

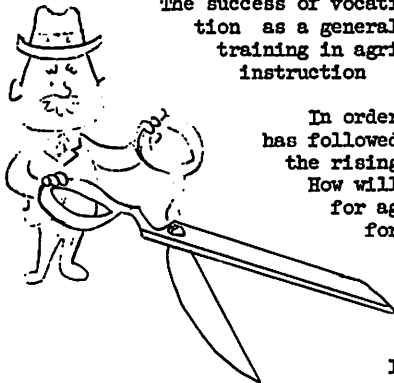
## AGRICULTURE'S SUCCESS MECHANISM

Education has been agriculture's success mechanism throughout all of American history. America's first teacher was an agriculture teacher. The Indian, Squanto, taught a lesson in corn growing to the pilgrims who survived the first winter at Plymouth. The classroom was an open field and the students were a bedraggled group of men, women and children. This was truly an ingenuous lesson from an indigenous teacher. Its consequence was surplus and its celebration was Thanksgiving.

Early success at the elementary level with both agricultural instruction and agricultural extension relied on two favorable circumstances: (a) the high rate of literacy and skills among the early immigrants, and (b) the universal nature of compulsory education through the common school. Both became integral determinants of agriculture's development momentum.

Later, vocational agriculture became an essential instrument of agriculture's development and the growth of the program was a corollary and, in a sense, a beneficiary of compulsory secondary education.

The success of vocational agriculture was linked with education as a general success mechanism while it provided training in agriculture as one of its special forms of instruction



In orderly succession agricultural instruction has followed evolutionary stages corresponding to the rising levels of educational requirements.

How will education serve as a success mechanism for agriculture in the future? What will be the form of agricultural instruction? Will it continue to move in successive evolutionary stages requiring higher and higher levels of educational performance?

If so, one might expect rising enrollments in agriculture at the collegiate level. This has not been the developing pattern. In absolute numbers, both high school and college enrollments have remained relatively unchanged. In relative terms (agricultural enrollments as a proportion of total enrollments) both are declining sharply.

Agriculture exhibits all of the symptoms of a slow-growth industry. Like other extractive industries, it has its rapid-growth segments. In an attempt to retain enrollments and thus to sustain a visible position for agricultural instruction, agricultural educators have turned their

attention to these rapid-growth segments. At the secondary level, agricultural related occupations have won new attention and at the college level agri-business is a new label and a favored emphasis. Neither has resulted in significant increases of total enrollment. Both are worthy experiments but both should be recognized and emphasized for what they are--mere efforts to exploit some small but rapid-growth segments of a large slow-growth industry. Neither deals with the manpower problems and thus with the educational component of the massive slow-growth segment of agriculture. There is a rising educational requirement here too and meeting this requirement is likely to emerge as the next important stage in the evolutionary progress of education as agriculture's success mechanism.

The drama of out-migration may have captured excessive attention from agricultural educators. This may be only the first step in another series of evolutionary stages. Automation has now brought a similar out-migration from the industrial sector. Out-migration from the service sector may not be far behind. In each sector humans are being priced out of the energy market. By being the first sector in the parade of out-migration, agriculture is offered two advantages: (1) it can rely on later sectors to absorb some of its excess manpower and (2) it can have more time to deal with its own basic problems of manpower quality.

Here is another reason for leadership alertness in agricultural education, the theme of the lead article in this issue of the AATEA Journal and the purpose of the Journal itself. In this article, Professor Harold Byram provides a thoughtful analysis of leadership in agricultural education. The editors commend it to the readership as a piece that will continue to repay study.

G.I.S.

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How do you explain to kids why a nation that spends millions of dollars on nuclear bombs is trying to abolish fire crackers. . . .

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How to get more for your money: Step on a penny scale.

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"What am I supposed to do with this?" grumbled the motorist as the police clerk handed him a receipt for his traffic fine.

"Keep it," the clerk replied. "When you have four of them you get a bicycle."