

**AIRGRAM**

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

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DATE SENT  
July 16, 1970

FROM - Yaounde

SUBJECT - Federal Higher School of Agriculture

REFERENCE -

Dr. Jackson, Dean of the School of Agriculture, Southern University departed Cameroon on 12 July after a two-week visit to explore the possibility of an AID contract with his university to establish a Department of Agricultural Economics at FHSA.

It is believed that the visit was highly successful in the eyes of all concerned. Dr. Jackson was most cordially received by the school, and by ministers and other officials concerned with the project. He had ample opportunity to visit the school, nearby research institutes, and government offices and to gain a firsthand impression of both small-holder and plantation agriculture in Cameroon. At his departure, Dr. Jackson appeared to be convinced that FHSA offered a fertile ground for the introduction of an American input, that it was an institution that held much promise as a principal agricultural education center in francophone Africa, and that the project was one in which Southern University could effectively participate.

Mention should also be made of Dr. Jackson's handling of this exploratory visit. He quickly understood the nuances of the school's relationships to various ministries within the bureaucratic structure and the problems and the prospects of enhancing the role of FHSA in the process of agricultural development. His comprehension and tact contributed in no small way to the rapport which he was able to establish.

The question of the French-language competence of the American staff also was thoroughly explored. The contention of the director of the school that lectures could be conducted in English tended to be confirmed by the

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fact that Mr. Nguenkeng, a Cameroonian member of the faculty whose only English-language training was in secondary school and at FHSA, was able to serve in quite a satisfactory manner as interpreter and guide for Dr. Jackson. It was recognized, nonetheless, that a substantial degree of French competence would be required by all the American professors. Dr. Jackson seemed to feel that, if one of the members of the team had considerable fluency and the others a usable working knowledge of the language, the team could adequately handle its assignment. The need for intensive French training prior to departure of those lacking fluency was recognized. It is felt that this is a correct assessment of the situation provided that those team members whose French is initially somewhat weak have the language aptitude to improve during their tour.

It would appear that Southern University does not have on its faculty an agricultural economist with French-language competence. Dr. Jackson thought that a French-speaking professor from LSU, with which Southern apparently has very close connections, could be seconded to Southern to take the position of team leader. In this connection, the desirability of a close identification and commitment to the project by Southern University was discussed. Dr. Jackson gave every indication of fully appreciating the importance of a successful U.S. contribution to FBSA and of closely associating his university with this effort. Given this attitude and the nature of the relationship between LSU and Southern University, Dr. Jackson's suggestion could offer a satisfactory solution.

The FROP was reviewed and Dr. Jackson expressed reservations on two points. He felt that the time span of U.S. services indicated on page 19 reflected too optimistic an assumption regarding the date when U.S. professors could be withdrawn. He also felt that if the Agricultural Economics Department were to have any independent research capability, study to the Ph.D. level would be required for at least some of the Cameroonian participants. These two interrelated points would appear to be well-taken and will certainly be discussed during Dr. Jackson's consultation in Washington. On the basis of these discussions, it is believed that there should be no difficulty in an appropriate revision of the FROP document.

In terms of logistic support, Dr. Jackson's main concern was the lack of faculty housing on the campus. He felt it important that U.S. faculty members be located on the campus where it would be possible for them to have easy informal contact with the students. It was agreed that the programming of counterpart funds for housing construction would be explored and indicated that this could likely be arranged. The adequacy of office and classroom space was also recognized as a problem, though this may be at least partially resolved by the planned IBRD-financed construction. It was suggested that Dr. Jackson discuss the question of furniture acquisition in AID/W, it being possibly easier and less costly to arrange furniture purchases directly by AID in Ghana rather than have the university itself undertake procurement. The desirability of standardizing on a single make of vehicle for all projects and activities in the Yaounde area was also discussed in view of the parts and service problems for American vehicles. Here, again, direct AID procurement may be preferable to university purchase. Both furniture and vehicles should, of course, be timed to arrive approximately with the U.S. personnel.

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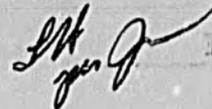
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In the various discussions, it was indicated that the target date for the arrival of at least the first of the American professors (presumably the team leader) was January 1970. Although Cameroonian officials generally expressed the desire that the project be initiated as soon as possible, this date was accepted and it is urged that every effort be made to adhere to it. If, as is expected, there is mutual agreement to implement this project with Southern University, it is hoped that contract negotiations can be initiated promptly in order that signature can quickly follow the availability of FY 1971 funds.

The draft grant agreement is being translated and will be discussed with appropriate officials in the near future.

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