

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Division

THOMAS P. COOPER, Dean and Director

CIRCULAR NO. 192

**THE HOMEMAKERS' ASSOCIATION IN
KENTUCKY**

"There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the nation, than the farmer's wife; no more important home than the country home."—Theodore Roosevelt.

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“Everybody must live in some sort of a home, everyone finds his chief happiness there, character is developed there. No great advance, spiritual or material, is possible which does not begin with the home. The homemakers of America have the making of the Nation.

On the breadth and strength of the base depends the height of the pinnacle; on the home foundation we rear the pinnacle of all that is good in state or individual.”

American School of Home Economics.

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The Homemakers' Association in Kentucky

By MYRTLE WELDON,

State Leader in Home Economics Extension

The rural homemakers of America hold an important position in the Nation's well-being. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the Nation, than the farmer's wife; no more important home than the country home." Any homemaker will agree that the job of homemaking is a complex one, involving skill in many lines and requiring much knowledge. The rural homemaker has been compelled to work out her problems alone and unaided and in her discouragement she has often felt herself no more than a common drudge. The information resulting from research, the contributions of science and art, have not been accessible to her to help her solve her problems.

Extension work in home economics was initiated to meet this situation by extending education in home economics beyond the walls of the institutions of research and learning to the homemaker in her own community. The extension program in homemaking has given the rural woman the opportunity to study her homemaking problems under trained leadership; to increase her skill and efficiency in performing the many mechanical tasks of housekeeping, thus freeing her from the bondage of drudgery; has made it possible for her to acquire the information which enables her to apply the contributions of science and art to her chosen profession, thus making the home a more healthful and beautiful place in which to live. Furthermore, the extension organization, thru its varied activities, is stimu-

lating a new attitude toward homemaking, a keener appreciation of the bigness and importance of her job, is opening new fields of interest in the mental, moral, social and spiritual aspects of homemaking, in community homemaking which involves the problems of better rural education, community health and sanitation and better rural recreation. Thru participation in these activities, the rural homemaker herself is developing poise, self confidence and powers of self expression which are giving her personal satisfaction and are increasing her influence for good in her home and community.

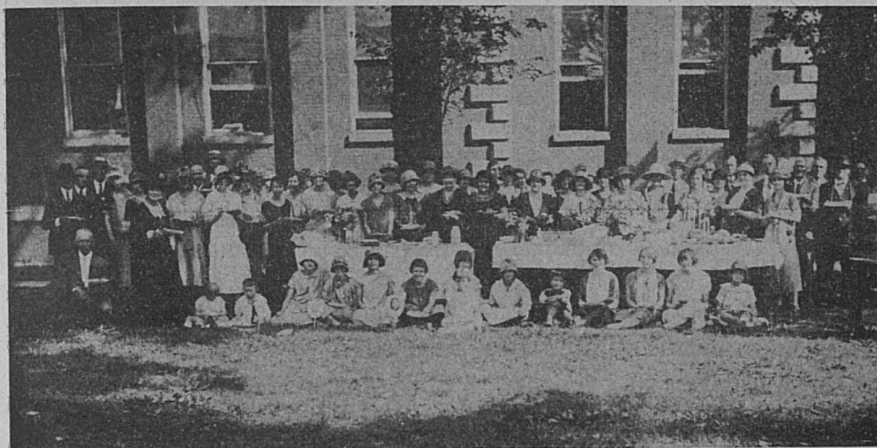
Extension education in agriculture and home economics was given great impetus in 1914 by the passage of the Smith-Lever bill which appropriated Federal funds to be divided among the states in proportion to their rural population and to be used in promoting an educational program in agriculture and home economics. In order to receive these funds each state is required to raise an approximately equal amount to supplement the Federal fund and to be used for the same purpose. Every state in the Union has met the terms of the act and is carrying on a program of extension education in agriculture and home economics. The administration of these funds and the supervision of the program were delegated to the state agricultural colleges of the various states.

