meetings, because there was a particular interest at that time. We put these conferences on wherever these commodities are important. I might state that we have had very generous help from the Department here. Dr. Ezekiel, Mr. Callander, and Mr. Harlan have been with us at different times, and we have had other assistance.

Question: I should like to ask how many commodities were covered with these charts, and, second, how many different commodity groups he had in his meetings of committees.

Answer: The number of commodities to a meeting varies according to the area. We select in advance usually those commodities that are of most importance within that area, and when these are discussed we allow the farmers to call for additional commodities in which they are interested. I should say we usually cover about six commodity subjects.

Question: What mistakes have you found in your three years' experience, if any? Going too far on price forecasting or anything like that?

Answer: We have had one or two unfortunate experiences, although I do not believe they were very serious. We are always very careful, of course, to say that we are not trying to forecast prices. They must understand that our effort is merely to try to put the information before them. In the first year we held a conference in northwest Missouri among large-scale operators. This is a corn-hog and beef country, and there happened to be a number of hog speculators present, and in spite of our warnings they apparently reached conclusions as to what we thought about the matter, and many of them jumped into the buying of hogs on a pretty big scale. Now if they had followed the corn and hog situation as closely as Prof. _____ who had bought heavily of hogs also, they would have come out all right. He bought his corn before the bulge came and protected himself. Some of these other men didn't and we had an unfavorable reaction there, which I felt was entirely unjust.

We had one other unfavorable reaction in another section of the State which shows perhaps some of the pitfalls that are possible to get into in territory where direct buying was having considerable effect on the local livestock shipping associations, and the greatest boosters in the farm bureau movement -- the strongest men we had -- had used the argument against local buyers that direct buying was responsible for the market being broken. Not knowing the situation there, and in discussing the hog situation, one of our men was asked about direct buying on the hog market, and his statement was that statistically there was no evidence available on that belief -- no evidence available apparently that direct buying had been a factor of any great importance in making hog prices. That caused considerable trouble at the time. I believe these are the only two reactions we have had. I overlooked this one statement. We realize that we have failed so far largely to

tie in farm management as well as we should. We jumped out to reach too many people, and we definitely feel that that is a weakness in our work. We do, however, in our outlook meetings, try to work each commodity down to practical problems, such as the hog situation at this particular time, and assuming hogs of a certain weight, the feed situation, etc. The farmers ask the question, "Which way are we going to turn?" We very often call on different men to give their opinions, and this is included in the committee's report. We try to work out practical problems, but I feel that really our weakness has been that we have failed so far to tie up this outlook work definitely with farm management.

Question: Have you had any trouble at the time of the meetings by the local press interpreting statements made at the meeting? Do you prepare a news article directly that will tend to give the tone of the news story that will follow the meeting, or do you let the reporters get the story from the meeting?

Answer: We have had no difficulty of that kind. The reporters usually attend the conference, and, at the close of the meetings, one or two of us usually sit down with these committees in making up their reports, and in that same way we also help the reporters to get the story.

Question: What do you plan to do this year in reference to the cotton outlook?

Answer: Mr. Chairman, that is an unfair question. We have some outlook meetings coming along next month in the cotton country, and the discussion will be principally cotton -- hardly anything else. We have not sized up the situation yet, but I have talked it over with some of the men of the Department while here, and I don't believe that we are going to have any difficulty. I think without breaking the law at all we can show them the situation pretty well, but we will simply have to lay off of any statements as to acreage and so on. I don't know what the reaction is going to be. We are simply going to do the best we can and will be glad to tell you later.

All those attending the conference desired that Mr. Wood supply them with a copy of his detailed plan for outlook meetings.

G. B. Nance -- Kentucky:

Kentucky is different from both of these other States in that the field men in markets have attempted to do most of the work with the county agents. Whatever information we give directly to the farmer has been incidental to this. Last year it was a rather new project and as they were not familiar with it, we found it necessary to visit each of the counties in which we put on this work. We prepared seven or eight charts, probably twice the size of most of the charts used here, that could be read by an ordinary sized audience, and then a lecture outline. It was really more than a lecture outline and was mimeographed. Then the field agent in markets went into the county and with the county agent in his office went over the material until we felt he was familiar with it. That evening we held a meeting in almost any community the agent would pick out. We left the charts of which we had about six different sets. We left them in the county until the county agent should hold whatever meetings he thought necessary to cover that county. This year there is more demand for these meetings, and the field agent is only visiting those counties where the agent plans to cover his county with these outlook meetings.

