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A study of the difficulties encountered in supervised farm practice in all agricultural departments of Massachusetts.

James W. Blackburn
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A Study of the Difficulties Encountered in Supervised Farm Practice in All Agricultural Departments of Massachusetts

Blackburn 1941
A STUDY OF THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN SUPERVISED
FARM PRACTICE IN ALL AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS OF MASSACHUSETTS

- By James W. Blackburn -

PROBLEM SUBMITTED FOR DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGE

AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

JUNE 1941
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INTRODUCTION

During the academic year, 1939—1940, the writer had the good fortune to be chosen as an apprentice teacher of vocational agriculture under the "Smith Hughes Law". As with most vocational instructors, we at Smith's Agricultural School used the project method as the basis of our teaching. It has often been stated that the objective of the project in teaching agriculture is virtually the same as that set up for teaching vocational agriculture: "To start the boy in farming, on the road to success in farming." Every day spent in the classroom, every course which the student takes is definitely linked up with his own project or other supervised farm practice. As we travelled around the rural areas of Northampton and came into contact with actual projects, the scope and area covered by project work amazed me. Definite problems were met, in fact could not remain unnoticed in such an extended set-up.

I became much interested in the supervision of the farm practice of the boys in the agriculture classes at Smith's Agricultural School and the difficulties encountered in that work. With such basis the state-wide study of these difficulties challenged me. Hence this study.

THE PROBLEM DEFINED

Completion of successful work in supervised farm practice requires not only the cooperation of instructor and student, but also that of parents and in certain instances that of the employer of the student. From time to time problems arose between these four factors which greatly hindered the effect and progress of our instruction, with the subsequent result that our objective in project teaching was quite often not attained. Briefly, our problem is to discover the difficulties met and, as far as possible, their solution from the viewpoint of the instructors of vocational
agriculture in Massachusetts.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Supervised Farm Practice** - General term to include all the farming experiences with which a boy may come into contact. It may include:

1. the productive enterprise project or typical home ownership project
2. placement for farm experience
3. improvement projects
4. supplementary farm practice

**Productive Enterprise Project** - A business venture for profit, usually a complete production cycle in a farm experience, such as vegetable garden.

**Placement for Farm Experience** - Employment by some successful farmer for a considerable period, with an opportunity to secure experience in many farm practices.

**Improvement Project** - A project intended to increase the real estate value of the farm or to improve the efficiency of the farm business, such as draining a field.

**Supplementary Farm Practice** - Providing what is lacking or needed in a well-balanced experience in farming, such as bee keeping.

**GENERAL PROCEDURE**

Based upon my own experience, that of Mr. Heald and several other men in the field, a questionnaire was drawn up in which we attempted to cover the problems encountered in the process of supervised farm practice. It was concluded that these problems would arise from four sources:

*Heald, F. E., State Supervisor for Vocational Agriculture Teacher Training for Massachusetts*
namely (1) the student; (2) the instructor; (3) the parent; and
(4) the employer of the boy. The questionnaire was then submitted
to all agricultural instructors in this state who included supervised
farm practice as a part of their regular duties. Instructors were
asked to check, (p) those problems that were or had been troublesome,
and also (s) those that had been troublesome and had been solved. In
the latter case an outline of their solution was requested.

The returned questionnaires were analyzed and the results tabu¬
lated to show the frequency of each problem and whether solutions of
them had been made. The returns were analyzed further for outstanding
solutions of problems, combinations of problems and special comments.

DISCUSSION OF DATA

Space and time do not permit a detailed list of all problems sub¬
mitted with suggestions for their solution, but significant replies
have been chosen as the basis for a short analysis. The tables on the
following pages show the relative importance of the various problems
and the degree to which they have been solved. As can be easily seen,
the recognition of the problem in most instances clearly exceeds the
dergree to which it has been solved, evidence of the fact that our
agricultural instructors definitely have trouble in their supervision
of farm practice and would appreciate any possible aid in the solution
of these problems. There seems to be no significant correlation between
the percentage of problems checked and the percentage solved.
The following tables show responses of agricultural instructors on each problem. Column A lists the numbers of checks from all instructors returning the questionnaire—with percentages. Column B lists the number of instructors offering solutions to each problem—with percentages.

Table I. Problems with the Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Size of enterprise too small for student interest</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does not like particular phase of farm work (garden)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does not like to keep records</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does not like to work</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lacks spirit of cooperation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has wrong ideas and attitude toward farming</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is stubborn and doesn’t want to help</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dislikes teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is thinking of leaving school</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is irresponsible and discontented</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fails to complete project</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Boy rarely at home for project visit</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Accounts never up to date</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Boy has same project year after year</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Not physically capable</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Not mentally capable</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Is definitely in wrong vocation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Still has vocational problems—undecided</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Does not have clear understanding of project work and farm practice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Project planning and analysis is insufficient</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Has interest in some other hobby</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Seems frightened by the teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Unable to express himself well orally</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Project differs from the plan made</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Hasn’t enough time to carry on project</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Sees no opportunity for financial gain</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Insufficient space or tools to work with</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Insufficient capital to start project and continue project</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Insufficient experience to carry on project</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Not given enough freedom in his work</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Projects conflict with 4-H work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Less than ten grouped together
### Table II. Problems with the Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Description</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does not like to keep records</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not cooperative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spends time on hobbies rather than supervision</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is stubborn and disagreeable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is easily managed by students and parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has become stagnant and in a rut</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Has become sick of project work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Minimum requirements for project work set too low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Standard of project work too low</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does not leave good instructions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fails to look over boy's record book</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Failure to create interest and stimulate boy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hasn't enough patience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Does not know subject field</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Has race prejudices</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Difficulty in explaining problem situations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Dislikes talking with parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Dislikes working with boys</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Does not have clear understanding of project requirements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Not enough time for project work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Cannot place boys for farm experience</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Projects too many for frequent visits</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Projects too widely scattered</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Cannot get cooperation of students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Too expensive - car, gas, etc.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Does not fully explain project work to students and parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Difficulty in visiting some projects (roads etc.)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Failure to be at project at critical time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table III. Problems with the Parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>A</th>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not interested in farming</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dislikes interference from strangers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does not want boy to become a farmer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not interested in the boy and his future</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Not cooperative with the school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does not give boy enough freedom in his work</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wants boy working with him rather than on project</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Unfriendly toward instructor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does too much for the boy - on project, etc.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does not fully understand project set-up</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Not strict enough with the boy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Takes possession of project himself</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Makes use of incorrect farm practice and thus teaches and sets wrong example for the boy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Thinks he knows everything</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Cannot speak English</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Wants to quit farming</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem No.</td>
<td>Problem Description</td>
<td>A No.</td>
<td>A %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not interested in the boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Does not give varied experiences to the boy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Does not understand school and project requirements</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sets bad examples for the boy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discourages the boy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Works boy too much</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE STUDENT

1. Size of enterprise too small for student interest

Returns from instructors proved this item to be one of the more important, forty-five percent of them checking it as a definite problem with twenty-two percent offering a solution. The majority of replies came from cities and manufacturing districts where land and materials are not plentiful. Some of the suggestions for solution are listed below.

