



THE KANSAS UNION FARMER



Organization

Education

Co-operation

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Women's Progressive Farmers Association Of Missouri A Strong Ally Of Missouri Farm Clubs

Interesting History of the Organization as Told by Mrs. Geo. Kent of Osgood, Mo., at the Annual Meeting of the Farmers Union at Topeka

Brother and Sister Farmers:—

Words fail to express the deep sense of appreciation that I have in being invited to talk to the farmers and farm women of your great state, on this, the occasion of the Annual Convention of the Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of Kansas.

It is indeed a pleasure to attend your most interesting and instructive convention, and a rare privilege to hear such splendid and sincere messages to the farmers of your great organization.

When the invitation was extended, it seemed to me that it would be impossible for me to accept—I felt so unworthy and so very new in the organization work—in fact I felt that I would need several "props" if I were able to fill this place on your program. Notwithstanding the fact that I represent a living type of the Missouri corn fed that you hear so much about.

The message I am bringing to you will give some of the constructive ideas the Farm Women of Missouri have begun to put into practice through cooperation.

The thinking minds of our "mighty" country, who are interested in the welfare of the tillers of the soil, all voice the same opinion that the problems of the farmers of our land can be properly solved only by ORGANIZATION and CO-OPERATION. All realizing more and more the great truth that "United we stand, divided we fall."

When the fact is so widely recognized that organization is so necessary to secure a "square deal" for the much abused farmer, what are we going to do to secure a "square deal" for the farmers family who struggle to help "daddy" in every way possible, working every day to help get enough money together to pay off the mortgage, pay the taxes and keep the little home from being sold away from them.

Even using the egg money, cream money and pig money to buy the new tractor or other modern implements. All to help "daddy" get his work done in the best and easiest way possible.

Leaving poor Mother and the girls to get along the best way they can, in many cases using colonial methods in the work of the household. Many times having to get up at four-thirty in the morning, carry the water from the well in the corner of the garden, get breakfast for the farm hands, tend the incubator and baby chicks, get the children off to school, chase the turkeys through the dew wet grass, eat the family washing and ironing. Raise and care provisions for the winter, probably milk the cows. Then turn the cream separator. Occasionally making an extra hand in the field, plowing, harrowing or running a "big rake." Cooking three meals a day, caring for the orphan colts and calves. Feeding the pet lambs and pigs; while sandwiched in

between comes the house work, the care of the babies and what little rest and recreation they are able to snatch between jobs.

Now isn't that a formidable array of duties? With hundreds of others not mentioned that are performed daily by the farm women of our land. Do you suppose that "daddy" has ever had time to think of them all in a row? Or is his mind so occupied with greater things that he does not ever give them a thought? We must be just to father—it is not so much what he does that makes the hair so gray and brow so wrinkled, it is knowing that his loved ones are being denied many comforts and pleasures that under the existing circumstances he cannot afford to give them.

They tell us in Missouri that "the brain of a farmer is like our gumbo soil, the more it is stirred and aired the better the production."

We find among the nearly 7,000,000 farmers of our nation many who have stirred and aired their thoughts. Fair-minded matters with their neighbors and decided that something must be done for mother and the girls. They have helped conditions a lot in many localities but usually they have taken all the responsibility upon themselves.

There is an instance on record in the Farm Organization History of our good old U. S. A., where a large body of organized farmers in the course of their work to secure a "square deal" recognized the fact that they were using only half of their power to accomplish the desired results like the first farmer the world has record of.

"decided that it was not good to dwell alone and took unto himself women," they followed his example. After thinking things over they came to a conclusion something like this: "They talk about a woman's sphere as though it had a limit; There's not a place in Earth or Heaven.

There's not a task to mankind given, There's not a blessing or a curse, There's not a whispered "yes" or "no."

There's not a life, a death or birth, That a feather's weight of worth Without a woman in it.

So they accepted the first and only extensive organization of bona-fide farm women in the world as equal partners in business involving millions and millions of dollars.

I refer to the M. F. A., "that has become the most powerful organization of farmers in any single State of our union" and their companion organization the W. P. F. A. of Missouri. It is difficult to speak of the W. P.

F. A. without talking of the M. F. A. also.

With the same loyalty and pride of our association that each member feels for your mighty Farmers Union of America, I want to tell you a few things that have happened in our state in the last few years.

