

Excerpts From History

Harrison County

University of Missouri Extension Center



1919 - 1969

PREFACE

The magic number is '50'. Fifty years of Extension Service in Harrison County. Fifty is a relevant number. To a 21 year old just graduating from college, 50 is an old man. To a 49 year old, 50 doesn't seem old at all. We are not really concerned, however, with whether extension is old or young, but with the number and kinds of changes that have taken place here in the county in the past 50 years. Many, many events have had a serious impact on life in Harrison County. The advances in agricultural technology have never been equaled in a comparable period in American History.

In 1919, a farmer produced enough to feed eight persons. Today, because of our great efficiency in agriculture, one farm worker in America now produces enough to feed thirty-seven persons. Without a doubt, many of these changes are the direct result of efforts put forth by all past extension agents and the many outstanding leaders and individuals with whom they have worked.

Today, the University of Missouri Extension Division represents all the University of Missouri, thus serving not only farmers, but all residents of Harrison County.

The following pages are not meant to represent all the "Fifty years of Extension Work in Harrison County", but are merely excerpts from pages of history.

1919 - 1924

County Extension activities were inaugurated in Harrison County on January 1, 1919. On that January day, County Agent R. J. Hawat opened the doors of the first Extension Office. Miss Iola George started to work at that time as the first Home Demonstration Agent. She worked only until October 1 of that year at which time the Home Demonstration Agents position was discontinued until 1933.

County Agent Hawat worked in Harrison County until March of 1920. Mr. Glenn Hensley served as County Agent from March 1920 until October 1, 1924. From that date in 1924 until December 1933, Harrison County was without the services of a County Agent.

The first "Clover and Prosperity" meeting was held in Harrison County on what is now known as the P. O. Salmon farm. T. J. Harrison owned and operated the farm at that time and had planted the first alfalfa in the county. The meeting was held on the farm with a basket dinner at noon. Speakers from the college and everyone had a chance to see this new miracle plant for feeding dairy cows. Bob Hawat was County Agent at that time.

Mr. P. O. Salmon recalls one time when County Agent Glenn Hensley was called to the farm which Mr. Salmon was operating for Dr. Groome, an Economics Professor at the College of Agriculture. They had some pigs that were coughing. The County Agent told them it was lung worms — which they doubted. To prove that he was right, Mr. Hensley knocked a pig in the head with a tire tool, took a sharp knife from his pocket, opened up the pig and showed Dr. Groome and Mr. Salmon the lung worms — then told them the worms were caused from the dusty bedding.

Mr. Hensley also got them interested in raising bees to help in pollinating their fields of sweet clover. Mr. Hensley could handle the bees, but when he left the farm, the bees stayed to eat on Mr. Salmon and Dr. Groome. This project was not considered a success.

SET A HEN AND RAISE A CONVENIENCE. In 1919 and the early 20's, there was no money for home improvements. So home agents came up with the suggestion of a farm woman setting a hen on 15 eggs and all of the chickens hatched, raised, and sold from that 'setting' were to be used to buy a home convenience. Many home conveniences were added in this way.

1919 - 1924 continued

Activities on soil conservation were started during the first year of Extension work in Harrison County in 1919. R. J. Hawat set up terracing demonstrations on three farms. County Agent Glenn Hensley set up additional terracing demonstrations each year of the next four years. It is interesting to note that as early as 1920 and again in 1923, Extension Specialists and County Agents from the State of Nebraska visited Harrison County to study the demonstrations on terracing in the same part of the county where in 1933 one of the major Soil Conservation Demonstration Areas in the United States was located. Terraces on the George Hendren, Carl Morris and Percy Selby farms were still giving service when the Soil Conservation Demonstration Area was established.

A far cry from the 1969 way of preserving corn was the 1919 way of making sure that your family had some corn to use during the winter. This was before the tins of pressure cookers — so corn was brought into the house early in the morning, cut off the cob, heated and packed into pint jars boiling hot. The tops were tightened, then carefully turned 1/4 turn back. These were then put in to a wash boiler which had a home-made rack in the bottom. The water covered the jars by one inch. The water was brought to a boil as rapidly as possible and kept at a full rolling boil for one hour. Sometimes additional boiling water had to be added to keep the water level high enough. The boiler was then removed from the fire and the corn was allowed to cool. On the second and third day, the cooking and cooling process was repeated. Then the jar lids were tightened and the corn stored in a dark place. The theory was that the intermittent cooking killed spores that might develop. The canned corn was quite tasty, but the food value that was left after that much cooking is a big question.