We also prepare résumés of this material to leave with him to put in his county paper, and then we prepare a series of articles that are released from the experiment station. Next year, in some of these counties where we have held these meetings for the last two years and where the agent is well enough acquainted to do the work himself, we will probably try the plan of working with groups of agents at central meeting places and perhaps bankers whom we can get in. The plan for work with new agents will probably be the same as we are doing now.

A. W. Manchester -- Connecticut:

We have a very small State. Our plan this year is the same as last for a State outlook conference. We have in our district a New England outlook conference. To the New England conference, we are taking a few of our commodity specialists who will serve as chairmen of committees in our State outlook conference. Our State outlook conference last year was and this year will be primarily of the extension workers of the State, with the idea of making our county agents and our commodity specialists thoroughly acquainted with the outlook. We found that method last year did away with much of the contradiction and lack of agreement among various extension workers, and worked out very successfully. At our State conference we prepare a short State report of about four pages which we circulate and county agents mail to 30 or 40 per cent of the farmers of their counties. We held last year one or two local outlook conferences, but we are not planning on any this year, but we did present the material as a major item at about 120 meetings of farmers, covering most of the State, and developed 12 radio talks and quite a number of newspaper releases. The principal change in that plan this year is that our county agents stated in the last annual conference that they believed that a much more effective way to get our outlook across was through short popular commodity stories, and this year we are going to attempt to feature the preparation of these short, simple, plain statements in a variety of form so that we can keep the press well supplied with them and get a large publication of these single commodity stories.

O. B. Martin -- Texas:

With us in Texas it has been a matter of the Experiment Station getting out the State outlook. I am, however, especially concerned as to how we are going to get the county agents in on this thing and get them to thoroughly understand it. If the facts are dependable and based upon science, it seems to me that the first thing is that the county agent must know it.

A. L. Walker -- New Mexico:

I think Mr. Martin has certainly raised a key-note question. The capability of county agents in putting these data across without making a lot of mistakes or getting into deep water, is a real problem with us and I should like to know what the experience of other States has been with

respect to this proposition. Our county agents do not have, or but a few of them have, much training in agricultural economics and farm management, and, therefore, I have wondered how dangerous it is to turn this outlook proposition over to the county agents and ask them to disseminate it.
Answer: As far as Colorado is concerned, I think I can tell Mr. Walker how we handle it there. In connection with our economic conference work in Colorado, each county agent is made secretary of a commodity committee. He takes a series of charts that contain all the material that is necessary in arriving at a program for that particular commodity, and explains them. When he gets through with this committee, and answers all the questions that arise in our conferences, he is in pretty good position to at least handle the situation or outlook for that particular commodity.

There is one particular feature of the outlook for application that I think needs some consideration and that is where you have an area devoted mainly to one particular crop or commodity. In getting out outlook information for Colorado this next year, we plan to get out at least three, possibly four, reports during the year on cattle, sheep, hogs, and potatoes. The cattle report, of course, is of interest to the feeders around the Greeley area and the mountain range men, and that report will go only to those men. I mention this because frequently reports are sent to a wheat farmer that may contain only one short paragraph on wheat and the rest of the report may contain many lengthy paragraphs on things he does not grow. We are trying to meet that situation this year. With regard to cattle, we hope to get out a general outlook when the cattle are ready to go on the range, another outlook when they come off the range, and another when the fat cattle are ready to move to market. We think those are the critical times when the farmer has to decide, and we are trying to outline a service to fit that situation.

W. F. Knowles -- New Jersey:

At our annual extension conference next week we are going to spend two full days on farm management. We are going to have the State home demonstration agents and 12 club agents at these meetings. The program is built to give a 4-year course in farm economics and farm management in two days.

C. R. Arnold -- Ohio:

In Ohio perhaps our most effective way of informing county agents about this work is through direct contact with them in the counties. For a number of years we have held many farm-management meetings with the county agents in the counties. Each year 65 to 70 counties are reached with the farm organization and accounts project, and over the past four years perhaps a total of 300 meetings dealing with the economic situation of a particular commodity such as hogs, dairy, poultry, wheat, etc., have been held in the counties where the commodity is important. We also meet our agents and discuss problems at State and district conferences, but with all this we feel the development of much of this material has been too fast for the busy

agent to keep pace with without much individual help. This past fall the district agent and the farm-management specialist visited more than 70 counties and spent a day with the county agent working out economic facts regarding his county that were important in developing a sound extension program. From responses of the district and county agents we feel that this was quite an aid to them.

