

price of orange juice suddenly increases following an unseasonal frost in Florida or California. The reason is obvious. They have experienced more difficulty, however, in understanding why the price of beef has increased so drastically during the past year. Yet, the economic principles involved in both instances may be the same.

Much of the consumer unrest in recent months had its origin in what was considered to be "unreasonable" prices. The price increase of a year ago for beef products and the ensuing boycott is an example. These boycotts were relatively ineffective because the consumer, in failing to recognize the factors responsible for the increase, focused on only one participant (retailer) in a large complex meat marketing system. What they failed to realize was that in those cases where meat prices did fall, the decline resulted, in part, from a reversal in one of the same factors (demand) that initially contributed to the increase.

On the demand side, increasing consumer income and steadily increasing consumption of beef products were major factors. This was true for foreign markets as well. The supply of beef products, on the other hand, had difficulty in keeping pace with demand despite rapid productivity increases for the past 20 years. Despite large increases, beef production in the United States was not sufficient. This was due, again, to conditions in both domestic and world markets. The world supply of beef products was down. Major beef exporting countries were at low production levels. Further, those that did have products to export found higher prices in markets other than those in the U.S. In addition, the world supply of other protein sources was at a low point. Finally, world demand for feed grains increased noticeably with the entry of the USSR and China into the world market.

While the preceding is not meant as new information to personnel in colleges of agriculture, it is mentioned here to illustrate the myriad of factors that affect the price of a product. Two conclusions should be noted: (1) retail prices are influenced by many factors and (2) food prices paid by U.S. consumers are increasingly being influenced by world demand and supply condition.

Food marketing system

As noted in an earlier section, the industrialization process has resulted in a more complicated marketing system. This, in turn, suggests the need for greater understanding by consumers of the functions of the market systems. This need is especially critical in the pricing process. For example, when raw product prices fall, consumers frequently expect lower retail prices upon their next visit to the grocery store. A time lag between purchase of the raw product at the lower price and the finished product's appearance on the grocery shelf may take several weeks. Thus, today's fall in raw product prices may not be noticed at the retail level for some time.

The practice by retailers of pricing on a product-mix basis instead of product by product has been confusing to consumers. This often results in spreading a wholesale price increase or decrease, for a specific product throughout the store's product bundle. Even when retail prices do change, the overall cost of a consumer's market basket may reflect only minimal change. Assuming general price stability, a decreased retail price of one product may be offset in a consumer's grocery bundle by increase for another product. Thus, retail food prices may take considerable time to reflect lower raw product prices. *When the product-mix is priced as a unit, some of the lower raw product prices lose their effect before reaching the retail level.*

Role of Colleges and Departments of Agriculture

Given the type of program outlined above, how can colleges and departments of agriculture become more responsive to these consumer needs? Land-grant colleges, through the Cooperative Extension Service, have increased personnel and program emphasis in this area in recent years. So as teachers in adult education programs, consumer marketing economists are already active.

The classroom teacher faces a somewhat different situation, but one that is equally as challenging. However, the alternatives may be limited to (1) formal course offerings or (2) seminars.

Many colleges now offer a course in consumer economics which tends to focus on some of the issues outlined.

The seminar approach has some advantages over the formal course offering. A regularly scheduled senior seminar for one or two hours credit provides an attractive approach. This allows structuring the seminar around student interests. The seminar approach would tend to attract students from curricula outside of agriculture. Colleges of agriculture, in recent years, recognized the potential interest in environmental issues and proceeded to establish programs and courses in that area. These courses have attracted the nonagricultural student. Current indications are that any course focusing on consumer issues would be equally popular.

The need, interest, and potential exist. It is up to us as teachers of agriculture to meet the challenge.

References

- 1 James Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times - The Failure of the Land Grant College System*, Preliminary Report of the Task Force on the Land Grant College Complex (Washington, D.C., Agribusiness Accountability Project) 1972.

¹ Paper presented at the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture convention, Lincoln, Nebraska June 19-21, 1974.

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Career Education: Teacher As Communicant; Student As Consumer

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This paper relates to the role that is played by teacher-training institutions and the role that is played by the faculty members in these institutions who are responsible for developing educational philosophies in their teachers-to-be. It most particularly relates to the philosophy of career education: the tenets of which have now evolved to a considerable extent in several parts of the country. There are at least six basic beliefs that must be assumed in order to set the parameter within which the posture of this presentation is framed. They are:

- 1) Federal and State legislation has had, and is having, a large influence on the development of formal education in this country.
- 2) A "work-ethic" is still a part of our society; albeit possibly changed in nature from what it has traditionally been thought to be.
- 3) Career choice, in young people, is an ongoing process of interrelat-

ed decisions, spanning a period of 10 or 15 years.

- 4) The concept of career education is valid, and in no way denies a student a full range of options to pursue whatever "next step" is most suitable for him.
- 5) Agricultural colleges, by virtue of their heritage and the broad range of agricultural-type occupations available, are in a commanding position to take the leadership in teacher-training.
- 6) Unless there is a significant improvement in the quality of teacher-student contact at the junior and senior high school levels, the career education philosophy is doomed to ultimate failure.

