

'Meat For Future Agriculturists'

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For meat to be of benefit to an individual, the meat must be **present** in the diet and it must be **fresh**. So it is with agricultural technology for students. Up-to-date results and supporting evidence from agricultural research labs and plots should provide "meat" in the educational diet.

An undergraduate course in Agronomy now should include a thorough discussion on high-lysine corn. And next year, emphasis might need to be placed on utilization of high protein oat and wheat breeding stocks. "Fresh meat" for a student in Genetics might be the discussion of messenger RNA and polyribosomes. In Animal Nutrition, students may be startled to learn that ground oyster shells can substitute for a portion of the roughage in finishing rations for cattle.

Dr. Cecil Ryan drops his lecture notes in the trash can at the end of the last class meeting each semester. He develops a new set then for the next course. His students in Poultry Science at Texas A&M University can see that they have received up-to-date information. Contents of many courses in agricultural disciplines could become more challenging through a similar up-dating.

Questions pertinent to this point were raised by Dr. Darrell Metcalfe, Director of Resident Instruction at the University of Arizona. In the most recent issue of *The Journal of the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture* he asked, "Should the undergraduate receive more theory and less practice?" Is the objective to teach the answers to a thousand questions or to develop the thinking power of a student and to treat his mind as a workshop not a storehouse? Are our graduates exposed to research? If they are exposed, can they interpret the research data intelligently? How can undergraduates be effective teachers if they are not acquainted with research — including the field of education?" Each of us needs to develop satisfactory answers in our daily classroom experiences to these questions.

Agriculture directors and other college administrators must remain alert constantly to opportunities for improvements in curricula and programs. In recent months, numerous local, state, regional and national conferences have focused attention on contemporary educational needs in Agriculture. Professional societies in all major agricultural disciplines have provided excellent guidelines for restructuring undergraduate curricula.

This was well illustrated for the Agricultural Education curriculum by O. E. Thompson¹. During his summary of trends in undergraduate programs he stated, "Agricultural education curricula in many colleges now include courses in occupational information, vocational guidance, and studies of off-farm occupations in agriculture. The time-honored

requirement that a student must have completed the curriculum in agricultural education before teaching vocational agriculture is gradually being replaced. Many schools now permit double majors. Others will accept students from any major as teacher candidates, for example, only ten of the forty schools surveyed held to the traditional requirement that only agricultural education majors could qualify for teaching vocational agriculture. This relaxation of requirements permits many colleges to prepare non-agricultural education majors for teaching vocational agriculture in as little as one college quarter. Undergraduate curricula in many schools are now sufficiently flexible to permit the preparation of teachers who can direct programs for students interested in occupations in agricultural business and industry, in landscape horticulture, and in other vocations for which an understanding of agriculture is essential."

Educational pressures are mounting also, for "meaty" retraining programs for instructors of Agriculture in junior colleges and secondary schools. Senior colleges and universities must furnish leadership in this area. They can provide staff and facilities for summer institutes or workshops in specific subject matter disciplines. Such workshops appear to be particularly appropriate for helping junior college personnel keep abreast of advances in agricultural technology.

All educators should be cognizant of the continual need for a "fresh, meaty" educational diet as innovations in Agricultural instructional programs affecting students are proposed and adopted. As graduates from our college apply their credentials in the "computer" of a management or professional career in Agriculture, we surely don't want the "print out" to read "You are obsolete."

¹O. E. Thompson. Trends in Undergraduate Teaching in Agricultural Education. Paper presented as part of a Symposium: NACTA and the Professional Societies. Annual meeting of NACTA, Arizona State University, Tempe, April 3, 1967.

Morale In The Classroom

by

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Recently, while counselling with a student, I asked him what he planned to do after graduation. His response was somewhat vague. In essence, I gathered that he planned to work for a government agency, or in agricultural extension or maybe for a commercial company. Knowing that this young man had a farm background, I asked him how he felt about farming. This struck a chord of genuine interest. Before I could expand upon some of the satisfactions of operating a profitable agricultural production enterprise, he took over the conversation and said, in effect, "Oh, yes, "I'd like farming — I've always wanted to run my own farm — and just as soon as I get me a good job and get settled down, I'm going to get some land and start farming on the side."