

**AIRGRAM**

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

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FROM - MONROVIA

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Ryland L. Holmes, Area Extension Advisor

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## END OF TOUR REPORT

Ryland L. Holmes  
Area Extension Advisor

October 20, 1961

During this tour of duty the technician served as Area Extension Advisor in the Central Province, Western Province, and one District of the Eastern Province, Republic of Liberia. The Technician served as advisor in the Western Province only from December 1, 1960 to November 17, 1961.

SITUATION

Organized extension activities were initiated in the Central Province in July 1958. During the previous tour of this technician, with five community level extension workers who had been with the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, R.L., for four years as rice production workers. None of the initial five extension workers possessed the equivalent of high school training. In early 1956, one Liberian with a B.S. degree in General Agriculture returned from America and was employed as an Agricultural Agent. However, until January 1960, he devoted ninety-five percent of his time at the research station producing tree-crop seedlings for distribution to farmers. In 1955, one Department of Agriculture and Commerce employee established a demonstration-distribution tree-crop nursery in the Tehron District of the Eastern Province under the guidance of the USOM Area Extension Advisor of Maryland County, R.L. Demonstration-distribution centers were initiated in the Western Province as early as 1960, under the guidance of American Extension Advisor. These demonstration-distribution

centers answered a real need for improved planting materials, otherwise available only from Firestone Plantation, and served as the beginning of extension work in the provinces.

#### GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF EXTENSION PROGRAM

1. To raise the general level of the Liberian economy.
2. To promote agricultural practices geared to bring about improvements in standards of living.
3. To raise the economic level of the farmer through introduction of such crops as cacao, coffee, rubber, etc.; to expand production of these crops, and to encourage practices designed to increase yields per acre and higher output per hour of labor.
4. To encourage production of adequate food supplies for the local population, both in quantity and quality.
5. To disseminate and encourage the use of approved practices in livestock production to increase greater output of animal protein.
6. To encourage practices designed to improve marketing of cash crops.

#### SPECIFIC GOALS

1. To advise on organization and development of an effective Agricultural Extension Service in the Central and Western Provinces of Liberia.
2. To advise and train the Deputy Director of Extension for the Provinces in supervisory activities.
3. To train and advise Agricultural Extension Agents, Rural Youth Workers and Extension Aides (Community-level workers).
4. To assist in analyzing agricultural needs of the area and train and advise the Department of Agriculture and Commerce Extension staff in the development of "Plans of Work" to meet these needs.
5. To provide training in adequate reporting and record keeping.

#### EXTENSION ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In December 1959, the Area Extension Advisor assisted the Director of research and Extension with preparations of a budget for agricultural

extension in the Central Province. For effective functional operations, the Central Province was divided into two extension areas. Organizational plans provided for a National Deputy Director of Extension, one extension agent and eight community-level workers (Extension Aides) in each extension area. Further, the budget provided for one Rural Youth worker in each area, and necessary supporting funds.

November 1960 the first Agricultural Extension Agent was assigned to the Western Province. At this time plans were approved to expand the field staff to 26 community-level workers (Extension Aides).

In early 1961, a reorganization of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce effected a change in the extension organization: A National Director of Extension and a Deputy Director of Extension to be headquartered in the DAC, Monrovia; and, a Deputy Director of Extension for Provinces to be headquartered in the Central Agricultural Experiment Station, Suakoko.

Summary of Extension Workers in Provinces as of October 15, 1961

Provinces	One Deputy Director of Extension
Central Province	Two Extension Agents Two Rural Youth Workers 15 Extension Aides
Western Province	One Extension Agent Two Rural Youth Workers 21 Extension Aides
Tchlen District, Eastern Province	Three Extension Aides

One vehicle, one motor-bike, and four bicycles have been provided as transportation. The budget provides meager allowance for traveling by

public transports. Allowance is also provided for subsistence for all extension workers. The office of the Deputy Director of Extension for Provinces has a minimum of three contacts each week with each Extension Agent by means of two-way portable radios. Salaries, travel allowances, vehicles, fuel, and demonstration materials are provided by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Housing for community-level workers is provided by local (Paramount Chiefs) officials.

