

# Two-Year Programs in Agriculture

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We are rapidly learning more about the variety of post-high school, two year educational programs in agriculture which have been getting started, and growing tremendously in the last few years. (See in this issue both the listing by Manley and the article by Cameron.) The focus on vocational education, including post-high school education, in recent federal legislation will stimulate continued growth. In these developments, agriculture has been broadly defined, including not only farming and ranching, but also including all other branches such as, farm credit, seed companies, equipment companies and other agribusiness, and not excluding governmental and educational agencies dealing with agricultural problems.

Agricultural colleges for over one hundred years have been dedicated to preparing young men and women for more productive careers in agriculture. This dedication has evolved from two fundamental and entirely compatible desires. One desire was to provide for the educational development and personal success of young people entering careers in agriculture. The other desire was to assist agriculture to grow into a prosperous industry. Historically, agricultural colleges found it necessary to establish and operate high schools and non-college credit short courses, because qualified college-level students were either in short supply or non-existent. Colleges gradually developed educational programs of greater and greater academic complexity until in recent decades enrollment at the graduate level in some colleges has even outstripped undergraduate enrollment.

In spite of the increased attention given to advanced levels of education the agricultural colleges have never lost their awareness of the need for agricultural education at the practical, applied levels, but frequently found their finances, man-power and public demand for higher levels of education and research such that programs of less than the four-year degree level were slighted. These colleges

should therefore welcome with open arms the two-year programs which provide such an excellent supplement to the other levels of higher education in agriculture.

Every student, every person, has his own individual set of values and interests. In our free, democratic society we encourage this individuality, even though it brings with it some uncomfortable dissension at times. Some agricultural students are pragmatists, so deeply interested in the practical job of the moment that they do not wish to devote any time or effort to the concept of "breadth of education" which most college staffs strongly support. Two-year vocational-technical programs can and should satisfy these students. These schools should teach only the "principles" of mathematics and other subjects necessary for application. In this way they and the four-year programs supplement each other.

Close liaison should be maintained among all of these institutions. Counselling and recruitment should be coordinated so each student is encouraged to pursue his education in such a way as to further his best interests. In-service training for staff of two-year institutions should be the responsibility of the four-year colleges. Research and extension information should flow freely to all levels of agricultural instruction. Job placement information could be exchanged. Close relationship in all other ways should be encouraged.

Finally, since many two-year programs are new, and not firmly entrenched in their methods and attitudes, this is the time to retain flexibility and adaptability in our contacts among different types of institutions. Agriculture, as an industry of great breadth, should profit from the wise development of two-year programs of higher education in agriculture.