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THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS
FOR YOUTH PREPARING TO ENTER
NONFARM AGRICULTURAL JOBS IN LOUISIANA

Charlie M. Curtis

Louisiana State University has recently entered into a contract with the U.S. Office of Education that will enable Louisiana to complete Phase Three and Four of a developmental program that is directed toward expanded vocational education in agriculture at the high school level. Beginning in 1962 recognition was given in Louisiana to the dramatic changes in the nature of agriculture making it no longer feasible to continue limiting training in agriculture to youth preparing to enter upon the work of the farm. Evidence indicated that instruction must be broader to encompass the great host of occupations available in nonfarm agriculture.

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The approach to developing programs in vocational agriculture of a kind that would serve to prepare students for agricultural occupations, rather than strictly farm production, was planned to embrace four specific phases:

- 1) Developing a basic program on a state-wide basis, made up of units of instruction in all technical subject matter areas: plant science, animal science, management and conservation, mechanics and automation, supplementing, where practical, units of instruction with subject matter materials;
- 2) Conducting a survey of the seven metropolitan areas of the State to determine pre-employment and continuing educational needs of workers engaged in nonfarm agricultural occupations;
- 3) Conducting a state-wide survey of 68 populated centers, to determine the extent of semi-urban nonfarm agriculture, plus the jobs contained and the training requirements for job entry, and
- 4) Developing descriptions of all job titles identified and described in the two surveys, to be followed by compilation of training programs designed for use at the high school level for preparing students in vocational agriculture for jobs available which involve the use of knowledge and skill in agricultural subjects.

Phases One and Two have been accomplished. Comprehensive units of instruction have been placed in the hands of all school administrators and agricultural teachers covering animal science, plant science, farm management, agricultural mechanics and forestry. Surveys have been completed in the seven metropolitan areas of the State: Baton Rouge, Alexandria, Shreveport, Monroe, Lake Charles, Lafayette and New Orleans.

A state grant of \$25,766 was used to finance the survey, with Louisiana State University providing necessary researchers from the Department of Vocational Agricultural Education. The Agricultural Education Section of the State Department of Education assisted with the supervision of the interviewers in the various cities. Survey findings have been tabulated, analyzed and organized into eight publications — one for each area surveyed and one as a summary covering the seven areas.

Attention is now being directed towards Phases Three and Four: a survey of the lesser populated centers of the State, followed by the development of job title descriptions for all jobs discovered, plus the formulation of suggested training programs designed to supplement farmer training programs presently in use.

Objectives

The following objectives give direction to Phases Three and Four of the developmental program:

- 1) To identify and describe present and emerging agricultural occupations, other than farming and ranching, for which knowledge and skill in agricultural subjects is a requirement for job entry;
- 2) To develop job title descriptions found in nonfarm agricultural families;
- 3) To cluster and categorize job titles according to major sectors of nonfarm agricultural families;
- 4) To develop suggested training programs for use in vocational agriculture classes having students with occupational objectives in nonfarm agriculture;
- 5) To demonstrate and evaluate training programs in pilot centers at the high school level; and
- 6) To develop leadership in vocational education, especially in the service of vocational agriculture.

Procedures

The general design of the research will accomplish a multiple purpose:

- 1) Develop leadership in vocational agriculture;
- 2) Provide for participation of agricultural teachers at the local level; and
- 3) Effect needed research on a high level of performance, obtaining information basic to program planning, plus program development and evaluation.

Four experienced and successful agricultural teachers have been added to the staff of the Department of Agricultural Education in the capacity of research associate, one for each vocational agriculture area of the State.

These men have been trained in procedures considered essential to conducting the research proposed and are working under the direction of C. M. Curtis, Associate Professor with the Department. Actual surveys are being made by selected local agricultural teachers, trained and guided by the research team. The research associates will in turn process survey results, develop job title descriptions, and compile training programs for trial and evaluation.

Firms, industries and agencies on the survey list will be classified under one of the following eight occupational families:

- 1) Farm Machinery Sales and Service,
- 2) Farm Supplies and Equipment,
- 3) Livestock and Poultry,
- 4) Crops, Forestry and Soil Conservation,
- 5) Ornamental Horticulture,
- 6) Wildlife and Recreation,
- 7) Farm Service, and
- 8) Agricultural Service

Job titles will be identified and described according to occupational level:

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| 1) Professional, | 6) Office, |
| 2) Technical, | 7) Skilled, |
| 3) Managerial, | 8) Semi-skilled, and |
| 4) Supervisory, | 9) Unskilled. |
| 5) Sales, | |

Job descriptions for each job title will be developed using a format calling for:

- 1) Duties and responsibilities of the job,
- 2) Qualifications,
- 3) Prospects for employment,
- 4) Promotion possibilities,
- 5) Salary, and
- 6) Additional information pertinent to the job

Jobs appearing within a particular occupational family of a similar nature will be "clustered" when establishing training objectives and developing training programs.

Training programs will include courses made up of specific, but complete, instructional units selected to form a combination required for giving pre-employment learning experiences demanded by job titles in a specific occupational family.

Processed survey results will be assembled into a report for each of the four vocational agriculture supervisory areas and a state summary. In addition, the research will yield data necessary for the assembly of a "Handbook of Job Title Descriptions for Nonfarm Agriculture in Louisiana."

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If you want something done right — appoint a committee.
If you want something done right now — do it yourself.

-Hammond