In order to carry on this program in Kentucky, the College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky has created an Extension Division in Agriculture and Home Economics and maintains a staff of supervisors, specialists and county agricultural and home demonstration agents whose time is given to the promotion of the extension program.

The home economics extension program is under the immediate supervision of the State Leader of home demonstration agents and her assistants. This staff helps in determining policies, building programs, in problems of organization, administration, publicity, development of leadership, finance and general activities of the extension organization and in the organization of new counties.

COUNTY HOMEMAKERS' ASSOCIATION

In Kentucky, as in most states, the county has been chosen as the logical unit for carrying on the extension program. The county organization for carrying on a home economics extension program in Kentucky is known as the County Homemakers' Association. This association is an organization of women who wish to identify themselves with the extension service of the University of Kentucky and receive the benefits of the home economics extension program. Any woman who is interested in the purposes of the organization may become a member by signing an enrollment card and taking part in the activities of the organization.



County meeting of Homemakers, McCracken County

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The members of the Homemakers' Association in any community compose a community Homemakers' Club which is the study group of the association. Each community Homemakers' Club elects its own officers and is represented on a county advisory council.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The administration of the affairs of the organization is delegated to the Homemakers' advisory council composed of the chairman of the community Homemakers' Clubs and the county



Community Homemakers Club in a mountain county.

officers. This group holds regular meetings thruout the year, helps in determining policies, planning the program, financing the organization and promoting all county-wide activities.

THE HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT

The home demonstration agent is the local representative of the University in the county. She is employed jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture, the College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, and the county in which she works. She is a woman well trained in home economics. The home demonstration agent is not a walking dictionary or encyclopedia nor a personal servant of the homemakers in the county. She is an administrator, organizer, supervisor and teacher. She helps the women of the association in the determining of policies and the organization of clubs. She makes arrangements for all meetings with specialists, attends club meetings, supervises both the adult and junior program, helps

plan the program and put it across and gives personal help and advice when necessary. She may be consulted in her office or called into the home in regard to matters requiring her personal supervision.

THE HOME ECONOMICS EXTENSION SPECIALIST

The home demonstration agent with her many activities and interests in a county cannot be a specialist in all phases of her work. She can, however, call into the county specialists from the state extension staff who conduct training classes for local project leaders. These leaders, in turn, become instructors in their respective communities and by so doing not only make a real contribution to better homemaking in their communities, but gain initiative, poise, self confidence and become potential leaders in other phases of community betterment.

THE PROJECT LEADER

The project leaders are homemakers selected by their respective Homemakers' Clubs to help carry on a project of interest to the community. They are chosen because of their interest in the project and their ability as leaders. These leaders meet about once a month at the county seat in all-day session, at which time they are given specific instructions by the specialist or the home demonstration agent. This meeting is called a leaders' training conference. The leaders, in turn, repeat this information to their community groups. It is customary for each community Homemakers' Club to select two project leaders for each project.

PROJECTS CARRIED ON IN KENTUCKY

The extension projects carried on in Kentucky may be classified under five main heads.

1. Food.
2. Clothing.
3. Home Improvement.
4. Home Health and Sanitation.
5. Community Improvement.

The program carried on in any county is of its own building. A community program planning meeting in each community forms the basis of a subsequent meeting of the advisory council, at which time the county major program is planned. The county major program is carried on cooperatively by the specialist, home demonstration agent and project leader. The specialist trains the local leader who, in turn, is the teacher in her community. The home demonstration agent helps to select the leader, makes all local arrangements, secures local cooperation, plans local meetings, checks up on project leaders, secures records of accomplishment and supervises the demonstrations. In addition to her part in the county major program the home demonstration agent carries on a minor program in the county based on the particular interests of the community groups. If the homemakers of the county are quite unanimously interested in one major project, more can be accomplished by concentrating on that one project for a year. If, however, there is considerable diversity of interest probably the interest of more members will be retained by choosing two projects each of four or five months' duration.