(Reported by Mr. Hensley in December 1968) County Agent, Glenn Hensley, reports the following about Extension Work in Harrison County during his years of service:

"During the 4½ years I worked in Harrison County, I learned to know and appreciate the many fine farmers and businessmen of the county".

"As I think back over these years, I am reminded of the tremendous changes that have taken place in all our agricultural practices and how greatly our programs in Agricultural Extension Work have been modified to better meet the needs of the modern day farmer and his family".

In the early 20's, dairying was one of the leading farm practices in the county. "Our main work with dairy farmers was in the areas of herd improvement and marketing their butterfat." "We also organized and worked closely with more than 100 A-H Dairy Calf Club members".

1919 - 1924 continued

Poultry production was of importance on almost every farm in the early 20's.

"In the less than five years I was in Harrison County, I surveyed and supervised the terracing of several hundred acres of rolling land. Only a few years ago, I was told that some of these terraces were still in existence."

Alfalfa production was also started in the county in the early 20's.

Honey production was an important side-line on many farms.

"In crop production, our work with farmers included the encouragement of planting our better known varieties of corn such as Reid's Yellow Dent and Boone County White. Our hybrid strains were unknown at that time."

"Our methods of teaching consisted of demonstrations and numerous night meetings utilizing lecture methods. Seldom a week passed that we did not hold one or more night sessions at various points over the county. These meetings frequently kept me out until midnight and during the winter months, would at times entail a 40 mile round trip in my Model T touring car. These drives were entirely over dirt roads either frozen hard or if thawed out with a mudhole at the foot of every hill. In fact, I wore out three sets of mud chains the first year of my work in Harrison County. I also learned what North Missourians meant when they said, 'the mud was rolling'. I learned this when one of the front wheels on my car rolled so full of mud that it slid instead of turning. Only the Ruckstell axle I had installed on my car gave me enough power to travel under these conditions."

"Our assistance to farm women was very limited for we had no Home Demonstration Agent. Mrs. Hensley, assisted by a specialist from the College, gave numerous demonstrations in the making of paper dress forms. The women found these forms of great value in improving the fit of their home-made dresses."

"Among my more amusing remembrances are that of the farmer who came in to tell me that after I had supervised the terracing of a hillside field, he was convinced that I was running the water uphill. Unable to sleep that night, he got up, dressed and carried two buckets of water out to pour in the terrace to see which way it would run. To his utter surprise, it ran the right way and he went back to bed to sleep contentedly."

1919 - 1924 continued

"Then there is the memory of the requeening demonstration over near Mt. Moriah. Our specialist and myself were well equipped with bee veils and gloves. Among those attending were a number of excellent bee men who had brought some of their experience from the 'Old Country'. They were prone to make light of our use of veils, saying bees never stung them. Not realizing that bees apparently know strangers, in the midst of our demonstration on a hot, humid afternoon, a brief rain shower came up driving the worker bees in from a nearby ladino clover field. They arrived to find a crowd of strangers gathered in their home land. Angered, they swarmed to the attack and in a matter of seconds, everyone except our specialist and myself were forced to beat a hasty retreat. When things quieted down, no further remarks were heard about our protective devices."

1934

In the summer of 1934, Harrison County farmers found themselves without water, their pastures bare and hay crop about 25% of normal. The corn and other feed crops burned up and their cattle was forced on a demoralized market. Having approximately 47,000 head, a A.A.A. Cattle Buying Program was set up. Farmers were eager to take advantage of this opportunity which resulted in a much better price for their cattle than could be obtained on the open market. By the end of November, 5,362 head of cattle had been purchased.

1935

A multiple hitch demonstration was held for farmers of Harrison County. A multiple hitch was made and assembled and a plowing demonstration given showing advantages in using this type of hitch. This hitch could be seen in use on several farms in different parts of the county. A miniature multiple hitch exhibit was shown in windows of hardware stores in Bethany.

1936

Horse Biting Campaign was carried out with approximately 3000 horses, mules and colts being treated for bots. A circular letter was sent to all horse owners in the county carrying pictures of the bot fly, the egg and the larvae, with an admonition to the farmer to place himself in the position of the horse and asking him what he would do about it. Apparently this was the thing that got action. Another method which, no doubt, contributed to obtaining acting was the securing of the stomach of a horse which had died as a result of bots and preserving it in formaldehyde. This specimen was displayed in the county office.