"Placement in addition to project"
"Variety of other work added; carry other projects"
"Emphasis on careful budgeting increases interest"
"Either increase it or drop it"
"Have best possible for conditions; then place on good farm"
"Place on farm job"
"Not allowed as a project"
"Have students get extra work--usually for pay"

From these replies we might conclude that any enterprise too small for student interest certainly does not of itself fulfill project requirements. Either drop it entirely, increase it in scope, or require the boy to do additional work on a good farm. The emphasis is definitely upon farm placement for varied experience as opposed to the small ownership project which may require a half hour's work each day.

2. Does not like particular phase of farm work

A definite problem encountered by fifty percent of the instructors with only twelve percent offering solutions.

"Point out value of knowing different phases"
"Show student that to become a farm manager he must have broad experiences"
"Change job and carry one he does like"
"In gardening point out value of knowing how plants grow for help in other enterprises"

Replies stated here seem to indicate that the teachers favor the idea of making clear the importance of broad experience for successful
farming.

In handling such a boy as this problem presents, it has been our practice to concentrate heavily upon that one phase of farming which lacks appeal, approaching it from all angles in an attempt to discover an opening through which we can break down the boy's resistance. Often, we find that the boy has had some bad experience with this phase of farming. If we can correct that mistake or blot out that experience, then usually we can create some interest in a project.

This business of farming has so many individual yet related problems that a weakness in one phase will undoubtedly weaken the whole set-up. Therefore, most of our students intending to become farm managers must possess a well-rounded out background of experience or become lost in the shuffle.

3. Does not like to keep records

The most outstanding problem of the entire study. Replies from instructors showed this item to be linked up with others such as (1) accounts never up to date; (2) attitude toward farming; (3) mental ability; and (4) student irresponsibility and discontentment.

Seventy-five percent of the instructors reported trouble to be present in student record books. Twenty-five percent offered suggestions, a few of which follow:

"Close checking weekly"
"Make them as simple as possible"
"Visit successful farms where careful records are kept"
"Adjust record keeping to boy's ability"
"Account system in operation during school time to fix habit"
"Keep simple and check constantly"
"Insist he develop habit; give failing work on project slip each visit"
"Pupil loses membership in class on failure to submit records"
"Withhold school credit until complete"
The replies in general show that most instructors believe in developing a habit by means of simplicity of records and constant checking. To quote one member of the group:

"My experience has been that very few boys keep satisfactory records unless there is pressure somewhere that causes them to do a good job. I attempt to keep the records in as simple a form as possible but always find that this part of the work has to be checked constantly."

Our suggestions add very little to the solution of this problem. We have found that a thorough explanation and demonstration at the beginning of the school year is extremely important. The necessity and value of records should also be emphasized not only at this time but constantly throughout the year. Keep them as simple as possible: check them weekly. A five-minute period every day devoted to record keeping is very helpful in establishing the habit.

4. Does not like to work

A fairly significant problem being checked by forty percent of the instructors, fifteen percent offering solutions, such as:

"Enter lazy work habits on slip. Give poor mark"
"Call it recreation, contest or experiment"
"Try to find out what the boy is interested in"
"Employers are not asked to pamper a boy—if fired for laziness, boy must find his own job and make good or else leave school"
"Gradually finds himself eliminated"
"Compulsion again—no work—no agriculture in high school for that pupil"

Replies to this problem would hardly be of help to the boy who doesn't like to work. The fact that we give him poor marks or eliminate him from school still does not aid the boy and after all our chief duty is to adjust this boy to his environment whether it be in farming or some other line of endeavor.

In our opinion this student must have had some interest in agriculture
or he would not have signed up for the course. Whether this interest be sufficient may be discovered after one year of farm placement. Very often it is true that a boy will do much better for another employer rather than his own parents. If he likes the work, then he will work and our problem no longer exists. However, should he react unfavorably to farm placement, then our next job is one of guidance, discovering interests, hobbies and finally an attempt to get him located in the right channel. As instructors of agriculture we must be broad-minded enough to realize that students of high school age are quite temperamental and as changeable as the weather. Therefore, be sure that the change is for the better, but above all do not attempt to hold boys in your department who are definitely interested in other fields of work. It is such narrow-minded instructors as these who are to blame for the downfall of many promising boys.

5. Has wrong ideas and attitude toward farming

This problem was closely associated with several others, such as (2) does not like particular phase of farm work, (17) is definitely in wrong vocation, and (18) still has vocational problems—undecided. Thirty-seven percent of the instructors listed it as a problem and only twelve percent offered a suggestion.

"Instruct in proper ideas"
"Correct by individual guidance"
"Put him on probation at once, if he doesn't change, expel him so he will get into work better fitted to him"
"Usually not interested so drops out"
"Dropped out of school"

Instructors differ on the method of handling this situation, some allowing the boy to go his own way and drop out of school while others make an attempt to change this attitude toward farming. Naturally the
first method is the easier for the teacher, but we firmly believe in the latter, that is, an attempt to give the boy a different viewpoint on the agricultural situation. The basis for such a decision is not in that which makes our teacher job easier, but in that which is best for the boy.

6. Is thinking of leaving school

Replies showed a lack of interest present on the part of the student probably due to parental influence or teacher failure. Suggestions on this topic were relatively weak, the best of which appear below. About fifty percent of the instructors reported the problem with twenty percent offering solutions.

"Show willingness to be of help no matter what the problem"
"Make sure boy is not suited for agriculture; then recommend shift"
"If for lack of money, be sympathetic"
"Don't allow them to think this over twenty days"
"Advise him according to boy and the situation"
"Find out why--advise"

The combination of suggestions seem to indicate an honest attempt to adjust the boy to his environment. Find out what his major interests are and if possible get him started in a new field.

Sometimes such a boy is of the emotional type who feels himself slighted by the instructor or who does not fit in with the other boys. We suggest an informal talk with him to build up spirit, to discover some phase of farming in which he is interested, to show him the future value of remaining in school. If other students bother him, a class lecture when our problem child is absent may help. Tell them of the situation, ask them to cooperate, and they usually will do so. At any rate we as instructors should make an honest attempt to keep our boys in school.
7. Is irresponsible and discontented

Very closely linked up with the preceding problems and fifteen percent gave suggestions. Thirty-five percent reported difficulty.

