

A COMPARISON OF FACTORS INVOLVED IN UTILIZATION
OF KANSAS EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

by

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Also, appreciation to my wife Sandra, who supported this period of study and thesis preparation with patience and understanding.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The writer was born at Hutchinson, Kansas, August 13, 1932.

Elementary and secondary education were received in Reno County, graduating from Partridge High School, Partridge, Kansas in 1950. He worked at home, on the farm, for several years before enrolling at Kansas State University in 1955. In 1959 he graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in Dairy Production. He then moved to Wyoming, to take a position as dairy herdsman and farm manager at the Wyoming Industrial Institute at Worland, Wyoming until 1969. From there he moved to Wheatland, Wyoming as manager of a machinery dealership until May, 1970, when he entered the Kansas Extension Service as the County Extension Agricultural Agent in Morton County, Kansas, which position he now holds.

The author married Sandra M. Thompson of Mission, Kansas in July, 1958. They have two children, Christopher Allen, age 12 and Thomas Frederick, age 10.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

County extension councils were established by Kansas law to plan and conduct educational programs in agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, and community resource development, in every county of the state.

Background of Study

The Cooperative Extension Service was officially established in 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. This act was amended in 1953 and again in 1955. The amended Smith-Lever Act provides that:

In order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States, useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same. . . .

Cooperative agriculture extension work shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics and subjects relating thereto. . . .¹

The Kansas County Extension Council law states that one of the sole purposes of the Council is "to plan the educational extension programs of the county."² Membership on the Council consists of nine elected members from each of the three county commissioner districts.

¹Lincoln, David Kelsey and Cannon Chiles Hearne, Cooperative Extension Work 3rd ed. (Ithaca, New York: Comstock Publishing Associates, 1963), p. 31.

²Handbook for County Extension Councils, (Kansas State University Manhattan, Kansas 1975), p. 5.

Three of these members shall represent agriculture, three members represent home economics, and three members represent 4-H and youth. These representatives are elected to office by the people of their respective commissioner districts at special election meetings held in accordance with the Kansas Extension Council law. After the election, three advisory committees are formed as provided for in the law. Each committee is made up of nine members who represent their various interest areas of agriculture, home economics, and 4-H and youth. Sanders lists three basic premises which underlie the concept of advisory groups. First, the involvement of representative lay people in the planning process will speed up the process of educational change among people. Second, the involvement of representative lay people will result in "better" decisions when compared with those made by the professional staff alone. Third, the involvement of the individual in planning activities is a beneficial learning experience.³

Duties of Advisory Committees

The duty of these advisory committees is to assist the county extension agents in planning and implementing current and long-range programs which will be of educational benefit to the people of the county. Considerable literature has been written concerning extension program planning. However, limited information is available concerning the actual utilization agents make of the various advisory committees in program planning and implementation.

³H.C. Sanders, The Cooperative Extension Service (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 101.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to seek data regarding the utilization of the agricultural advisory committee by the county extension agricultural agent in program planning and implementation of the county agricultural program. It also attempted to determine if certain personality factors regarding county agricultural agents have a relationship to the utilization or non-utilization of the extension advisory committee.

Statement of Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. Determine advisory committee utilization by agent in program planning and implementation.
2. Determine if various personal factors of the individual agent has an influence on the advisory committee's functions in program planning. Some of the factors to be considered are:
 - A. Age of agent
 - B. Tenure of service in present county
 - C. Formal education level
 - D. Tenure in extension service
3. Determine how often the county agent feels the advisory committee needs to meet to be the most effective.
4. Determine what suggestions the county agents feel could increase the effectiveness of the advisory committee.
5. Determine the overall effectiveness of the agricultural agent in utilizing the advisory committee.

6. Determine what the agricultural advisory committee member sees as his contribution toward program planning.

Limitations of Study

There was no attempt to generalize the findings of this study beyond the agricultural agents and the agricultural advisory committees within the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of utilization of agricultural advisory committees within individual counties in Kansas and to determine how effectively they are performing this role as prescribed by law.

Due to the wide variety of extension organizational structures among states, information similar to the Kansas Cooperative Extension organization, is limited. Some of the literature review stated herein reflects these differences in organizational structure.

Hamlin, in discussing the use of councils in agricultural education, states "the most important characteristics of a council which is to serve the whole community is that it shall be representative of the people in the community."¹ The Kansas Handbook for County Extension Councils defines the Kansas Extension law concerning establishment and utilization of the agricultural advisory committee.

The county agricultural advisory committee is composed of the members of the county extension council who are elected to represent agriculture. This committee reviews long range agricultural objectives for the county and determines current problems needing educational emphasis. Members of the committee will. . . .

¹Herbert M. Hamlin, Agricultural Education In Community Schools (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Publishers, 1949), p. 126.

²Handbook for County Extension Councils, (Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 1975), p. 13.

The Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies, and Goals, stated "the people who are to benefit from extension work should participate democratically and effectively in determining program emphasis in light of what they believe will benefit them most".³ Kreitlow, Aiton and Torrence describe the process of working together as coordination. "Coordination among groups in the community is the process of working together to establish goals and take action on specific problems".⁴ Brown described the advisory committees involvement in developing public programs:

An explanation of the popularity of the public advisory board can, in all probability, be found in its basic adaptability to the bigness of bureaucracy. The board offers a means. . . . The advisory board may well be the twentieth century way of coping with the problem.⁵

Cox concludes that "every effort should be made to get the most capable people on planning committees".⁶

Gwinn states that "regardless of the methods used in selecting members of county advisory committees, consideration should be given to the

³Joint Committee Report on Extension Programs, Policies and Goals, (U.S.D.A. and Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C., 1948), p. 37, Government Printing Office.

⁴Kreitlow, Burton W., E.W. Aiton, and Andrew P. Torrence, Leadership for Action in Rural Communities (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc. 1960), p. 161.

⁵David S. Brown, "The Public Advisory Board as an Instrument of Government", Public Administration Review XV, Summer 1955, p. 204.

⁶Lawrence J. Cox, "Extension Program Development in Ten Selected Counties in Kansas", (Master of Science Thesis, Kansas State University, Manhattan, 1960), p. 31.

ability, interest and willingness to work as exhibited by prospective committee members".⁷

Mathur found that county extension advisory committees are the groups who are most helpful to county extension agents in adopting and fitting innovations into the on-going programs of the county.⁸

Carter feels that the performance of county extension advisory committees are more effective when county agent chairman are perceived to provide initiation of structure leadership behavior for advisory committees.⁹

Beckstrand lists functions performed by advisory councils in the following order of importance:

1. Determining needs and interests of the people
2. Planning for action
3. Implementing program plans
4. Coordinating or uniting for harmony, compromise, and cooperation
5. Reporting accomplishments
6. Evaluating programs
7. Developing lay leadership¹⁰
8. Determining public policy

⁷Samuel M. Gwinn, "The Role of County Advisory Committees in Program Projection", (Unpublished Ph.D., Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1958), p. 177.

⁸Shyam Lal Mathur, "The Role of Cooperative Extension Personnel and Advisory Committees in the Adoption of Program Innovations" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1966) pp. 134-235.

⁹Cecil E. Carter, Jr., "The Relationship of Leader Behavior Dimensions and Group Characteristics to County Extension Advisory Committee Performance", (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1967), p. 151.

¹⁰Gordon L. Beckstrand, "Organizational and Operational Procedures of Extension Program Advisory Councils, Characteristics of Council Members and their Appraisal of their Council Operation in Selected Counties in Oregon and Colorado", (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1959), pp. 42-43.

Beal and associates found that sub-committees are mainly responsible for analyzing in detail the background information, for defining specific problem areas within their subject matter areas, and stating educational objectives which, if accomplished, will help solve the problems listed. The responsibility of the agricultural advisory committee can be stated at a general level as being that of: 1) analyzing background information related to agriculture in the county, 2) defining specific problem areas and specifying relevant background information related to these problem areas, 3) stating objectives that if accomplished, would help ameliorate the specific problems. The immediate product of the advisory committee of value to the extension educational effort is the written program statements.¹¹

Patton, in a study of Missouri Extension Councils, lists duties of extension councils ranked in order by respondents:

1. Secure adequate local finances
2. Approve personnel for county
3. Approve and pay monthly bills
4. Establish local policy
5. Serve as a source of communication between University and local people
6. Hold elections
7. Set program priorities
8. Initiate new programs
9. Serve in advisory capacity only¹²

Gwinn suggests that the assignments of the committee should be broad in nature. Members need to be familiar with the program on which they

¹¹George M. Beal and others, Social Action and Interaction in Program Planning (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1966), pp. 345-346.