1936 continued

Specimen samples of clump grasses and timothy from three different locations in the county were taken, warmed up and chinch bugs floated out, with as high as 1125 bugs a square foot. Around 1500 gallons of Chinch Bug Oil was used in oil barriers. By summer, the grasshoppers started hatching out. Two car loads of bran mash was received. Poison Bran Mash was mixed with equal parts of bran and sawdust along with the necessary amount of poison. A total of 109,270 pounds of poison mash was distributed at 20¢ per pound. In 1937, a total of 318,370 pounds of poison bran mash was distributed.

4-H Club work in Harrison County has increased more than 500% this year with 16 clubs and 184 members. Last year we had three clubs and 30 members.

1937

Due to lack of funds for extension work, a County Extension Association was formed and farmers took out a membership in the association at \$1.00 per year. A meeting of the county board was held and R. B. Baker, State Extension Agent pointed out to the board the necessity of adequate financing for extension work in the county if a satisfactory piece of work was to be done.

H. B. Steele was absent from the county for 2 months doing graduate work. Lelan Ryan, Assistant Agent, was transferred from Platte County to Harrison County. He did a highly satisfactory piece of work during that time considering the fact that the county was entirely new to him.

1939

Information on REA and the cooperation on the part of interested farm leaders with other neighboring counties has resulted in obtaining an approved REA project, Harrison County having approximately 122 miles of line, which will service in the neighborhood of 350 customers. The Extension Service has furnished information on wiring and lighting to these prospective customers.

The sponsoring organization in Harrison County is the County Extension Association, represented by the County Extension Board, consisting of one man and one woman representative from each of the 20 townships in the county. This board was elected at community meetings of local leaders. This is the first time that women have been elected to the membership of the board. The Extension Board previous to this time has consisted of two men from each township.

1939 continued

A change was made in the location of the Extension Office in the county. Originally the County Extension Office and the AAA Office had been housed together in private buildings, but with the construction of a new County Court House, ample room was provided in the basement for both the Extension Service and the AAA Offices.

1945

The Harrison County Livestock Marketing Association was organized and the first feeder calf sale was held. Every year since that time until the present, at least one calf sale has been held each year. In 1968, the sale was moved to new facilities at the Robertson Sale Barn in Bethany.

1948

State 4-H Club Week started. James Bennum, Alvin Parkhurst, Deloris Smith, Charles Slaughter, Frances Ann Walker, Betty Maize and Shirley Radon were the Harrison County representatives in 1948.

The Harrison County Soil Testing Laboratory was opened to test soil in Harrison County. It was located in the basement of the court house in a room on the south side. Later it was moved to a room on the west side. In 1968, it was moved to a room adjoining the Extension Office Meeting Room. At that time, new cabinets were built and remodeling was completed making it one of the finest soil testing laboratories anywhere in Missouri.

1951

The 28th Annual Soils and Crops Conference was held February 11 in the Moll Theater. Three hundred persons registered. Much interest was shown by the farmers because of the squeeze they were feeling at that time.

The Home Economics Extension Club members each adopted one or more patients at the County Home. Mrs. Bert Kickerson states that more than 500 packages were sent and 750 cards received.

Twenty five farmers were selling hatching eggs.

1957

Missouri State Fair Farm Family was chosen to attend the State Fair with all expenses paid. Each year since a Farm Family has been chosen.

1957 continued

The Balanced Farming Association was organized with Raymond Day as Balanced Farming Agent. The association started out with forty members and increased to 50 members.

Raymond Day was responsible for several farmers building hog finishing floors and trench silos.

1959

The Kick-Off Meeting in Brucellosis Eradication Program was held in 1959. This marked the start of area testing to have the county declared a modified-certified brucellosis free area. A certificate was issued Harrison County on April 4, 1961 certifying a Modified-Certified Brucellosis Free Area.

1960

Prior to 1960, the Extension Office was known as the Agricultural Extension Service and the agents represented only the College of Agriculture. In 1960, the University of Missouri Extension Division was organized and the local Extension Office became known as the Harrison County University of Missouri Extension Center. From that date on, the Extension Center has been the local office of the University of Missouri and thus the extension agents represent all the schools and colleges of the University. The Harrison County University of Missouri Extension Center now serves not only farmers, but all the residents of the county.

1961

National 4-H Citizenship Short Course was started. Thirty three Harrison County 4-H members have attended in the past seven years. This is a trip to Washington D. C. for one week of interesting Citizenship Programs and sightseeing.

1962

The Harrison County Livestock Marketing Association organized the first feeder pig sale under the direction of John Gross. There have been fourteen pig sales held since with an average of 1500 pigs sold at each sale.

1965

The Extension Office was moved in the East end of the Court House, formerly occupied by the A. S. C. S. Office.