"Human nature; try to help him"
"Wake him up—question of entrance and admittance"
"Work is best for such cases"
"Guide into other work if possible"
"Always a reason—find it"
"Don’t let any student occupy more than his reasonable share of your time. Be firm even if the boy leaves"

8. Fails to complete project

A fairly common problem with thirty-five percent having difficulty and twelve percent offering solutions.

"Give incomplete mark, must be complete before passing"
"No completion, no credit"
"Half a loaf better than none"
"No credit; proper follow-up by instructor"
"Return to school on condition if at all. His next project must be excellent to work off condition"

The instructors agree we cannot give credit for an incomplete project and that there should be a follow-up to discover why.

It is our opinion that an interested boy will complete the project at any cost. We have seen specific illustrations of boys who worked all day on farm placement, then came home in the evening to put in a few hours on their own project. Therefore, excuses for an incomplete project should be rare and should not be allowed to happen more than twice. The only answer then would be a change of vocation.

9. Boy rarely at home for project visit

One of the minor problems met in the study. Thirty-two percent of the teachers listed this difficulty with twenty percent giving a suggestion for improvement.
"Definite date—suggest ways work can be improved"
"I doubt if this type of boy would pass"
"Plan to be there when he is home"
"Find reason"
"Has to have work elsewhere to get full time credit"

Replies varied on this item, but in our minds there is but one answer and that coincides with the instructor who says "Plan to be there when he is home". Once you can contact him personally, then is the opportunity to emphasize the importance of project work. Of course, if his project is in good shape, you may leave notes and suggestions with the parents, but at any rate a personal visit with the boy should be made at least once per month.

10. Accounts never up to date

A very important phase of supervised farm practice checked as a problem by sixty percent of the instructors with twenty-two percent offering a solution. The problem itself is closely allied with (3) does not like to keep records and consequently many of the suggestions received are quite similar.

"Give low marks on the project visit slips.
Put him on probation if necessary. He might even 'flunk' the project"
"Give incomplete work"
"Mark low and follow up"
"Be hardboiled—Flunk 'em. It works"
"This is a matter of degree"

The instructors apparently believe in the value of a low mark as a means of stimulation. In some cases such a procedure would work; in some cases it would only result in discouragement. The matter of low marking in this instance is strictly an individual matter and one in which we should use utmost care. More frequent checking would undoubtedly be of value. However, as stated in problem (3) a good thorough explanation
and demonstration at the beginning of the school year is the real basis for good record keeping.

11. Boy has same project year after year

Another very important problem met by forty percent of the instructors. Twenty percent gave suggestions, such as:

"Point out value of other experience"
"Boy must change or leave school"
"O.K. if increased in size materially"
"Schools not justified in continuing such a boy’s scholarship after two years"
"If expanded and diversified, O.K."
"Do not allow. Tell boy of other jobs"
"Make it grow. Hold up credit"

We all agree that a boy may have the same project year after year if the project is expanded accordingly. In fact that is just what we are hoping will occur. But in addition we are of the opinion that a boy should gain experiences in other phases of farm work, either on the home farm or that of some employer. Diversified experiences contributing to a well-rounded farm background are the basis of successful work in the agricultural field.

There is but one solution to the boy who refuses to enlarge his project each year: Placement for farm experience or a change in vocation.

12. Not physically capable

This problem was met in minor degree with thirty percent of teachers listing it as a difficulty and only ten percent offering a solution.

"Help boy to build up health"
"Make it a benefit"
"Could be given a certificate if he did his best"

Replies in general favor a sympathetic attitude toward the boy, an attempt to help him do his best. Our suggestion is similar, that is giving him jobs that he can do and trying to find out what phase of
farming is best suited to his handicap. However, the whole topic relates back to the question of admittance, a strictly individual matter dependent for the most part upon the school director. Let it be said here that it is a great injustice to prepare a boy for farming, then have him discover that he isn't equipped to handle the job.

13. **Not mentally capable**

Definitely tied up with the above problem with thirty-five percent of the instructors reporting difficulty and fifteen percent giving suggestions which were very similar to the preceding list.

- "Have pupils do only what capable of"
- "Adjust demands to boy's ability"
- "No such cases--some of best projects completed by specials"

The reply, "Adjust demands to boy's ability", seems to fit the situation very well. Once again we might bring in the question of admittance which, as stated previously, is an individual matter.

14. **Is definitely in wrong vocation**

This problem and the following one are very closely associated. Forty-two percent of the teachers checked this one while seventeen percent gave suggestions for improvement.

- "Change to other vocation desired"
- "If they hinder, out they go"
- "Be careful about admissions--Better to have no entrants than one of these"
- "Advise a change in course"
- "Try to help establish boy in other work"
- "Guide him or try to send him where he can get proper help"

The consensus of opinion based on these replies is that the boy must have advice and a change to a more favorable vocation. The importance of admission requirements is again brought in.
For the student already enrolled, we admit that guidance is necessary. Visit the boy at his home, talk with him, discover his interests, find out what he does in his spare time. Talk with his parents and get their viewpoint; finally a discussion with the principal and the boy, perhaps deciding upon an early transfer to some other course. At any rate require good work and behavior as long as the boy remains in your department.

A practical example of this problem is quoted below.

"Not infrequently I find that I have admitted boys to the agricultural course that are definitely out of place. In this case I usually talk it over with the boy and with my Principal and have the boy transfer to some other course, if it is in the early stages of the game. If the boy is in the last year I usually have him graduate and frankly advise that after he has met his graduation requirements that he attempt to find out what he wants to do and get busy at it. Last year I had two boys in my graduating group who had demonstrated to me without a question that they would never be successful in agriculture, but they were both outstanding in mechanical work. I advised both of them to go in for this line of work. I do not feel that they lost out by taking agriculture for through the shop part of the work we discovered what they were best fitted for. Something that the average course in the small high school does not do."

15. Still has vocational problems—undecided

Thirty-seven percent of instructors listed this difficulty. Fifteen percent offered a solution.

"Require reasonably good work and cooperation until mind is made up"
"Counsel—guide the boy"
"Guidance—farm practice"
"Watch very carefully to see if they have guts. One hard summers work—they decide"

Suggestions offered were similar to the above problem dealing mostly with the matter of individual guidance.
In our opinion the instructors should take the boy around to several representative farms where he can see and talk to men in the field. Watch him closely both in school and out to discover interests and leisure time activities. Finally place him on a farm where he really has to work and is in contact with farming and farmers throughout the day. At the end of this time the student usually makes up his own mind.