## Discussion of How Other Specialists Use Outlook Material.

### D. W. Reed -- Maine:

An outstanding example in our State was the orchard program of our fruit specialist that is an outcome of an attempt to standardize on varieties that we call "The New England Seven". Everybody will back me up that the orchard men in New England are using outlook material to a great extent.

### D. C. Wood -- Missouri:

The livestock specialists in our State have made it a policy to attend the outlook conference, particularly in the livestock sections, and they use outlook material in their regular work. In other lines, with dairymen in particular, we have been invited at their annual conferences (where they have annual meetings of associations, etc.) to discuss perhaps the feed situation or the dairy situation, and the dairy specialists have made it a definite part of their work to present the feed situation at the proper time of the year and the dairy situation along with their other work.

### C. R. Arnold -- Ohio:

In Ohio we have never held meetings of the entire specialist group, but we have always worked very closely with the different commodity specialists. We prepare as a basis for our situation meetings what we call our "Facts Series". I have this one here entitled "Facts about Hog Prices". We have prepared a series of this kind of facts on different commodities. In each case these are prepared with the specialist who happens to be interested. In this way they understand what we are doing, give helpful suggestions, and they are also prepared to use this material. I think these leaflets are used to quite an extent at all meetings by other specialists.

## How to Prepare a State Outlook Report

L. S. Robertson -- Indiana:

Mr. Breithaupt and I have by mutual consent divided this talk so that each of us would discuss one phase of it. He is going to discuss the method of getting different subject-matter groups to work cooperatively on an outlook report, and I am going to discuss the statements that should go into a report. It is difficult to give anything very definite on this subject that will have general application. In Indiana any directions I might give would not necessarily apply elsewhere, because of the difference in progress that has been made in various States. In a State where a large amount of this work has been done, different procedure would probably be followed. I have made a mental note of about four rules for preparing an outlook report - four recommendations, however, they should be called.

The first one is to make it simple. There are several angles to that. One of the ways of gaining simplicity, of course, is to have brevity. There is a temptation to put into these outlook reports all the information that we have. We want to show how much we know. Farmers get a large amount of reading material sent to them, and unless what they get is very brief and concise they are going to pass it up. I am going to use my own report (the Indiana report for last year) as a horrible example. I am not going to take your time except to read the part that illustrates what I am getting at. On foreign demand and competition, I have seven or eight lines which I think are good, and I should have stopped there, but instead I included another paragraph. I am just going to read a part of the first one so that you can understand the second:

"The foreign demand-and-supply situation has a large influence on the price Indiana farmers receive for products of the kind that are either exported or imported. During 1928 foreign demand for Indiana farm products will probably be no better than in 1927 and may be less. The reasons for this are that foreign production of certain products, such as wheat, hogs, and dairy products that enter into competition with Indiana products is increasing and that industrial conditions are not good in some of the foreign countries that are important markets for agricultural products from this State."

I should have stopped there but went ahead with this:

"Industrial conditions in Great Britain, our leading foreign market, are particularly unsatisfactory, the economic outlook in continental Europe as a whole for a year comparing favorably with 1927 with possible recession in German business about offset by improvement in Italy, France, and some of the smaller countries. Prospects in the Orient are less favorable."

That part was true, but for farmer consumption I do not think it meant anything. We should limit our State reports to what farmers have an opportunity to grasp. These other things should be in the Federal report no doubt, which is more of a research bulletin, while what we should get out in the State is more of an extension bulletin. Brevity is one of the ways of securing this simplicity.

I think putting the material in the language that farmers use is another important matter. Just a minor example on that: In our State farmers do not reasily understand the term, "domestic demand". It is perfectly evident what that is, but I am going to give another brief paragraph on this that I think shows a little better method of expressing domestic demand -- an example out of the sheep part of this outlook report. I gave a horrible example before; now I want to offset it by this:

"One of the important factors influencing the prices at which farm products sell is the financial condition of consumers and their ability to buy. Apparently the buying power of United States consumers as a whole will not be lower in 1928 than in 1927 and there are some indications that it may be even higher during the latter part of the year."

We must express these things in terms that farmers can understand. Actually I think that the printed message is one of the minor ways of carrying out the outlook information so far as effectiveness is concerned, but even if that is so, we can increase the effectiveness by putting it up in attractive terms.