¹²Glenn Patton, "A Study of the Effectiveness of University of Missouri Extension Councils", Special Report, (University of Missouri, Columbia, December 1968).

are expected to give advice. Advisory committees should establish definite patterns of organization and operation and should meet often enough to become a functioning group or team.¹³

Beckstrand found that the majority of advisory councils usually met quarterly. Some council members stated they did not believe it mattered whether councils met regularly at a schedule time. Agents often stated that they were more satisfied with their councils since they had stopped meeting at regular intervals and called the council into session only when deemed necessary. Members interviewed seemed willing to spend as much time as necessary to plan adequate programs. The majority of the members felt they were not spending enough time in developing and executing extension programs.¹⁴

Patton lists problems that tend to reduce effectiveness of councils as ranked in order of importance.

1. Lack of interest
2. Poor choice of nominees
3. Lack of training
4. Past experience
5. Present duties as defined by law
6. Doesn't meet often enough
7. Election method
8. Age¹⁵

Beckstrand suggests that it is possible that as extension agents develop a greater insight into the purposes, organization and functions of councils, they will increase their effectiveness in working with them.¹⁶

¹³Gwinn, pp. 177-178.

¹⁴Beckstrand, pp. 75-79.

¹⁵Patton.

¹⁶Beckstrand, pp. 161-162.

Gwinn concluded that "as committees become more organized and suburbanized there is a greater demand upon the time of the leaders in these committees. This competition for time means extension groups are forced to compete with other organized groups for meeting dates most suitable to the community leaders".¹⁷

¹⁷Gwinn, p. 127.

Chapter III

METHOD AND MATERIALS

Research Design

Selltiz, et al. defines the research design as "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure." They indicated that research designs differ according to each specific research purpose. They stated:

Each study, of course, has its own specific purpose. But we may think of research purposes as falling into a number of broad groupings: 1) to gain familiarity with the phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it, often in order to formulate a more precise research problem or to develop hypotheses; 2) to portray accurately (with or without specific initial hypotheses about the nature of these characteristics); 3) to determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (usually, but not always, with a specific initial hypotheses); 4) to test a hypothesis of causal relationship between variables.¹

The design used in this study will be a combination of two categories outlined in the above groups . . . exploratory and causal relationship.

Selltiz, et al. noted that:

Any given research may have in it elements of two or more of the functions we have described as characterizing different types of study. In any single study, however, the primary emphasis is usually on only one of these functions, and the study can be thought of as falling into the category corresponding to its major function.²

¹Claire Selltiz, et al., Research Methods In Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1959), pp. 50-51.

²Ibid.

Method of Sampling

The State of Kansas is made up of 105 counties with an extension office in each county. Each county office is staffed with a minimum of two agents, an agricultural agent and a home economics agent. The State is divided into five administrative areas with approximately twenty-one counties in each area.

There are two target populations in this study, the agricultural agent and the agricultural advisory committee. Due to definite differences between counties and their mode of operation, this study used all the agricultural agents who had been in service prior to January 1, 1976, in order to reach the most conclusive information available. Additionally a stratified random sample of ten county agricultural advisory committees in the state were studied in order to get their view of the agricultural advisory committee effectiveness.

Procedure

Questionnaires were mailed to all county agricultural agents who had been in service prior to January 1, 1976, requesting information on what the individual agent perceives about the advisory committee, how the committee functions and some personal information regarding the individual agent. A similar questionnaire was sent agricultural advisory committees in ten counties (two randomly selected from each administrative area) to reach a cross section of that population. Examples of these questionnaires are found in the appendix.

Data Collection

Data gathering instruments for this study are mail questionnaires developed by the author with advice of the faculty advisors. Questionnaires were pre-tested by former county extension personnel, who were currently located at Kansas State University. Questionnaires were mailed to respondents December 14, 1976. The questionnaires were coded by county identification to help preserve anonymity. Those agents and committee members who did not return their questionnaires within two weeks, were sent a reminder requesting that the questionnaires be returned as soon as possible. A personal telephone call was made to those agents who failed to get their questionnaires returned after the reminder.

Definition of Terms

Cooperative Extension Service: the educational arm of the college or university out in the counties.

County Extension Agricultural Agent: the person employed in this position in the county extension office to give agricultural educational guidance to the public.

Agricultural Advisory Committee: the nine people elected with agricultural interests to serve on an advisory committee to the county agent in program planning and implementation.

Formal Education Level: degree of formal education received from a college or university such as a bachelor's or master's degree.

Tenure: length of time an individual has held his position of employment, or in the case of the advisory committee members, how many years they have served on the committee.

Program Planning: the act of planning a program which will meet the required needs of county clientele in the area of interest, in this instance, agriculture.

Utilization: method by which the advisory committee is used by the agent in program planning, implementation, and evaluation of the county agricultural program.

Effectiveness: results as reflected by active participation in program planning effort and in quality of programs planned.

Likert Scale: a five point rating scale in which the interval between each point on the scale is assumed to be equal.

Data Analysis

The data reported in this section were compiled from responses to the questionnaires sent to the two groups of respondents. Data analysis was done by numerical and percentage treatment. Selected data were treated to chi square analysis to determine statistical significance or lack of it.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data reported in this chapter were compiled from responses to questionnaires sent to two different groups. The primary group was Kansas County Extension Agricultural agents. Only those agents who had been employed less than one year, or those counties without agricultural agents, were excluded from the survey.

A separate questionnaire was sent to a random sampling of agricultural advisory committees in ten counties, representing all five administrative areas of the state. Both sets of questionnaires asked respondents to give their opinion concerning factors regarding the utilization of agricultural advisory committees. Agricultural agents were asked questions concerning advisory committee meetings, number of committee members attending, and how often they felt the committee should meet for effective planning and evaluation. They were then asked to rate their committees on the functions for which the committee was established. Finally, agents were asked if the "best qualified leadership" was being elected to the committee, and if not, why not?

Agricultural advisory committee members were asked questions concerning meeting times, frequency of meetings, their attendance at meetings, and if they had received committee training after being elected. Committee members were also asked to rate their own committee in their elected functions, how well the agricultural program was meeting the

county needs, and how well the agricultural agent utilized the committee in program planning and other activities. The committee members were then asked if they felt the "best qualified" people were being elected to the advisory committee and if not, why not?

Response to the agents questionnaire was excellent. Eighty-seven questionnaires were mailed and a 100 percent return resulted. The response by committee members was good, although not equal to the agents response. Eighty-nine questionnaires were mailed to ten counties. About 82 percent, or seventy-three out of the eighty-nine potential respondents, returned completed questionnaires.

Descriptive background information on agricultural agents is presented in Table I. Information includes tenure in extension, age, tenure in present county, and educational degree earned.

About 78 percent of the agricultural agents in Kansas have served six or more years in professional extension work. Fifty-seven percent of these agents have a total tenure length of sixteen years or more. About 76 percent have served four or more years in their present county and 29 percent of these have been in the same county for sixteen years or more. Thirty-seven percent are between the ages of twenty and forty and 63 percent are forty-one years of age or older.

Agricultural agents in Kansas are required to have a bachelor's degree for employment. Fifty-five, or 63 percent, have a bachelor's degree with thirty-two, or 37 percent, having a master's degree.

Descriptive background information on advisory committee members is presented in Table II. Information includes age of members, length

of service on the advisory committee and education level attained by the committee member.

Table I

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL
AGENTS BY NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DATA (N=87)

Years	Length of Tenure in Present County	
	Number	Percent
1 - 3	21	24.0
4 - 6	15	17.0
7 - 10	12	14.0
11 - 15	14	16.0
16 or more	25	29.0
Length of Tenure in Professional Extension Work		
1 - 5	19	22.0
6 - 10	9	10.3
11 - 15	9	10.3
16 or more	50	57.4
Age of Agricultural Agent		
20 - 30	18	21.0
31 - 40	14	16.0
41 - 50	27	31.0
51 or over	28	32.0
Educational Degree Earned		
Bachelor's	55	63.0
Master's	32	37.0

Table II

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTY EXTENSION
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS
BY NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DATA (N=73)

Years	Number	Percent
Tenure of Advisory Committee		
0 - 2	14	19.2
3 - 6	35	47.9
7 - 10	21	28.8
11 or more	3	4.1
Age of Committee Member		
20 - 29	4	5.5
30 - 39	30	23.3
40 - 54	28	38.4
55 or more	24	32.8
Education Level by Grade Completed		
8 or less	6	8.2
9 - 12	30	41.1
13 - 16	29	39.7
17 or more	5	6.9
No response	3	4.1

About 81 percent, of the members have served on the advisory committee for three years or more, and 19 percent, have been on the committee for two years or less. Seventy-one percent of the committee members are forty years of age or older and 29 percent, are under forty years of age. Approximately half of the committee members had an education beyond the high school level.

