

A Partial Alternative to the University Beef-Teaching Herd

F.A. Thrift and C.G. Chenette

Introduction

About two-thirds of the students currently enrolled in Animal Sciences at the University of Kentucky come from non-farm or urban backgrounds. This two-third value agrees with a previously reported value for agriculture students (Mayer, 1980) and is similar to a value reported for Animal Science students (Morrow, 1982). Because of this non-farm background, most of these Animal Science students lack the necessary "hands on" experience to work with livestock. This lack of "hands on" experience can be alleviated by utilizing university teaching herds; however, the cost of maintaining these herds is becoming more prohibitive, especially for beef cattle. Thus as suggested by Kirst (1980), possible alternatives to the traditional university owned teaching herds must be explored if students are to receive "hands on" experience working with livestock.

Discussion

With this problem in mind, a course was started during the 1982 spring semester within the Animal Science Department at the University of Kentucky. This course, offered as an elective and referred to as the Animal Science Sales Management class, was developed to provide students an opportunity to obtain "hands on" experience by planning, coordinating, and conducting a purebred beef cattle sale involving performance tested bulls. The bulls are offered for sale from the Kentucky Beef Cattle Association central bull test located at the University of Kentucky's Eden Shale Farm near Owenton, Kentucky. Bulls, representing as many as 8 breeds, are consigned to the test by various consignors. Consequently, participating students have both an opportunity to gain "hands on" experience working with the bulls and an opportunity to interact with many of the consignors throughout the 140 day test.

The sales management class usually consists of from 15 to 20 students (restricted to juniors and seniors) who report considerable variation with respect to "hands on" beef cattle experience. Two students with some beef cattle experience are also selected for each class so they may assist in working with the students who lack experience. Although the students vary considerably in their beef cattle experience, attitude (apparent willingness to work) is a common factor for all the students, since this is one of the primary factors considered in their selection. Willingness to work should be given prime consideration in the selection of

students for this course since it is essential that assigned duties be performed to meet a strict deadline. Also, students possessing favorable attitudes will more favorably impress both consignors and buyers of the bulls.

To facilitate fulfillment of duties leading up to the sale, various committee assignments are made early in the semester. The committees are advertising, sale catalog preparation, sale facilities, fitting and grooming, care of bulls at sale site, sale clerking, and bull load out after the sale. A chairperson is appointed for each committee, and each student receives more than one committee assignment. All students are expected to help with certain assignments such as loading out of bulls after the sale.

The bulls are weighed and hip height measurements recorded every 28 days during the 140-day test period. Students are required to attend and work during at least one of the monthly weigh days. At the end of the 140-day test, the students begin to ready the bulls for the sale by doing minor fitting and grooming on each of the bulls that qualifies for the sale (the fitting consisted of mud removal and clipping of long hair from the head, neck, and underline). This fitting not only provides the students opportunity to gain some "hands on" experience with the various fitting procedures, but also permits the students to gain considerable "hands on" experience working bulls through the various cattle handling facilities located at the test station. Most students realize a real sense of accomplishment after having restrained bulls in the squeeze chute. At the end of the test, the higher performing bulls within each breed are fire branded with a special brand to denote their superior achievement. This branding procedure permits the students to observe and actually participate to a limited extent in this form of beef cattle identification.

In addition to the "hands on" experience gained by the students in planning and carrying out all aspects of the bull sale, an effort is made to expose the students to representatives of the purebred beef cattle industry by the scheduling of guest speakers periodically during the semester. The class meets once per week at night for approximately 1½ hours. Guest speakers deal with subjects such as beef cattle management and beef cattle advertising and sales.

Concluding Comments

Using bulls consigned to a central bull test station to provide students with an opportunity to gain "hands on" experience represents a relatively inexpensive technique for achieving this purpose. Consequently as funds become more limited, this procedure offers a partial alternative to the traditional university-owned beef teaching herd, especially if the bull test station is

Professor and assistant professor of Animal Science, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40546. Agricultural Experiment Station Journal Article 83-5-42.

located near the university campus so that student transportation is not a limiting factor. However, a course of this nature does have the major disadvantage that only a relatively small number of students can be accommodated per semester because of the limitations on both facilities and number of animals with which to work.

Literature Cited

Kirst, R.C. 1980. Animal Science without animals. *NACTA J.* 24(3):40-41.

Mayer, L.A. 1980. Providing practical training for non-farm agriculture students. *NACTA J.* 24(2): 34-35.

Morrow, R.E. 1982. Teaching beef production: "Different Strokes for Different Folks." *NACTA J.* 26(2): 16-17.



INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Robert R. Shrode, Chairman
Department of Animal Science
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996

Peace Corps Role — International Volunteerism In Agriculture

James Sedlacek

In the 60's Peace Corps was a new, innovative program that drew a lot of attention and quickly became an accepted and familiar concept to most Americans. During the intervening 22 years, while much of the initial "hoopla" and media attention may have diminished, the Peace Corps has matured into a vital part of the development establishment. Today, volunteers serve just as many, if not more, countries than they served some 20 years ago.

The mission and underlying goals of the Peace Corps have not changed in those years. These objectives simply stated are: (1) to aid in the development of "Third World" nations, (2) to help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of people served, and (3) to help promote a better understanding of other peoples by the American public. Much attention is paid to the first of these objectives, but, in truth, the latter two of these objectives are equally important, and often these objectives are overlooked when evaluating Peace Corps in relation to other development efforts.

Over 30 percent of all the volunteers requested by countries worldwide are in agriculture. About 27 per-

Sedlacek is in charge of Peace Corps Recruitment, 10 West Jackson, 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60604.

cent of those requests worldwide are for people with specialized agricultural skills. At one time Peace Corps accepted many "generalists" and trained them to become volunteers working in basic farming projects. Whether or not this effectively met the three objectives of the Peace Corps might still be an issue open for debate. The reality of the matter is that countries today are requesting volunteers who already possess strong agricultural skills.

Peace Corps finds individuals by recruiting from two different audiences. The first group is the farm population; the second is recent college graduates. Peace Corps relies heavily on these graduates since they are the most available for service and usually are most open to this alternate career path. However, in many areas, Peace Corps cannot find enough volunteers for the requests it is trying to fill. Areas where Peace Corps has a difficulty finding enough qualified candidates are:

Area	% requests filled
Forestry	73
Plant Protection	25
Ag Education	49
Large Animal Husb.	42

Often these programs are filled with candidates with other types of degrees such as education or biology. or persons with other degrees and a strong farm background. In fisheries, for instance, Peace Corps could utilize about half of all the graduates in fisheries from the Land Grant Universities. About 15-20 percent of all the Agricultural Education graduates could be utilized as well. The most dramatic example is in the area of Forestry where about one fourth of all the graduates matriculated by Land Grant Universities each year could be accepted, yet many of these graduates either are unaware of the possibility or don't see the value of two years of productive work as foresters in the Peace Corps.

Students today seem to be more pragmatic and more concerned about careers and career development. Outside of the altruism and personal growth that are part of an experience in the Peace Corps, and are a strong part of the program, most volunteers might gain in many ways relating to their careers. Volunteers will often work directly in the areas for which they have been trained, and will work very much at the grass roots level with the small farmer, or limited-resource farmer (in development vernacular) not in sales, or some other area where companies often start graduates. They will view a different type of agriculture from that to which they are probably accustomed here in the States, and gain experience in resolving problems, dealing with people, and working under many limiting circumstances.

Many volunteers come back with their eyes opened for the first time to the dimensions of international agriculture, and often pursue careers in this area.