

Forestry Extension in Middle West

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In the last issue of the Ames Forester, there appeared a discussion relative to Forestry Extension as applicable to the State of Iowa and presenting some of the difficulties and problems encountered in developing the work. Suffice to say here that the need for forestry in this part of the United States is as apparent now, if not more so, than it was a year ago, and the problems have changed but little. The following summary presents a survey of the situation as detailed before.

The Early Problems of the Work

- a. Educating the Forestry Extension Worker:
As to the workings of the Extension Department and general policies of administration,
As to the best established methods of carrying out Extension work,
As to the attitude of the farmer and the people of the state towards extension work in general and especially toward Farm Forestry.
- b. Educating the Forestry Field in the State (including the administration of the Extension Office):
As to the meaning of Forestry in Iowa,
As to the work that could be accomplished,
As to the fact that Forestry Service was available as such and not as a part of some other line of work.

It is interesting now to glance back over the past two and a half years of effort and review what has evolved.

Development of Policy

A start was made by working through the general Extension offices and the county agent's offices to familiarize the field with the work; that is to say, efforts were devoted to placing plans and purposes of the Forestry Extension program in the hands of these offices in expectancy that they would in turn get to the field through proper channels. The reason for adopting that policy was the early determination to carry out the work if possible along the same lines established for the other Extension activities.

This gave rise to two problems: (1) the education of a man trained in forestry as it is generally conceived of, who was turned loose into a highly developed Extension field with no knowledge of Extension methods; (2) the competition with lines of work which have been long established and have grown beyond the propaganda stage and which are accepted by the public of the State as the important if not the only worthwhile lines of endeavor.

In attempting a solution of these problems it was soon realized that probably it would be a long while before any real work in the field was accomplished if it depended upon already established Farm Bureau committees, etc., to absorb enough of the importance of the problem to carry out the program of work outlined. This was chiefly because their time and attention was busily occupied with problems under way. The committees and men in charge of the community programs of work would no doubt have to have the new problems brought to them from the field itself. With this lesson learned, it was then decided to start from the other end. A definite program of direct contacts was undertaken in the field itself. This dealt with the county agent and with the farmers themselves wherever there had come a call for assistance in forestry lines. Every opportunity was taken to get the county agent out to the farms on which these problems existed and, almost without exception, the result was a new conception of what the forestry extension work was really trying to accomplish. Of course, a larger showing might have been made in people reached and meetings held if other types of work were undertaken, but, as has been stated, the object was to form a foundation for the Forestry Extension along the same lines as other Extension activity and with the farmers themselves in the hope that farm forestry could be linked up directly to the big industry of the State and with as little effort lost as possible. However, we realize that there is a field of work left which is large and important and as yet untouched outside of the farm problem. This no doubt is more true for Forestry than for any other type of Agricultural Extension.

The program of direct field contacts bore its fruit. It resulted in a number of farmers and county agents throughout the State getting in touch with the work, and when the calls for other forestry work reached these men, they were awake to the possibilities of having them answered in the same way that all the other agricultural problems could be answered. A few demonstrations began to be held. The inquiries for information on the various forestry problems began to be more and more numerous. Apparently there were plenty of problems waiting to be solved and the people were beginning to appreciate the importance of these problems.

Particular pains have been taken from the first in answering inquiries by correspondence. As full information as possible has been given and always the suggested opportunities of assistance through the Extension Service have been carried out in the field. It might be called selling Forestry to the farmers.

The growth of Forestry Extension in Iowa is indicated in the accompanying charts.

GROWTH OF FORESTRY EXTENSION IN IOWA
Demonstrations Established

WOOD PRESERVATION	Year	Number of Demonstrations and Counties Doing Work	
	1921-22	(11)	in 12 Counties.
1922-23	(9)	in 5 Counties.	
1923-24	(17 held)	(14) Total	To be held, 31 in 16 Counties.

TREE PLANTING	Year	Number of Demonstrations and Counties Doing Work	
	1921-22	(12)	in 12 counties.
1922-23	(21)	in 16 Counties.	
1923-24	(31)	in 11 Counties.	

FARM FORESTRY SERVICE	Year	*Number of People Reached	
	1921-22	690	
1922-23	850		
1923-24	855	Record for 7 months.	

*Measured by "people reached" because demonstrations are possible for only a small part of the work under this project. It includes meetings, advice, tours, farm and home visits, etc.

INFORMATION LETTERS SENT OUT

1921-22	345	
1922-23	359	
1923-24	400 +	*(Record for 7 months only).

*The fiscal year runs from July 1 to July 1; hence 1923-24 is incomplete.

FARM AND HOME VISITS

1921-22	No Record	48
1922-23		52
1923-24		(Record for 7 months only)

Total number of counties in which some definite type of forestry is under way 38.

The Forestry Projects

At the present time Forestry Extension in Iowa is being carried out under three definite projects as follows:

F-1—PRESERVATIVE TREATMENT OF FENCE POSTS AND FARM TIMBERS.

OBJECT:

- (1) To conduct at least two demonstrations in each county to show how to set up and operate a farm creosoting plant.
- (2) To have the co-operators keep a check on costs and increased durability so that the actual saving can be observed.
- (3) To get three other users of preferably native species of posts and timbers to start treating work.



PLANTED GROVE OF WHITE PINE IN IOWA

Trees between 35 and 40 years old. White pine produces lumber of high value and is well adapted to Iowa planting.

- (4) To furnish additional information on post and timber treating work through meetings, conferences and illustrated talks.

F-2—FARM FORESTRY SERVICE PROJECT.