On a cold winter night in 1914 near the central part of Missouri in Charleston county a little country school house known as the Newcomer a few farmers met and formed the first Farm Club with less than a dozen members. From that small beginning with our beloved William Hirth as "commander-in-chief" our real fight was begun for "production cost" together with a reasonable profit for the fruit of the farmer's sweat and toil." Quoting from a list arranged by the secretary-treasurer of the M. F. A., (H. A. Cowden), it is evident that we have accomplished many things of great value.

In the year 1921, the M. F. A. was made up of about 70,000 real "dirt farmers" it had organized 3,100 school house clubs, financed and controls 120 grain elevators, 312 produce exchanges, 9 cold storage plants, organized and controls 320 livestock shipping associations, is a member of Farmers National Co-operative Exchange. Shipping approximately 4,000,000 bushels of wheat secured 4 per cent farm loans—which lowered interest rates in Missouri. Shipped approximately 13,000 cars of live stock. Member Farmers National Co-operative Livestock Marketing Association. Secured passage of laws opening grain and livestock exchange in Missouri. Shipping approximately \$8,000,000 of poultry and eggs. Are connected with the "Co-Op" Livestock Commission Co., at Kansas City, St. Joseph and Chicago, handled more than a million and a half pounds of binder twine, one-third of Missouri requirements, organized Farmers Livestock Commission Co., at Kansas City, St. Joseph and Chicago, handled more than a million and a half pounds of binder twine, one-third of Missouri requirements, organized Farmers Livestock Commission Co., at Kansas City, St. Joseph and Chicago, handled more than a million and a half pounds of binder twine, one-third of Missouri requirements.

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3. To promote a more friendly relation between neighbors.

4. To discuss the various problems of Rural Life.

5. To teach cooperation and loyalty to the Farm Club work.

6. To provide wholesome and instructive entertainment for the Farm boys and girls.

7. To foster all enterprises that will lead to higher and nobler things in life.

We are just starting on our program of building for better rural conditions. We believe with all the might that lies within us that by working together as one body and one mind we will be able to help ourselves secure better prices for our eggs, poultry and cream and in so doing be able to banish the inconveniences and unsightly conditions of many of our farm homes. For isn't it the small sums we "keep out" of the egg and cream money that goes toward keeping up our house? By marketing our produce co-operatively through our own firms we will be able to "keep out" a larger sum and will use it to help put a modern water system in the homes, electricity to give us better lights and power we may use to milk the cows, turn the cream separator, run the incubator and brooders, turn the washing machine and do the ironing, run the sewing machine and vacuum cleaner and even wake up "old biddy" at 5 o'clock and make her think winter time is April that we may have more eggs to sell to buy more improvements, etc. With such modern homes the women would have more time to take part in activities outside their own homes and in so doing make farm life as satisfying as the city life for the boys and girls that we may be able to keep them on the farm. Last year we marketed through our exchange \$8,000,000 of poultry and eggs. We are told by the best authority that the farm women of Missouri were able to get from five to ten cents more per dozen for their eggs last year than adjoining territory because we sold our eggs to our own co-operative firms. That small amount per dozen on \$8,000,000 worth of eggs and poultry is a saving worth while, isn't it?

We expect to produce first quality eggs or "Sunshine eggs" if you please, in large enough quantities to enable us to get from ten to fifteen cents above what we would receive if they were just "aigs." We expect to eliminate by proper action the fertile eggs during the summer months. Also eliminate the small cracked, irregular, shaped and dirty eggs that we may be able to get a fancy price which will be our just reward.

We expect to produce also first quality cream. It might as well be "Sunshine cream" or better as the case may be. These are problems that the farm women must solve and it goes without question that organization is a mighty big step in that direction.