Agent Comparisons

Agents tenure in professional extension service as compared with educational degree earned, as shown in Table III, indicates 63.2 percent of the agents have bachelor's degrees and 36.8 percent have master's degrees. By tenure, 26.3 percent have a master's degree with five years experience or less, compared to 46 percent of those with sixteen years or more. About 74 percent of the agents with five years experience or less have bachelor's degrees compared to 54 percent of those with sixteen or more years.

Table III

A COMPARISON OF AGENTS TENURE IN PROFESSIONAL EXTENSION SERVICE AND EDUCATIONAL DEGREE EARNED (N=87)

Degree Earned	Years Tenure in Extension Service					
	1 - 5 N %	6 - 10 N %	11 - 15 N %	16 or more N %	Total Percent	
Bachelor's	14 73.7	8 89.0	6 67.0	27 54.0	55	63.2
Master's	5 26.3	1 11.0	3 33.0	23 46.0	32	36.8
Total	19 100.0	9 100.0	9 100.0	50 100.0	87	100.0

Tenure and Frequency of Meetings

Comparison of tenure in extension service with the frequency of advisory committee meetings held and how frequently the agent feels the

committee should meet to provide satisfactory program results, is presented in Table IV.

Data in Table IV indicates that all tenure groups tend to have two or fewer meetings. About 28 percent of those agents holding one meeting, had one to five years experience compared to 40 percent for those agents with sixteen or more years. About 21 percent of the agents holding three or more meetings, had one to five years experience compared to 75 percent for the agents with sixteen years or more. The chi square value of 5.91 was not significant for this table.

Average Number Meetings

	Years Tenure of Agents				All Groups
	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 or more	
Average number meetings held	1.95	1.55	1.66	2.41	2.00

The average number of meetings held per tenure group varied from 1.55 meetings for agents with six to ten years tenure, up to 2.41 meetings for those agents with sixteen years or more. The average for all groups was 2.00 meetings.

Suggested Frequency

Thirty-nine percent of all agents favored four meetings in preference to other frequencies. About 24 percent of agents suggesting four meetings, had one to five years experience compared to 59 percent for those agents with sixteen years or more. Twenty-eight percent of those agents suggesting two meetings, had one to five years experience compared to 52 percent for those agents with sixteen or more.

Table IV

A COMPARISON OF AGENTS TENURE IN EXTENSION SERVICE AND NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD AND FREQUENCY AGENTS SUGGEST MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD (N=86)*

Frequency of Meetings Held	Years Tenure of Agriculture Agents						Percent of Total
	1 - 5 N %	6 - 10 N %	11 - 15 N %	16 or More N %	Total N %		
1	7 28.0	4 16.0	4 16.0	10 40.0	25 100.0	29.1	
2	7 18.9	5 13.5	4 10.8	21 56.9	37 100.0	43.0	
3 or more	5 20.8	- -	1 4.2	18 75.0	24 100.0	27.9	
Total	19 -	9 -	9 -	49 -	86 -	100.0	

Chi square value 5.91 -- Not significant

Frequency of Meetings As Suggested		(N=87)								
		1	2	3	4	5	6			
1	12.5	2	25.0	2	25.0	3	37.5	8	100.0	9.2
2	28.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	13	52.0	25	100.0	28.7
4	23.6	3	8.8	3	8.8	20	58.8	34	100.0	39.1
As needed	15.0	2	10.0	1	5.0	14	70.0	20	100.0	23.0
Total	19	9	-	9	-	50	-	87	-	100.0

* Data incomplete

Age and Frequency of Meetings

A comparison of agents by age and frequency of advisory committee meetings and suggested frequency of meetings, is presented in Table V.

About 24 percent of the agents holding one meeting were twenty to thirty years old compared to 12 percent for those agents fifty-one or older. Twenty percent of those agents holding three or more meetings were twenty or thirty years old compared to 48 percent for those fifty-one years or older.

Average Number Meetings

	Agents Years of Age				All Groups
	20 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 or more	
Average number meetings held	2.00	1.50	1.92	2.38	2.01

The average number of meetings held per age group, varied from 1.5 meetings held by agents thirty-one to forty years of age, up to 2.38 meetings held by agents fifty-one years or older. The average for all age groups was 2.01 meetings.

Suggested Frequency

Thirty-nine percent of the agents indicated a preference for four, or quarterly meetings. Thirty-eight percent were still satisfied with two or fewer meetings and 23 percent wanted to call meetings as needed.

Degree Earned and Meeting Frequency

A comparison of the degree earned by agricultural agents and the frequency of advisory committee meetings held, is presented in Table VI.

Table V

A COMPARISON OF AGENTS BY AGE AND FREQUENCY OF ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD AND FREQUENCY AGENTS
SUGGEST MEETINGS BE HELD (N=86)*

Frequency of Meetings Held	Age of Agricultural Agent					
	20 - 30 N %	31 - 40 N %	41 - 50 N %	51 or Older N %	Total N %	Percent of Total
1	7 24.0	8 32.0	8 32.0	3 12.0	25 100.0	29.0
2	7 19.4	5 14.0	12 33.3	12 33.3	36 100.0	42.0
3 or more	5 20.0	1 4.0	7 28.0	12 48.0	25 100.0	29.0
Total	18 -	14 -	27 -	27 -	86 -	100.0

Chi square value 11.72 -- Not significant

Frequency of Meetings As Suggested	(N=87)					
	1 12.5	3 37.5	4 50.0	-	8 100.0	9.2
1	1 12.5	3 37.5	4 50.0	-	8 100.0	9.2
2	5 20.0	4 16.0	7 28.0	9 36.0	25 100.0	28.7
4	9 26.5	5 14.7	8 23.5	12 35.3	34 100.0	39.1
As needed	3 15.0	2 10.0	8 40.0	7 35.0	20 100.0	23.0
Total	18 -	14 -	27 -	28 -	87 -	100.0

* Data incomplete

Sixty percent of the agents holding one meeting, held bachelor's degrees as compared to 40 percent of the agents with master's degrees. Sixty-four percent of the agents holding three or more meetings, had a bachelor's degree compared to 36 percent for those agents with a master's degree. The chi square value of .11 was significant at the .10 level indicating that 90 percent of the time, agents with bachelor's degrees can be expected to hold more advisory committee meetings than agents with master's degrees.

Average Number Meetings

Average number meetings held	Degree Earned By Agricultural Agents		
	Bachelor's	Master's	All Groups
	2.04	1.97	2.01

The average number of meetings held for each degree level held varied from 1.97 meetings held by agents with a master's degree to 2.04 meetings held by agents with a bachelor's degree. Both groups averaged 2.01 meetings.

Suggested Frequency of Meetings

About 62 percent of the agents suggesting four meetings had a bachelor's degree compared with 38 percent for the agents with a master's degree. Seventy-two percent of the agents suggesting two meetings had a bachelor's degree compared with 28 percent for the agents with a master's degree.

Table VI

A COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL DEGREES EARNED BY AGRICULTURAL AGENTS AND
 FREQUENCY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD AND FREQUENCY
 AGENTS SUGGEST MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD (N=86)*

Frequency of Meetings Held	Degree Earned						
	Bachelor's		Master's		Total		Percent of Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	15	60.0	10	40.0	25	100.0	29.0
2	23	63.9	13	36.1	36	100.0	42.0
3 or more	16	64.0	9	36.0	25	100.0	29.0
Total	54	-	52	-	86	-	100.0

Chi square value .111 -- Significant at .10 level

Frequency Agents Suggest Meetings Should Be Held (N=87)

1	4	50.0	4	50.0	8	100.0	9.2
2	18	72.0	7	28.0	25	100.0	28.7
4	21	61.8	13	38.2	34	100.0	39.1
As needed	12	60.0	8	40.0	20	100.0	23.0
Total	55	-	32	-	87	-	100.0

* Data incomplete

Advisory Committee Comparisons

A comparison of advisory committee members by educational grade completed and the frequency of attendance at committee meetings, is presented in Table VII. A comparison of advisory committee members by age and education completed, with frequency of meetings as suggested by committee members, is shown in Tables VIII and IX.

As shown in Table VII, 40 percent of the committee members who attended meetings regularly, had high school levels of education compared with 57 percent who had college levels of education. Fifty-seven percent of all members indicated they attended committee meetings on a regular basis.

