



# **How an agricultural representative could help the farmers of a county. Bulletin no. 39 October 1916**

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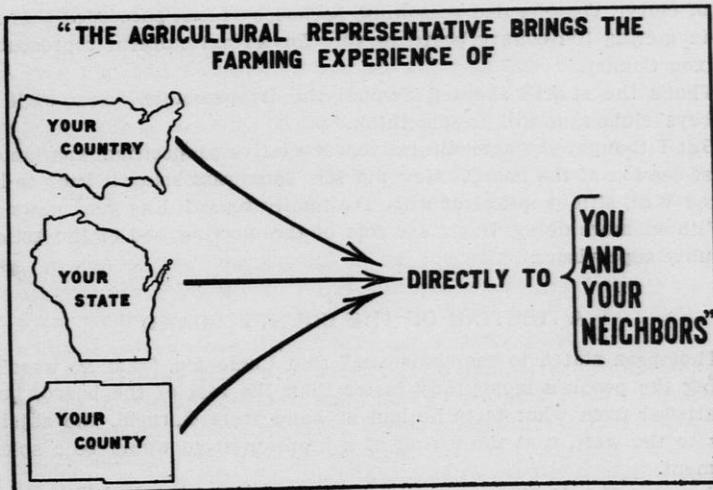
# WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

## How An Agricultural Representative Could Help The Farmers of a County

By

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**Wisconsin Bankers' Association**

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# How An Agricultural Representative Could Help The Farmers of a County

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Here is a true story. Only the names of persons and places have been changed.

"It takes something mighty interesting to break up a checker game in the 'soap box crowd' at the corner grocery, but 'Jim' Heath did it today all right. Inside of five minutes after he had come in from his auto trip to Hopeville where the county board's in session, he had everyone in the store listening to his story, like a threshing crew waiting for the dinner bell."

So said Uncle Joe Ferris as he washed up before joining the family at the supper table.

"What's new?" inquired the son, Will, as he passed his plate for a second helping.

"Simply that Frank Thompson, the supervisor from Springvale, by a piece of clever, clear-headed reasoning, backed by facts, succeeded this afternoon in getting the county board to vote for an agricultural representative for Dixon County."

"That's the stuff!" shouted Samuel the Irrepressible, "now we'll have some boys' clubs that will do something."

"But I thought the agricultural representative proposition was tabled at the last session of the board. How did Mr. Thompson bring it back to life?" inquired Will, still skeptical of what the family regarded as good news.

Without more delay, Uncle Joe told of the meeting and of the action of the county supervisors.

## A MEETING OF THE COUNTY BOARD

"Thompson stated to the chairman," said Uncle Joe, "that he wasn't for spending the people's money any faster than the rest of the board, but he was satisfied from what facts he had at hand from Garfield, the adjoining county to the west, that the hiring of a representative would be a splendid investment.

"Knowing Harris, the representative, personally, Thompson went over to Smithville, county seat of Garfield, to learn something about the work. But before looking up Harris he obtained some good facts from the business men and the county officials. These facts he verified and had one of his boys make a chart to compare Garfield with Dixon county. The chart was hung up in the board room while Thompson told his story.

"Thompson found that in the four years that Harris had been at work in Garfield county, steady improvement had been made in their potato production; that last year while Dixon county farmers were selling potatoes at warehouse prices, Garfield county farmers sold about 6,000 bushels of certified seed stock at \$1.25 a bushel, an advance of 50 cents over table stock, with buyers asking for more. In the same time Garfield county had built six silos to Dixon's one; had sold several car loads of pure bred young stock,

and three successful cow testing clubs had been organized. An outbreak of hog cholera had been nipped in the bud last summer in Garfield county—at the same time Dixon county farmers lost hundreds of porkers. The Garfield county exhibit at the State Fair won first place for two years while Dixon county wasn't even represented.

### A DAY'S WORK

"Then Thompson told about a trip through the county with Harris. He met him just as he was starting out to see a farmer who had telephoned for help on building a silo.

"Harris invited Thompson to jump into his car and make the rounds for the day if he wanted to know something at first hand of a county man's job.

