

Program for 1938 Was Concentrated On Five Problems

Much Done Toward Developing Wholesome Attitudes on Part of Farm People

BY BEN SMITH

The Negro women of Durham county's rural communities, as well as the men, are actively engaged in improving conditions in their homes and on their farms, Estelle T. Nixon, home demonstration agent, declares in her annual report to the county commissioners.

So much has been done toward developing new and more wholesome attitudes among the rural people of the county during the past year that 1938 turned out to be the best year for home demonstration work in the four years the home agent has been here, she says.

In summing up the accomplishments for 1938 and discussing the outlook for 1939, the home agent states:

"Not enough has been done for anyone to sit down and rest upon his laurels, but the agent firmly believes that extension work in Durham county is on the 'Onward Trail.' The outlook for bringing about a

higher standard of living throughout the county by demonstrating better management of time, labor, and material resources in the home is very favorable."

There are 22 communities in Durham county where there is a need for extension work among Negro families, and 18 of these were actively engaged in home demonstration and 4-H club work in 1938, the home agent reports.

At the close of the year there were 11 women's clubs with a membership of 300, 12 girls' clubs with 400 members, two community clubs with 80 members, and two older girls' clubs with a membership of 42.

Through the cooperation of these clubs the home agent in 1938 was able to reach 321 of the 515 Negro farm families, 100 non-club members, and about 75 tenant families.

The program of work for 1938 was planned to combat the following five problems:

1. Malnutrition among children—caused more by a lack of the right kind of food than by a lack of the right amount of food.

2. Need of a food supply adequate for the family for the year around, rather than a surplus at one season and a scarcity at another.

3. Need for establishing good food and health habits.

4. Need for more pride in home life and home surroundings.

5. Need for family cooperation and home ownership.

With these problems in mind it was decided to make foods and nutrition the major project for the year's activities, with adult clothing as a minor project.

All 300 women in the 11 adult clubs took part in the major foods and nutrition project, and 225 satisfactorily completed it. A total of 125 families followed as closely as they could the requirements of a daily food essentials sheet; 71 women worked hard to serve balanced meals for their families and faithfully followed improved practices of preparing and serving food; 25 families reported they had improved home-packed lunches according to recommendations. As a result of the program three schools served hot school lunches to 75 undernourished children.

Through the efforts of the home and farm agents and the food leaders in the various clubs, 287 families produced and preserved food supplies according to the annual food supply budget; 351 families were assisted in canning and preserving fruits, vegetables, and meats; and women canned 70,600 quarts of fruits and vegetables, and made 9,000 containers of jam, jelly, pickles, and

completed the requirements. Not only were these women given advice in the making of their clothing, but they were encouraged to wear such clothes as would improve their personal appearance. In this connection attention was given to the care of the hair, skin, teeth and hands, especially among older women who were inclined to feel that their appearance no longer mattered.

The project included remodeling garments and making garments of a health and comfortable type for children as well as preparing women's clothes. Twelve women supplemented their income by \$375 by sewing for others.

Quilt making, too, was in full sway, and 100 beautiful and serviceable quilts were finished.

The interest in home gardens was keener than ever last year, with every one of the 200 women enrolled completing the work, so that the home agent was enabled to say in her report that she felt "the garden project is at last a permanent activity and because of it the problem of an inadequate balanced ration will be in part solved." No longer do the men wait until all other plowing is done before planting the home garden, but are eager to help their wives in getting it started as early as possible.

A project for the beautification of home grounds also met with good results, and when a special campaign was carried on in the Russell, Rocky Knoll, Peeksville, and Hebron communities, news of its success spread so that men and women from all parts of the county came to see the improvement that had been made in the homes.

One of the finest achievements in improving the appearance of a home was made by Mozelle Page, of the Peeksville community, in Oak Grove township. After she and three children had hauled 25 loads of earth to fill in the low spots in her yard, built low stone walls to hold this earth in place, sodded it with Bermuda grass where possible, spent \$10 for flowers and bulbs to plant, and then saw the results, she wrote to the home agent, "We also were convinced that no yard is so ugly that work, patience, flowers and love can not make it beautiful.

A project for better home management and improvement in house furnishings attracted 250 women, 200 of whom finished the project. A total of \$555 is estimated to have been saved by the work done in this project, such as repairing furniture, painting walls to preserve them, etc.

The same program and projects

were carried out in the 4-H clubs as in the adult clubs. The value of the food preservation program among the girls was estimated at \$786.75, with 2,500 quarts of fruits and vegetables being canned, 1,745 pounds of fruit dried, and 1,000 containers of jelly, jam, and other products put up.

Good results were noticed in the efforts of the home agent to teach girls to cook meats and eggs in other ways than by frying them.

The total money value of the 4-H girls clubs' projects was estimated at \$975.75. In addition to the \$786.75 from the canned goods, this included \$60 from garden products, \$95 from tobacco, \$20 from a hog-raising demonstration, and \$14 from a canning contest.

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