16. **Does not have clear understanding of project work and farm practice**

On the basis of replies this item seems to be relatively unimportant with only twenty-five percent of the instructors registering difficulty. Fifteen percent of them offered solutions, such as:

"This is explained several times during the year"
"My biggest problem—raving on it continually"
"Spend plenty of time in explanation—older boys pass word along in simple language"
"Project planning"
"Tell him about it"
"Instructor must have slipped"

The small number of replies on this problem may be due to the fact that lack of clear understanding of project work is a confession of teacher failure. In general the solution to this problem is a good thorough explanation at the beginning of the school year with frequent follow-ups at opportune moments.

In addition to the above we are of the opinion that a printed form of requirements given to the student each year and perhaps posted in the front of his notebook would be of value.

17. **Project planning and analysis is insufficient**

This problem was definitely associated with number (11) fails to complete project. Thirty-seven percent of the instructors checked this problem with fifteen percent offering a solution.
"Flunk him. Instructor should never be responsible for a poorly planned project"
"Records and methods used by successful students"
"Visits to such projects on class time"
"Insist on plans complete"
"Instructor's fault"

Replies on this topic were so varied that no general conclusion can be formed. However, we agree with the instructor who says "Instructor's fault". It is his job to check and recheck with every student, to attempt to visualize a project through the complete cycle—in short to make sure that the boy knows what he is doing and where he is heading. Poor project planning has only one cause—inattention by the instructor.

18. Unable to express himself well orally

Peculiarly enough this problem was registered by forty-two percent of the instructors with fifteen percent offering solutions.

"Don't ask him to do so"
"More current topics; F. F. A. activities"
"Be sure he knows subject matter; encourage oral work"
"Practice needed; learn by doing"
"Results of his work can be used as evidence to determine whether or not to at least pass him"

General opinion from these replies seems to indicate more practice in the oral work. We ourselves are of the opinion that the study of English is not emphasized enough in our vocational schools. It has been definitely shown that about ninety percent of high school graduates read practically nothing after they have left school. As for oral work, the amount of public speaking done by students is practically nil. The blame cannot be placed upon the agricultural instructor, but more specifically upon the curriculum makers and the teacher of English. We firmly believe that a course in public speaking should be a requirement of every high school.
19. **Project differs from plans made**

As it turned out, this item appeared to be insignificant with only thirty-two percent of the instructors checking the difficulty and fifteen percent adding a suggestion.

"Make adjustments"
"Good thing perhaps"
"Always—plans are only a rough course to follow"
"Variation in all cases. If deliberate attempt to cut corners, student should be penalized"
"Check plans closely; help change if necessary"

The teachers are unanimous on the notion that projects should and will differ from the plans made, that it is a good thing unless the student is lazy and deliberately tries to take short cuts. We believe that in most cases some slight changes are necessary since certain difficulties arise which were not apparent at the time of planning. Such changes as are for the best should be allowed, but any drastic rearrangement is questionable and should be looked into thoroughly. Our project plans with which we spend so much class time should be good enough to be of use and not be discarded after one look at the actual project itself. Once again we cannot fail to emphasize the importance of thorough and accurate project planning.

20. **Hasn't enough time to carry on project**

A rather insignificant problem checked by twenty-five percent of the instructors. Seventeen percent offered a solution.

"Make him show his speed"
"Loses membership in class upon failure to live up to original agreement"
"Should be checked in advance"
"If other work is agricultural, project might be cancelled; otherwise boy's scholarship better be cancelled"
"Why—reasons. Plan."

Replies seem to indicate an attempt to speed up the boy; then,
should the schedule be too heavy, cancel the project and give credit for other work being done. The project plans made during the school year should have shown up this weakness.

21. **Sees no opportunity for financial gain**

A rather serious problem with only three percent offering a solution while twenty-seven percent listed the difficulty.

"Show him"
"Select project with gain or get job"
"Project should not be started unless planned well; opportunity for good experience should not be considered equal asset to financial gain"

The general opinion gathered from replies is that the project plans should show opportunity for gain or else the project should not be started.

From past experience we believe that the possibility of a financial gain is a great incentive to the student, especially to a newcomer in the department. On the other hand, should the project be a financial loss, the amount of discouragement would have permanent effect on the future of the boy.

The decision definitely leans toward choosing a project that has good possibilities of financial gain.

More and more the importance of good project planning becomes apparent.

22. **Insufficient space or tools to work with**

A rather important problem checked by forty-two percent of the teachers with but fifteen percent offering solutions. As would be expected, replies on this topic were more numerous from the urban areas where the percentage of farm boys is relatively low. Especially did
this problem exist in manufacturing areas where the boy's father worked in the local shop and used the back yard as a miniature farm.

"Usually projects are small anyhow"
"Do best can be done"
"Project plans will show up this weakness and may result in change to an employed project"
"Should not be allowed to start"
"Grade him on what he does have"

The general conclusion here seems to indicate that the boy without opportunity at home should, after a preliminary year of agriculture, be placed on a good farm where he may receive a variety of experiences. In our judgment farm placement is excellent not only for the development of skills but also for the development of traits, such as responsibility, honesty, correct habits of living and the ability to do a good day's work. This is undoubtedly of greater value than back yard projects in gardening and perhaps poultry.

23. Insufficient capital to start project and continue project

Very closely related to the previous problem with fifty-seven percent of the teachers reporting difficulty and seventeen percent giving a suggestion.

"Do the best possible under conditions"
"Get work for boy on an employed project"
"Since we have started a credit union bank in the school from which the boys can get loans, this problem has ceased to exist"
"Found an interested person who was willing to loan money for the boys to start projects. No loss so far"

The solutions on this problem were excellent. Fortunate indeed is the instructor who finds a person so interested that he will finance student projects, but the idea of starting a credit union bank for student loans is a possibility in any school.
24. Not given enough freedom in his work

A minor difficulty encountered by thirty percent of the instructors with ten percent offering solutions, such as:

"Talk frankly with boy and father; teacher can sell idea to folks"
"Instructor might have to cancel the project rather than allow the boy to be continuously embarrassed"

The instructors feel that there must be a change in the set-up or else the project must be dropped. Apparently with such a situation on his hands, we feel that the teacher is somewhat to blame, that he has failed to make clear the requirements of a project.

Therefore, the instructor can do no better than to impart first-hand information to the parents, emphasizing the seriousness of the work and the fact that the boy must manage the enterprise on his own account. The difficulty is usually straightened out after such a procedure.