#### ADVISING AND TRAINING THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION

Office arrangement and location promoted daily contact by the Area Extension Advisor with the Deputy Director of Extension. The Area Extension Advisor has advised the Deputy Director of Extension on day-to-day supervision of personnel, assisted with budget preparation, program planning, organization of conferences and training meetings, selection and recruiting of personnel. In May 1961, the Deputy Director of Extension for Provinces began a six months training period, sponsored by ICA, in the United States. This was a non-degree training program in Extension methods and supervision.

#### ADVISING AND TRAINING EXTENSION AGENTS AND COMMUNITY-LEVEL WORKERS

In March 1960, a five day training session was conducted for all extension agents and community-level workers in the Provinces, along with not less than twenty extension personnel from other parts of the Country. In addition to extension workers, other participants included research workers, education advisors, produce inspectors, forestry representatives, and National Agriculture Administrators. This was the first training

session to be conducted on an area wide scale and was designed to create an awareness of the concept and scope of extension work; to promote enthusiasm for the extension idea; to provide a favorable atmosphere whereby research workers could become acquainted with extension workers in order that they (research workers) may realize upon whom they are dependent for receiving problems from farmers, and for getting research results out to farmers; and, to provide a situation in which extension personnel may become acquainted with research workers, and gain a feeling of "belonging" to a family of scientific workers. After a few months, it became evident that small, frequent, short training sessions would be more effective. Thus, one or two day subject matter training sessions were scheduled monthly. Research workers, extension advisors, extension agents, and subject-matter specialists assisted with these monthly meetings. A total of thirty-two (32) one or two day meetings were conducted with an average of nine extension workers participating in each. New extension employees are scheduled for a one week minimum observation period at the Central Agricultural Research Station. In January 1961, three agents, three Rural youth workers, and seven community-level extension workers participated in a 2-week agriculture workshop sponsored by USOM-DAC jointly. In June 1961, three Extension Agents of the Provinces participated in a one-week National Extension conference on program planning and methods in extension.

#### TRAINING IN REPORTING AND RECORDS

Extension forms have been developed and are now in use by all extension workers. These forms were designed to record extension

activities for the purpose of evaluating progress, and to measure the effectiveness of methods.

#### SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Area Extension Advisor devoted considerable time to production project activities as a step toward general objectives and to establish training situations for extension workers.

Fish Ponds: Assisted by the Research Fishery Division, sixteen fish ponds have been constructed and stocked. These ponds are strategically located in the Central and Western Provinces to serve as demonstrations, as well as a source of protein food. The estimated acreage in fish ponds is thirty-five, with an annual production potential of 70,000 pounds. An additional twelve ponds are under construction, and sites selected for another fourteen ponds.

Livestock: Purebred animals and recognized breeds of poultry for demonstration purposes were obtained and "started" by the Animal Division of the Central Agricultural Experiment Station. Eighteen result demonstrations have been established, consisting of 1,200 straight-run birds-- twelve units of 50, and six units of 100 birds each with emphases placed on feed, housing and management. One hundred fifty (150) New Hampshire and White Rock roosters were distributed to local farmers and villages, in exchange for "native" birds, as foundation stock for upgrading local flocks. One 2,000 bird laying flock has been established in the area. Twelve pure bred Hampshire and Spotted Poland China boars and gilts were placed with farmers in different areas of the Provinces for the purpose

of upgrading local stock. Five result demonstrations were established in rabbit production.

Crops: Local farmers were assisted with arrangements for obtaining enough high yield variety rubber seeds to produce 900,000 high producing rubber seedlings, adequate to plant 6,000 acres. Demonstration rubber budwood gardens were established in four locations, and served to supply budwood materials for local farmers. Special emphasis on swamp rice culture has increased rice acreage and yields, and to some extent decreased the practice of "shifting cultivation".

Marketing: An Agricultural Center in the Gbarnga District is now under construction, and scheduled for completion in December 1961. Included in the center will be a 5,200 square foot market building adequate to provide space for eighty retail stalls and a 200 square foot "meat" room; a 196 square foot slaughter house; a 900 square foot administrative building designed to provide office space for the Extension Agent, market officer, and communication and information facilities. Two market buildings, 2,700 square feet each, are under construction in the Salala District, approximately sixty-five miles North of Monrovia. Palm kernel cracking machines for demonstration purposes have been established in three communities.

#### FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE FACTORS

Favorable factors which are considered significant for progress toward goals:

1. The farm people (90% illiterate) are rapidly becoming aware of

money as a means of exchange for services.