OBJECT:

To provide forestry assistance and allow for a program of miscellaneous forestry work:

- (a) Consultations in tree work and care of woodlots (thinning woodlots, removal of woodlot crops, regeneratin of

woodlots), (b) plans for shelterbelts, (c) meetings on woodlots, tree planting, wood preservation and general forestry subjects.

It is impossible for specialists to make special trips to counties on consultation work for individuals. However, there are many individual problems which ought to be handled but which require more specific help than can be given at general meetings and demonstrations.

F-3—TREE PLANTING—SHELTERBELTS AND WOODLOTS.

OBJECT:

To establish demonstration shelterbelts or woodlots, as new plantings or as renewals. To discuss methods of setting trees, kinds of trees, spacing, etc. To furnish tree planting information through meetings, conferences and illustrated talks.

Some Results Obtained

During the year July 1, 1922 to July 1, 1923 Farm Forestry Extension was carried directly to 21 separate counties: wood preservation demonstrations were carried on in 5 counties, planting demonstrations in 16 counties, and farm forestry service demonstrations in 2 counties. A total of 1,741 people were reached by direct contact through 25 demonstrations, 30 meetings, and 360 interviews and conferences.

Three hundred and fifty-nine letters with information on farm forestry subjects went out to 75 counties in Iowa. Information has been sent out of the State in 46 letters.

There were received from the press for distribution the following:

Extension Bulletin, No. 108, "The Shelterbelt as an Asset on the Iowa Farm."

Extension Bulletin No. 109, "Longer Durability for Fence Posts and Farm Timbers."

Extension Bulletin No. 110, "Improving the Woodlot and Farmstead."

Extension Bulletin No. 111, "The Fuel Value of Wood."

Mimeographed: "How to Use Wood Fuel."

"Why Use Wood Fuel."

There was a total distribution of these publications, almost entirely in this State, of 18,620. Ninety publicity articles were prepared dealing in the main with the experiences of farmers in woodlot or other forestry work.

Some General Conclusions

1. Three outstanding conclusions are to be noted in connection with Forestry Extension in Iowa.

a. The rapid expansion of planting work.

This has been somewhat of a surprise because it was thought that probably the inspiration for new planting would be hardest to put across. Important phases which have come out in the planting work are the necessity of regular inspections and the instilling of ideas of replacements and staying with the planting to obtain a full stand.

b. Inquiries regarding treating of posts and the general attitude showing clearly that the cost of fence up-keep is a real problem.

The actual work accomplished in treating posts to date does not measure the recognized importance of the problem. It requires an initial outlay of \$50.00 to \$100.00 to start an average farm post treating plant, and the farmer has been making as few investments of this type as possible. A good deal of the demonstration work which was scheduled last year, was postponed because of lack of preparation by the communities attempting the demonstration.

c. The response to the call to utilize and harvest woodlot land and crops on a business like basis, the same as any other farm land or farm crop has been more than expected.

2. One of the big problems has been to get the people of the state to think of forestry as forestry and not as something else. Forestry has seemed to mean something foreign to Iowa and Iowa conditions. As the farmers have gotten the conception of forestry as a distinct problem they have grasped more and more of the significance of the forestry problems in the state and the value of the work.

3. We recognize that there is distinct forest land in Iowa and a forestry problem which if solved will be economy for the state. Yet, we try to keep our own enthusiasm from broadcasting the view that we believe Iowa would make more money from timber crops than from corn and hogs. There may be certain few localities where timber or fruit crops or garden or truck crops can be made the major issue. But in spite of our own enthusiasm, we believe we have to face the fact and recognize the job to be one of fitting in and rounding out a full program of soil utilization and economic farming by showing the uses of minor industries in supporting the major.

4. In our forestry work, where we find that soil which is better suited to production of timber as a secondary crop and that this would fill in the general agricultural program, we run into the marketing phase of the industry. Net return is the big point of interest to the farmer, and when it comes to the production of surplus wood crops the farmer wants to know where and what the net return is. He is having troubles even with the marketing of staple farm crops, much less with the marketing of specialties. If we are going to produce surplus of special crops, we must teach salesmanship.



CREOSOTING FENCE POSTS

Through farm demonstrations the farmer learns how to utilize his wood to better advantage.

In this connection, in Forestry Extension, we are up against one of our biggest problems in preaching use of waste land in certain sections for timber crops and management of native woodlands without being able to demonstrate definitely what disposal can be made of the surplus crop beyond the home or farm use. Our work therefore, to date, has been on the basis of the value of timber and trees in producing a crop for economic consumption on the farm where grown rather than on the basis of holding forth a new crop for the Iowa farmer to make money out of. This does not mean that we have not made use of every opportunity to give out results where farmers have been able to dispose of surplus timber crops at a profit.

5. It will be necessary for us to organize some method of giving individualized service. We find the woodland and planting problems to vary so much that it is difficult to give out the best advice in a meeting or demonstration. We have made some attempt to solve this problem by means of the farm tour in which a large number of visits can be made and problems discussed in the field with the individual farmer.

6. The long time nature of our forestry work makes the reporting of concrete results difficult. However, some indication of results have already been obtained.

7. It is gratifying to note that Iowa even though essentially agricultural, is among the leaders in Forestry Extension activity. There are some five or six states employing full time Extension Foresters and Iowa is one of them. The efforts being made in Iowa to collect data, keep accurate records, measure results and carry out follow-up work, are apparently in advance of many of the other states. To date, Iowa has been successful in carrying out the Forestry Extension program under the regular administration of the Agricultural Extension Department.

