A manual has been prepared which is used by many high school teachers and about 4,000 contestants. Approximately 1,200 students participated in county contests and 400 to 500 in regional contests. The Federal Land Bank and the soil conservation districts provide trophies.

National Science Foundation

The Summer Program in the Life Sciences for Secondary School Students of High Ability for outstanding high school juniors is currently under the direction of one of the Agronomy professors. Forty carefully-selected students who are oriented toward science come to the campus for eight weeks. They receive two to three hours of lectures and participate in a seminar each day. The rest of the time is open for individualized, creative research under a research scientist and for study and recreation. This group of youngsters is exceptionally keen and capable. Most of them show unusual creative ability. Many of them come back to Purdue later for college careers.

Winter Short Course

Agronomy professors offer two courses in the eight-week winter short course for farm boys. Approximately 100 to 120 are enrolled and consistently several of them elect to transfer to four-year curricula.

Personal Attention to Students

The undergraduate teaching in Agronomy is handled by a corps of 7 "undergraduate" teachers who have been carefully selected for teaching interests and abilities and are assigned one-fourth time to the Purdue Experiment Station for fundamental researches in current in science and to stimulate their creative tendency. The teachers are protected otherwise from excessive teaching assignments and that they will have time to prepare well informally with students and to help advise them. These friendly, devoted teachers, in a favorable response from students that the Agronomy is always filled with many capable students, have secured promotions and salaries equal to those available to the men primarily engaged in research and teaching of graduate students. As a result, the Agronomy Department has been able to attract and keep good teachers.

Agronomy Club and Other Organizations

The teachers accept the job of counselling student honor societies, and other groups as part of their educational activity. This undoubtedly helps themselves, reduces the number of drop-out expressions of discouragement, and creates a closer relationship between students and faculty. This must have a favorable response from students that the Agronomy Department should be able to attract and keep good teachers.

It is difficult to assign values to the effect of individual activities as aids to recruitment, probably play a role. The Purdue Agronomy Department believes each one should be pursued as vigorously as possible because of their belief in the excellence of the Agronomy.

Facets of Agronomy as Careers for Young People

Published November, 1964

Counseling High School Youth for Education in the Agricultural Sciences

Howard B. Sprague

IT HAS been true for more than a decade that the number of seniors graduated from the agricultural colleges of the United States does not equal the number of new job opportunities for careers in agriculturally related fields. This deficiency is large and is increasing rather than decreasing. From various surveys made it appears that the situation with respect to college students majoring in agronomy, soil science, and crop science is much the same as for all students in agricultural courses. The apparent cause is twofold (1) An increase in number of career opportunities and positions available and (2) a declining enrollment of agriculturally oriented students that enter as freshmen in our Colleges.

In searching for explanations for the declining enrollment of agricultural college freshmen, several factors are suggested. The lack of information in the high school as to job opportunities in biology and agriculture for youth born into farm families, there is a parallel shortage or complete absence of campaigns of publicity to focus attention on opportunities in the biological and agricultural sciences and industries. Examine, if you will, any editions of our newspapers and note the absence of advertisements as to job opportunities in biology and agriculture for youth born into farm families, there is a scarcity for young men and women to learn of or agriculturally oriented careers during the first 2 or 3 years of high school.

2. The actual number of young men and women from farms and rural communities is steadily declining as a result of farm mechanization and the enlarging of individual farms. The percentage of total college-age youth from farms is dropping even faster than the number. To the extent that agricultural colleges as a group depend for their enrolment on the "gravity flow" of farm youth to college, is virtually impossible to schedule courses that would make it attractive to the men primarily engaged in research and teaching of graduate students. As a result, the Agronomy Department has been able to attract and keep good teachers.

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