By age, as shown in Table VIII, 24 percent of those members who suggested four meetings, were thirty to thirty-nine years old as compared to 30 percent who were fifty-five or older, and 33 percent who were forty to fifty-four years old. Forty-five percent of all members suggested four meetings should be held.

By years of education completed (as shown in Table IX) 28 percent of those committee members who suggested four meetings had high school levels of education compared to 56 percent who had college levels of education. Forty-seven percent of the members who suggested two meetings had high school levels of education compared with 27 percent who had college levels of education. Forty-three percent of those members suggesting five or more meetings, had high school levels of education compared to 50 percent who had college levels of education. Twenty-eight percent of all members indicated four meetings, 23 percent indicated two meetings, and 22 percent said five or more meetings.

Table VII

A COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL GRADE COMPLETED BY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND FREQUENCY MEMBERS
ATTENDED COMMITTEE MEETINGS (N=70)

Frequency of Meeting Attendance	Educational Years Completed						Percent of Total
	8 or less N %	9 - 12 N %	13 - 16 N %	17 or Over N %	Total N %		
Regular	6 15.0	16 40.0	15 37.5	3 7.5	40 100.0	57.1	
Whenever Possible	- -	11 44.0	12 48.0	2 8.0	25 100.0	35.7	
Seldom	- -	3 60.0	2 40.0	- -	5 100.0	7.2	
Total	6 -	30 -	29 -	5 -	70 -	100.0	

Table VIII

A COMPARISON OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS BY AGE AND
FREQUENCY COMMITTEE MEMBERS SUGGEST COMMITTEE
MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD (N=73)

Suggested Frequency of Meetings	Age of Committee Members by Years					
	29 or less N %	30 - 39 N %	40 - 54 N %	55 or older N %	Total N %	Percent of Total
1	-	-	2	2	4	5.4
2	-	5	4	6	15	20.6
3	-	4	7	4	15	20.6
4	4	8	11	10	33	45.2
No response	-	-	4	2	6	8.2
Total	4	17	28	24	73	100.0

Table IX

A COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL YEARS COMPLETED BY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND FREQUENCY MEMBERS SUGGEST
MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD (N=64)

Suggested Frequency of Meetings	Educational Years Completed					
	8 or less N %	9 - 12 N %	13 - 16 N %	17 or More N %	Total N %	Percent of Total
1	-	3 75.0	1 25.0	-	4 100.0	6.3
2	1 6.7	7 46.6	4 26.7	3 20.0	15 100.0	23.4
3	1 7.7	5 38.5	6 46.1	1 7.7	13 100.0	20.3
4	2 11.1	5 27.8	10 55.6	1 5.5	18 100.0	28.1
5 or more	1 7.1	6 42.9	7 50.0	-	14 100.0	21.9
Total	5 -	26 -	28 -	5 -	64 -	100.0

Committee Participation As Perceived
By Agricultural Agents

Factors pertaining to agricultural agents, such as tenure in extension work, age, and educational degree earned, were compared with how they rated their agricultural advisory committee in a number of functions. These functions were: 1) participation in planning the county agricultural program; 2) implementing the program activities; 3) evaluation of the program; 4) committees understanding of their job role; 5) how well satisfied the agents were with overall performance of their advisory committee.

Due to the type of questions asked, which were Likert rating questions on a continuum, and the wide spread of responses, it prompted the use of mean weighted scores to compare opinions of the various factors pertaining to respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from one to five, the point at which the question was best answered in their judgment. Values of 5-4-3-2-1 were assigned equi-distant along the scale with five being the most desirable and one being the least desirable. Responses were totalled using the numerical value and then divided by number of respondents, to obtain the mean weighted scores. A mean weighted score of 3.5 was considered as being a desirable median. The results are shown in Table X.

Table X reveals that tenure of agent did not appear to influence satisfaction with performance of their advisory committees in regards to the program planning function. By age of agent, younger members are the most satisfied, followed by the two oldest groups. The thirty-one to forty age group being the least satisfied with performance of the advisory

committee as regards program planning. The factor of degree level shows the greatest variation. Those respondents with a master's degree seem considerably more satisfied than agents with bachelor's degrees, but statistically there is no difference. Tenure of agents reveals a considerable variation between groups concerning program implementation. Those with less than five years and the eleven to fifteen year group, rated committees lowest with a (2.4) score, while agents with sixteen years or more rated the committee highest with a (2.9) score. All groups however, indicated a weakness by their committees in program implementation assistance. The age and degree level groups were consistent in the overall evaluation rating. The youngest age group gave the lowest rating and as age increased, the rating increased also. By degree level, the agents with bachelor's degrees gave a (2.6) score. There is no pattern to these ratings and no differences statistically speaking.

Committee participation in program evaluation was consistently on the low side, indicating some weakness on the part of committee involvement regarding program evaluation of the county agricultural program. The agents with less than five years tenure rated the committee the lowest. Agents with six to ten years gave the highest rating and each successively longer tenured group gave a lower rating. The two younger age groups rated the committee quite low. The two older age groups were somewhat better, but still below a desirable level.

Agents generally feel committee members are lacking knowledge concerning what their jobs entail. This may be an indication of a need for some training of members after their election. The two shorter tenure

groups both rated the committee below a (3.0). The two older groups gave scores above a (3.0). The youngest age group gave a score under (3.0) and all other groups were above. By degree level, both groups rated the committee at (3.1).

Agents satisfaction with advisory committee performance varied from (2.9) to (3.5) regarding tenure, with the two shortest tenure groups indicating the low score and the two older groups giving successively better scores. By age groups, the younger group was below a (3.0) and all other groups were above. By degrees earned, both groups gave a (3.2) score.

Table X

DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT, EXPRESSED AS MEAN WEIGHTED SCORES, THAT AGRICULTURAL AGENTS RATED ADVISORY COMMITTEES AS TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION. COMMITTEES JOB UNDERSTANDING AND AGENTS SATISFACTION WITH COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE, BASED ON FACTORS OF AGENTS TENURE, AGE, AND DEGREE

Factors in Relationship to Agricultural Agents	Committee Participation in:				Committees Job Understanding	Agents Satisfaction With Committee Performance
	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation			
Tenure of Agent 1 - 5 years 6 - 10 years 11 - 15 years 16 years or more	3.3*	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.9	2.9
	3.2	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
	3.2	2.4	2.6	3.3	3.2	3.2
	3.2	2.9	2.5	3.2	3.5	3.5
Age 20 - 30 years 31 - 40 years 41 - 50 years 51 years or more	3.4	2.4	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.8
	3.1	2.5	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	3.3	2.8	2.7	3.3	3.4	3.4
	3.3	2.9	2.6	3.2	3.4	3.4
Degree Level Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree	3.1	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.2
	3.5	2.8	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.2

* Mean weighted scores were based on a rating scale of 1 - 5. 1=poor 5=very good

Election of Advisory Committee Members

Agricultural advisory committee members are elected from their county commissioner districts by special elections held each year. Three questions were asked of agricultural agents in regards to the election of these committee members. Tables XI and XII deal with these questions. The information is shown as a comparison with factors of agents tenure and educational degree earned.

Influencing Member Selection

Agricultural agents were asked if they felt it was morally acceptable to attempt to influence selection of advisory committee members.

By tenure, as shown in Table XI, 79 percent of those agents with five years or less say it is acceptable compared with 10 percent who said it was not and 10 percent said they were uncertain. When asked if they did try to influence selection, 74 percent indicated they did compared to 26 percent who said they did not. Sixty percent of the agents with sixteen or more years of tenure indicated they felt it was acceptable compared to 26 percent who said it was not and 14 percent who were uncertain. When asked if they did, 46 percent of this tenure group said they did try to influence selection compared with 54 percent who said they did not.

By educational degree earned, 71 percent of the agents with a bachelor's degree said it was acceptable to influence selection compared to 18 percent who said it was not and 11 percent who were uncertain. When asked if they did, 60 percent said they did compared to 40 percent who did not. Sixty-two percent of the agents with a master's degree said they thought it was acceptable to influence selection of committee members compared to 19 percent who said no or were uncertain.

