A study of the current status of home economics consumer education in Cooperative Extension youth programs in the United States and specifically Montana
by Beverly Baringer Wallace

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in Home Economics
Montana State University
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Abstract:
The 4-H program has demonstrated success in teaching manual skills. In our consumer oriented nation, future 4-H programs need to teach decision making skills. The purpose of this study was to determine the current status of consumer education in the 4-H club program with particular attention to Montana.

A questionnaire requesting information on 4-H consumer education was sent to the administrator of youth or home economics work in each state. There was a 90% return.

Forty-two states reported consumer education taught as a secondary discipline in an average of 4.14 projects per state. Thirteen states had a primary focus project and six were preparing one. This survey reported one-third of the youth reached by Extension were being taught consumer education but only 10% received it as the primary emphasis.

As 94.4% of consumer education taught is in related fields the hypotheses that consumer education is incorporated as a secondary rather than primary goal is substantiated. Projects planned will increase the states having consumer education projects to 38%. The hypotheses that consumer education will be increasingly presented as the primary focus is substantiated.

Montana does not have a consumer education project but does incorporate it in six project areas reaching 75% of her membership. The hypotheses that Montana has less consumer education than the national average is rejected.

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Date October 4, 1972

A STUDY OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF HOME ECONOMICS CONSUMER EDUCATION IN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION YOUTH PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES AND SPECIFICALLY MONTANA

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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in

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ABSTRACT

The 4-H program has demonstrated success in teaching manual skills. In our consumer oriented nation, future 4-H programs need to teach decision making skills. The purpose of this study was to determine the current status of consumer education in the 4-H club program with particular attention to Montana.

A questionnaire requesting information on 4-H consumer education was sent to the administrator of youth or home economics work in each state. There was a 90% return.

Forty-two states reported consumer education taught as a secondary discipline in an average of 4.14 projects per state. Thirteen states had a primary focus project and six were preparing one. This survey reported one-third of the youth reached by Extension were being taught consumer education but only 10% received it as the primary emphasis.

As 94.4% of consumer education taught is in related fields the hypotheses that consumer education is incorporated as a secondary rather than primary goal is substantiated. Projects planned will increase the states having consumer education projects to 38%. The hypotheses that consumer education will be increasingly presented as the primary focus is substantiated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The past quarter century has seen the United States embarked on an historically unparalleled course of advancement in technological and scientific development. No where has this change been more evident than in the field of agriculture. America was an agrarian oriented society at the turn of the century. The nation's survival was directly dependent upon farm production, and Congress was acutely attuned to all legislation and research which held the promise of increasing this production.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service whose assigned task was to disseminate information gained at the Agricultural Research Stations to the farmer in his environment. Recognizing that what youth learns either in the formal classroom or in an informal educational setting will influence not only his parents but his future, Boys and Girls Club Work (the forerunner of 4-H) was incorporated into the Cooperative Extension Service.

Development of pesticides, fertilizers, mechanization, advanced storage and marketing techniques, and

acceptance of soil conservation practices has turned our 1914 agrarian nation into a nation of consumers instead of producers. No group has been more aware of this change than the Cooperative Extension Service. Proponents of Extension credit much of this development to the effectiveness of the teaching techniques employed by Extension personnel.

As the characteristics of the national population have changed so has the Extension Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1971: 51). A People and a Spirit (1968: 61) stresses the Service should now shift its emphasis from increasing farm production to improving the quality of living for all people.

Only a few years ago the 4-H program was the only vehicle through which Extension worked with youth. Now youth groups beyond 4-H, and even some youth who have no formal club ties, are becoming involved in Extension sponsored programs. In some cases the personnel and techniques formerly associated with only a rural 4-H organization have moved into the inner-city. The Expanded Food and Nutrition program aimed specifically at the low-income populace is a good example of this movement.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

As an unique, out-of-school, informal education program, 4-H can serve young people from all economic and cultural backgrounds. Due to the circumstances of its birth, the 4-H program has stressed the skill type project such as beef fattening, field crops, clothing construction, and food preparation and preservation.

The success of the 4-H program has been demonstrated and its maintenance as a development activity for youngsters is assured, but the program needs to become as relevant to the urban youth as it has been to the rural youngster (USDA National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges Study Committee, 1968: 66). With our present consumer-oriented nation and the concomitance of Extension to work within the urban areas with all economic levels, the 4-H project needs to become more management than skill oriented.

The 4-H program must focus on helping youth know how to live well as well as how to make a living. The major problem becomes how to be a wise consumer.