25. The remaining problems were those checked by less than twenty-five percent of the instructors and therefore deemed of minor consequence. Most of them were of a personal nature, dealing with teacher-pupil relationships and probably belong under the general heading of discipline and management. The list below indicates the problem with suggestions that may prove of value:

Lacks spirit of cooperation

"Usually not interested, so drops out"
"There's a reason; find it; teacher's job"

Is stubborn and doesn't want help

"Accepts help after a few errors"
"Find reason and remedy"

Dislikes teacher

"Some teachers deserve to be disliked"
"Forget it"

**Has interest in some other hobby**

"I should hope so"
"Help boy to find self"

**Seems frightened by the teacher**

"Be kind and patient"
"Help boy to gain confidence in teacher"

**Insufficient experience to carry on project**

"He learns as he goes along"
"Any outside aid available"

**Projects conflict with 4-H work**

"4-H work can be a help"
"Are you sure both cannot thrive together"
II. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

As seen by the table on page (5) replies on this section were small. The reason for this may lie in the fact that instructors are a bit wary in checking their own weaknesses. Granted it is difficult to criticize one's own method and procedure, but a thorough self-evaluation may sometimes be the basis for a significant change in instruction, a change that may mean the difference between failure and success. Of course, this factor may enter in—that most instructors have evaluated their work and corrected most of the difficulties. I quote one reply which is pertinent at this point:

"With over twenty years of experience I try not to get very far out of line on any of these items. There may be existing the element of not being able to see myself as others see me."

On the basis of replies we can list the instructor difficulties in two definite groups.

A. At the top again is that perennial favorite, the matter of keeping records. This topic included both teacher records and student records with a general implication that there were too many records to be kept; that the time spent on records could better be used elsewhere, perhaps on project visits, on lesson planning, or other work pertaining to student activity. Suggestions concerning records appeared to take the form of a defeatist attitude.

"They are required; so what can we do"
"Keep to a minimum and try to develop habit"
"Make it a habit"

The instructors seemed to consider record keeping part of their duties, something that has to be done although at times it may seem disagreeable. Keep them to a minimum and make it habitual is the general consensus of
opinion.

Our suggestion on this matter is as follows: The matter of keeping records has always been a sore thumb in the agricultural schools. Evidently the information called for appears too detailed and unnecessary, but the fact remains that the administration calls for such records and instructors should cooperate. Should records be unnecessary, I believe the staff in Boston would be among the first to cut down on the required amount. It appears that all material recorded is made use of. Therefore, we believe that instructors should consider this work as a part of their regular duties, do a thorough job, and keep them up to date. In many cases, the setting aside of a definite period each week has been a great help in establishing the habit.

B. The second difficulty that teachers listed concerned project visits and included items such as time, expense, and difficulty in reaching some projects. The matter of expense varied according to the schools and amount of project work necessary. As would be expected, replies from the western end of the state over-shadowed those of the Boston area on the matter of difficulty in seeing projects and the amount of time available. Some of the rural areas in this section do not support the best of highway conditions and, especially in the Spring of each year, this problem must definitely stand out. Responses on this difficulty were humorous, but not very significant.

"Work overtime"
"Take your wife or sweetheart"
"Speed up"
"Stay home"
"Think of what you can save on your income tax"

The instructors evidently believe in more work and less play. Make your project visits even if you do have to sacrifice two or three evenings
a week and a little money.

We agree here with the instructors. Make your visits regularly at any cost. For the sake of two or three hours, perhaps five or ten dollars, many of our boys' projects would fall down below the point where improvement is possible and profitable. Therefore, get around to see the boys as often as possible. It is not only the material help that is of value, but also the spirit and courage you give that enables a boy to continue.

As a general summary of this section on instructor difficulties, we quote the following:

"Any instructor to whom any one or all of these 27 applies certainly should not be a project instructor.

"A good project instructor certainly must like to work with boys, parents or employers, to know his subject and many others. Be interested in the work at hand and that to come in near future, be cooperative in every way with a smile. Be able to create interest, give clear instructions, write them and leave a copy with student. Be interested in students' records and not take them along for further study and forget to return them."
III. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE PARENT

1. Not interested in farming

The majority of replies listing this difficulty appeared to originate from families who had no real farm background and used farming only as a sideline or for recreation. The problem itself was closely associated with (3) does not want boy to become a farmer. Thirty percent of the instructors checked it as a difficulty while only seven percent offered a solution.

"Be absolutely firm in reasonable project requirements; otherwise do not pass the boy"
"Let them starve awhile"

Replies give us no clue as to the method of handling this situation. Our method of attack would be to concentrate upon the boy and his work. Be positive that he has a good project, one that even the parents are proud to show their friends. Be sure that the parents see what the boy is doing, that they see how much interest the boy has in his work. Gradually an attempt should be made to win them over to your side and finally an attempt to help them with their farm problems.

2. Dislikes interference from strangers

Another personal problem checked by thirty percent of the teachers. Twelve percent gave suggestions for improvement, such as:

"Make friends first; gain their respect"
"Don't be a stranger"

In general the answer here is entirely dependent upon teacher personality. First break down the barrier which separates teacher from parents in any manner possible; be friendly, understanding, helpful, sympathetic. Gain their good will. Then attempt to win their respect and admiration through helpful suggestions and demonstrations of your
ability. In general, the whole solution goes back to personality and the understanding of the basic principles of psychology.

3. **Does not want boy to become a farmer**

One of the major difficulties encountered by teachers of agriculture, thirty-seven percent checking it and only seven percent offering a solution.

"Show the parents they are making a mistake"
"Find out what the boy thinks"
"Help the boy to keep up his courage; win over parents"
"Try to place boy away from home on a project"

The trend of suggestions seems to indicate first, a definite understanding with the boy to the effect that he really has an interest and a goal. Secondly, an attempt should be made to encourage and perhaps get him away from parental influence onto a good farm. Finally, discussions may be had with the parents in an endeavor to point out their mistakes and have them cooperate with their son.

Needless to say, we believe the above procedure is excellent.

4. **Not interested in the boy and his future**

Parents like these seem to be rare since only twenty-two percent of the instructors noted trouble. Twelve percent offered solutions.

"Try to place boy away from home on a project"
"Help boy to keep up his courage; win over parents"
"Show 'em they're crazy"

From these replies we might conclude that such a parent does not care what happens to their son. Therefore, it would be perfectly all right to get him away from home and placed on a good farm where he might have an opportunity to express himself. Then comes your attempt to win over the parents by showing them the progress of their boy, not only in
his chosen occupation, but also in health and in spirit. Perhaps such a demonstration will serve to awaken the parents' interest in farming.