1966

Two Freeze Branding Demonstrations were held in Harrison County by Wayne Gerber. Instead of using hot irons, dry ice, alcohol and glycerine are used.

1969 - BUDGET

The extension center's operational budget as might be expected, has varied a great deal through the years as has the sources of income.

Records show the following sources of financial support for extension work in Harrison County --- County Court, Extension Association, Production Control Association, Farm Bureau, Soil Conservation Association, Businessmen and Merchants Fund, Balanced Farming Association and other local funds. Our budget records date only back to 1934 when the budget was \$1072.00. In 1940, it dropped to a low of \$751.51. Our 1969 operational budget is \$17,100.00.

1969 - STAFF

From extensions beginning in 1919, with two extension agents working in Harrison County, the staff has enlarged to fifteen specialized agents working in a multi-county area. From 1919 until January 1, 1969, the extension staff remained fairly stable varying from one to four agents. On January 1st, 1969, Harrison County joined with eight other North Central Missouri Counties (Davies, Caldwell, Mercer, Grundy, Livingston, Putnam, Sullivan and Linn) and organized the Green Hills Area Extension Program. Operating under the area program, Harrison County now has the services of fifteen specialized subject matter agents --- administration, farm management, livestock, agronomy, agri-mechanization, dairy, home economics, youth, community development and program development. Some of these specialized agents work in only two or three counties while others work in all nine counties. A total of twenty-six agents work in the nine county area.

HARRISON COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS

January 1919 - January 1969

January 1, 1919 - January 31, 1920 R. J. Hawat	Mrs. Ruby Larson
October 1, 1918 - September 20, 1919 Iola George	June 1, 1949 - April 15, 1954 Harold Cash
March 15, 1920 - September 31, 1924 Glenn S. Hensley	May 1, 1950 - December 31, 1953 Virginia Barber
December 15, 1933 - March 1, 1943 H. B. Steele	July 22, 1952 - April 30, 1957 Robert N. Zulian
October 21, 1941 - December 6, 1941 Vernita Conley	February 1, 1954 - August 31, 1954 Bina S. Davis
February 1, 1942 - July 31, 1943 Dixie Ebersole	July 16, 1954 - July 15, 1956 Oscar L. Benson
March 1, 1943 - August 31, 1944 John Burkeholder	October 16, 1954 - August 31, 1957 Manona Brewer
April 15, 1944 - June 4, 1944 R. S. Stone	July 16, 1956 - December 31, 1961 Raymond Day
May 15, 1944 - December 31, 1944 Bina S. Davis	January 15, 1957 - September 15, 1957 Dale Wilson
October 15, 1944 - October 15, 1946 Don Spalding	May 16, 1957 - September 23, 1959 Charles F. Belshé
December 1, 1944 - November 1, 1945 Bina S. Davis	August 1, 1957 - October 1, 1957 Charles Campbell
January 1, 1945 - June 30, 1948 Charlotte Logerstrom	November 11, 1957 - December 23, 1959 Garland Ford
June 18, 1945 - January 1946 Earl P. Flint	June 1, 1958 - December 31, 1958 John Yohe
November 1, 1946 - May 31, 1949 Herschel Gaddy	March 9, 1959 - August 29, 1959 Martha E. Harrison
January 1947 - February 1948 Gene Thurlo	September 1, 1959 - August 31, 1965 John G. Gross
December 1947 - February 1948 Frances Meyer	January 1, 1960 - November 30, 1960 Bina S. Davis

HARRISON COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS
(continued)

December 1, 1960 - April 19, 1968 Mildred O. Eaton	October 1, 1965 - May 31, 1967 Ernest W. Gerber
January 1, 1962 - September 30, 1962 Rex Rhoades	June 1, 1967 - September 8, 1967 Donald C. Rains
October 1, 1962 - Cesar C. Tharp	September 11, 1967 - Donald L. Henderson

CONCLUSION

Fifty years of Extension in Harrison County shows us again that the present is a product of the past. We know that a knowledge of the people and events of yesterday helps us in understanding and interpreting the events and movements of today. It makes it possible to participate in them intelligently and to have a hand in their direction. We understand the past and learn from it, so we can make a maximum contribution to the work of today, which with that of yesterday, constitutes the great force we call progress.

We wish to dedicate these pages of history
to all the Extension Agents who have worked in
Harrison County during the past Fifty Years.

Compiled and edited by:

Mrs. J. P. Collins

Mrs. Cecil Davis

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Mrs. Wayne Roberts

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