2. A large percentage of the hinterland population is becoming dissatisfied with present living conditions and have a desire for improvement.

3. Acreage is available to adequately support the population, provided methods of production are improved.

4. Acceleration of public school facilities is providing opportunities for basic training.

5. Motor roads reaching into what once were remote areas are providing opportunities for contacts with more progressive areas, and serve to stimulate expanded cash crop production.

Some unfavorable factors which must be overcome before significant progress may be realized:

1. Lack of individual ownership of land which discourages stability.

2. Credit facilities for short or long range farm projects are grossly inadequate.

3. Effectiveness of an extension service may be measured by its mobility. Only fifteen percent of the extension personnel in the Provinces have any means of transportation (trucks, cars, motor bikes, or bicycles).

4. Commercial fertilizers, seeds, commercial feeds, chemicals, and farm tools and machinery are not available within the areas needed.

5. The number of trained personnel needed to discharge extension responsibilities is inadequate. Employee personnel unsuited by background training (adequate to absorb further training) and experience

may lead to loss of public confidence, as well as bring about an unpleasant personnel situation when qualified people do become available.

6. Research results prepared in simple form to be utilized by extension workers and farmers are inadequate to meet the needs.

#### EVALUATION OF RESULTS

Extension activities previously directed almost exclusively to tree crop nursery demonstration-distribution centers have been redirected, geared to reach individual farmers. Recommended farm practices utilized by individual farmers are more meaningful as a motivation force than when demonstrated by a government supported agency. A compilation of information received from one extension area for one month revealed that 3,533 farmer contacts were made by twenty-seven extension workers. These data indicated that an average of 130 contacts were made per extension worker through farm visits and village meetings, covering nine crop production areas. A reorganization of the National Extension Office has promoted a more realistic, functional extension organization in the Provinces.

Systematic recruiting, in-service training, and foreign training have raised the number and educational level of extension personnel.

Prior to November 1959:

Total Extension Workers	30
B.S. degrees in agriculture	1
High school, or equivalent	3
Third to 8th grade, or equivalent	12
Below third grade, including illiterates	14

## Extension personnel as of November 1961:

Total Extension Workers	44
B.S. degree in agriculture	3
2 years special agriculture training beyond high school, six months extension training in America	1
1 year of College agriculture	1
High School graduates, or equivalent	11
Third to 8th grade, or equivalent	20
Below third grade, including illiterates	8

Fish farming is adaptable to the Liberian people, as well as to the favorable topographical conditions. The innumerable natural pond sites makes impoundment of water a relatively simple operation. The Liberian people have been very receptive to the Freshwater Fisheries Program, due partially to the quick returns realized from investments, and because an additional source of meat is made available within the local areas. Present personnel and facilities are inadequate to meet the demands for fish pond construction requests. The many unfilled requests for fish pond construction is evidence of the receptiveness of fish farming in Liberia.

Though technical assistance has been provided in Liberia for more than twelve years, tangible results are not as outstanding as may be expected. This situation is not due to lack of sincere efforts and devotion to duty by American Technicians. There is a need for concentrated efforts on fewer projects or increased American staff. In some cases, technicians' activities are spread too thin to expect

meaningful results within short periods, though technicians may spend long dedicated hours discharging their responsibilities.

As donors of economic aid in the form of technical assistance as well as financial assistance we need to be conscious of strains on the economics of the Country. Care should be exercised not to set a pace of progress beyond that which Liberia can follow. Development projects must be kept within limits of resources - equipment, personnel, finance, favorable and unfavorable factors. Limitations in resources dictate careful selection of priority projects and directions for development.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Marginal and sub-marginal personnel be replaced as rapidly as qualified persons become available.
2. Extension Agent-level personnel be increased.
3. Adequate transportation facilities for extension workers be given TOP priority in the immediate future.
4. Office facilities be provided for Extension Agent-level personnel.
5. Greater emphasis be placed on in-service training and local scholarships for high school and college-level training. Foreign scholarships be reserved for top administrative personnel.
6. American field extension advisors for Provinces be increased by three: One to serve in the Western Province; one to serve in the Sanniquellie-Tappita Districts; one to serve in the Eastern Province; and, one to serve in the RAD Area (Gbarnga District) and Salala District,

Central Province. Development advances in the fields of public education and agriculture go hand and hand. Without an adequate number of field advisers, it is logical to assume that there will be a serious lag in agriculture development.