Let us first deal very briefly with the matter of legislation and its effect on educational development. The classic curriculum has tended to deal more with educational philosophy than with educational legislation — and probably college students prefer such emphasis, as legislative subject matter is often thought to be

quite boring. Despite this outlook, it seems reasonable to this observer, that in the "real world" of applied public education, the enabling legislation has probably had a greater effect than Rousseau, Dewey, and all the others combined. It also seems reasonable, that in the long run, any particular philosophy must carry itself by its own momentum; but in the shorter run it probably stands very little chance of success without an impetus provided by financial backing. Indeed, the Land-Grant universities are perfect examples of this situation. The genesis provided by the 1862 Act allowed these schools to get started with a new philosophy of occupational-type education for the "industrial classes"; certainly a revolutionary idea for the point in time at which it was promoted. This is the importance of any historical legislative enactment; its relation to the national condition at the time of its passage, plus its effect on future legislation. The Land-Grant schools were spawned by the 1862 Act and were later nurtured by the Hatch Act promoting research, and the Smith-Lever Act promoting agricultural extension as well as the Smith-Hughes Act. Conceptually, the philosophy of these institutions was at least partially concerned with the vocational aspects of education. Today we are operating in the final months of the current occupationally-oriented legislation (VEA-1968) and Congress is turning its attention to new vocational legislation to meet the needs of a large segment of our population.

If we accept the fact that legislation has been and still is important to us, then we must turn our attention to the second proposition — the existence of a work ethic in our population. I feel it is safe to assume that such an ethic still does exist — although the traditional Protestant work ethic is not viewed by contemporaries as it has been by older generations. There may be a difference between the middle class and the working class work ethics. The middle class ethic teaches the deferral of gratification and introduces a bias towards middle class occupations and middle class means of entering them. Teaching at the secondary school level has traditionally been considered one of these acceptable middle class occupations and attendance at a public Land-Grant-type college an acceptable means of entry. Thus, does it not seem logical to impart this ethic with its attendant emphasis on career education to the people who are training to be teachers and will thus be in a position to pass on their viewpoints to younger students later on?

If we accept the fact of a bona fide work ethic, we must approach the problem of career development or career maturity. In 1950, the idea was put forth that career choice was not a "one shot" point in time event. Today, most educational psychologists (including Super and Crites) believe that career maturity is a developmental process which spans at least the period from age 10 to age 21. This theory is completely compatible with the career education concept which actually has been said by some to embrace the entire spectrum of a person's life from "womb to tomb." If career development does, in fact, occur more or less continuously through the child's school year, then it seems reasonable to ask that teacher training schools instill this "longitudinal work ethic" concept into the teachers-to-be. Indeed, this concept should be infused into the entire curriculum that a prospective teacher might use with his future students.

Career education is a valid concept. At both the secondary school and the university levels it has often been imagined that a dichotomy exists between career and academic education. Those of us who believe in the concept think that there is no dichotomy. No one wishes to deprive any student of his cultural heritage as it is presented through broadly academic courses. At the same time, we need to provide every student with the tools necessary for him to take a successful "next step" in his progression through life on whatever career track he has chosen to follow. All students should have an opportunity to continue formal education and all students should have some sort of skill available to them to sell in the marketplace. Career education is, in fact, a reform, a change, and a revolution in the total public education system. It is not conceived as being a part of the system; it is the system.

The role of colleges and universities in training people for all aspects of the world of work has generated controversy for many years. This certainly has been true in agricultural colleges and state universities. Most public universities today no doubt face the prospect of some internal turmoil with respect to the selection of what to teach and how to teach it. The effects of career education in the public schools (pre-college level) are already a force to be reckoned with and teacher-training institutions are now in a position that will require some measure of commitment to the impetus. The commitment to career education can range all the way from adding a token course or two here and there to the development of a complete bachelor's degree package that will provide an in-depth philosophical "infusion" to its recipient. The Great Cities Task Force on Vocational Education, of which this writer was a delegate at the AVA Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, December 1973, did, in fact, take a position that a B.S. curriculum in career education be considered by universities that train our public school teachers of the future. Regardless of how well colleges prepare individuals for careers, post-secondary institutions have the added responsibility of preparing people who are capable and knowledgeable about the total concept of career education. This concept has extremely important implications for teacher education programs. If career education ever achieves its rightful place in colleges and universities, it must first have been fully developed at the primary and secondary levels, and this will only result if teachers are committed to all the elements of career education. One of the places teachers can get this commitment is in agricultural colleges. These colleges have a long tradition of occupational orientation and they train people for a broad range of acceptable middle class-type occupations.

Summary

The principal thesis of this presentation has been that legislation has been the main force behind educational change and improvement. The educational philosophies are put into practice through this legislation. Career education does not as yet have its own legislation,² so it must be carried forward at this time by the strong commitment of those who believe in the concept. Due to the existence of some sort of middle class work ethic and the longitudinal nature of career development, the career education philosophy—extending from K through college is very sound. In order for it to be promoted at the pre-college level, we must have a dedicated and properly prepared core of young teachers who can carry the concept through — especially in the absence of any large blocks of funding to support these activities which almost surely will be more expensive than the traditional approach.

As always, it is the critical teacher-student contact that really counts. The teacher must be trained, and must be enthused to be the communicator of career education to his students, who are the consumers and who are the ultimate users of the "career tools" the teacher provides. I believe the agricultural colleges are in a commanding position to take a leadership role in this respect.

Thank you.

¹ Prepared for presentation at NACTA Annual Meeting — University of Nebraska, June 20, 1974.

² The proposed new legislation, currently being formulated in Washington, will provide for "pre-vocational education" funds.

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