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A POLICY STATEMENT ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SOIL
CONSERVATION SERVICE AND THE EXTENSION SERVICE

The purpose of this policy statement is to clarify the cooperative relationships between State Extension Services and the Soil Conservation Service. The statements made herein are in conformity with the Secretary's Interbureau Committee Report of June 5, 1935 - a report which sets forth basic relationships between the Soil Conservation Service and certain other agencies. It remains unchanged.

Basic Objectives of Extension Services

In the interest of the general welfare of farm people and in promoting more adequate farm life, the broad general objective of Cooperative Extension Work in agriculture and home economics is to aid in diffusing information to farm people with respect to all phases of agriculture and rural life, -- local, state, and national, and to so organize and assist farm people that such information will be applied on the farm and in the home.

In attaining this objective, activities consist of giving instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in certain colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise; and this work is carried on in such manner as may be mutually agreed upon by the Secretary of Agriculture and the State Agricultural Colleges.

Basic Objectives of the Soil Conservation Service

The basic purpose of the Soil Conservation Service, broadly stated, is to aid in bringing about desirable physical adjustments in land use with a view to bettering the general welfare, conserving natural resources, establishing a permanent, balanced agriculture and reducing the hazards of floods and siltation. (See Field Memorandum SCS-769)

In attaining these objectives the Service, as an action agency, provides technical and material assistance in determining and making physical adjustments for the conservation and proper use of soil and water resources and in connection with farm forestry and water facilities development. The Service also engages in submarginal land purchase and development.

In approving the Interbureau Committee Report, the Secretary of Agriculture emphasized the scope of erosion control methods of the Service in the following words:

"I find that one thought persists through the whole report: Soil erosion control, to be effective, permanent, and economically feasible, involves more than the use of vegetative and engineering methods. It involves also general land-use planning, proper crop rotations, controlled livestock grazing, and the application of other sound farm-management practices."

The major portion of the work of this Service involves assistance to farmers and ranchers through other agencies, such as soil conservation districts, State Agricultural Extension Services, State Experiment Stations, and other local, State and Federal agencies, rather than assistance direct to farmers and ranchers. In directing the program of the Soil Conservation Service toward its prescribed objectives, it is the policy of the Service to administer its program in a unified approach to land use and conservation problems. (See SCS-769.)

State Advisory Committees

When the Soil Conservation Service was first established in the Department of Agriculture, the Secretary of Agriculture appointed a Soil Conservation Advisory Committee in each state to assist the Soil Conservation Service in formulating a program for soil conservation work in the State; in coordinating the activities of various agencies concerned with soil conservation; in locating demonstration and other projects; in encouraging the formation by farmers of soil conservation associations and in otherwise contributing to a unified plan of action. (See Secretary's Interbureau Committee Report of June 5, 1935, page 18, concerning State Advisory Committee.)

Although the membership of this committee varies somewhat in different states, the State Director of Extension, the State Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station and the State Coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service are among the members in every case. (See SCS-211, page 5, for functions of State Coordinator.) By virtue of their offices these men have available for assistance in developing the work of the committee the resources of their respective agencies. In turn, these resources may and should be utilized by the State Advisory Committees in the operations phases of the program. The basic duties and responsibilities of the State Advisory Committees have not changed as the result of the passage of the State Soil Conservation Districts Laws.

State Soil Conservation Program

A state soil conservation program, prepared by the State Soil Conservation Advisory Committee, sets forth the situation in the state and determines methods for effecting the program, including research, education and operations.

Memorandum of Understanding

In order to attain and coordinate the objectives of the two Services insofar as they are related, a memorandum of understanding or project agreement has been entered into by each of the 47 state and two territorial Agricultural Extension Services and the Soil Conservation Service, and approved by the Director of Extension Work and the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service in the United States Department of Agriculture.

The memorandum of understanding provides for the employment cooperatively of Extension Soil Conservationists; for the conduct of educational work in furtherance of soil and water conservation on such areas and to such extent as may be mutually agreed upon by the State Director of Extension and the State Coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service; for the formation and development of soil conservation associations; and for the encouragement of the organization of soil conservation districts under State law, so as to provide for general, effective conservation of soil and water resources. It further provides, through the Office of the State Coordinator, for furthering unity of purposes among State agencies in the development of plans, in bringing about cooperative arrangements, in encouraging soil conservation legislation, and in carrying out policies of soil conservation, to the end that a coordinated and water conservation program for the State may be effected.

Extension Soil Conservationist

The Extension Soil Conservationist, cooperatively employed by the two Services and administratively responsible to the Director of Extension, is the leader in the State who conducts educational work in soil and water conservation.