"In Harris' auto Thompson noted a number of tools—saw, wrench, square, and level, a case of instruments for castrating and dehorning live stock, and various disinfectants for treatment of injuries, which he carries with him as regular equipment to use when necessary.

"The first stop was at a farm owned by a man named Schmidt. This fellow had gotten the silo forms from the representatives the week before and had started to lay out the silo, but he wasn't quite sure just how to start the thing off. Harris helped the farmer to get the forms set right, looked over his sand to see if it was the right quality for the cement, discussed the proper mix which he should have for the wall, and then told him he would be back in a couple of days to see if everything was going well.

"At the next place they were cutting clover for ensilage. The farm hands were having trouble with the blower and didn't seem to know what the trouble was. As a matter of fact, they lacked power because the engine was placed too close to the machine. Harris helped them to make the change in location and waited long enough to see the machine started again. The increased power was sufficient to overcome the friction of the blower.

"It was dinner time when they reached Dell Jones' farm, where Harris made arrangements to test Jones' herd for tuberculosis. Jones and Harris took the temperatures in the afternoon. While they were waiting for evening to make the inoculations, Harris ran down to the next farm on the road to see a fellow who had been spraying his potatoes for the late blight. Last year the farmers in this section lost over half of their late potatoes from the blight and Harris had succeeded this year in getting a number to spray to overcome this disease. This fellow left four rows unsprayed through the middle of the field. These were all shriveled up while the sprayed were healthy and green.

"They got back to Jones' for supper, after which the tuberculin was injected. Jones was to start taking temperatures at six the next morning and Harris promised that he would be there for the next set of temperatures at eight.

"On the road back to town they stopped at the representative's office in the court house and saw his method of filing records, how he kept track of the follow-up work with each farmer. Thompson made up his mind that a day's work for a county man was a job that would keep any man busy most of his time. Some folks think that a county representative is a kind of kid

glove professor, but Thompson had the thing his own way with the facts he had to back his proposition.

## 20 MEN ALLOTTED BY THE STATE

"After this personal experience of Thompson with a county man, Brainard of the town of Jackson told the Board that the state had already appropriated the money for twenty of these representatives this year and that Dixon county by voting their quota could get one of these. If they didn't they had to pay their share in the state tax anyway so they might as well try it out."

## HOW TO GET A COUNTY MAN

Steady progress is evident in the new movement for agricultural representatives in Wisconsin. Seventeen counties have now secured such "agents of prosperity." In each case they have made good. Not a single county has discontinued the work.

This method of carrying on extension work in agriculture in this state had its start in Oneida county in 1912. Counties now supplied with representatives are Ashland, Barron, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Portage, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, and Walworth.

The county board must vote not less than \$1,000 a year for a two-year period, which makes available state and federal aid through the College of Agriculture. The financial load thus distributed over the entire county means only a few cents a farm each year. The agricultural representative, while selected by the College of Agriculture is subject to approval by a committee of the county board.

The man lives in the county, usually at the county seat, has an office in the Court House, and his services are available to any person on call. This resident relationship is sure to make him cautious in his advice. If he makes a mistake the error stares him continually in the face. He can't get away from it. These county men do not pose as experts capable of answering every inquiry made. If they have not had actual experience on the question asked, they are so situated in their relation to the Agricultural College and the federal Department of Agriculture, that they can get in touch with some agency which can give the desired aid, if such is possible. They are, therefore, resident representatives in agriculture, located throughout the state, on the ground where they can be of the most use to the man who most needs help. Many a farmer will ask a question personally or over the telephone who would not sit down and laboriously write out a letter, sending it to the College at Madison, regarding some problem that bothers him.

The County Agricultural Representative can help you stop hog cholera, test your cattle for tuberculosis, show how to disinfect your grains for smut, get improved kinds of seed, help you pick out a better sire, test your soil for acidity, compound a spraying mixture, aid in marketing your surplus crops, develop a system of simple farm accounts, show you how to build a septic tank for disposal of house sewage and numerous other problems that are constantly arising in connection with our diversified agriculture.