The second recommendation is in regard to the form of putting up this material. This is more an editorial proposition, but the plan that I think should be used is to put it up more or less in newspaper style and make it interesting. Put a real news lead on it, and follow that with direct statements regarding the general proposition you are trying to get at; Show first what all this means to a farmer, and then follow with your commodity statements. Include only the commodities that are of particular importance in the State and the ones on which you can say something that is real information.

The third suggestion would be to make sure that this national information applies particularly to your State. I have a quotation here from one of these reports that is true so far as a national outlook is concerned, but which has no significance for use in Indiana,

"Greater net returns to livestock producers should follow from stabilizing of livestock numbers at no material increase above present levels, accompanied by slight reductions in feed-crop production rather than from increasing livestock numbers to balance feed-crop production."

From a national standpoint there is no question about that, but when we get to interpreting it in a State outlook report there is no particular value that we can get out of a recommendation like that to a farmer. We even have to break our recommendations up by sections of the State, I think, because recommendations for one part of the State may be entirely different from those for another part.

The fourth and last recommendation I think would be to make sure that your statements are supported by some basis of facts and fairly conservative. There is more opportunity of getting into trouble by writing something down than by stating it. When speaking you can always fall back on the supposition that you have been misquoted, but if you write it down once, it is done. The matter may have been very simple to begin with, but may get you into trouble if supporting evidence is not at hand.

L. R. Breithaupt -- Oregon:

A man as extension specialist in charge of this work has three alternatives - three policies that he might pursue in the development of a State outlook report. He might prepare the report entirely by himself; he might act as the secretary or the central figure in a committee composed of three or four men, perhaps in the Department of Economics, or he might become a clearing house through which a number of committees would coordinate the information assembled by them, as is done here in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and become rather an editor than taking the full responsibility for the facts. Now, for instance, if he assumed the first position of preparing the report himself he would have first the Federal Outlook Report to draw upon. That would be his major source of information. He would have his own information as the secondary source and whatever he might be able to draw upon besides his own knowledge in the way of State statistics, etc. In the second place if he adopted the plan of a committee, he would increase somewhat his own information by drawing upon the other men who were members of his committee. However, on the other hand, if members of that committee were busy on other things, he might not be able to function any better than if he worked by himself and asked for information informally. The third alternative I am going to discuss represents the plan that we are following in Oregon. I do not say that it is the best, I just present it here for your consideration.

We have 10 committees. The chairman of each of these committees is a department head in the college, as follows: (1) crops, (2) animal husbandry, (3) horticulture, (4) dairy, (5) poultry, (6) economics, (7) farm management, (8) marketing, (9) home economics and (10) the man in charge of agricultural situation work. Each of the department heads has an extension specialist as secretary of the committee and such members of his department as he wishes to name to assist in the preparation of his respective outlook report. In addition to that we draw upon the county agricultural agents. Our county agents contribute in advance of the work of these committees by making each month throughout the year what we would call a county agricultural situation and outlook report and they report in at the conclusion of the year in advance of these committees what they consider the outlook in their county as to costs of credit and labor, the power situation and all things of that kind, so that these committees may have the advantage of that information. They also report in on the production during the year -- say 1928 -- and their estimates of the intentions of the farmers to produce the various commodities in 1929. All of that information is summarized and made available to these committees, also the Federal Outlook Report and other data obtained from the Federal people. You see by this process we have drawn upon the experience and knowledge of our entire agricultural staff, both in the Experiment Station and the Extension Service in the preparation of the respective reports.

The reports of these committees are considered at our annual extension conference by the entire group of county agents and by the commodity and other specialists sitting in the conference. They are read and discussed and then passed to the extension specialist charged with the preparation of the State outlook report for squaring up editorially, and if he has obtained, through the annual conference here and his study of the situation throughout the year, any information that the others have passed by, of course he has the opportunity then to adjust these reports to the facts.

If there is any serious conflict, there is another conference held with these committees. To provide for any possibility of conflict that can not be settled in that way, the Director of Extension and the Director of the Experiment Station are the recourse. So that when our State outlook report goes out every man on the staff has had his say.

Mr. Dixon asked me to say a word at the conclusion of this talk on the mechanics of the preparation of an outlook report and dissemination. I want to point out here that in the preparation of the State outlook report by the method I just outlined we have touched every man on our whole staff not only in the preparation, but in the dissemination as well. I think that the first step, and the biggest step, in the dissemination of the Federal Outlook Report has already been taken by the participation of the State men in the preparation of the local outlook report.

