The Indiana State Board of Education

EDUCATIONAL BULLETIN

Educational Bulletin No. 27 Vocational Series No. 16

COURSES IN AGRICULTURE

ON THE

HOME PROJECT BASIS

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
AUGUST, 1917

State Board of Education

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Courses in Agriculture on the Home Project Basis

Indianapolis, Indiana
August, 1917

FORT WAYNE PRINTING COMPANY
CONTRACTORS FOR STATE PRINTING AND BINDING
1917

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THE MATERIAL IN THIS BULLETIN

AMOUNT TO COVER IN ONE YEAR

Seventh and Eighth Grade Teachers.—Teachers in the rural schools whose time for work in agriculture is limited to two periods each week will find that *one project* is sufficient for one year's work. Do not hesitate to limit the work to one project, because the majority of seventh and eighth grade pupils will not have time for the practical work of more than one. The practical work must be done, otherwise agriculture in the school course will have little or no educational and economic value.

High School Teachers.—The high school teacher who has one class in agriculture should limit the work to two projects each year,—the equivalent of one for each half year. It will be found advisable to give the work in each project in the order of seasonal sequence rather than to attempt to cover all of a given project in one semester. Not less than one year of work in agriculture must be offered. Agriculture can not be substituted for a science.

Vocational Teachers.—If the teacher has but one group of vocational pupils, he will devote all of each afternoon to agricultural work with this group. By devoting one half of each day during the school year and all of the time during the summer to purely agricultural subjects, the vocational group can cover four projects each year.

SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Seventh and eighth grade and high school teachers should select projects on the basis of dominant agricultural interests in the community. Manifestly it would be unwise to attempt to interest pupils in dairy husbandry as a major enterprise on the home farm, if the community is wholly unsuited for dairy farming. Since the aim of seventh and eighth grade and high school agriculture is general rather than vocational education, personal interest and major agricultural occupations in the community will determine largely the kind of projects to select.

Projects should be selected with due consideration of their degree of suitability to the grade of pupils. Taking everything into consideration, the following may be regarded as suitable to *seventh and eighth grade pupils:*

1. Corn Growing. Seventh and eighth grade pupils should not attempt to take up this project on either as extensive or intensive a scale as should high school pupils. Breeding plot work should not be undertaken by seventh and eighth grade pupils. Soils studies in connection with this project should be more elementary for seventh and eighth grade pupils than for those in the high school, as should be also seed selection and corn judging. The outlines in this bulletin make it possible for the pupils to take up in a given project only those details which they are capable of working out successfully. (In general these statements apply to each project named below.)

2. Pig feeding. (See Swine Production. See also the above comment on Corn Growing.)

3. Poultry Raising.

4. Dairy Calf Raising.

5. Home Garden.

6. Potato Growing.

7. Dairy Cow Management.

8. See outline for work in *soils* for seventh and eighth grades.

9. See outline for work in *crops* for seventh and eighth grades.

High School and Vocational Pupils.—All of the projects outlined in this bulletin are suitable for high school and vocational pupils.

METHOD

Agriculture is essentially a practical arts subject. It is preposterous to assume that boys can become fully informed on the whole field of agriculture in one or two years. While information that can be applied directly to practical farm problems should be obtained by the boys who study agriculture, yet this is not the sole aim of the work. Agriculture, like other practical arts subjects, requires that the pupil "learn to do by doing." There should result from the school work the *habit* of putting into practice the information gained through class room discussions, laboratory exercises, and direct contact with the actual problems of the home farm.

The home project method of teaching agriculture is perhaps the best means of forming and fixing in the pupil's life the habit of doing rather than talking about doing things on the farm. By using the home project method the teacher makes practical use of well-established psychological principles, as, for example, the personal interest of the pupil, the personal interest of the

pupil's parents, "no impression without correlative expression," proceeding from the known to the unknown. Performance under actual farm conditions must go hand in hand with instruction, if habits of profitable farm practice are to be developed.

Specialization not the aim.—Teaching agriculture by the home project method does not in the least tend toward specialization on the part of the pupil. On the other hand by this method of teaching the pupil is trained in the fundamental principles of conduct based on independent thought, power to take the initiative, ability to organize and execute. By this method the pupil learns through his experience in working out a corn growing project how to proceed, on his own responsibility, in carrying out successfully a hog raising, a crop production, a farm management project. *Power to do* and ability to think for one's self are results of the home project method of teaching. Therefore, the pupil's otulook upon farm life is broadened rather than narrowed.

Books.—Books should be used extensively. The pupil will gladly read about things in which he is interested. If the pupil takes "Poultry Raising" for his project, he will of his own volition read extensively for information on how to select poultry that he can raise with profit, how to house his poultry, how to feed his poultry, how to keep his pens, yards, and houses in a sanitary condition. The school library should contain, therefore, an adequate supply of reference books on agriculture.

The work in agriculture should not be based on a book, but should be based on farm problems in which the boy is personally interested, such as, for example, beef production, sheep raising, home gardening, fruit growing. *The pupil will read books dealing with the project in which he is interested, but it does not necessarily follow that by reading books he will become interested in home projects or farm problems.*

TEACHERS

Seventh and Eighth Grade.—Seventh and eighth grade teachers should be trained to teach agriculture on a home project or practical arts basis. They should prepare themselves for creditable teaching in agriculture, because agriculture is fundamental to our national life and deserves a large place in our scheme for general education.

High School Teachers.—The high school teacher should be a graduate of a standard college or normal school. At least two years of the four years' course should be the minimum require-

ment. The course pursued in college or normal school should include agricultural instruction on a practical arts basis.

Vocational Teachers.—Vocational agricultural teachers are selected from graduates of standard agricultural colleges. They must have demonstrated in their farm practice and their teaching experience that they are qualified to teach agriculture on a practical arts basis.

RECORDS

In each of the outlines in this bulletin the suggestion is made that the pupil know how to keep records of work done. These records should be complete but not complicated. The State Department of Public Instruction will supply blanks on which to keep home project records.

Z. M. SMITH,
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