We farm women as a rule think of the things that go toward making happiness for the family and when we put our heads together in a community, it means a happier and contented farm life in that community. I will tell you a few things about how we work in our several local neighborhoods. We hold meetings two weeks all over the state in Missouri. In our own little club at Osgood, Sullivan county, we hold a business meeting the first Wednesday afternoon of each month in the farm home or at our rest room in the

little village where our exchange is located. Every third Wednesday we have an all-day meeting and serve what we call a "covered dish" dinner. Each member takes one article of food and we all open them at the noon hour. None is supposed to know what the other is to bring. We always have an excellent dinner served by cafeteria method. We held thirteen "covered dish" dinners in 1922. After each dinner we always thought the last one was the best. We had a membership of 80 with an average attendance of 28. Even our Missouri mind did not stop the attendance. Some farm woman hitches a span of Missouri mules to a farm wagon and gathers up the women as she goes along and we have our meeting regardless of the weather. I take my turn with the rest. Nothing but a rampage of Big Medicine creek last summer kept us from meeting. We are just a bunch of ordinary women with a big idea and "pep" enough to carry it out. Our first president was a woman who had had a common school education and had no experience in club work. She was the one we all wanted for our presidency of the club. She thought that she never could do it, but she did it so very well that she was elected again at our annual meeting and just last week was elected the first president of our county W. P. F. A.

There is entirely a different spirit among the women than there was at first. Each one seems to try to outdo the other to make everybody have a good time. We have so much business that we always have to hurry. We do not gossip! We have something of REAL importance to do. We serve dinner at the farm sales, serve free dinners at our annual farm club election on January 1st, each year, and at the annual election of exchange officers on June 10th each year. The usual attendance at each meeting is about 500. We have a visiting committee and a program committee always on duty. We give a public program at least once each month. One man feature of our work last year was making paper dress forms for each other. The material costs us 90 cents and we have lots of fun making them at our all-day meetings. The woman for whom the form is made has an article of greater value to her than any commercial dress form she could buy at any price. We are always working together for some common good while we know that about 5,000 other farm women of Missouri are doing similar things. We sell everything we have to sell and buy everything we need through our own firms and live, teach and preach the doctrine of loyalty. What we are doing the women of any other community can do if they want to "dig in." The greatest specific thing the W. P. F. A. is doing now is the practical education of our own children through the Boys' and Girls' Club work.

The great leaders of our real farm organization, who are giving the very best of their lives and also the energy of their declining years for the farm organization movement, did not find in their "old school books" reasons on the organization of farmers but have gained their knowledge through the force of necessity and the school of experience.

Boys' and Girls' Club work will develop leadership. Let us then make our own organization the training school for our boys and girls. The future home-maker and her husband must take up the task that each

active worker must, some day lay down. So let us train them through the activities of their own little clubs. Why shouldn't we get back of the Boys' and Girls' Club work with our own organization and see that they get the practical training we did not get in our childhood. We had better take charge of the work ourselves as to let another so-called farm organization train them in team work through the calf club, pig club, poultry club, canning club etc. Offering them tempting premiums to line up even in their childhood outside our ranks. If we expect them to fill the vacant places in the ranks with the farm women, fighting to secure "production cost" together with a reasonable profit for the fruits of the farmer's sweat and toil" we must train them in the "dirt farmers" way of thinking! In our association the task is left to the W. P. F. A.

We have found one great handicap. In our effort to secure professional service from the extension department of our state, we find that it is not so freely extended to the members of our association unless we submerge our organization and allow all credit to pass through the hands of the county agent. Where one is in the county. In counties where county agents are not employed due credit is given to the W. P. F. A. It seems to us that we are as competent to handle our own work in counties where county agents are employed as to handle it in counties where one is not employed. It is quite probable that the M. F. A. will take a hand and through the proper legislative channels clear the pathway for a swifter progress. We work side by side with the M. F. A. and believe with all our hearts that we are now beginning to do our part. We felt "that only half the team was pulling the load" before we assumed the responsibility of our own association. With all the power I own I think the organization of bona-fide farm women will sweep our land like a mighty prairie fire. I have faith enough in the ability of my farm sisters to believe that when they form companion organizations to the organization their husbands have already formed that the power of the present organization will be doubled. It remains to be seen whether the bona-fide farmers' organizations are first to double their power.

I am not familiar with your work here, but I have it from your honorable President, Mr. John Tromble, that our M. F. A. and your Farmers Union of Kansas are very similar. I do not know what plans have been made for a union for the farm women, but I do know that it is the profound desire of the great generous heart of your president to have an organization for the farm women of Kansas.