Educational work of the State Extension Service involves subject matter of most of the departments and the specialists of the agricultural colleges. The cooperation of all departments and specialists is needed to achieve satisfactory results in soil and water conservation. The Extension Soil Conservationist will work closely with the several subject matter departments, referring to them problems in soil conservation within their respective fields and securing such information and assistance as is available. To this end, the Extension Soil Conservationist should, through the proper administrative officials, arrange with the various subject matter departments in the Experiment Stations and Extension Services, the technicians of the Soil Conservation Service and representatives of other agencies for assistance in building and carrying out the State soil conservation program of Extension education.

Soil Conservation Districts

It is the policy of the Department to cooperate with soil conservation districts, insofar as resources permit, established under adequate State laws. The basis for this policy is indicated in the Federal Soil Conservation Act, Public No. 46, Section 3, wherein it is stated: "As a condition to the extending of any benefits under this Act to any lands not owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, the Secretary of Agriculture may, insofar as he may deem necessary for the purposes of this Act, require -

- "1. The enactment of reasonable safeguards for the enforcement of State and local laws, imposing suitable permanent restrictions on the use of such lands and otherwise providing for the prevention of soil erosion."

The Secretary was in conformity with the above mentioned authorization when he approved the Report of the Interbureau Committee on Soil Conservation of June 5, 1935. In effect, this report states that on and after July 1, 1937, new undertakings by the Soil Conservation Service shall be limited to States having legislation authorizing or permitting State or other legally constituted organizations to enter into agreements with the Federal government.

To date Soil Conservation District Laws have been enacted in 37 States, and without exception each of these Acts establishes a State Soil Conservation Committee as an agency in the State. (In some States these are referred to as State soil conservation boards or commissions.) It is the responsibility of the State Soil Conservation Committee set up under the State Soil Conservation District laws in most cases:

1. To make the legal determinations necessary in the organization of soil conservation districts.
2. To guide and coordinate the activities of organized soil conservation districts insofar as this may be done through advice and consultation.
3. To disseminate information in order to encourage the formation of districts where their organization is desirable.
4. To allocate to the soil conservation districts any appropriations made by the State therefor.

Soil Conservation Districts are local governmental subdivisions organized under State law, through which owners and operators of land may cooperatively exercise their own initiative and responsibility in the field of conservation of soil and water resources, including proper land use and the control and prevention of soil erosion within the district.

The work of the district may have important relationships to such programs as water facilities, land utilization (including retirement of submarginal land from cultivation), cooperative farm forestry, certain aspects of agricultural and range conservation, private and public credit facilities and other work in the field of soil and water conservation and land use adjustments. It should be remembered also that the responsibility for organizing soil conservation districts rests upon owners and operators of the lands involved and upon the State Soil Conservation Committee.

Responsibilities in Education and Operations

The broad working relationships between the State Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service should be based on the State Soil Conservation Program formulated by the State Soil Conservation Advisory Committee. The working relationships between the two Services in soil conservation districts are set forth in the districts' work plans. It is recognized that the activities of the soil conservation district are the responsibility of the district governing body insofar as the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service may be involved. The District Work Plan outlines the functions of the Extension Service, which has the leadership in educational work, and functions of the Soil Conservation Service which has the leadership in the development of farm conservation plans and the execution of such plans on farms. It also outlines the functions

of other agencies that cooperate with the district supervisors in furthering and executing the district program of conservation of soil and water resources. Thus the work plan defines to a large degree the relationship of the Extension agents and technicians of the Soil Conservation Service.

The two major phases in carrying out a soil and water conservation program with respect to districts are: (1) Education preliminary to soil conservation operations; (2) Operations in soil conservation districts.

1. Education preliminary to soil conservation operations.

In accordance with the State program of the State Soil Conservation Advisory Committee, it is the responsibility of the Extension Service, through the Extension district agents, Extension soil conservationists, county agricultural agents and specialists to conduct necessary educational work in areas where districts are contemplated. The Extension Service may request the Soil Conservation Service, through the State Coordinator, for assistance of technicians and for informational material which may be available for educational work. Educational work preliminary to operations may concern the following types of information:

- a. Existing conditions indicating the need for conserving soil and water resources.
- b. Practices and measures to be applied in order to conserve soil and water resources.

Through demonstration farms farmers will be made acquainted with the applied complete farm conservation plans. Special emphasis will be given to those simple practices which individual farmers may apply without technical assistance. In establishing demonstration farms outside of project, camp and district areas, the Extension Service will be responsible for the selections and upon request the technicians of the Soil conservation Service will prepare complete farm plans for such farms according to agreement in the State.

c. Organization and functions of soil conservation districts.

Education in this respect will consist in informing farm people of the nature and provisions of the Soil Conservation Act of the State and procedure necessary for the organization of a soil conservation district.