Those of us attending this national conference are in a much better position to take an aggressive and constructive leadership in this work. We know what it means now, in a way that we would never know if we had not been present at this conference. We now know better how to interpret it than we possibly could know by simply reading the report that we receive in the mail, so we have made a beginning in dissemination right here with our entire staff.

The secondary step in dissemination out in the counties where we hold our county or district conferences is taken in advance of the preparation of this report when the committees are organized and they begin the preparation of the county outlook reports, using their local information, getting that into shape before they receive the State and the Federal Outlook reports. Now the central men in our county who work both on the preparation of that report and the dissemination of it, are the county agents, and they bring in five committees in most of our counties -- one each on horticulture, farm crops, general livestock, poultry, and dairy. Sometimes we have some other committees, but this is the usual set-up. On each of these committees we have from 5 to 10 key men, selected because of their interest in certain commodities and their influence, and they are called together in advance and organized and plan their report and get busy. The extension specialist on the respective committees, the horticultural specialist for instance, is the central adviser on that committee. The county agent and that group of farmers are responsible. So going back to the discussion of bringing the extension specialists in commodities into this picture, they have a hand both in the preparation of the report and in the dissemination of it. They are really made responsible for its dissemination. Through these committees we reach 700 or 800, maybe a thousand leaders, who will sit in and prepare these reports. That is the essential first step in dissemination.

The next step is the conference, and each of these committees has a day to present its report and other information. That is where we go into this budgeting business. We try to show how the outlook can be applied to the individual farm. That is the method of application rather than the exact details, and by bringing the farmers into these conferences we increase the dissemination or spread of that information so that I think this year we will

probably reach somewhere from 5,000 to 10,000 farmers out of about 60,000 in the State. I have this material in mimeographed form, and if any of you want to know more about it I shall be glad to furnish it to you. (The group desired that Mr. Breithaupt supply each of them with a copy of this plan.)

How I Conduct an Outlook Meeting. (This subject was discussed by R. L. Donovan of Minnesota and V. B. Hart of New York, but stenographic notes were not taken.)

## Measuring Results of Outlook Work.

A. E. Anderson -- South Dakota:

It is rather difficult to explain the results of our work. I think the best measure or illustration we have of it is given in the remarks made by individuals to us as we go over the State, on how they changed certain features of their operations based upon the outlook information that was given. We have a big land operator who has charge of a great many farms. I was sitting in his office last September or October. While talking over the agricultural conditions with him last fall he went to his file and pulled out the agricultural outlook that we had issued in the spring. He had been studying it and using it and incidentally had been checking up on us.

Then again last year we had a mailing list of about 800 to 900 for our monthly farm outlook, and immediately following our outlook meetings we had requests from people for this periodical. Our list now is 1,800. That shows an increase in interest for this type of information. We also had requests from Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, etc. to have the matter discussed with them. The eight district group meetings of bankers called for a discussion on this subject last spring, even though it was past the time in which we ordinarily gave outlook information.

H. Hedges -- Nebraska:

I can say with Director Anderson that we have no definite yardstick by which we can measure the results of this outlook work. One thought I should like to suggest -- and that is the possibility of some researching for methods in devising these yardsticks, and in this coming year before the next conference perhaps some of you can give thought to that, and perhaps you can devise some measuring stick by which we can measure results.

In the dissemination of our monthly economic situation report we have a revision of that mailing list the first of every year. Last January the list was between 700 or 800 and for December 3,000 names were on the list. Another indication somewhat similar to what Mr. Anderson mentioned is the number of personal letters we get asking for information. That has increased materially, and it takes considerable time of the members of the rural economics department to answer those letters giving our correspondents some ideas of the trends that are ahead.