Since our husbands are working together in your co-operative organization, I am sure that you, St. Joseph and Chicago, to my mind there is no reason the farm women's state organization of Missouri and the farm women's state organization of Kansas can not work together in perfect harmony also. We feel that we have chosen an excellent name for our association. I wonder if I dare express the great wish that is in our hearts? It is this: That the farm women of your state may choose the name "Women's Progressive Farmers Association of Kansas." Whatever the name we hope to combine our

strength and resources to accomplish the things we have set out to do. We are situated in the heart of America, many eyes are looking this way. There never was a time when organization was as necessary as it is now. Then with all the power that lies within us we must not falter. The success or failure of it all must lie with us. Probably the loyal lineup of the wives and daughters is just the reserve force we need to change the "tide of battle" in favor of the farmers. Then let us join hearts and hands in our effort to help emancipate a troubled agriculture. It will call for many sacrifices on the part of many of us. What does it matter if we only are successful in the end. After all in the language of the poet: It's doing your job the best you can. And being just to your fellowman. It's not making money—but holding friends.

And saying true to your aims and ends.

It's figuring how and learning why. And looking forward and thinking high.

And dreaming a little and doing much.

It's keeping always in closest touch. With what is finest in word and deed. It's being thorough yet making speed. It's dashing blithely the field of chance. While making labor a brave romance. It's going onward despite defeat. And fighting staunchly but keeping sweet.

It's being clean and its playing fair. It's laughing lightly at Dame Despair. It's looking up at the stars above. And drinking deeply of life and love. It's struggling on with the will to win. But taking loss with a cheerful grin. It's making better this good old earth.

It's serving, striving through strain and stress. It's doing your NOBLEST, that's SUCCESS!

SECOND THOUGHT

By W. F. Ramsay

In President Harding's first inaugural he strongly urged that public works of all kinds be started to provide work for the unemployed. His words fell upon open ears. Very open. Grafting promoters got busy all over the United States, urging the commencement of every kind of public works: roads, bridges, play grounds, monuments etc., etc.

Now comes Secretary Mellon urging "That congress pass the administrative measure, for a constitutional amendment barring further issues of tax-exempt securities."

There never was a more complete reversal of opinions and policy in so short a time. And it is good politics. It is the strongest possible endorsement of the tax-payers' associations.

It seems to me that small "try politicians" ought to be as quick to learn as the President of the United States and his cabinet. Economy is today both a private and a public duty. As an illustration of what not to do, consider for a moment our Kansas soldiers bonus of \$25,000,000 will work out.

When the principal and interest on those bonds are finally paid the tax payers will have paid, at least, fifty millions of dollars. The goods sold to obtain that \$50,000,000, will be fifty perhaps seventy-five per cent lower than they are now. In other words the "boys" who will receive that bonus will really gain almost nothing while the general public will "pay through the nose" for that little.

DOING HIS BEST TO MESS THINGS UP AGAIN



WOMEN'S AID IS URGED

No Farmers' Union Local Will Function Successfully Without Them.

Not long ago the editor talked at a Farmers' Union meeting in Colorado, where the audience was composed entirely of men. Later in the evening a lady member, accompanied by her wife, came to the door. He walked in but she hesitated. And asked the speaker, "Are women allowed in here?"

We were so surprised at this question that we failed to answer for an instant. We welcomed her gladly. The local we speak of is not doing so well, and now we can guess the reason. No Farmers' Union Local will function successfully unless the women are equally interested with the men. As a matter of fact, the attendance and activity of women in the organization is vitally essential to success.

The Farmers' Union has something like 300 locals in the state of Colorado, some of them mightily prosperous, a few fairly so and some that are not doing so well. We find that the most prosperous locals are the ones where the women attend the meetings and take an active part in all local union work.

Women Look High For Inspiration. Surely women know enough about present day conditions on the farm to be able to act intelligently, far more intelligently in many cases, than some of the men. Men are too inclined to keep their eyes on the ground, while women can more readily turn their eyes to the heights for inspiration. In our recent trips over the state we have seen countless women laboring with the men in the fields, working shoulder to shoulder with the men. And we must remember that this extra effort on the part of the weaker sex (?) is but a small part of their daily grind. One time when running a local paper I sent a reporter out early in the morning to spend the day on a farm and write an article telling in detail the daily tasks accomplished by a farm woman. I asked him to write 500 words. When the article was finished he had over 3,000 words, and ever then had left out some things

he could very well have included. Let us, by all means, urge the women to get into the Farmers' Union work if we want a fair success.