Table XI

A COMPARISON OF AGRICULTURAL AGENTS BY YEARS TENURE IN EXTENSION
AND EDUCATIONAL DEGREE EARNED REGARDING PRINCIPLE OF
INFLUENCING COMMITTEE MEMBER SELECTION (N=87)

Years Tenure	Accept Principle of Influencing Selection						Actively Influence Selection					
	Yes			No			Not Certain			Yes		
	N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%	Total
5 or less	15	79.0		2	10.5		2	10.5		14	73.7	19
6 - 10	6	66.7		-	-		3	33.3		5	55.6	9
11 - 15	8	89.0		1	11.0		-	-		6	66.7	9
12 or more	30	60.0		13	26.0		7	14.0		23	46.0	50
Total	59	-		16	-		12	-		48	-	87

Degree Earned	Accept Principle of Influencing Selection						Actively Influence Selection					
	Yes			No			Not Certain			Yes		
	N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%	Total
Bachelor's	39	70.9		10	18.2		6	10.9		33	60.0	55
Master's	20	62.5		6	18.75		6	18.75		15	46.9	32
Total	59	-		16	-		12	-		48	-	87

When asked if they did try to influence selection, 47 percent indicated they did compared to 53 percent who said they did not.

Best Qualified Getting Elected

Agricultural agents were asked if they felt the best qualified people were getting elected to the advisory committee.

By tenure, as shown in Table XII, 53 percent felt the best people were getting elected and 47 percent felt they were not. Fifty-eight percent of the agents with five or less years of tenure think they are and 42 percent feel they are not. Agents with sixteen or more years of tenure are evenly divided in their opinions. By age, 52 percent of the agents are satisfied that the best people are elected compared with 48 percent who feel they are not. Sixty-one percent of the agents who are twenty to thirty years old feel they are compared to 39 percent who feel the best people are not getting elected. Forty-three percent of the agents who are fifty-one or older feel the best people are elected compared to 57 percent who feel they are not. By degree, 59 percent of those agents with a bachelor's degree are satisfied that the best people are elected compared with 41 percent who say they are not. Thirty-nine percent of the agents with a master's degree feel the best people are elected compared with 61 percent who feel they are not.

Advisory Committee Members Perceptions of Committee Functions

Advisory committee members were asked to rate themselves on understanding of job, time spent on program planning, adequacy of planned programs, committee assistance to agricultural agent, and agent utilization of the advisory committee. This data is presented in Table XIII.

Table XII

A COMPARISON OF AGRICULTURAL AGENTS BY TENURE, AGE, AND DEGREE
EARNED REGARDING WHETHER BEST QUALIFIED PEOPLE ARE
GETTING ELECTED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (N=87)

Years Tenure In Extension	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
5 or less	11	57.9	8	42.1
6 - 10	5	55.6	4	44.4
11 - 15	5	55.6	4	44.4
16 or more	25	50.0	25	50.0
Total	46	52.9	41	47.1

Age of Agent

20 - 30	11	61.1	7	38.9
31 - 40	9	64.3	5	35.7
41 - 50	13	48.1	14	51.9
51 or more	12	42.9	16	57.1
Total	45	51.7	42	48.3

Degree Earned

Bachelor's	32	59.3	22	40.7
Master's	13	39.4	20	60.6
Total	45	51.7	42	48.3

Those committee members who have served the longest, rate their understanding the highest with a mean average score of (4.3). Members who have served six years or less, rated themselves at a (3.8) mean average score. Members by age groups have those fifty-five years or older, rating themselves highest with a (4.1), and youngest members giving themselves the lowest score, a (3.6). By grades completed, those members with advanced college years, rate their understanding the lowest with a (3.6). Those members with one to four years of college, rate their understanding the highest with a (3.9) score.

Members with seven to ten years experience, gave the highest score for program planning, with a (4.0) score and those members with two years or less, gave the lowest score, a (3.5). By age, the youngest members gave the lowest score, a (3.1), and the oldest members gave the highest score with a (4.1). The grade level category reveals that members with advanced degree work gave the highest score (4.3), with scores decreasing to (3.4) for the group with an education of eight years or less.

Data regarding adequacy of the planned program, indicates that by tenure, those members with seven to ten years experience gave the highest score (4.0) and members with two years or less gave the lowest score (3.5). By age, the oldest members gave the highest score (4.1) and the youngest group gave the lowest score (3.1). The education category shows those members with the least years of school as giving the lowest score (3.4). Those members with the most education, gave the highest score (4.3).

Committee members rated the agricultural agents in their utilization of the advisory committee, with the shortest and longest tenure groups

Table XIII

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS RATING OF THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF JOB ROLE, TIME SPENT ON PROGRAM PLANNING, ADEQUACY OF PLANNED PROGRAMS, COMMITTEE ASSISTANCE TO AGENT, AND AGENTS UTILIZATION OF COMMITTEE, EXPRESSED AS MEAN WEIGHTED SCORES

Factors in Relationship to Advisory Committee Members	Agricultural Advisory Committee Member Views of:				
	Understanding of Job Role	Time Spent on Program Planning	Adequacy of Planned Programs	Agents Utilization of Committee	Committee Assistance to Agent
Tenure on Committee					
2 years or less	3.8*	3.5	3.5	3.7	2.8
3 - 6 years	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	2.8
7 - 10 years	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.3	3.6
11 years or more	4.3	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8
Age					
29 years or less	3.6	3.1	3.1	3.5	2.5
30 - 39 years	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.6
40 - 54 years	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.1
55 years or more	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.3	3.6
Grade Level					
8 years or less	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.1
9 - 12 years	3.8	3.7	3.7	4.0	3.0
13 - 16 years	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.1
17 years or more	3.6	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.0

* Mean weighted scores were based on a rating scale of 1 - 5. 1=poor 5=very good

giving the lowest score (3.7) and the seven to ten year tenure group giving the highest score (4.3).

In the age category, the youngest members gave the lowest score (3.5) and the oldest members, the highest score (4.3). By grade completed, the lowest grade group gave the lowest score (3.3) and the advanced college group gave the highest score (4.6).

Committee members rated themselves on giving assistance to the agent in assisting with program activities. By tenure groups, the lowest score was given by the shorter tenure members (2.8) and the highest score was given by the members who have served longest (3.8). By age category, the youngest members gave the lowest score (2.5). Members thirty to thirty-nine and fifty-five years and over, gave the highest score (3.6). By grade level, the lowest score was given by the high school group (3.0) and the advanced college group gave the highest score (4.0).

Committee Training

Committee members were asked if they felt some training would be helpful to them in assisting with their job. Information regarding training in comparison to committee members length of service, age, and years of education, is presented in Table XIV.

By tenure on the committee, 36 percent of the members with two years or less favored some training compared with 21 percent who did not and 43 percent who were uncertain. Fifty-two percent of the members with seven to ten years of tenure felt training would be of value compared to 19 percent who did not and 29 percent who were uncertain. By age,

50 percent of those members who were twenty-nine years old or younger felt training would help compared to 25 percent who were either uncertain or were sure it would not. Fifty-eight percent of those members who were fifty-five or older were in favor of training compared to 12 percent who said they were not and 29 percent who were uncertain. By years of education, 53 percent were in favor of training compared with 17 percent who were not and 30 percent who were uncertain. Forty percent of those members who had some post-graduate work were favorable to training as compared to 40 percent who were uncertain and 20 percent who did not feel it necessary.

Election of Best Qualified People

Committee members were asked if they felt the best qualified people were being elected to the advisory committee. Data for years of service on the committee and by age of committee member, are presented in Table XV.

Committee members, as shown in Table XV, feel very strongly that their membership is the best qualified for the job, with only a very few feeling otherwise. About 85 percent of those members with two years or less tenure on the committee feel the best people are getting elected. Eighty-seven percent of the members with three to six years tenure say the best people are elected, 86 percent of the members with seven to ten years of tenure feel the best people are elected, and 67 percent of the members with tenure of eleven years or more feel the best people are getting elected.

Table XIV

A COMPARISON OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS BY TENURE,
AGE, AND EDUCATIONAL YEARS COMPLETED REGARDING
VALUE OF COMMITTEE TRAINING IN OPINION OF
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS (N=73)

Years Tenure on Advisory Committee	Yes		No		Not Certain	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2 or less	5	35.7	3	21.4	6	42.9
3 - 6	17	48.6	6	17.1	12	34.3
7 - 10	11	52.4	4	19.0	6	28.6
11 or more	2	66.7	-	-	1	33.3
Total	35	-	13	-	25	-

Age of Committee Member						
29 or less	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0
30 - 39	7	41.2	4	23.5	6	35.3
40 - 54	12	42.8	5	17.9	11	39.3
55 or more	14	58.3	3	12.5	7	29.2
Total	35	-	13	-	25	-

Educational Years*						
8 or less	4	66.7	-	-	2	33.3
9 - 12	16	53.3	5	16.7	9	30.0
13 - 16	11	38.0	7	24.0	11	38.0
17 or more	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	40.0
Total	33	-	13	-	24	-

* Three members did not give an opinion in the education category.