CLOTHING PROJECT

Selection—Selection is a fundamental clothing problem of interest to every woman. Whether she sews or whether she buys her clothing ready made, every woman desires to be as beautifully, appropriately, suitably and comfortably dressed as possible. To do so, she must select the color most becoming to her, the design which emphasizes her good points and conceals her bad points, the material and style suitable to her occupational and social needs. Since selection is fundamental to all clothing work, the beginning course in clothing is selection, supplemented by simple constructive processes applied to the construction of undergarments.

Elementary Construction—The clothing selection course is followed by clothing construction, which includes a study of:

1. Short cuts in sewing thru better understanding of the sewing machine, its care and operation, the use of machine attachments to accomplish practical short cuts.
2. Selection, testing, alteration and use of commercial patterns.
3. Fundamental constructive processes such as seams and their use, bindings, facings, pipings, hems, collar and neck openings, how to set in sleeves, etc.
4. The making, mounting, covering and use of the dress form.
5. Making a simple one-piece dress.

Advanced Construction—Advanced projects in clothing take the home dressmaker into the problems of renovation, remodeling, work on silk and wool material, linings and advanced constructive processes.



Project leaders training class in clothing, Mercer County.

Millinery—There are some who smile at the idea of the rural woman making her own hats, but here the old saying holds true, "He laughs best who laughs last." Rural women are not only learning to make their own hats at a saving of money but they are learning to appreciate a beautiful hat, to choose the color and line most becoming to them and they are wearing better hats and more attractive hats than when they used to buy

them. The rural woman has had little opportunity for creative expression of her innate love of the beautiful. The millinery work is giving this opportunity for self expression and many women are surprised at the work of their own hands.

Tailoring—There are a limited number of women who have done considerable clothing work and who wish to go on and attempt something more difficult. A course in the making of tailored garments is offered to these groups. Here, again, the women are surprised at their own accomplishments.

FOODS PROJECT

The foods project as carried on in Kentucky may be classified under four headings: Selection, Preparation, Production, Preservation.

Selection—The selection of the food thru the whole of life and particularly from infancy thru adolescence is fundamental to growth, vitality, resistance to disease, and general health. Since the homemaker selects and prepares the family meals, it is in her power to determine whether her family has the food which will furnish the necessary elements to build strong bones, pure blood, strong nerve and muscle, provide for maximum growth and development, maintain good digestion and elimination or the reverse. Malnutrition, particularly among children, low standard of health, frequency of minor ailments, indicating low resistance, are evidences of poor food selection. The purpose of the food selection program is to teach the homemaker: (1) the importance of food in relation to health; (2) the food requirements of persons of various ages and in various conditions and occupations; and, lastly, (3) how she in her own particular locality and on her means can provide for her family a healthful diet.

Preparation—The selection of food is the first and fundamental step in a satisfactory family diet. Once selected, food must be prepared, so it is appetizing, attractive and digestible and must be attractively served. The aim of the food preparation project is to teach the principles of cookery of the different food groups, to teach enough nutrition to stimulate an interest in

better meal planning and to provide better cooked, more digestible, more appetizing and more attractive meals for the family group.

Production—In order to have a well-selected variety of fruits and vegetables during the summer and a surplus to be stored or preserved for winter use, the family garden must be given careful consideration. The Horticultural Department has given the Home Economics Extension Department invaluable help in carrying on a garden project.

