

# EXTENSION SERVICE CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

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Anyone who grew up on a farm and was in a 4-H club as a kid has firsthand experience with Extension and Extension agents. So do farmers themselves, businessmen and engineers. And golf course superintendents. Nearly everyone in our country has benefited greatly from the help and counsel and advice of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Have you ever had Dr. Gayle Worf come to your golf course to help with a particularly difficult turfgrass problem? Did you ever question him (or Dr. Newman or Dr. Kussow) at the WTA Summer Field Day or at the UW Turfgrass Conference or over the phone? Their help comes courtesy of the Cooperative Extension Service. The same is true for many of the other faculty members whose help you need from time to time. Did you ever watch WHA-TV or listen to WHA radio? They are the Extension Service at work. Extension has made the lives of all Americans, either directly or indirectly, both easier and better.

Extension is one of the ways our University of Wisconsin shares her research with the citizens of the state. The Cooperative Extension Service is 75 years old this year. But in our state, it got an earlier start. Back in 1890 Steve Moulton Babcock shared his development of a test for butterfat content in milk with the dairy industry. In 1908 the UWEX initiated a health project to prevent tuberculosis by educating school kids and adults about the hazards of this disease.

May 8th marked the official anniversary of the Cooperative Extension Service on a national level. Coop Extension programs began in 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. But Extension's roots in other states, as well as in Wisconsin, are much older than that.

Probably the first U.S. organization to informally distribute information on agriculture was the American Philosophical Society which was founded in 1743. One of the founders and a long-time leader of the society was Benjamin Franklin. Informal learning activities became much more systematically organized through agricultural societies. The first of these was organized in Philadelphia in 1785. This movement prospered and flourished for 75 years

and reached a peak about the time the Civil War started.

State legislators also advanced informal agricultural education by establishing state boards of agriculture. The first was New York's, founded in 1819. These state boards were primarily responsible for establishing one of today's Extension's most direct predecessors — farmers' institutes. These usually lasted from one to five days and dealt with a variety of topics.

Opportunities for formal learning in agricultural sciences were extremely limited in early America. Most colleges through the first half of the 19th century offered few, if any, courses related to agriculture. Most of them were private colleges offering a classic based curriculum most likely patterned after the centuries-old examples of Oxford



and Cambridge.

A few years ago I wrote a piece about a man I consider a real hero among American agriculturalists — Justin Smith Morrill. As a Vermont Congressman, in 1857 he introduced a land-grant college bill. Five years later, in 1862, President Lincoln signed the bill into law (on July 2). The Morrill Act provided for at least one college in each state, "...where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific or classical studies, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts."

The legislation provided a number of 30,000-acre land grants to each state equivalent to the number in each state's congressional delegation. The lands were to be sold, 10 percent of the proceeds used, if necessary, to purchase a college site, including an experimental farm, and the balance was to be permanently invested at five percent interest. What a brilliant piece of legislation by that Vermonter.

The Morrill Act was part of 1862's "bumper crop" of agriculture-related legislation. Only a few weeks before signing the land grant act, Lincoln signed two other historic and important bills. On May 15, he signed the Organic Act which created the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), an action that had been proposed 70 years earlier by George Washington.

The other bill, signed five days later, was the Homestead Act. That law made available to the public millions of acres of land at virtually no cost. Immediately land prices dropped, speculation was widespread and the result for the new land grant colleges was meager endowments.

Morrill almost immediately began a campaign in the Congress for additional endowment funds, but it wasn't until 1890 that another bill was passed that assisted in solving this problem.

Establishment of Agricultural Experiment Stations was another milestone in the development process that ultimately led to Extension's emergence. Experiment stations had long been in existence in Europe when, in 1875, Wilbur Atwater established our country's first at the Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Later, Atwater became the first director of the Office of Experiment Stations in the USDA.

Legislation was introduced in Congress in 1882 to establish an Experiment Station at one land grant college in each state. It wasn't until 1887 before such a bill, sponsored by Missouri Representative William Hatch, was signed by President Grover Cleveland. Members of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association have heard Dr. Worf speak of research work paid for from "Hatch" funds. Now you know where that phrase comes from. The Hatch legislation firmly established research as a recognized function and mission of the land grant colleges and universities.

Two New Englanders were early pioneers actively involved in Extension-type efforts. They were Kenyon L. Butterfield, president of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, and Seaman A. Knapp (a Vermonter) of the USDA. Their views on how Extension should be administered were very different. Knapp advocated "cooperative farm demonstrations" directed by the USDA

through its field agents, while Butterfield urged a system of "agricultural college extension" planned by the states and including farm demonstrations as one of several methods.

Butterfield suggested "pecuniary aid by the national government to land grant colleges for agriculture Extension work." This was the germ of the idea which 17 years later resulted in creating the Cooperative Extension Service through passage of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act.

Knapp firmly believed that observing farms operated at public expense wasn't likely to motivate farmers to change their operating methods. In his opinion, diversified agriculture and other desirable changes would come only through demonstrations conduct-

ed by farmers themselves on their own farms under ordinary farm conditions. In Knapp's words, "what a man hears, he may doubt, but what he does, he cannot doubt . . . ."

A bill filed in December of 1909 to finance Extension work by the agricultural colleges was the first of 32 such bills ultimately submitted. South Carolina Congressman A. Frank Lever put his in the hopper on June 2, 1911. An amended version of Lever's bill was introduced in the Senate more than a year later by George Hoke Smith. Nearly two more years passed before the Smith-Lever bill finally was passed. President Woodrow Wilson signed it on May 8, 1914.

The Smith-Lever Act provided for mutual cooperation of the USDA and

the land grant colleges in conducting agricultural Extension work. It specified that the work ". . . shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise . . . ."

The vision of these early agricultural leaders in Congress and their dedication to the cause of education has been beneficial to golf course management for generations. Their tight hold to an ideal has given us the chance to know and learn from educators like Dr. Worf. This birthday year of Extension is worthy of celebration!

— MSM

## JACOBSEN HOLDS 22nd ANNUAL COLLEGE STUDENT SEMINAR

Turf students Todd Monge of the University of Wisconsin (seated) and Glenn Perry of the University of Rhode Island (right) are shown in the accompanying photograph discussing Jacobsen's LF-100 Fairway Mower with Training Manager Ralph Sylvester during the 22nd annual Jacobsen College Student Seminar held in Racine May 21 through May 25. Monge and Perry were among the thirty-six students who attended this year's program.

Curt Larson, general manager of Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corporation, talked about the subject of "what golf course superintendents should expect from their distributor" with the students.

Adding to the 1989 seminar's distinctive Wisconsin flavor was a trip to Milwaukee County Stadium to hear from Harry Gill before watching the Brewers play a night game. They toured Racine Country Club and were hosted by WGCSA member Mike Handrich. In addition to a Jacobsen factory tour, they "toured" Lake Michigan aboard a cruise boat. Kent Kurtz of Cal Poly Tech made what has been an annual trip for him to Racine. John Piersol, an instructor at Lake City Community College, lectured on the subject of realisms of the working world.

Jacobsen staff members were included throughout the program. Students heard from familiar names like Brinkman, Reid, Krick and Sylvester, among others.

As recorded in the "Editor's Notebook", former Wisconsin residents Danny Quast and Bill Roberts came "home" for the chance to address future members of our profession.

Jacobsen sponsors the seminar as part of the company's continuing commitment to golf industry education. As we know, that commitment also includes generous support of the NOER CENTER and annual monies dedicated to the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund.

— MSM