2. Operations in soil conservation districts.

Following the organization of a district, and upon request of the district governing body:

- a. Assistance will be given the district governing body by the Extension Service.

- (1) In the development of program and work plan.
- (2) In conducting educational work within the district for groups of farmers who can initiate practices without technical assistance.

(3) In conducting educational work within the district for farmers who require technical assistance for the completion of conservation programs on their farms.

(4) In conducting educational work within the district for follow-up work on application and maintenance of practices in accordance with the district program and work plan.

b. Assistance will be given the district governing body by the Soil Conservation Service (under prescribed limitations)

(1) In making physical, economic, and social surveys to serve as a basis for conservation work.

(2) In formulating the district program and work plan.

(3) In helping the district and land owners and operators prepare and apply farm conservation plans and to further the district work plan.

(4) By providing labor, equipment and materials insofar as needed and available.

The Soil Conservation Service has the responsibility of operating units outside of soil conservation districts such as demonstration projects, CCC camp area, water facilities, land utilization, farm forestry, and drainage. It is recognized by the Soil Conservation Service and the Extension Service that it is the responsibility of the Extension Service to conduct educational work necessary for action programs of the Service in such areas.

Responsibilities in Information

In conjunction with both education and operations the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service disseminate information to the public. This is a responsibility inherent in both organizations: - in the Cooperative Extension Service under the Smith-Lever and supplementary acts and the memoranda of understanding with the state agricultural colleges; in the Soil Conservation Service under the terms of the organic act of the Department of Agriculture and of the Soil Conservation Act (Public 46).

It is the policy of the Soil Conservation Service and of the Extension Service to exercise this function on a basis of mutual assistance and cooperation, under definite procedures worked out state by state and agreed to by appropriate representatives of both agencies.

It is the policy of the Soil Conservation Service to recognize the State Extension Service as the primary channel through which agricultural information can be disseminated in the State and to work through it in such manner as may be agreed upon between the two Services in the release of information pertinent to soil conservation within the State.

It is the policy of the Cooperative Extension Service to recognize the Soil Conservation Service as an important source of agricultural information and to cooperate with information officers and other representatives of the Soil Conservation Service in presenting soil conservation information available from this source to the public of the State.

These mutually cooperative policies are founded on the assumption that the Soil Conservation Service extends to the Extension Service the prerogative of clearing agricultural information within the State, and that the Extension Service, in accepting that prerogative, agrees at the same time to share responsibility incumbent on the Soil Conservation Service for carrying forward adequate information relative to its program.

The field of information, as defined for the purposes of this statement, includes dissemination of subject-matter and administrative information through all available means of communication, including the press, the radio, visual materials, and official publications.

In the Soil Conservation Service these functions are performed under the direction of the Division of Information of the regional office. In the Extension Service, they are normally performed under the direction of the Extension Editor at the State Agricultural College. Information procedures of the Soil Conservation Service are worked out in cooperation with the State Coordinator and the Extension Soil Conservationist in the State.

In addition to normal information activities, the Soil Conservation Service cooperates with school authorities in providing conservation material adapted especially for school use, in developing and revising conservation curricula, and in general assisting educators in the preparation and presentation of soil conservation subject matter in the schools. This work is handled in cooperation with the State Coordinator of the Service and in collaboration with the Extension Soil Conservationist. All contacts in the State are made with the knowledge, approval, and cooperation of the Extension Service.

/s/ M. L. Wilson
Director of Extension Work

/s/ H. H. Bennett
Chief, Soil Conservation
Service.

It is the policy of the Cooperative Extension Service to recognize the Self Conservation Service as an important source of information and to cooperate with information activities and other services of the Self Conservation Service in providing self conservation information and to cooperate in the field of the State.

These mutually cooperative activities are founded on the assumption that the Self Conservation Service extends to the Extension Service the responsibility of planning and providing information within the State, and that the Extension Service, in cooperation with the Self Conservation Service, is to share responsibility for the Self Conservation Service in providing information relative to the program.

The field of information, as defined for the purpose of this report, includes dissemination of subject matter and administrative information through all available means of communication, including the press, the radio, films, literature, and official publications.

In the Self Conservation Service, these functions are performed under the direction of the Division of Information of the National Office. In the Extension Service, they are generally performed under the direction of the Extension Division of the State Extension Council. Information personnel of the Self Conservation Service are worked out in cooperation with the State Extension Council and the Extension Self Conservation Council in the State.

In addition to normal information activities, the Self Conservation Service cooperates with school authorities in providing conservation material adapted especially for school use, in developing and revising conservation curricula, and in general assisting educators in the preparation and presentation of self conservation material in the schools. This work is handled in cooperation with the State Extension Council. All contacts in the Extension Service with the Extension Self Conservation Council are made with the knowledge, approval, and cooperation of the Extension Service.

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