For an individual to become a skillful consumer he needs to develop the ability to make decisions within the

framework of his own values in order to achieve maximum utilization of his resources (Human Resource Development Staff, 1971: 3). To date, when decision making, or management, has been incorporated into the 4-H skill project it has been as a secondary aspect relating production to market cost. The value of such an approach is dependent on the ability of the individual member, volunteer leader or county agent to apply the isolated knowledge gained in the project to other areas of living. The time has come to delineate projects in which the major purpose is to provide the manual skills and those which emphasize the teaching of management, or decision making skills.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the current state of consumer education in the Cooperative Extension Service's 4-H home economics program. Future 4-H programs or projects stressing decision making need this determination in order to develop an effectual learning pattern.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated for this study.

1. Current 4-H projects in those states responding will indicate that consumer education is being incorporated as a secondary rather than a primary goal of instruction.

2. Consumer education will be increasingly presented as a primary goal of instruction in new 4-H projects developed in the states responding.

3. Consumer education in Montana's 4-H program, incorporated as a secondary goal of instruction, will be found to be less than the average among those states responding.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined as:

Consumer education. Consumer education is the development of the individual in the skills, concepts, and understanding required for everyday living for one to achieve within the framework of his own values, maximum utilization from his resources (Human Resource Development Staff, 1971: 3).

Primary Goal. The focus of the education process with other disciplines used in support.

Secondary Goal. The supportive discipline used to help teach the primary focus or goal.

4-H Project. Project work is an interest area in which the 4-H member enrolls and in which he is expected to complete certain pre-set requirements. Project work is done at home or in club meetings under the supervision of club leaders or parents in an informal, unstructured educational setting. For example: raising a calf for market; learning food preservation techniques; acquiring clothing construction skills; etc.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Cooperative Extension Service is being challenged to help youth in critical problem areas such as understanding of one's self and others; community development and environmental improvement; business and economics; and consumer affairs (4-H Youth Subcommittee, 1971: IV). This review of literature will attempt to bring into focus the circumstances that have played a part in determining the present position of consumer education in 4-H club work particularly as applied to the state of Montana.

Throughout history the majority of men could only be classified as producers. They arose each morning to a round of laboring which produced just enough of the basic life-substaining elements to allow them to rest and rise again to repeat the previous day's experience. Only a minor handful avoided this treadmill, and in today's vernacular these would be classified as consumers. Because of the obvious separation in life styles the guidelines of conduct for consumers and producers were well defined and outlined.

Man dreamed of leaving the status of "pure" producer for the one of "pure" consumer. In striving to

fulfill this dream, man finds himself today in uncharted waters. He is both producer and consumer and there are no pre-existing guidelines to follow. Man works and yet there is time, money and energy enough remaining from his hours of labor to feed other wants beyond his physical necessities. There is money to purchase, from another man's labor, material items of which he is desirous but which he does not need.

Consumer education as defined in this paper is a phenomenon of the United States circa 1960. It is a discipline born of necessity to help man achieve maximum utilization of his resources within the framework of his own values.

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Origin

George Washington set the keynote for the extension service by his interest in experimental farming methods. It was not until the middle of the Civil War, however, that Abraham Lincoln signed the Land Grant College Act (the Morrill Act of 1862) whereby each state would have an institution of higher learning designed for the industrial class and funded in part by tax monies. These institutions were

to teach agriculture and the mechanic arts (Bliss, et al., 1952: 8-16).

The experiment station (farm) was a major part of the land grant college. Quite often information gained on the college farm reached the farmer via either a Farmer's Institute meeting (a one to three day demonstration-lecture-social event) or a county/state fair where farmers were vividly taught how to improve their stock or crops by the monetary prize system.

The concept of an agriculturist employed and stationed in the field appears to have originated in Canada. Historians differ on the date and place of the first county agent in the United States with some saying Texas in 1906 and others New York in 1911 (Kelsey, et al., 1949: 19; Cooley, 1924: 6). The definition of agriculturist-in-the-field and/or county agent used might explain this discrepancy.

On May 8, 1914, the Smith-Lever Act creating the Agricultural Extension Service passed Congress. The financial foundation as specified by the Act involved federal, state, and county monies thereby making it a "cooperative" extension service. The purpose of the Act was to provide a formal, legitimate vehicle through which

the Experiment Station and the Land Grant Colleges could disseminate information to the rural family. The Cooperative Extension Service was born to help the rural American (Kelsey, et al., 1949: 27-64).

Boy's and Girl's Club Work

Boy's and Girl's Club Work (4-H) teaches learning by doing in an informal situation. The origin of this youth program is even less clear in the historian's mind than when the first county agent was employed. Records show that as early as 1828 a teacher in Ohio used the "learn by doing" method of instruction under the stimulus of competition by allotting parcels of land to teen-age boys to grow corn, cucumbers, radishes, tomatoes, etc. (Reck, 1951: 5).