Table XV

A COMPARISON OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS BY TENURE AND AGE
REGARDING WHETHER THE BEST QUALIFIED PEOPLE
ARE ELECTED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
IN THE MEMBERS OPINION (N=69)*

Years Tenure On Advisory Committee	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
2 or less	11	84.6	2	15.4
3 - 6	28	87.5	4	12.5
7 - 10	18	85.7	3	14.3
11 or more	2	66.7	1	33.3
Totals	59	-	10	-

Age of Committee Member				
29 or less	4	100.0	-	-
30 - 39	14	87.5	2	12.5
40 - 54	19	76.0	6	24.0
55 or more	22	91.7	2	8.3
Total	59	-	10	-

* Four members did not give an opinion on this question.

By age, 76 percent of the members who are forty to fifty-four years old feel the best people are elected compared to 92 percent of the members who are fifty-five or older who feel the best people are being elected.

Agricultural agents in Table XII, page 37, who answered "no" that they felt the best qualified people were not getting elected, were asked to give some reasons why they felt this way. Responses to this question are ranked below in order of the replies given most often to the least often.

Involved in too many other jobs and functions (4)

The most popular individuals are not always the best qualified (5)

People do not want the job (4)

People show too little interest (4)

Best qualified persons do not get asked (3)

Current members are automatically re-elected whenever possible (2)

Too few members (1)

People do not respond as expected (1)

Too agricultural oriented, need some urban representation (1)

Need new blood (1)

Not responsible for making county wide changes (1)

Advisory committee members in Table XV, page 43, who answered "no" that they felt the best qualified people were not being elected to the advisory committee, were asked to give their reasons as to why they felt this way. The following responses are ranked in the order of the replies given most often to the least often.

The member takes the job without knowing what it is about (2)

Lack of time and interest (1)

Willing to serve does not mean best qualified (1)

Need compensation for time (1)

Advisory Committee Member Qualifications

Both groups of respondents were asked an open ended question that, based on their observations and experience, what knowledge and abilities do they feel agricultural advisory committee members should possess to perform their jobs satisfactorily. The replies are listed in order of frequency of responses.

Agricultural Agents

Keep informed on Extension programs in the county (26)

Have leadership interest in community affairs (23)

Be willing to serve on the advisory committee (22)

Be interested and successful in agriculture (21)

Be aware of the cross section of agricultural areas
within the county (15)

Be able to think and see the entire problem (15)

Be known, accepted, and respected by the community (12)

Good people -- feel that Extension has something to offer (10)

Be willing to work with others (9)

Be well read (8)

Be receptive to new ideas (7)

Understand their duties (4)

Have concern for agriculture and the community (2)

Meet oftener (1)

Advisory Committee Members

Be knowledgeable of agriculture and agricultural problems in the county (15)

Be interested in Extension, research, and agriculture (15)

Be a farmer or in agri-business (15)

Be willing to attend meetings (12)

Have ability to communicate (7)

Be willing to work with others (6)

Have an open mind to new ideas (3)

Know the people (3)

Know the job (2)

Be active in community programs (2)

Have leadership ability (1)

Be well read (1)

In is interesting to note that both agents and committee members gave much the same replies in regards to what knowledge and abilities committee members should have.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the county extension council is defined as educational in nature.

The increasing complexity of agriculture requires that extension programs keep pace if they are to be of value to the agricultural clientele. Extension councils are charged with planning the educational program for the county. With the increasing complexity of agriculture, it is necessary for agricultural advisory committees to possess the best leadership and programming skills available. Equally important is the utilization of these advisory committees after they are elected.

Committee Utilization

Some agents apparently utilize their committees extensively, but it is equally apparent that more agents fail to utilize the abilities of advisory committees as fully as they might. From data obtained it is apparent that 72 percent of the agents held advisory committee meetings two or fewer times during the year. This indicates a definite apathy on the part of agents toward holding advisory committee meetings, as shown by the data in Table X. Based on the scale of 1 - 5, there were no scores higher than 3.3. Many of these meetings were the initial organizational meetings held as required by law, at the annual extension council meeting.

Agent Satisfaction

Agricultural agents did not indicate a high degree of satisfaction with their committees.

However, based on frequency of committee meetings held, advisory committees do not have too many opportunities to participate in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Frequency of Meetings

How often should advisory committees meet to be most effective? The answer to this question varies from agent to agent. Earlier work cited indicates that, while many people feel committees should meet at least four times a year, there are equally as many who feel they should meet only when needed, which could be one time or many. Data in this study indicates four or quarterly meetings are favored, not only by agents, but by committee members also. Almost 40 percent of the agents and 45 percent of the committee members favored four meetings. The committee opinion could be viewed as a mandate for more emphasis on program planning which would lead to better programs.

Personal Factors of Agricultural Agents

Personal factors regarding agricultural agents were studied in relationship to advisory committee members. The factors of tenure in the present county, tenure in professional extension service, age, and educational degree earned, gave little significant information towards understanding why agricultural agents do or do not utilize their advisory committee in order to get the best qualified people. Fifty-five percent

answered affirmatively that they do attempt to influence selection of nominees.

Best Qualified Elected

Agricultural agents were about equally divided on whether the best people were getting elected to the advisory committees. About 85 percent of the advisory committee members felt the best people were being elected. Some observations about why the best qualified leaders were not being elected, which were given by both groups, are:

- 1) involved in too many other jobs and functions
- 2) the most popular individuals are not always the best qualified
- 3) the member takes the job without knowing what it is about
- 4) people do not want the job
- 5) people show too little interest
- 6) best qualified persons did not get asked, and
- 7) current members are automatically re-elected whenever possible

Effectiveness

Both agricultural agents and advisory committees need certain skills and knowledge to plan and carry out programs for their clientele. Agricultural agents and committee members listed several qualifications they feel members should have to increase committee effectiveness.

- 1) members need to keep informed on extension programs
- 2) be willing to serve on the committee and attend meetings
- 3) have some leadership ability and an interest in community affairs

- 4) be successful in their own enterprises and be interested in agriculture
- 5) be known, accepted, and respected by the community
- 6) be a farmer or in agri-business
- 7) have ability to communicate with others
- 8) be aware of the cross section of agricultural areas within the county, and
- 9) be well read.

Committee Training

Advisory committee members were asked how well they understood the job. The committee members definitely feel they understand what is expected of them, probably much better than their agricultural agents give them credit for. Advisory committee members were asked if they felt training would be helpful to them. About 48 percent responded favorably to the question. About 34 percent were uncertain and 18 percent were sure training was unnecessary.

Agricultural Agent Utilization of Committee

Advisory committee members generally rated the agricultural agent quite high concerning his utilization of the committee. This appears to be somewhat contradictory to the information presented earlier on frequency of advisory committee meetings and the committee members answers regarding the need for more frequent meetings. Committee members may feel the agent is generally doing a good job, but feel a need for better program planning and committee involvement.

Committee Assistance

Advisory committee members were generally of the opinion that programs planned were meeting the needs of the producer, and that committees were providing reasonably ample assistance to the agricultural agent in implementation of these programs.

Conclusion

Six specific approaches are suggested to improve utilization of the agricultural advisory committee based on citations from the literature, findings of the study, and personal experiences and observations of the author.

The first approach would be to initiate committee member training. All new members should be given some orientation training on the extension organization, philosophy and purpose in the community. This training should be given after the election and before the annual extension council meeting. Further training should be given regarding the agricultural advisory committee functions and on program planning techniques before the need to actually begin planning the county program.

The second approach is for regularly scheduled meetings. Preferably, meetings should be held at least quarterly and special meetings held as needed otherwise. If a regular schedule can once be established, it will soon become a desirable habit.

The fourth approach would be for the agricultural agent to actively involve committee members in various activities of county programs throughout the year. Active participation often gives a person the feeling of belonging.

The fifth approach concerns program evaluation. Evaluation is a vital part of any program. The decision about whether the program met the needs of those it was designed for, is important. The good and not so good, need to be sorted out, and a decision made about how to improve the program. Evaluations should be made by the committee and agent. These evaluations should be considered in planning future programs.

The sixth approach would be to give committee members some recognition whenever possible. A little public relations work can go a long way toward increasing the willingness of committee members to be active participants of the advisory committee.

Educational programs planned and conducted by the advisory committee, can only be as effective as the people who develop them. Extension should actively seek the best qualified people available, to achieve this goal.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The agricultural advisory committee, as a functional part of the county extension council, is elected from residents of the county. Special elections are held yearly in each county commissioner district for the purpose of electing members to the extension council.