5. **Not cooperative with the school**

Most of the parents are cooperative as evidenced by the fact that only twenty-five percent of the teachers checked this difficulty. Twelve percent offered suggestions, such as:

"Don't give ground regarding the reasonable rights and policies of the school"
"Most parents cooperative"
"Remind them that the local school is the best school in the world"

 Replies on this topic were weak and varied. However, the trend seems to suggest a continual emphasis upon the value of the school in the community. We agree with this viewpoint that such an approach may give dividends. Evening classes held in the schools undoubtedly help the situation; parent-teacher associations are also a benefit. There always has been and always will be a certain barrier between home and school. The sooner we break down this barrier, the sooner we will be able to establish the teacher-pupil-parent triangle which is so necessary in the teaching process.

6. **Does not give boy enough freedom in his work**

A problem closely related to (9) does too much for the boy and (11) not strict enough with the boy. Thirty-five percent of the instructors listed this problem with twelve percent offering a solution.

"Lower the boy's visit slip mark and tell why"
"Project planning may help"
"Take it up with the boy"

The general solution here seems to indicate an approach to the parents by means of the boy, assuming that the boy will talk over the situation with his father and mother and that thereafter everything will
be fine.

To us it seems difficult to swallow that such a boy will immediately assume full responsibility of the work without any further interference from the parents. We believe a good thorough understanding with the parents is necessary. Again there is present a lack of knowledge concerning project work both by the boy and his parents. In such a situation, the instructor is strictly to blame and should attempt to correct the mistake immediately.

7. Wants boy working with him rather than on project

One of the most important problems encountered with the parents. Forty-two percent of the teachers checked this problem; only seven percent gave any kind of suggestion for improvement.

"Forget the project; give boy credit for what he does"
"Cancel the project and base mark on employed work status"

In the case of large farms and especially where the boy is of good size, this problem is ever present to a certain degree. At certain times during the year the boy may be quite essential in the progress of the farm work. We cannot expect the parent to take the boy away from his regular chores to work on his project. But we can expect the boy to use whatever spare time he may have to advantage rather than go fishing or swimming. In such cases, as the instructors point out, we have no other alternative but to cancel the project and give credit for the amount of farm work done.

In addition to the above the possibility of adding improvement projects should also be considered. This type of job is always necessary on the farm and almost any farmer would appreciate such work being done.
3. **Unfriendly toward instructor**

A minor problem checked by only fifteen percent of the teachers with twelve percent offering suggestions.

"Maintain a civil attitude and be sure all project visit formalities are properly attended to each visit"

"When this occurs it is the instructor's fault nine times out of ten"

"Instructor must use tact"

"Wait for your day--be sweet to mother (when father is not home)"

This problem is definitely one which depends upon the personality of the teacher and his method of approach to the parents. There is very little we can add to the suggestions offered except the statement that success or failure on this item is entirely on the shoulders of the instructor.

4. **Does too much for the boy**

Almost identical with number (6) does not give boy enough freedom in his work. Forty percent of the teachers listed this difficulty with fifteen percent adding a suggestion for improvement.

"Lower visit slip marks and tell why"

"Get the boy to want to assume responsibility"

"I give the parents the grade"

Once again the instructors' solution seems to be an approach to the parent by means of the boy.

Once again we say, be straightforward. The trouble in ninety percent of the cases is that the father has not received a thorough lecture on the requirements of the agricultural department. Evidently the instructor has failed to drive home the significant points. Should the situation continue, then drop the project and give the boy credit for what he does around the farm. However, this type of boy is usually indifferent at home.
and would be much better off working for some other farmer.

10. Does not fully understand project set-up

On the basis of replies, a rather insignificant problem being checked by thirty percent of the teachers. Seventeen percent offer solutions.

"Instructor probably slipped"
"Instructor's fault"
"A primary duty of the teacher"
"Explain to parents"
"This is instructor's fault—he must make the best of it"

There is a definite agreement in the replies that the instructor is to blame for the existence of this problem, that he hasn't fully explained the situation. Naturally the only remedy is to have further discussion with the parents.

The question may arise as to the best time for explaining project work to the parents. May we suggest that the requirements be outlined in detail the first time that instructor and parent meet. Follow this up further at the time of the first project visit. Apparently it is repetition and emphasis which is of value in parental understanding.

11. Not strict enough with the boy

This item is definitely linked up with (9) does too much for the boy. Forty-two percent of the teachers checked it, and only five percent offered a solution.

"Lower marks if necessary and tell why"
"This is not my business; skip it until they get wise to him"

The only method of solution indicated here concerns the student, an attempt at stimulating him to action. He may or may not assume responsibility but certainly he will never gain anything from the instructor who
says "not my business".

12. Takes possession of project himself

A minor problem checked by twenty-seven percent of the instructors with but five percent offering a solution.

"Cancel it as far as boy's credit is concerned. Don't visit it further"
"Financing not clear-cut and business like. Needs tactful handling"

The instructor who advises cancellation of the project for credit is correct. We have no choice but to do this and attempt to have the boy gain experience elsewhere.

13. Makes use of incorrect farm practice

This item is closely related to the following one (14) thinks he knows everything. Thirty-five percent of the instructors checked the difficulty with seven percent offering suggestions.

"Don't grade the boy on such—allow no skill rating on incorrect practice, explain that a low or failing mark may result"
"Make test of new practice—compare with old"
"Keep emphasis on correct practices—visit other farms"

The solution by the instructors would include a demonstration of new practice and a comparison with the old, followed by continual emphasis upon the better procedure.

In addition to this attack, we suggest that you show him other possibilities of financial gain with less work. Send him the latest publications from the State Department of Agriculture, and tell him where he can get more. We might even go so far as to contact the County Extension Agent and arrange a visit. It is only by such methods as these that we can get the full support of the community behind our work.
14. **Thinks he knows everything**

From the reports this type of parent appeared to be the old dyed-in-the-wool Yankee, living up in the hills on scrub farms, ignorant of the existence of the State College or its extension service. Again thirty-five percent of the instructors listed this difficulty. Seven percent offered a solution.

"Let him make costly blunders which if they bring about a desire for correct information will help this situation"

"It is difficult to get such parents to realize their ignorance"

"Listen, but help as often as possible"

"No one can tell what one really thinks. Don't worry about such a wide field"

A brief summary of these replies would indicate an attempt at first cultivating friendships, then help and emphasis upon correct practices until the advantages and benefits of better methods are made clear.

