

## VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

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One assumption that can be made with the greatest degree of confidence when discussing Vocational Agriculture in the future is that there will be change-- more widespread and much more rapid than in the past. The authors are suggesting that in order to adjust to this era of change, a more comprehensive point of view regarding Vocational Education in Agriculture must be accepted.

This must include objectives relating to the phases of the total program as well as over-all objectives. A plan is set forth which will provide a comprehensive program of vocational education of agriculture. This program will:

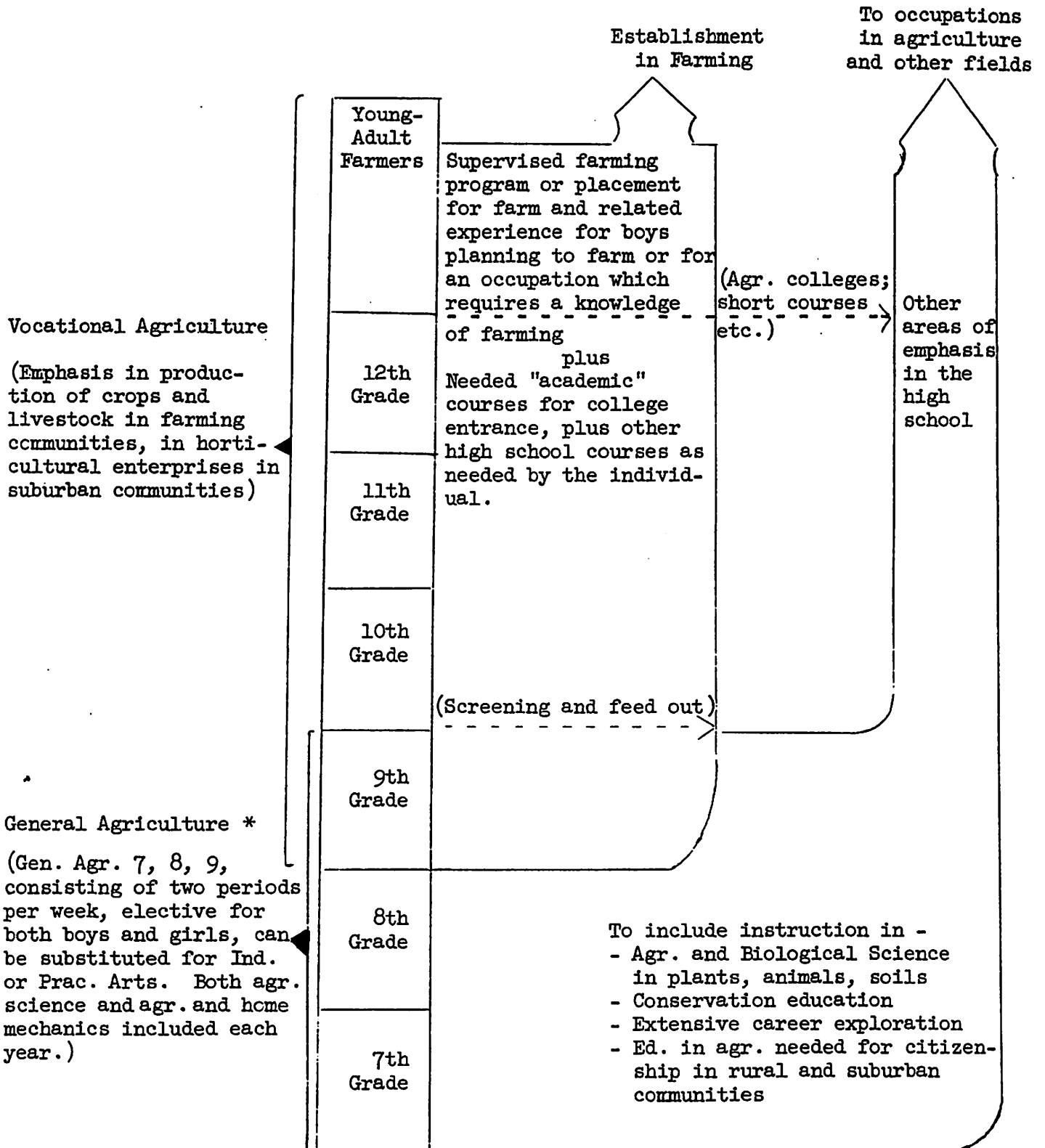
1. Prepare young men and women for careers in farming and associated occupations which require a knowledge of scientific farming. (Included in this would be such areas as floriculture, ornamental nursery work, maintenance supervisors of estates, parks, and similar occupations.)
2. Provide basic preparation in the Agricultural Sciences.
3. Provide greater breadth and depth in career exploration.
4. Provide an adequate preparation for those going on to college.

It is felt that this suggested program will be broad enough for adjustments to be made by individual states and individual schools within these states in order to meet their unique needs. For example, the diagram shows an opportunity to provide 2 periods a week of general agriculture in grades 7, 8, and 9 in lieu of industrial and practical arts. This agricultural course would include a down-to-earth applied type of work which would include how plants and animals grow, develop, and feed. There would be some work on the function and care of plants and animals, and a basic understanding of inheritance. Work could also be included on improving the home grounds, maintenance of the home, covering such areas as plumbing, heating, wiring, painting, and sewage disposal. There would be both classroom and shop-lab work included in this general agriculture program.