Club work did begin, in a formal manner, prior to the Smith-Lever Act. In the very early 1900's boys were organized into clubs to learn through demonstration type instruction how to grow a larger yield of a higher quality corn per acre. Competition and reward were used as the incentive. It followed most naturally that the girls should become organized into their own canning clubs where they tilled their own gardens and preserved the excess produce. Competition became as keen for the females as it did for

the young males. Club work was touted and extravagant money prizes given at the Farmer's Institute sponsored county and state fairs. There appears to have been an almost deliberate usage of these young minds by the Farmer's Institute personnel and the experiment stations. At that point in time the benefits to the individual and community would seem to outweigh the materialistic drawbacks of this type of approach. The Institutes used demonstrations as one of their main teaching methods. A Boy's Club within the community, each boy with his plot of corn, taught more, quicker and easier, than a dozen farm institute demonstrations and lectures. Girls were taught to can by early day home economists. During the critical food shortages of World War I these girls were used to teach homemakers how to preserve their food supply.

It was a natural movement for the first agriculturists (county agents) employed by the fledgling Extension Service to become not only involved in, but to organize and use the Boys and Girls Clubs. The job description for Montana's first county agent, M. L. Wilson, dated May 1, 1913 includes, "Promote boy's corn contests" (Cooley, 1924: 7).

ECONOMIC MOOD OF RURAL AMERICA

1900 to 1940

During the first twenty years of this century, the rural American family was completely involved in the struggle to survive. The land grant colleges were striving to help the rural populace better its economic position. The 1920's have been glamorized as the era of the flappers, gangsters, and prohibition. Unemployment, dust storms, and a crushed economy seem synonymous with 1930 and the Depression.

During these forty years rural America seemed to be in the diabolic state of two steps forward and one and a half steps backward. Farming techniques, soil conservation practices, seed varieties, animal breeding, mechanization of farm jobs were all improving but at a rate to make the progress almost invisible.

Economics as concerned cost-value-profit was of prime importance during this period. The adult male was eager to find improved seed varieties and planting, fertilizing and irrigating methods. A better strain of livestock that would not only withstand the elements but produce more meat was sought. The goal was a larger net profit, a better quality of living.

The farmer's wife was concerned with the problem of providing food for her family especially during the winter months. Here improved garden varieties and growing conditions became involved with improved methods of canning, pickling, and drying. The family must be clothed, so construction, renovation, pattern-making filled the winter hours. An improved and more comfortable home was high on the list of wants of the homemaker, but had bottom priority. Into this situation the children came.

How to stay alive was the basic problem, but money, profit, appeared to all to be the crux. The parents and the children were eager to learn how "to make the best better" in order to reap a greater financial gain. Extension, and Boy's and Girl's Club Work, taught tested methods of how to improve the farm income and improve the standard of living and the environment in which the farm family resided. The Extension Service and the rural family were naturally wedded in their common goal.

The Farmer in the 1940's

Agriculture until the present time has always depended upon man's brawn to produce its yield. World War II took the male work force and sent it off to battle.

The farm wife again, out of necessity, worked along side her man in the fields. German prisoners of war were used for farm labor.

After the wind and drought of the 1930's, the weather of the 1940's seemed almost ideal for the raising of crops. Farm prices were high due to the war demand. Out of the experience of the dust bowl, soil conservation methods were learned and put into practice. The rapidly developing war technology produced fertilizers, pesticides and previously undreamed of equipment that would free many man-hours in the field. Farm debts of long standing were paid off. For the first time the farmer could see ahead something besides daylight to dark labor.

The farmer was now able to produce more than he or his immediate neighbor could use. The ability, knowledge and wherewithal to market that excess farm commodity would be of prime importance. With the portent of things to come, Congress passed the Research and Marketing Act in 1946 which required that twenty per cent of future increases in Federal-grant formula funds for the State Agricultural Experiment Stations be devoted to marketing research (Bayley, 1971: 4).

The farmer was becoming a consumer. He had excess

time and money to buy another man's labor. With the freeing of the farmer, the urban dweller found his food and fiber costing much less of his time and money. In the spin-off of the farmer's good fortune the urban dweller now found himself in the new role of consumer-producer.

ECONOMIC MOOD OF URBAN AMERICA

1900 to 1950

Town and city life during the early period of this century was somewhat better economically than it was in rural America. Though the vast majority of income went to provide the food and fiber necessary for existence there was enough leeway available that "domestic economy" became a popular expression. Books were written to help the female understand the marketplace and how to use wisely her weekly family allowance (Bidder, 1901; Fredericks, 1929). Organizations had little trouble recruiting membership. Interest in learning how to make wise consumer decisions was high.