In our opinion the approach to such a parent is purely a psychological one, an attempt to establish friendship and good will. If ever an instructor had sales ability, here is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate. In the preliminary visit to such a farmer, we should be hesitant about offering too many suggestions. But as time goes on and we become more friendly, have him make a trial of a new and better practice. Should the experiment be successful, you have a friend for life.

15. **Cannot speak English**

A minor problem checked by twenty-two percent of the instructors with twelve percent having a suggestion.

"Talk to the youngster with parents present and watch their faces"

The above reply proved to be the only significant one with the student
acting as a sort of interpreter. There isn't very much that we can add to this topic, although it has been our experience that parents who lack education themselves are very cooperative and pleased to have their boy learn as much as possible.

16. Wants to quit farming

Another relatively small problem with but twenty-two percent of the instructors checking the item and seven percent offering a suggestion.

"Try to place the boy away from home on a project"  
"Encourage records and planning"  
"Urge them to go out at the top—not the bottom. Show them that if they are really going out, they will profit most by putting things in order. A farm with income sells better than a run-down"

We agree with the instructor who advises the boy to get away from home on a project. After all, should he remain at home in such an environment, he would meet nothing but discouragement at every turn. Better to let him judge the farming business from personal experience rather than be prejudiced by conditions at home.
IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE EMPLOYER

1. Not interested in the boy

One of the minor difficulties encountered by instructors in this section. Twenty-seven percent checked it with seventeen percent offering a suggestion.

"If employer pays for work value received, a strictly business arrangement may get by.
Steer boys clear thereafter"
"The farmer is not running a school. He is trying to get work done"
"Place no more pupils on such jobs"
"Work to build up interest or get another job for the boy"
"Help boy get another job"

This problem was present to a greater degree in the newer departments rather than in the older departments where good friendships and contacts have already been established. The general opinion of instructors is to remove the boy from this farm to another job and cross the farmer from our placement list.

Our first step in this case would be a thorough investigation of the situation since oftentimes it turns out to be the boy's attitude which has created all the stir.

After all, the man is running his farm as a business enterprise and cannot be too concerned with a boy and his troubles. It is up to the boy to assume the offensive, to ask questions, to build up an interest for the employer. Only in this way can the student derive real benefit from his farm placement.

One other possibility—the instructor may be at the root of all this trouble because of a failure to explain the agricultural set-up. Injustice; correct it.
2. **Does not give varied experiences to the boy**

The outstanding topic in this section was checked by fifty-five percent of the teachers. Seventeen percent gave suggestions for improvement. The viewpoint of one instructor is pertinent at this point:

"Most employers look upon the boy as just another farm hand. The more important phases of the farm practices they do not wish to entrust to the boy."

"Help boy get another job"
"Change place of employment"
"Steer boys clear after first experience if enough better projects can be found"
"List experiences for employer"
"Explain vocational work; its aims"
"Get out mimeo copies"

Suggestions indicate two broad possibilities: (1) get the boy on another farm, or (2) talk with employer and outline project requirements including various experiences desired. The enclosed page from the Essex County School Placement Office seems to apply to this employer problem.

3. **Does not understand school and project requirements**

Under this heading may be listed most of the trouble encountered with the employer. Yet only forty percent of the instructors listed this difficulty and twenty percent gave solutions.

"Teacher's fault"
"Try to have employer see other projects, or visit to school"
"Be patient the first time, but be sure of thoroughly understood facts thereafter with other boys"

 Replies indicate that once again such a situation is the fault of the instructor and should be corrected immediately.

We agree with both cause and remedy.
4. **Sets bad examples for the boy**

A minor problem with thirty percent of the teachers checking the difficulty and ten percent offering a solution.

"Get to know him and try to correct this condition"

"Talk it over with parents and probably take the boy off the project"

Instructors would attempt to correct the situation by talks with the employer or else place the boy on another farm.

On the basis of past experience we would tend to lean toward the latter solution, that is, place the boy on another project. Farmers of this type are usually too busy to be bothered with helpful suggestions, probably would laugh at the instructor, or ignore him outright. At any rate it is a waste of time to attempt to change such a man's viewpoint. We suggest immediate removal of the boy before he becomes entirely stuck in the mire.

5. **Discourages the boy**

Similar to the preceding problem, checked by twenty-seven percent of the teachers with ten percent offering a solution.

"Probably take the boy off the project"

"Can warn the boy"

Only one answer here again—remove the boy from the project and place on another farm.

The importance of farm placement becomes more and more apparent as we continue with these items. We cannot simply set the boy down on a strange farm and leave him. He is our student, our responsibility. We must not fail to give him the proper farm background and experience. After a few years in one area the instructor should have at his disposal a list of reputable farms, places where he is sure the boy is handled
correctly and given opportunity. In the event of placement on an unknown farm, be sure to make a thorough investigation of the set-up.
EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT of the ESSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL trains its students to make a living in one or more phases of agriculture.

OUR TRAINING PLAN
6 months in the classroom - 6 months on the job

STUDENTS LEARN TO DO BY DOING

To work this plan, your cooperation, as an employer, means a great deal to the boy and to the school.

The student wants to make good on the job. The school wishes to help him, and to make sure that there is a common understanding at the very beginning of our association, we have prepared a brief explanation of the relationships which should exist between Employer, Student Employee and the School.

THE SCHOOL EXPECTS THAT THE STUDENT WILL:

Show interest, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

Do a good day’s work according to his age and ability.

Keep his employer’s interest in mind at all times and be Punctual, Dependable and Loyal.

Be neat and clean - kind and well-mannered at all times.

THE SCHOOL BELIEVES THAT THE EMPLOYER SHOULD:

Have an understanding with the student (before he actually starts work) about his duties, work hours, wages, time-off, church attendance, house rules, etc.

Treat the student as he would his own son with respect to food, sleeping quarters, and bedtime orders.

Give the student an opportunity to learn how to do well, as many jobs as possible.

Coach the student in the ways which he has found to be sensible in doing his work and handling his problems.

Notify the school immediately if any serious problem should arise between the employer and the student.

THE EMPLOYER WILL OBTAIN SATISFACTORY SERVICE THROUGH:

Helping the student continue his education on the farm.

His relationships with the school. Many employers discuss their problems with project instructors on visiting days (twice monthly.)

A Triangle of Cooperation Between the Employer, the Student and the School Will Give Satisfaction to All

MAY WE HAVE YOUR SUPPORT AND COOPERATION?
SPECIAL COMMENTS OF INSTRUCTORS

A. Student

"I am a firm believer in the value of hard work. Unless the boy learns to work we can't hope to do much for him. I don't care how brilliant a fellow is, personally, I would not give him a job if he were afraid of hard work. I had much rather take chances with a good worker of mediocre ability than with a chap of brilliant mind who is lazy.