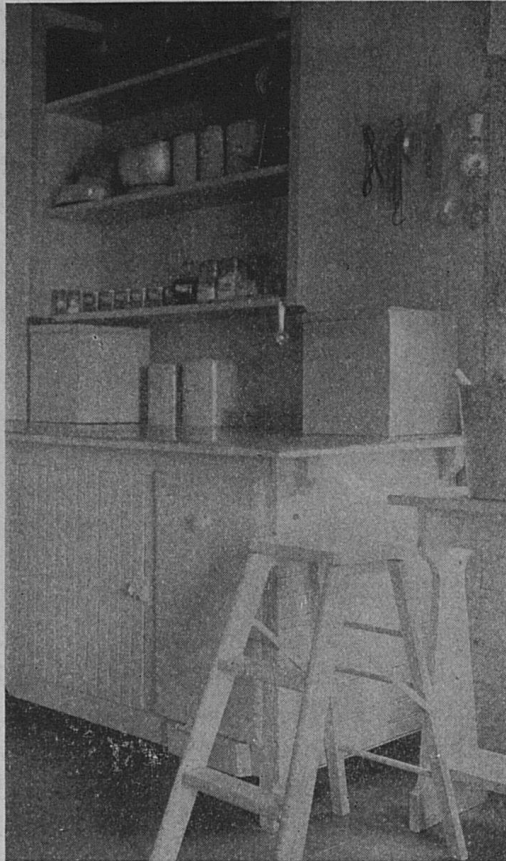
Preservation—A healthful diet in the winter in a farm home is more or less dependent on the canned and stored foods available. The homemaker needs not only to thoroly understand methods of food preservation but she must intelligently make a food preservation budget which will provide her family with adequate amount, quality and variety of preserved food.

HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The object of the Home Improvement project is to make the homes of the country more convenient and efficient workshops for the accomplishing of the many tasks of housekeeping and more attractive and satisfying places in which to live.

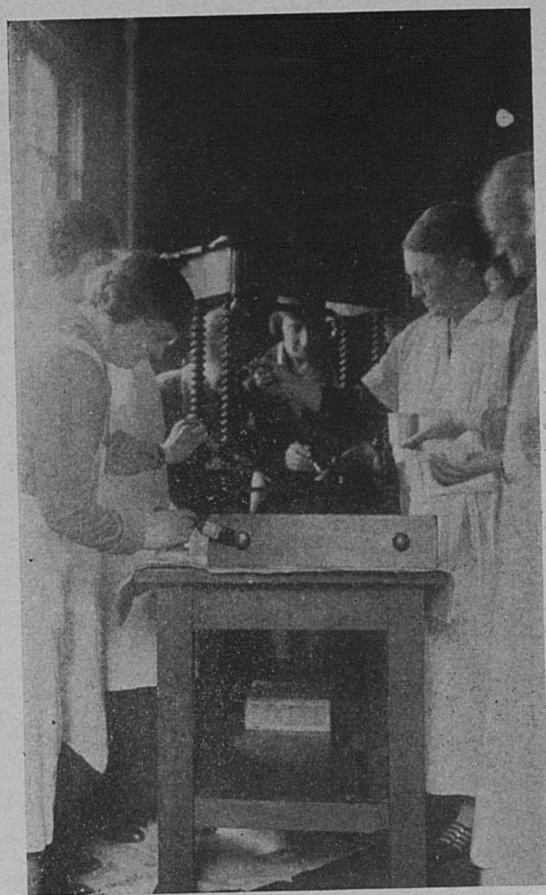
Wife-Saving Kitchens—Since the kitchen is the workshop of the home, the poor arrangement and lack of facilities for carrying on the work in the kitchen effectively, adds much to the homemaker's burden. In an effort to lighten the mechanical task of housekeeping a "wife-saving kitchen" program is offered to the women of Kentucky.

Home Furnishing—Beautiful home environment is not a matter of expensive furnishings but intelligent selection and arrangement. This course is teaching the homemaker how to make her walls beautiful backgrounds for her furniture, pictures, and for her family itself; how to decorate and care for floors and woodwork; how to select and make curtains and drapes; to select, frame and hang picture; how to secure pleasing color combinations in the home; how to refinish furniture; how to make and use other useful and beautiful home accessories.



Corner of a remodeled kitchen.