During the 1920's the urban dweller foresaw only good economic times ahead. He was eager to learn how to use his resources intelligently. Due to the small number

of consumer choices available to him, consumer education needed only to center around the "best buy," "record keeping" approach.

The Depression found the urban dweller in worse condition than the rural individual. Though the government legislated and the educators attempted to educate neither appeared relevant to the situation of the average citizen.

World War II brought a depleted male factory work force, the employment of women in all manner of jobs and the new phenomenon of people having more money to spend than there were commodities to buy. The citizenry had no frame of reference on which to build, or base any of its consumer decisions.

The war ended. Factories turned to the production of consumer goods. Everyone wanted to buy. Quality was poor. The consumer complained. As the first rapidly produced goods had to be replaced, industry and the national economy realized the gold mine that lay in building in a moderate obsolescence. This was not done maliciously but because it was economically feasible to do so for it kept men employed so they could buy more of the equipment and goods that would soon wear out and need to be replaced by a newer model.

The "New" Economic Mood

The decade was 1950 and the American public went on a buying spree that seemed to have no end. Employment was high, wages were better than ever before, and hard goods were on the store floors. Family economics, consumer protection, record keeping seemed only words and ideas from the past as a drunken populace continued their spree.

It took a generation born during World War II to bring the American citizen to his senses. These young people, who had never known anything but money and the ability to buy, questioned with words and actions their elders grasping for the material goods. Youth said, "Is there nothing else?" The parents and grandparents knew all too well there was more to life than collecting possessions and gaining money, but as with the alcoholic (drunk) the money-drunk did not want to be called by the proper name. A seeming impasse occurred between child and parent. A combination of many happenings; man walking on the moon, a seemingly endless conflict in Viet Nam, the assassination of a president, youth's rejection of material gain; and by the mid-1960's the population began to sober and the economy to slow.

The average man found he had money in his pocket,

a secure job and pension for his old age, and he had time for leisure. He was no longer serf, but far from nobility.

MONTANA AND THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

At the turn of the century land prices in the mid-west and eastern states were rising. Experienced farmers were selling and investing their money in less expensive, larger acreages. Montana was one of these areas. Farmers with little capital saw in Montana a chance to be their own masters. The railroads, the government, and the land syndicates, all played their part in encouraging a westward move. Credit was easy. Money was available (Cooley, 1924: 3).

The virgin grassland was plowed. Houses were quickly erected. By 1916-17 wheat was selling at $2.30 a bushel. The seed was planted, the sun shone, and anticipation among the new land owners was high. The hot winds came, but the rain did not. The winter snows were accompanied by wind and forty below zero temperatures. The man had his land; business had given him credit; but Mother Nature seemed determined to keep him in serfdom.

Extension and 4-H Club Work Begin

Montana became a state in 1889. Montana State

College was established in 1893. F. B. Linfield was director of the Experiment Station and organized the Farmer's Institutes in Montana. F. S. Cooley, who later became the first director of the Montana Cooperative Extension Service, was named head of the Farmer's Institutes in 1907. Boy's and Girl's Club Work started and by 1911 a Dr. Hartman was employed as an assistant in charge of its direction (Cooley, 1924: 6).

Montana's first county agent, M. L. Wilson, was stationed in Custer-Dawson counties (a total of 40,000 square miles) in March 1913. Two months later the state employed its second county agent, Carl H. Peterson, in Fergus County. By the end of 1915, the Montana Extension Service had published its first three bulletins: Rules for Boys and Girls Club Contests, Girl's Gardening or Canning Clubs, and Suggestions to Corn Growers in Boy's Club Contests. (In Suggestions to Corn Growers in Boy's Club Contests, is the statement, ". . . club work is for demonstration purposes as well as to help the individual member to grow crops at a profit and to learn home making.") The State Extension Annual Report for 1915 recorded 83 canning, potato, or corn clubs in Montana with an enrollment of 654 members.

Extension Work, 1920

The year, 1920, saw the Montana farmer in a severe

economic plight. Poor growing conditions (three years of drought from 1917-1920) combined with low livestock prices, high feed costs, and even higher freight rates were taking a heavy toll. Extension work, after five years of rapid growth, experienced a cut-back across the state as the counties could not afford to contribute their financial share. In the midst of this, 4-H Club Work was advancing. By 1923 there were 2720 4-H members in Montana and local bankers loaned over four thousand dollars that year to 4-H members to help them purchase livestock and seed (Montana Extension Service, 1923).

