

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

PD-AAA-748
59985
0056

TO : Douglas Jones, F&A Officer
USAID, Gaborone

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DATE: April 9, 1981

FROM : George R. James, CPC
MOA, Gaborone

RECEIVED
23/2 April 81

SUBJECT: End of Tour Report

This report is to highlight some of the accomplishments and frustrations I have had during my two year tour in Botswana. The Crop Program Officer is a much needed position in the Ministry of Agriculture and I have had a valuable experience filling the position. I hope the position will remain filled and maintained as a staff position in the Crop Production Department.

The Crop Production Project 633-0056 is a good project for Botswana. A good deal of thought went into the project design and plan. However, I do not feel implementation of the plan was properly supervised as far as the institution building portion is concerned. This thought is very well pointed out in the Evaluation Report of February 1980. It was common knowledge in AID and the MCA that the leadership of the Crops Department was not adequate for some reason. To quote from the Evaluation Report Summary, "...the chances of this AID project accomplishing its principal institution building purpose are for all practical purposes impossible." Because of this I feel some responsibilities or projects that should have been with the Crops Department were assigned to other Departments. This feeling of inadequate leadership and assignment of projects has led to the weakening of the Crops Department and is possibly why the Department has not progressed as planned.

I would suggest that the time is right to get the Crops Department going. (1) Put the ALDPF project under the Department. (2) Staff the five Regional Crop Officer positions. (3) Develop a plan of action within the Department with specific goals, actions and responsibilities to inform, train and implement improved husbandry practices and increase production in the country. This is what the present Crop Production Project was to do but has not progressed at the rate planned.

Some of the assignments I was given during my tour were:

1. Crop Demonstrations--This was a program to improve crop husbandry practices with farmers on their crop land. Each practice was on a small area of land (200 sq. meters) with an equal area for control. The control area was to be farmed in the manner the farmer was presently doing. Husbandry practices were (a) planting in rows vs broadcast, plow, planting, (b) use of commercial fertilizer, (c) use of local manure, (d) stocking of sorghum. In the 1978-79 season there



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were 35 demonstrations with results reported or only a few because of the drought. In 1979-80 there were over 160 planted with reports on 40 of these. The demonstrations that progressed thru harvest and were reported on showed the improved husbandry practices were economical to the farmer. Hopefully this would be the farmer's viewpoint also and he would adopt the practices in his normal farming operations. This year there should be even more demonstrations since the Agricultural Demonstrators were encouraged to have the farmers with the ALDEF the commercial fertilizer demonstration. Reports and analysis will be made after I depart.

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Most DAOs and RAOs indicate the small demonstrations are time consuming to the ADs and in many cases are not visible to non-participating farmers. It was recommended and agreed that in the future the demonstrations should be carried out on a large field (1 Ha). More publicity could be given to the demonstration and better field days held were other reasons.

I used a small storeroom in the back of the SAU storage shed to prepare the fertilizer packets. There is still some fertilizer there.

2. AD Equipment--All ADs did not have some basic tools needed to properly exercise their crop production duties. Therefore, with MCA funds rain gauges, spring scales and tape measures were purchased and distributed to the ADs. In addition 12 soil testing kits were purchased for the District offices and as funds would allow, wire stretchers and pliers were purchased to help implement the ALDEF fencing scheme. For the 1981-82 budget year it is planned that soil probes, screw driver, spanner and pliers will be purchased for each AD. At the present time the wire stretchers, pliers, soil testing kits and the surplus rain gauges and scales are stored in my office.

3. Training--I attended AD monthly meetings and gave training in the crop demonstrations. This included how to set up a demonstration with the farmers, how to adjust the fertilizer box on the planters, how to broadcast and/or side dress commercial fertilizer, how to utilize local manure, how to plant in rows without a planter, assistance in weed control, stooking of sorghum, storage of grain and yield reports.

With the start up of the ALDEF pilot implement credit scheme I assisted in the training and implementation of this scheme. Training sessions were held for the ADs involved in the scheme on husbandry practices and assembly of the planters and cultivators. All ADs were instructed on the procedure to adjust the fertilizer box. In addition tests were made and the suggested opening for the box communicated to all ADs. The procedure was written as an Agrifact but has not been printed. Visits to the field were made to see that the ADs were assembling the planters properly. A shortage of nuts and bolts was the main problem. The Botswana Cooperative Union was very slow in supplying extra parts so the inoperative planters were not use during the planting season. In future years it has been suggested that the

planters be delivered to a central location and assembled before delivery to farmers. This would eliminate most of the problems of missing parts.

Assisted in the planning of training for all DAOs and ADs for the full implementation of the five ALDEF credit-grant projects for 1981-82. Training will be conducted at the four RTCenters during the winter.

4. There were five Agrifact papers I prepared or assisted with. Only one, fertilizer recommendations, has been printed. The rest are in the Agricultural Information Department and some have been there well over a year. Agrifacts is the Technical Guide for ADs and I would think publication of these papers would be of high priority.

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