

Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration

Your Trusted Partner... Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

As Cooperative Extension marks 100 years of working for Wisconsin, the following is an excerpt from Cooperative Extension in Grant County – The First Forty Years by Wilfred Pierick, written in 1963.

Swine Production

Swine Improvement Project—A major project in swine improvement was begun through the county agent's office in 1946. The project was a sow testing program the purpose of which was to eliminate some of the guess work in the selection of breeding stock. Pigs farrowed by each of the sows being tested under the program were ear-marked at birth, weighed at weaning time and again at five months of age. Each pig in the litter was given an index which was determined by size of the litter, number of pigs in the litter at weaning time, and the weight of the pigs at five months.

Twenty-five swine breeders, including 4-H and FFA members, entered a total of 200 sows. Cooperating agricultural teachers were Orlie Baker, Boscobel; L. H. Bensed, Platteville; John Sauer, Cuba City; L. D. Kolar, Fennimore, and Paul Oehrlein, Lancaster.

Seventy-two swine breeders had enrolled a total of 587 litters in the project by 1950.

Meetings and Demonstrations—Many meetings on swine management, improved methods and practices, disease control and parasite control were held during these years. There were demonstrations on the use of benzene hexachloride for the control of mange and of sodium fluoride for worm control, new materials which came upon the scene about this time.

County Swine Booth—In 1948, a swine booth on "How Boys Grow Pigs," was planned by agents Dehnert and Dahms, vocational ag teachers, and specialist Dave Williams. The booth

showed improved practices used by 4-H and FFA boys in raising pigs. It was displayed at the State Fair and the National Barrow Show that year.

Swine Breeders Organized—Twenty-seven swine producers organized a Grant County Swine Breeder's Association in 1950, in the interest of promoting improved methods and practices in swine production.

The Association sponsored a weanling gilt sale at which donated gilts were sold at auction to 4-H and FFA members. Also, an all-breed boar and gilt sale was held this first year by the group.

Oscar Mayer Gilt Project—The Oscar Mayer 4-H and FFA purebred gilt project began in 1948. Ten selected purebred gilts were put out, free of charge, to interested swine project members to assist them in getting started in the purebred swine business with a quality gilt as a foundation animal. At the end of one year, project members returned one gilt from their litter of pigs so that another member might have the same opportunity. If the project was to work as planned, the transfer of gilts to new members each year supposedly will keep the project going indefinitely. Experience showed that boys occasionally experienced bad luck with litters so that they were unable to return a gilt. Provisions for this type of eventuality were provided for in the program.

Beef Cattle

Breed Organizations—Angus sales continued to be held annually. The Grant County Shorthorn Breeder's Association was organized in 1942 and held a sale that year at the fairgrounds. J. D. Hatch, Lancaster, was elected president of the new association and Clay Robinson of Platteville, secretary.

DDT for Fly Control—DDT for insect control came upon the scene in the late forties. One of the first demonstrations on its use was held on the Gus Kuenster farm, Glen Haven, in 1947.

Sheep

The most common educational activity in the sheep enterprise in this particular era seemed to be the sheep shearing school. These were held almost annually in one or two locations.

Another almost annual event was the appearance of the "ram truck." An average of ten to twenty of these high quality purebred rams were purchased each year by sheep breeders from these ram trucks sponsored by the UW Livestock Department.

A sheep meeting in the area of marketing was held in Platteville at the Teacher's College in 1946 in cooperation with the Wisconsin Wool Grower's Association. Wool grades and marketing, and lamb carcass quality were the principal topics treated at this meeting.

Poultry

Newcastle disease of poultry became a matter of considerable concern to poultry raisers about the mid-forties. To cope with the problem, the Extension office sponsored educational meetings with poultrymen, hatcherymen and veterinarians.

Livestock Marketing

Agent Dehnert cooperated with the Equity Livestock Cooperative in 1950 on a series of meetings on the grading and marketing of dairy cows and veal calves. The meetings were held primarily for veteran trainees and vocational agricultural students.

This same year, meetings were held at Bloomington and Cuba City on livestock management and marketing. Veal and swine carcasses were displayed to show market grades and quality.