Home Health and Sanitation—Altho the Extension Division does not maintain a specialist in health and sanitation, the Home Economics Extension service is working in all counties to secure higher standards of health. Many counties are carrying on a health program. The studying of such vital subjects as home and community sanitation, keeping physically fit, control of communicable diseases, home care of the sick, invalid cookery, control of household pests is resulting in homes screened, water tested, wells drilled, sanitary toilets installed, fly traps constructed, rodents killed, school children weighed, measured and defects corrected, health clubs in rural schools, and many other improved standards of health.



Leaders class in refinishing furniture,
Davies County

COMMUNITY AND MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

The interests of rural women are widening and with this widening interest they are sponsoring many activities of community interest. Each homemakers' club is becoming interested in building into its program a community project. The Homemakers' Associations are sponsoring such activities as community and county fairs, rural recreation, community improvement such as clean-up campaigns, landscaping of town squares and public buildings, furnishing of community rest rooms, building of community buildings, county recreational camps for women and many undertakings of benefit to their county and communities.



Star campers, Christian County Home-makers Camp.

**RESPONSIBILITY SHARED BY HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT
AND MEMBERS**

Much of the success of the Home Economics Extension program in any county is due to the fine leadership and the untiring service of the county home demonstration agent. She is the hub around which the entire county program revolves. She keeps the machinery working, her enthusiasm is the constant inspiration of the club members with whom she comes in contact. Her training and experience in home economics make her of invaluable service in the establishing of better home practices. The success of the Home Economics Extension program is

equally dependent upon the members of the Homemakers' Association. Their assumption of responsibility, their participation in the activities of the organization, their unselfish contribution to its program, are essential to a worth while piece of work. What they put into their organization in terms of time, interest, effort, participation, determines the value which they, in turn, receive and the contribution which they can make to their communities.

**STEPS IN ORGANIZING A HOMEMAKERS' ASSOCIATION AND
SECURING A HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT**

The Home Economics Extension service is willing to give assistance at any time to counties interested in organizing a Homemakers' Association and employing a home demonstration agent. The State Leader or Assistant State Leaders will meet with representative groups of women to help them make plans for securing a membership and informing the public regarding the work.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Since the extension program is a cooperative undertaking it is preferable that the financial responsibility be shared equally by the county and State Agricultural College. The county funds usually are secured by an appropriation of the fiscal court and are supplemented by State and Federal funds made available by the Smith-Lever Act. In addition to the county funds appropriated toward the salary of the home demonstration agent, the county furnishes an office with sufficient office equipment such as chairs, desks, files, typewriter, to adequately carry on the work of the organization. The efficiency of the home demonstration agent as a Home Economics Extension worker is greatly increased if the county will furnish full or part time office help to do the routine office work which must be done.

PROCEDURE IN SECURING A HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT

1. When the women in a county have expressed interest in Home Economics Extension work, some interested woman will call a county meeting of a few representative women from each community in the county.

2. A member of the Home Economics Extension staff of the University of Kentucky will meet with this committee to explain the Home Economics Extension organization and program and to help make plans for securing a home demonstration agent.
3. This committee forms a county organization committee. A chairman and secretary are elected to supervise the preliminary work in the county and keep a record of progress.
4. The representatives from each community form a community organization committee. These committees will give information regarding the work and will make a survey of the respective communities to ascertain how many women are really interested in participating in a Home Economics Extension program.
5. After this survey has been completed, the county organization committee meets again to decide whether there is sufficient interest in the work to justify a request for financial support.
6. If there is sufficient interest it becomes the duty of the members of the county organization committee to inform their officials regarding the work and to ask for financial support.

Before a Home Economics Extension program is undertaken and a home demonstration agent employed in any county there should be a county-wide interest in the program, a group of women in the majority of districts within the county sufficiently interested to take an active part in the program. Only when this is true do the county officials have reason to believe that they are using the funds expended for home demonstration work wisely and effectively. When an appropriation has been secured, the Extension Department of the University of Kentucky will give further assistance in perfecting a Homemakers' Association previous to the employment of the home demonstration agent.