"If I cannot wake a boy up to the value of work, I recommend that he change his plans and transfer to some other course. Last year I dropped one boy out of my course because of this, and one other year I dropped four boys, all tuition pupils. More and more I realize how important it is to be careful about the boys that we admit to our course."

B. Instructor

"One of the problems common to all instructors, I suspect, is that when the boy starts out on his own project or his farm placement job that he hits it full of enthusiasm and then a little later lets up. I tell my boys that I am more interested in how they finish than how they start. The instructor must constantly stimulate his boys to action. Boys have a natural tendency to let up a little when the new wears off.

"One of the most important things in the teaching game as I see it, is that the instructor must have a real interest in boys. A simulated interest will not do for the boy senses this right away. Unless a man has this interest and can find means to wake up his boys he had better let teaching alone and follow some other line of work."

C. Employer

"I have one and more employers who are inclined to think too rapidly what they want done, and use far too few words in telling the project student what is wanted. The exceptional boy can satisfy this type of man and can do much better for him the second year.

"I do not hesitate to tell this kind of man that he must be more definite in his directions.

"I have been visiting on the job when such directions were given, first I have followed the boy and tried to help him follow the directions. Then I have gone to the man and explained to him our troubles trying to read between his words and thereby fulfill his requirements, in every case this has helped, and directions have been more clear thereafter."
D. General Comment

"There is one point in farming, locally at least, that sums up the whole situation. Hard, cold cash in payment for labors completed in farming are small and inconsistent. There is, for the large majority of our boys, little inducement other than a love for the work. To set up examples of success to them is difficult because of the scarcity of well-paid farmers.

"The only solution I see, is a very highly changed system of guidance to get boys with brains to comprehend—and train them in turn to take charge of the many farm problems—no one has to date, and I doubt if they will."
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Heald, Franklin E., "The Home Project as a Phase of Vocational Agricultural Education", Vocational Education Bulletin No. 21, September, 1918


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the agricultural instructors of Massachusetts whose timely comments and suggestions contributed so much to the success of this study.

To Professor Heald and Professor Welles for their sincere interest and supervision of the problem.
Instructors of Vocational Agriculture:

Please help us to secure the experience and opinions of all Vocational Agricultural instructors in Massachusetts regarding the problems or difficulties in Supervised Farm Practice. The primary aim is the development of better teaching methods.

On the enclosed list please check with a (p) those problems of Supervised Farm Practice that have been troublesome. Also, check with an (s) those which have been troublesome and which you may have solved. In the latter case, an outline of your solution would be appreciated.

Our problems in farm practice appear to be chiefly concerned with the student, the parent, the instructor, or with the employer of the boy. In the series of questions submitted we have tried to cover as many of these problems as possible; any additional problems not noted would be welcome.

It is quite apparent that vocational instructors in our state and other states as well are encountering various problems in this most important phase of our teaching, namely supervised farm practice. For the purpose of clarification and the establishment of a standard in this study, let us state that supervised farm practice may include (1.) ownership of a home project; (2.) management of an enterprise owned by parents or another farmer and (3.) employment by some farmer in order to secure general experience in many farm practices.

Should results of this study appear to be significant, an attempt will be made to present a summary to all teachers cooperating. Please respond promptly so that compiling may be completed in the near future.

Very truly yours

James W. Blackburn
Graduate Student in Education

Cooperation urged by:

[Signature]
Difficulties Encountered in Supervised Farm Practice

I. With the Student:

1. Size of enterprise too small for student interest
2. Does not like particular phase of farm work (udder)
3. Does not like to keep records
4. Does not like to work
5. Lacks spirit of cooperation
6. Has wrong ideas and attitude toward farming
7. Is stubborn and doesn't want help
8. Dislikes teacher
9. Is thinking of leaving school
10. Is irresponsible and discontented
11. Fails to complete project
12. Boy rarely at home for project visit
13. Accounts never up to date
14. Boy has same project year after year
15. Not physically capable
16. Not mentally capable
17. Is definitely in wrong vocation
18. Still has vocational problems - undecided
19. Does not have clear understanding of project work and farm practice
20. Project planning and analysis is insufficient
21. Has interest in some other hobby
22. Seems frightened by the teacher
1. With the Student: (Continued)

23. Unable to express himself well orally.
24. Project differs from the plan made.
25. Hasn't enough time to carry on project.
26. Sees no opportunity for financial gain.
27. Insufficient space or tools to work with.
28. Insufficient capital to start project and continue project.
29. Insufficient experience to carry on project.
30. Not given enough freedom in his work.
31. Projects conflict with 4-H work.
II. With the Instructor:

1. Does not like to keep records
2. Not cooperative
3. Spends time on hobbies rather than supervision.
4. Is stubborn and disagreeable
5. Is easily managed by students and parents
6. Has become stagnant and in a rut
7. Has become sick of project work
8. Minimum requirements for project work set too low
9. Standard of project work too low
10. Does not leave good instructions
11. Fails to look over boy's record book
12. Failure to create interest and stimulate boy
13. Hasn't enough patience
14. Does not know subject field
15. Has race prejudices
16. Difficulty in explaining problem situations
17. Dislikes talking with parents
18. Dislikes working with boys
19. Does not have clear understanding of project requirements
20. Not enough time for project work
21. Cannot place boys for farm experience
22. Projects too many for frequent visits
23. Projects too widely scattered
24. Cannot get cooperation of students
25. Too expensive - car, gas, etc.
26. Does not fully explain project work to student and parents
27. Difficulty in visiting some projects (roads etc.)
28. Failure to be at project at critical time
III. With the Parent:

1. Not interested in farming
2. Dislikes interference from strangers
3. Does not want boy to become a farmer
4. Not interested in the boy and his future
5. Not cooperative with the school
6. Does not give boy enough freedom in his work
7. Wants boy working with him rather than on project
8. Unfriendly toward instructor
9. Does too much for the boy - on project etc.
10. Does not fully understand project set-up
11. Not strict enough with the boy
12. Takes possession of project himself
13. Makes use of incorrect farm practice and thus teaches and sets wrong example for the boy
14. Thinks he knows everything
15. Cannot speak English
16. Wants to quit farming
IV. With the Employer:

1. Not interested in the boy
2. Does not give varied experiences to the boy
3. Does not understand school and project requirements
4. Sets bad examples for the boy
5. Discourages the boy
6. Works boy too much
Approved by:

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W.F. Welles

Date May 14, 1941