W. E. Grimes -- Kansas:

We have been issuing monthly a statement on probable market trends and also on production trends for about five years. We began the work somewhat earlier than that and dealt with only a few commodities, and it is only in the last five years that we have made that a formal publication and put it out each month. We endeavor to keep the mailing list down to 2,500, and circularize it every six months. We also send out a report over the radio on the 10th of each month. At the same time it goes out in mimeographed form to about 700 weekly newspapers, and each month there come back to us from our editorial service the clippings that they happened to catch from these newspapers, and the monthly stack of clippings is usually about an inch high. They are rather well distributed throughout the entire State. In addition to getting it out in that way, we send out on the 9th of each month some 10 or 12 typewritten copies that go to trade papers, and the report is published in these papers at the first opportunity. We also send out a night letter containing the summary to a number of county agents, and this goes to commercial concerns within the State that have seen fit to take our statement on the general situation on wheat and translate it into two foreign languages, sending out 2,000 copies each month into foreign lands where they are selling flour. So from the response which we have secured from both the market outlook and long-time outlook material we are convinced that it is appreciated. The only criticism that we have had of it from farmers is that we hedge too much on our statements. One farmer expressed it that "you state that if it isn't fair to-morrow, it may cloud up and rain. You ought to be more definite." They are asking for more definite material and longer-time forecasts of what probably will occur. I think there is this difference that we should consider and that is that the farmers in different sections react differently to such things. In some States I am not certain that the farmers would react nearly as favorably to this sort of thing as the farmers of Kansas, and Nebraska. Our farmers state that they are taking chances anyway and they want as much as they can get to enable them to make certain that the chances they take will be in the right direction. We get many of the things that Director Anderson mentions in the way of personal conferences with men and concerns that express appreciation of the outlook service. We could not quit it now without considerable protest from those who have learned to depend upon it throughout the State.

Question: If you were an extension specialist with about half your time available for handling the agricultural outlook work and all other economic information concerning both office and field work, and had instead of eight or ten commodities say 50 or 75, would you attempt price forecasting?

Answer: I should not, for price forecasting or outlook work either one requires a good deal of fundamental research work. We have had a great deal of research back of the present outlook, and I feel that the weakest link in the whole chain is the small amount of research work along these lines in the States. There is not enough information to back up local outlook reports adapted to State conditions. I want to most heartily indorse what Mr. Olsen has said with regard to further need for research, and I want to enter a plea for more research work in the States along outlook lines. We certainly need it. We do not have enough data in Kansas now to go back and write a dependable outlook report for the State on all the commodities on which we should like to report. We are hoping to strengthen that, and I feel that this group can do much to call attention to the need for more research work of fundamental character in the States. When it comes to forecasting market trends by extension men I consider it very dangerous business, because we haven't the background. I do not know what our forecasting work is costing us. I should judge that it is costing us in the neighborhood of $25,000 a year, and that i for 7 commodities.

Resolutions of State Delegates regarding National Outlook Conferences

The advanced date set for the 1929 outlook conference is approved and appreciated, and any earlier date consistent with adequate information needed we feel would further increase the timeliness and practical application of the outlook material.

For the benefit of those States having perishable crops that are planted and marketed during late fall and winter months, a supplementary outlook report available prior to plantings would serve a large area not now covered by the present outlook report. Such report might include information on probable plantings in foreign competing areas.

An outlook report on other commodities is greatly needed, and we suggest that turkeys, raspberries, tomatoes, other perishable crops, etc., be included. It is further suggested that a study of the long-time outlook on forestry and timber products be included.

The effectiveness and the value of outlook work is dpendent, in large measure, upon adequate research, both in the United States Department of Agriculture and in the agricultural experiment stations of the various States. We urgently recommend the strengthening and extending of this research work.

With the need of adequate and comparable data so important in outlook work, we further resolve that (1) information now available through the foreign service is greatly appreciated, and we favor the further extension of this work, and (2) we do not favor the proposal to make the agricultural census of 1930 as of May 1. It should be made as of January 1 or earlier in order that it may be comparable to previous data and other statistics gathered by Federal and State agencies.

In order that the State representatives may be better prepared to discuss the preliminary outlook reports, it is suggested that such preliminary reports be distributed either on the opening day of the conference or at such time in advance as to permit a study of these reports.

In order that State representatives may have as much supporting data as possible on the material in the outlook report, it is suggested that the mimeographed outlook material sent to the States immediately after the conference include as much of the supporting data as possible, irrespective of the limits of the printed circular.

It is suggested that evenings be left as free as possible for committee and regional conferences on outlook material during the days when commodity reports are being considered. It is further suggested that several days be devoted, in addition to group meetings of farm economics specialists, to discussing the subject matter and methods in relation to extending and making use of outlook information.

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We wish to commend and thank the Bureau of Agricultural Economics for the charts furnished to the State workers without cost.

Since the opportunity for State representatives to attend this conference is of material assistance in the better development of extension programs in the several States, we wish to express our hearty appreciation to the Extension Service and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. We strongly recommend that the policy of calling in State representatives be continued.

Report adopted by State delegates attending national outlook conference.

Committee: R. M. Turner
A. P. Spencer
N. B. Rowe
C. R. Arnold
A. E. Anderson, Chairman