



Agriculture needs enthusiasts

"...for that matter will we ask anything or even bother to listen?"

Like everything else in this world, agriculture is an industry experiencing vast changes. Changes that we as ag majors must realize, face and challenge.

Let's face it, agriculture is no longer a way of life for the country as it was for so many decades. Today there are more people in agriculture-related jobs alone than on the farm.

What's good for ag is not necessarily good for the rest of the nation or vice versa. But what affects one segment does affect the other.

A handful of people make decisions each day that directly affect agriculture. Often the issues involved seem far away from the farm.

But the reality is that it is no lon-

ger enough to be concerned on only direct ag issues. All decisions affect agriculture in some way.

It's past time that we speak out on issues. For years it has been said that agriculture needs people in the political system who will listen.

Gerald McCathern, an early organizer of the American Agriculture Movement from Dalhart, Texas, decided that being heard was not enough. He feels that to have input into the system, people familiar with agricultural problems must be political candidates and he hopes some are elected. So, McCathern is seeking a senatorial seat in the Texas legislature.

Perhaps what agriculture really needs is a voice.

In the upcoming year, candidates will make speeches and speak out on issues. But will we as agricultural students question their views? Will we ask about farm policy and foreign affairs? Will we find out their views concerning foreign investment in farm and ranch land? For that matter will we ask anything or even bother to listen?

We all cannot be involved as political candidates, but we can be a voice for politicians to hear.

Agriculture has always been more than checking the north 40. But now it requires even more from its people. It doesn't need apathetic followers, but demands involved individuals.

Students are over-involved

"Students are involved to the point that they don't have time to do anything"

Involvement is the key word at Texas A&M. Freshmen should know that by the time they graduate, they will have been a member of three agriculture technical clubs, four student organizations (sports, church, social or service) held an office three times, served on seven committees, and averaged 16 hours per semester in addition to attending the local dance hall or drinking establishment at least once every ten days.

Multiply these figures by the number of students in the College of Agriculture and it would seem that many things are being accomplished or learned. It's obvious what dance halls and bars are for. But what is the purpose of being involved in so many organizations?

Students are overwhelmed with chances to join a club to meet people, learn things not taught in their classes and have a good time after studying. We are beginning to join for the sake of joining.

Our college has heard too many students say they are too busy with club activities, but we haven't seen the "fruits of their labor." Granted, a lot of students are purposefully involved, but the majority of them simply have joined so many clubs that they are getting "burned out." They stop working for the clubs, dump the work on the involved members and still take the glory for the club's accomplishments.

In the College of Agriculture, most clubs have suffered a loss in members attending meetings. Alpha Zeta, the agriculture honor society, has 250 members with only 20 to 50

attending meetings. The National Agri-Marketing Association had over 150 students involved in PCPA Day, but hasn't had more than 20 students at their past two meetings.

Students are frustrated with club meetings because they seem to lack a purpose. Most clubs have written into their constitution that it will meet twice a month and many officers think that if they don't meet they are letting their members down. Clubs are meeting for the sake of meeting.

One such organization in the College of Agriculture is the Ag Council.

The Ag Council is an assembly of all agriculture technical club presidents and elected council representatives plus all College of Agriculture senators.

The Council is supposed to serve as an advisory committee to the Dean of Agriculture and address important matters and policies affecting students within the college. Agricultural Convocation held in the spring to recognize outstanding students is a primary project of the Council.

The members of Ag Council are among the most active in their technical clubs.

Students on west campus were asked what they thought Ag Council's purpose is. Aside from those who said it handled Ag Convocation, most thought it should be, but isn't, a spokesman for ag students in student body issues.

The Council's current discussion is a chili cook-off so students can meet each other. Meeting people is

better accomplished at dance halls and by a friendly "Howdy" when walking to classes. Ag Council's time should be spent trying to get shuttle buses to run on time or helping students with class schedules.

West campus classes start on the half hour. Last year Ag Council worked to get this approved. This year students are having a hard time juggling classes to make west and main campus classes fit into their schedule.

Parking lots near the Kleberg Center are for day and dorm students. Dorm students park their cars for a week at a time in the lots closest to the west campus buildings, never moving them, forcing day students to park in the lots nearest Olsen Field.

Along with shuttle bus schedules, these problems could be handled by Ag Council. Most Ag Council reps are unaware that there is a parking problem. The Council can't serve the students if the students fail to use their Council representatives.

Since Ag Council representatives are from all the technical clubs on campus, that would be a good place for club leaders to learn how to conduct purposeful meetings. Ag Council should set the example for the rest of the clubs and students to follow.

Clubs should meet only when necessary. Students should let their officers know about their problems and require reports from Ag Council meetings. But most importantly, students ought to know why they belong to a club and have a purpose for being in each one.

Comment

the Agriculturist

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The cover photograph, courtesy of the TAMU Archives, shows a 1922 judging contest in the Animal Science Pavillion across from the Animal Industries Building.