Others who would find it more appropriate might have the general agriculture work in the 9th grade only and this could be paralleled with the 9th grade vocational work. Freshmen boys and girls who have made a decision that their life work will be in the area of agricultural occupations requiring a scientific knowledge of agriculture, would be expected to take the freshman vocational agriculture course rather than the freshman general agriculture program. The intent here is to suggest a flexibility which might have either a 3-3 junior-senior high or a 4-year high school program.

The following diagram portrays the plan discussed:

DIAGRAM OF A COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



\* A student would enroll for one year only.

Suggested objectives for each major phase of the program are:

I. Freshman and Sophomore Classes

1. Develop an understanding of the Science of Soils, Plant Life, and animal life as it relates to Agriculture.
2. Provide an opportunity to develop an interest in farming.
3. Develop students' ability to solve the problems encountered in farming.
4. Provide students with available information relative to the character of, the opportunities in, and the qualifications necessary for occupations related to farming.

II. Junior and Senior Classes

1. Provide adequate training in production of food and fiber.
2. Provide training in marketing and organizing marketing agencies to market food and fiber.
3. Provide training for the selection, operation, maintenance and repair of farming and processing equipment used on their own farm.
4. Provide for proper learning experiences.
5. Provide opportunity to develop rural leadership.

III. The Young Farmer Program

- A. Young Farmer classes should consist of a program of organized systematic instruction in agriculture aimed specifically at helping young men solve their problems in becoming established successfully in farming.
- B. Specific objectives of the instructional program for Young Farmers are:
  1. To determine the opportunities present in the community for establishment in farming.
    - a. To explore off-farm opportunities for those who do not have the aptitude or opportunity for establishment in farming on a full-time basis.
  2. To assist in locating an available farm to purchase, rent, or on which to enter into a partnership agreement.
  3. To determine the minimum requirements (size of farm, acres of crops and pasture, number of animals, amount of machinery, and so forth) for success in farming in a given situation.
  4. To determine credit needs and methods of obtaining adequate financing.
  5. To assist in developing a farming agreement.

6. To determine a comprehensive farm and home plan:
  - a. Planning and following a system of crop rotation.
  - b. Purchasing, servicing, and operating farm equipment.
  - c. Computing income tax.
  - d. Producing high quality products from the enterprises, such as producing Grade A milk.
7. To keep up to date with new developments in agriculture and to determine which new practices should be followed.
8. To increase farm income and production per unit.
9. To keep, analyze, and use farm records.
10. To participate in community activities in a leadership role.
11. To assist in personal, social, and civic development.

#### IV. The Adult Farmer Program

- A. Adult Farmer Classes should be designed to improve the efficiency of those who are established in farming.
- B. Instruction should serve to develop the ability to:
  1. Manage a farm business.
  2. Improve living conditions.
  3. Assume leadership roles.
- C. Because of the growing demand for adult education, schools should give greater emphasis to meeting the local needs for adult education in agriculture.

The program of vocational education in agriculture illustrated in the previous diagram would appear to have the following advantages:

1. It would enable more students to take advantage of the offering in vocational agriculture.
  - a. Biological science would be taught in a setting wherein application is made to a known real life setting.
  - b. Extensive career exploration, in conjunction with the guidance personnel of the school is possible at an earlier stage.
  - c. Basic agriculture information desirable for citizenship would be taught in the first two years.
2. During the first two years, supervised experiences in Agricultural careers would provide appropriate, useful experience, and would include supervised farming programs as we know them today for those boys who have the facilities for carrying them out.
3. There would be more flexibility in the program for the school administrator in his responsibility of scheduling classes. For example, Agr. 9 & 10 could be substituted for general science and biology.

4. The third and fourth year program would become very closely oriented to the business of actual farming. It is presumed that a careful screening has taken place at the close of the sophomore year and only those boys going into a farming occupation or an occupation requiring a knowledge of farming, will proceed in this portion of the program.
5. The Young Farmers and the Adult Farmer Programs would be tied more closely to the high school program by closely following the fourth year.

All of us are familiar with the traditional or usual vocational agriculture program of production-type agriculture which emphasizes growing crops and livestock. There is a great need, however, for high schools in suburban communities of which there are many in the northeastern states, where the program would be primarily one in which horticulture was the core of the training. Major emphasis would be therefore placed on nursery work, greenhouse work, turf work, town and country store sales and service, landscaping design, and improvement of home grounds, maintenance and management of turf areas such as large estates, parks, golf courses, vegetable and truck gardening, and the growing of small fruits.

As the local schools develop programs within this pattern, it would appear that certain minimum facilities would need to be provided. In order to prepare students in a program as suggested in the paragraph above, it would appear that the facilities would logically include the following:

1. Acreage for nursery and field grown crops, vegetables and flowers.
2. A classroom of at least average size equipped with adequate storage facilities plus a sink with water.
3. A combination headhouse and agricultural shop.
4. A greenhouse averaging at least 10 square feet for each student enrolled in the program.