The basic purpose of the agricultural advisory committee is to assist the agricultural agent in planning and implementing the educational programs for the agricultural clientele within the county.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to attempt to determine why agricultural agents in Kansas do not utilize their advisory committees more fully.

Questionnaires were mailed to agricultural agents who had been employed by the Kansas Extension Service for at least one year. Eighty-seven agents were included in this study and all returned their questionnaires. Questionnaires were also mailed to advisory committee members, representing ten counties, two from each administrative district in Kansas. Seventy-three respondents or 82 percent returned the questionnaires.

Findings

Seventy-two percent of the agricultural agents held two or fewer advisory committee meetings during the past year. Both committee members and agricultural agents expressed a definite need for four meetings a year.

Agricultural agents were somewhat less than satisfied with their committee's performance in assisting with program planning and implementation. Personal factors regarding the agent showed some statistical significance between the degree earned and frequency meetings were held. No significance was found for age and tenure factors.

Agricultural agents and advisory committee members were divided in their opinions concerning whether the best people are getting elected to the advisory committee. About one-half of the agents and 85 percent of the committee members, say the best people are being elected. About 68 percent of the agricultural agents feel it is ethical to attempt to influence selection of nominees for election to the advisory committee for the purpose of getting better qualified people on the advisory committee. About 55 percent say they do work toward this goal directly or indirectly.

The major reasons given as to why the best qualified leadership does not always get elected, are:

- 1) people involved in too many other jobs and functions
- 2) the most popular individuals are not always the best qualified
- 3) the member takes the job without knowing what it is about
- 4) people do not want the job
- 5) people show too little interest

- 6) best qualified persons did not get asked, and
- 7) current members are automatically re-elected whenever possible.

Agricultural agents and advisory committee members gave several qualifications as being important toward increasing advisory committee effectiveness. They are:

- 1) members need to keep informed on extension programs
- 2) be willing to serve on the committee and attend meetings
- 3) have some leadership ability and an interest in community affairs
- 4) be successful in their own enterprises and be interested in agriculture
- 5) be known, accepted, and respected by the community
- 6) be a farmer or in agri-business
- 7) have ability to communicate with others
- 8) be aware of the cross section of agricultural areas within the county, and
- 9) be well read.

Advisory committee members generally felt that the programs as planned, were beneficial to the clientele.

Conclusions

Agricultural advisory committees were established for a definite purpose and should be utilized toward that end.

Some positive approaches should be taken toward encouraging advisory committee utilization by agricultural agents. Six possible approaches include:

- 1) Expand committee member training and give this training soon after election. Training the entire Extension Council membership on the philosophy and background of the Extension Service, committee member responsibilities, and duties toward program planning, implementation, and evaluation, should be done prior to the annual Extension Council meeting. Further, each individual advisory committee should receive some training regarding objectives and goals in their subject matter areas.
- 2) Schedule regular and more frequent meetings. Meetings should be held at least four times a year.
- 3) Involve committee members directly in program planning by assigning them to a specific job to report on.
- 4) Actively involve committee members in program activities.
- 5) Make use of program evaluation at all times to help improve future programs.
- 6) Give committee members public recognition whenever possible.

Committee members must be aware of what is expected of them, before they can be expected to perform their elected duties satisfactorily.

Further Study

Further study of the relationship between agricultural agents and advisory committee members should be undertaken. Any future work in this area should include a closer look at committee training as a possible factor of utilization. Another factor which needs consideration is motivation of both agricultural agents to hold meetings, and committee members to attend meetings and to function as a committee. Motivation being the inner drive which causes a person to do those things that are necessary to satisfactorily meet the demands of the society in which they live and work.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A P P E N D I X

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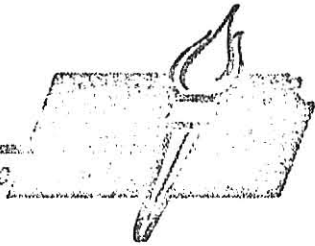
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~~EXTENSION SERVICE~~
of Kansas State University

MORTON COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE
County Courthouse
Elkhart, Kansas 67950
Phone: 316 697-2558

"Taking the UNIVERSITY to the



December 14, 1976

page 61

TO: County Extension Agricultural Agents

Dear Colleagues;

Your assistance on the following research project would be appreciated. I am presently on sabbatical leave at Kansas State University doing graduate study.

I am working on a study of Kansas agricultural agents and the agricultural advisory committees. Through personal experience and observation, I feel our agricultural advisory committees are not as well utilized as are the other advisory committees. Questionnaires were sent to advisory committee members in two counties - selected at random, in each of the administrative areas. These questionnaires should reflect the opinions of some of our advisory committees as to their involvement in program planning, implementation and evaluation.

The enclosed questionnaire for agricultural agents will reflect your opinions of the agricultural advisory committee and their involvement in program planning, implementation and evaluation. Questionnaires are coded and all information received will be kept confidential. A summarized report of this study will be made available upon completion.

This questionnaire is short and you should be able to finish it in 10-15 minutes. Therefore, I suggest you take a few minutes and complete this today and it will be out of the way.

A self addressed envelope is enclosed for your use in returning the questionnaire along with a timesaver enclosure. Please return by Wednesday, January 12, 1977.

Your assistance and help are gratefully acknowledged.

Sincerely,

Herbert R. Williams
County Extension Agricultural
Agent and County Director

HRW/mac
enc.

All Kansas Extension Educational Programs and Materials are available to all individuals without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or religion.

Kansas State University of Agriculture and Applied Science, County Extension Councils, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL AGENTS

1. How many years have you been employed in your present county?
- ☐ 0 - 3 years
- ☐ 4 - 6 years
- ☐ 7 - 10 years
- ☐ 11 - 15 years
- ☐ 16 years and over

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2. How many years have you been employed by the Cooperative Extension Service?
- ☐ 5 years or less
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ 11 - 15 years
- ☐ 16 years or more

3. What is your present age?
- ☐ 20 - 30 years
- ☐ 31 - 40 years
- ☐ 41 - 50 years
- ☐ 51 years or older

4. What college or university degree or ('s) do you hold?
- _____ degrees

5. How often did the agricultural advisory committee meet in 1976?
- _____ times.

6. Does the advisory committee have regularly scheduled meeting dates?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. On the average, how many committee members attend those meetings?
- ☐ usually 7-9
- ☐ normally 4-6
- ☐ sometimes 3 or less

8. How involved is the advisory committee in planning the county agricultural program?

5	4	3	2	1
Deeply Involved		Somewhat Involved		Not Involved

9. How involved is the advisory committee in implementing the agricultural program activities?

5	4	3	2	1
Deeply Involved		Somewhat Involved		Not Involved

(please turn over)

10. Does the advisory committee seem more concerned with program planning or with program implementation?

5	4	3	2	1
Planning		About		Implementation
Concern		Equal		Concern

page 63

11. Does the advisory committee become involved in evaluating the program?

5	4	3	2	1
Deeply		Somewhat		Not
Involved		Involved		Involved

12. How well do you feel the advisory committee understands its role in program planning?

5	4	3	2	1
Understands		Some		Lack
very well		Understanding		Understanding

13. How often do you feel the advisory committee should meet for planning and evaluation the agricultural program?

___ Monthly; ___ Quarterly; ___ Twice Yearly; ___ Once Yearly; ___ As Needed

14. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of the advisory committee?

5	4	3	2	1
Highly		Somewhat		Dissatisfied
Satisfied		Satisfied		

15. Do you think it is ethical to attempt to influence selection of nominees for election to the extension council in order to get better qualified people on the agricultural advisory committee?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Certain

16. Do you attempt to exert any influence in the selection of nominees for election to the agricultural advisory committee? ___ Yes ___ No

17. Do you feel the best qualified people in the various commissioner districts are being elected to serve on the agricultural advisory committee?

___ Yes ___ No If No, can you explain why?

18. Based on your observations and experience, what knowledge and abilities do you feel are necessary for agricultural advisory committee members to perform satisfactorily?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY
EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL AGENTS

page 64

Instructions for completing this questionnaire. There are four basic types of questions.

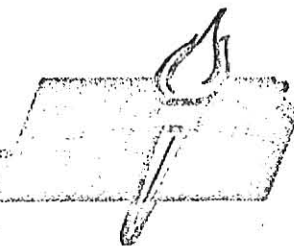
- A. Those that offer several choices. Select and check (✓) the response which best fits your situation.
- B. Fill in questions. Place the appropriate answer in the blank.
- C. Scaled questions. Place an (X) anywhere along the scale which best reflects your opinion of the situation.
- D. Open-end questions. Please state your opinion as the answer to the question.
- E. Please start at the beginning and answer each question in order.
- F. All questions deal with the county extension agricultural advisory committee and the county extension agricultural agent.

