

## SOME BASIC OBJECTIVES FOR AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM-BUILDING

D. M. HALL

*University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois*

Planning means dealing in futures. It presupposes that changes are desired in present conditions. It involves an understanding of the needs of individuals and a vision of the future social organization.

The acceptability of any set of plans will depend upon the philosophy of life which guides the majority of the generation. The American philosophy has been a dream of an opportunity for each to achieve according to his ability and energy; a dream of a social order in which every person may attain his full stature regardless of the chance circumstances of his birth or position. We call it a better life, but what is a richer and better life? If we are able to analyze this American dream, we may evolve the working objectives for program builders.

1. Governments were devices originally constructed by a group to enable it to satisfy its wants. We have found that by working together we can get certain services that we couldn't afford individually. The American philosophy sanctions the organization of groups to obtain goods and services. Thus we believe that the first objective for agriculture should be to build organizations. George W. Russell, the Irish philosopher, said, "Whenever rural prosperity is reported of any country, inquire into it and it will be found that it depends upon rural organization."

2. The American philosophy maintains that goods and services should be obtained only through individual vocational efficiency. Economic, technical, and job knowledge and management skills are important to vocational success and provide the means through which goods, services, pleasures, and advancement may be purchased.

3. The future of the nation depends upon the kind of citizens it produces. The differences in birth rates between farm and city lead us to believe that the future population will be reared in the farms. Society has a responsibility for the health of all the people. We can't expect reasonableness in a person if he has a history of poor health, malnutri-

tion, and physical inferiority.

4. We expect every person to have some opportunities to enjoy himself. We run into difficulties, however, when we try to prescribe the exact treatment. It should be noted that there are possibilities for intellectual as well as for physical recreation.

5. Society continuously alters its demands upon conduct. The present emphasis upon the dynamic concept of democracy which leads to greater social responsibilities places many demands upon the individual. It demands not only knowledge but certain feeling reactions. It demands of each the virtues of responsibility, dependability, determination, sympathy, and fair play. In a word, it demands social-civic efficiency.

6. In addition to building social and civic organizations through which citizenship may operate, the American philosophy demands that the resources of the nation be equitably distributed among the workers in proportion to the services each renders. It implies full value given for value received. It guarantees against the taking of unfair advantages. Such a philosophy demands that the resources of the nation be so used that every family will have a desirable level of living, yet will be so protected that future generations will have some chance of maintaining acceptable standards. Protection of and planning for the future is a test of our acceptance of our social responsibility.

These six objectives are broad enough to apply to any program-building body, but let us consider how they apply to agriculture. Agriculture is recognized as one of the foundation occupations. It has been, and likely always will be, the custodian of the soil and water resources. It produces the food and fiber needed by the industries. It has provided the nation with its major population replacements. Fifty percent of the population increases of the rural areas find employment in towns. In cities of over 100,000 persons there was a 33 per cent deficit in births to maintain a stable population in

1930. Agriculture has contributed an average of \$360,000,000 a year to the cities in costs of education and transfer of inheritances. These services emphasize the inter-relationship of agriculture and other groups and it is not difficult to argue that agriculture deserves returns in proportion to the services it renders. Certainly it should not be hindered when it attempts to build organizations to effect savings, to prevent losses, to reduce costs, to provide adequate health and medical services, to provide roads, schools, and public utilities, and to secure a fair deal. Certainly the people of the future deserve to inherit healthy, well nourished bodies.

Under the present migratory conditions agriculture deserves assistance in financing its educational system. With half of its young people finding jobs in towns, any wise vocational educational program should include industrial and commercial trade training. In addition there should be provided in rural areas facilities for vocational guidance, and placement in city jobs. Certainly all the means of recreation should not be in towns. No one will dispute the need for building citizenship attitudes. However, some rebel when requests are made for expenditures to set into operation adequate civic programs in rural areas.

A great deal of discussion has occurred during recent years regarding assistance given farmers to conserve their resources. Since the future is more nearly the responsibility of the state than it is of any individual it is justifiable that the state take measures to protect the future

against being exploited by the present. The government should protect all natural resources that their use may help provide a satisfactory living for future generations. Past generations probably have had neither the information nor the attitudes to properly manage the natural resources, but that fact is no argument against developing the attitudes now. A public conservation program is justified if it is based upon the following principles.

1. Every land area should be put to its best use in view of its long time maintenance.
2. Maintaining a productive soil is more profitable than permitting yields to decrease because of soil exhaustion. When fertility is regained the program should carry itself.
3. Replaceable resources should be so used that the reserves will be nearly equal as each rotation begins.
4. Reimbursing farmers for losses sustained in regaining fertility should be proportional to the value of the fertility conserved.
5. If a smaller total production is desirable the fertility of those acres not needed should be conserved for future use.

Programs should be judged on the basis of how well they met these major objectives. Programs should be aimed toward effecting changes in persons for these are the ultimate products of a civilization.