Women on the farm are not easily discouraged, although goodness knows they have enough to contend with. Also they are quick to grasp cooperative ideas and ideals; and they know how to dispense the ideas they acquire. They are the most competent propagandists in the world and along that line are the greatest asset of the Union. They are in closer touch with the children than the men, and both have the ability and the inclination to convey to childhood the lessons of co-operation which received at the most impressionable age will be fixed and lasting. The latter is most important for the cooperative hope of the future lies in education of the growing generation.

We sincerely hope that we will never again hear a woman ask the question, "Are women allowed in Farmers' Union Meetings?"

Urge Your Wife to Attend Meeting. Urge your wives to attend all the meetings. Give them something to do. Let them have charge of the programs. They eventually will interest the children and that is most important of all. They will add life and zest to your gatherings, help build inspiration anew, kindle bright fires of enthusiasm, and spur us onward and upward to greater co-operative effort and success.

Loyalty is a splendid attribute of womanhood. If this were not true, many farmers would be grass widowers at this minute. The lot of woman on earth is even more difficult than that of man, and the heaviest burdens of all fall on farmers' wives. The very nature of farm life and effort insures her an existence of strenuous toil. Her hands tell the story. They are worn and rough.

Loyalty is a wonderful thing. Without it the Union would die, and the women are loyal. By all means have the women work with you from this time on in your community. Colorado Farmers' Union.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING

HERE TO STAY IS By Carl Williams, Editor Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman

A Booklet recently issued by the American Cotton Growers' Association makes the following statement: "Co-operative marketing in America is a widespread economic movement for marketing reform that is destined more vitally to affect the financial status of more people for the better than any other single factor which has come to light in the history of agriculture."

Eugene Meyer, Jr., managing director of the War Finance Corporation, says: "The rapid growth and popularity of the movement for the cooperative marketing of cotton throughout the cotton belt is one of the most interesting and fascinating business rocesses of this generation." Herbert Hoover, secretary of commerce, says: "Business men should encourage cooperative marketing among producers for the same reason that they should support any method for the advancement of the business and economic life of the country—because it is good business."

There is food for thought in the above quotations. Hundreds more might be cited.

Cooperative commodity marketing, by which is meant the organization of farmers for marketing by commodity rather than by locality, is no new thing. It started in Denmark seventy years ago, and has made that nation the most prosperous agricultural country in the world. Its term of successful life in California is more than a quarter of a century.

But it never progressed beyond the confines of the Pacific Slope until the idea was seized upon by Oklahoma men and made a part of Oklahoma's economic life in the form of the Cotton Growers' association only two years ago. Since that time and under the inspiration of Oklahoma's success farmers everywhere have flocked to the standard thus set up until today more than 200 associations with more than 750,000 members and an annual business in excess of \$1,000,000,000

are on the map.

This audacious attempt by farmers to increase their own income by taking charge of a greater percentage of their own business has variously excited sympathy, commendation, complete approval and cordial assistance on the part of city business men, as well as doubt, hesitation, suspicion, ridicule and alarm on the part of other city people, according to their own recognition of economic principles and their own personal relationship to the new movement.

But this much is certain: Cooperative marketing in some form is here to stay. It is not a miracle, nor a cure-all. It will not make a good farmer out of a poor one, nor good land out of bad. It merely purports to be an economic remedy for some of the ills to which agricultural flesh has fallen heir.

One of the finest things in connection with the whole movement is the quite general approval which city business men, financiers and students of economics have generously given it.

More than 500 farmers and breeders raising all kinds of domestic animals answered questions sent out by the United States Department of Agriculture and from these replies it has been determined that these men consider pure breeds 40 per cent better from a utility standpoint than common stock. They say that offspring of pure breeds are worth practically 50 per cent more in sale value than the offspring of grades and crosses. The pure breeds were found in nearly all cases to be more readily salable.

One way to catch coyotes is to place traps for them on sheep driveways just after the flocks are started down from the summer ranges. Almost immediately the coyotes that follow sheep bands are caught. One of the inspectors of the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, recently made a catch of ten coyotes in seven days in this way.

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