Cooperative

~~HERBERT R. WILLIAMS~~
~~County Extension Agricultural Agent~~
~~of Kansas State University~~

MORTON COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE
County Courthouse
Elkhart, Kansas 67950
Phone: 316 697-2558

"Taking the UNIVERSITY to the



page 65

December 14, 1976

TO: County Extension Agricultural Advisory
Committee Members

Gentlemen:

I am the Extension agricultural agent located in Morton County. I am presently on sabbatical leave at Kansas State University doing graduate study.

The project I am working on is a study of the Extension agricultural agent and the agricultural advisory committee of various counties in Kansas.

Through random selection, your county agricultural advisory committee was selected to receive questionnaires. Your county agricultural agent has been notified and is aware that you are receiving this questionnaire. These questionnaires are coded and all information received will be kept confidential.

This questionnaire is short and you should be able to complete it in 10-15 minutes. Therefore, I suggest you take a few minutes and do this today and it will be out of the way.

A self addressed envelope is enclosed for your use in returning the questionnaire. Please leave the timesaver enclosure in the return envelope to ensure a quick return. Please return by Wednesday, January 5, 1977.

Your assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Sincerely,

Herbert R. Williams
County Extension Agricultural
Agent and County Director

HRW/mac
enc.

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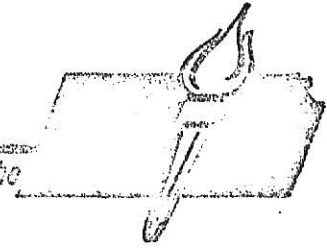
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~~ELKHART COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE~~
~~of Kansas State University~~

MORTON COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE
County Courthouse
Elkhart, Kansas 67550
Phone: 316 657-2558

"Taking the UNIVERSITY to the



page 66

TO: County Extension Agricultural
Advisory Committee Members

DATE: January 10, 1977

Dear Sir:

You should have received a questionnaire from me in December asking for information concerning the Extension Agricultural Advisory Committee of which you are or were a member. I requested that you return this questionnaire to me by January 5th.

I have not yet received your reply and as the information is very important to the study I am doing, I hope you will take a few minutes and complete this questionnaire.

In case you may have misplaced the earlier questionnaire, I have enclosed another one along with the return envelope and the timesaver for mailing. Should you have already returned your previous questionnaire, please disregard this letter.

Your reply would be much appreciated. Please return as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Herbert R. Williams

Herbert R. Williams
County Extension Agricultural Agent
and County Extension Director

HRW/mac
enc.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. How many years have you served on the agricultural advisory committee, present and previous terms?

___ 2 years or less; ___ 3-6 years; ___ 7-10 years; ___ over 11 years

2. How thoroughly do you understand what is expected of you as a member of the extension agricultural advisory committee?

5	4	3	2	1
Good		Fair		Lack
Understanding		Understanding		Understanding

3. How often do you attend the advisory committee meetings?

___ Regularly; ___ Whenever possible; ___ Seldom

4. What time of day is best for you to attend a committee meeting?

	<u>Nov-March</u>	<u>April-Oct.</u>	
Early morning	___	___	
Mid morning	___	___	
Early afternoon	___	___	(check each column)
Late afternoon	___	___	
Evening	___	___	

5. In your opinion, how long should advisory committee meetings last?

___ 1 hour; ___ 2 hours; ___ 3 hours; ___ one half day

6. Do you feel sufficient time and effort is being spent in planning and evaluating the agricultural program in your county?

5	4	3	2	1
Very		Somewhat		Inadequate
Adequate		Adequate		

7. How often did the agricultural advisory committee meet in your county in 1976?

___ times.

8. How many times a year do you feel the advisory committee should meet to adequately plan and evaluate the county agricultural program? ___ times.

9. In your opinion, how adequately is the extension agricultural program meeting the needs of the producer?

5	4	3	2	1
Very		Somewhat		Inadequately
Adequately		Adequately		

(please turn over)

10. In your opinion, do you feel the agricultural agent is utilizing the advisory committee to the best advantage in program planning and evaluation?

5	4	3	2	1
Utilizes		Utilizes		Fails to Utilize
committee fully		committee sometimes		committee

11. In your opinion, do you feel the advisory committee is providing maximum assistance to the agricultural agent in carrying out the program activities?

5	4	3	2	1
Provides		Some assistance		Provides slight
strong assistance				assistance

12. Did you receive any advisory committee training after your election?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Do you feel some training was or would be helpful in assisting you to do your job on the advisory committee?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

14. What is your age?

☐ 29 years or younger; ☐ 30-39 years; ☐ 40-54 years; ☐ 55 years or older

15. What is the highest grade you have completed in school in number of years ☐?

16. Do you as a member of the advisory committee feel the best qualified people are getting elected to this committee?

☐ Yes ☐ No If No, could you explain why?

17. Based on your observations and experience, what knowledge and abilities do you feel are important for an agricultural advisory committee member to perform his job satisfactorily?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Instructions for completing this questionnaire. There are four basic types of questions.

- A. Those that offer several choices. Select and check (✓) the response which best fits your situation.
- B. Fill in questions. Place the appropriate answer in the blank.
- C. Scaled questions. Place an (X) anywhere along the scale which best reflects your opinion of the situation.
- D. Open end questions. Please state your opinion as the answer to the question.
- E. Please start at the beginning and answer each question in order.
- F. All questions deal with the county extension agricultural advisory committee and the county extension agricultural agent.

A COMPARISON OF FACTORS INVOLVED IN UTILIZATION
OF KANSAS EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

by

HERBERT RODMAN WILLIAMS

B. S., Kansas State University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1977

Abstract

Purpose and Procedure

The purpose of this study was to attempt to determine why extension agricultural advisory committees in Kansas are not better utilized.

The audiences studied were the county extension agricultural agents and the agricultural advisory committees. All agricultural agents who were employed by the Kansas Extension Service by January 1, 1976, were included in the study. Eighty-seven questionnaires were mailed to agricultural agents and all were returned.

Two counties were randomly selected from each of the five administrative districts within the state, and eighty-nine questionnaires were mailed to advisory committee members in these counties. Seventy-three questionnaires or an eighty-two percent return resulted from this mailing.

Summary of Results

Seventy-two percent of the agents held advisory committee meetings two or fewer times and twenty-eight percent held meetings three or more times. Almost forty percent of the agents and forty-five percent of the committee members suggested four meetings as being the ideal number.

The personal factors, regarding the agricultural agents, of age and tenure, gave no significant information regarding why agents are not utilizing the committees more fully. The degree earned factor, compared with frequency of meetings held was statistically significant.

Agricultural agents were about equally divided as to whether or not the best people are getting elected to the advisory committee. About eighty-five percent of the advisory committee members were sure that the best qualified people were being selected.

About sixty-eight percent of the agricultural agents feel it is morally acceptable to attempt to influence selection of nominees for election to the advisory committee for purpose of getting better qualified people on the committee. Fifty-five percent say they do work toward this goal directly or indirectly.

The major reasons given as to why the best qualified leadership does not always get elected, are:

- 1) people get involved in too many other jobs and functions
- 2) the most popular individuals are not always the best qualified
- 3) the member takes the job without knowing what it is about
- 4) people do not want the job
- 5) people show too little interest
- 6) best qualified persons do not get asked, and
- 7) current members are automatically re-elected whenever possible.

Agricultural agents and advisory committee members gave several qualifications as being important toward increasing advisory committee effectiveness.

- 1) members need to keep informed on extension programs
- 2) be willing to serve on the committee and attend meetings
- 3) have some leadership ability and an interest in community affairs
- 4) be successful in their own enterprises and be interested in agriculture

- 5) be known, accepted, and respected by the community
- 6) be a farmer or in agri-business
- 7) have ability to communicate with others
- 8) be aware of the cross section of agricultural areas within the county, and
- 9) be well read.

Conclusions

Some positive approaches should be taken toward encouraging advisory committee utilization by agricultural agents. Six possible approaches include:

- 1) Expand committee member training and give this training as soon after election as possible, preferably before the annual extension council meeting.
- 2) Schedule regular and more frequent meetings. Meetings should be held at least four times a year.
- 3) Involve committee members directly in program planning by assigning them to a specific task to report on.
- 4) Actively involve committee members in program activities.
- 5) Make use of program evaluation at all times to help improve future programs.
- 6) Give committee members public recognition whenever possible.

Recommendations

Further study of the relationship between agricultural agents and agricultural advisory committees should include a closer look at committee training and motivation as possible factors in utilization of the agricultural advisory committee.