The Depression Comes to Montana

The economic depression of the 1930's, after the years of poor weather and crop conditions in Montana, should have caused a mass exodus from the area. Although many homesteads were abandoned, just as many farmers stayed. The Extension Service's Annual Reports seem to reiterate the same miserable weather conditions; the isolation of the farm-ranch family; the lack of any comforts beyond those necessary for existence.

Life in Montana during the depression years was not much different than it had been in 1910 and 1920. "Major attention was turned to utilizing and conserving all

possible food supply (depression and third year of [another] drought) . . . keeping household accounts . . . have been among the activities receiving attention" (Montana Extension Service, 1931). ". . . (weather) conditions were improved, but yields in grain weren't good . . . in part of state damage done by grasshoppers, hail, crickets . . . grain ran 2 to 3 bushels per acre . . . on some irrigated it ran as high as 45 bushels" (Montana Extension Service, 1935).

Farm-Ranch Management

Under these conditions one could have expected the keeping of complete and accurate farm income-expense records to have occurred. Extension personnel encouraged and enticed the farmer to do so. It may have been that conditions were so bad the farmer could not face the bookkeeping entries as these would state objectively the man's economic reality. Whatever the reason, farm-ranch management was not a popular subject among either the adult or his off-spring.

During 1937 and 1938 the weather conditions were somewhat improved. The economic picture in Montana, as over all the United States, was improving. In late May of 1939 a good general rain covered eastern Montana at just the right time for the seedling crops. As though by magic

Montana bloomed. The Montana farm economy surged forward. World War II came to Montana with high farm commodity prices and good growing conditions. The Montana farmer-rancher joined the brotherhood of consumers.

MONTANA 4-H CLUB WORK

The origin of Boy's and Girl's Club Work in Montana parallels that experienced throughout the nation. Records show that Club Work was operational in the state at least three years prior to the Smith-Lever Act. The job description for the first county agent incorporates instruction on using Boy's Clubs. The foundation on which Boy's and Girl's Club Work was based was closely aligned with the methods used by the Farmer's Institutes except for the age of the clientele. This base, learning by doing under the stimulus of competition, matched and/or caught the mood of the struggling Montana farm family.

4-H Financial Record Keeping

From demonstration plot, to the boys' or girls' corn or canning record, to the county agent's reports, financial records were required and kept with utmost detail. "Each club member receives a record book in which he keeps a record of his business operations" (Montana Extension

Service, 1920). "Club members keep records of variety of seed, cost of planting, cultivating, and all operations on a record blank furnished upon application by the State Leader. They keep records all summer of amount and value of produce used at home and sold . . . when a girl makes a great profit she can prove by figures how she has made her money and how she has canned her vegetables" (Montana Extension Service, 1916).

Miss Bess M. Rowe summarized this aspect in her Annual Summary of Home Economics Extension Work report dated June 30, 1917, ". . . in most of our work, economy has been the keynote . . . (eastern part of state) there is very little ready money. The western part is older and more prosperous. The same principles were taught in various sections but the application varied to suit local conditions."

The attention and emphasis given the monetary aspect of 4-H work during its early years shows in the State's Annual Report of Boy's and Girl's Club Work. Not only are the projects and enrollment charted but the value, cost, and labor income for each project is also tallied for the entire state enrollment.

Farm Record Project

Due to economic conditions it was natural the educators would see the need for a 4-H Farm Record project. Such a project did emerge in 1934. R. E. Cameron in his 1935 Annual Boy's and Girl's Club Work Report stated, ". . . this is an especially difficult and very important project . . . instilling . . . importance and necessity of keeping accurate records on farm business. Reports from other states indicate similar difficulties experienced . . . . The national farm record contest sponsored by a large implement concern and supervised by the National Committee of Boy's and Girl's Club Work has served to create more interest on the part of young folks in farm accounts."

Its importance was stressed by everyone. The need for accurate records during this period of poor weather conditions and low market values seems evident. Still the farm record project met with a slow death and by 1942 only one person in the state completed it.

4-H Home Economics Initiates Family Economics

In 1943 the home economics division of 4-H offered a Home Management project for the first time whose stated purpose was denoted as home service, household equipment

and home accounts. Enrollment was 157 that first year and excitement was high among the educators concerned with family economics. By 1946 enrollment in the Home Management project was reduced to 89 members of the entire state. With no explanation, the enrollment figures show a jump to 230 in 1947 with the notation that in the coming year this project (Home Management) would be included as a part of the over-all Home Living project (Montana Extension Service, 1947). During the ensuing years Home Living has become Home Improvement with no particular emphasis in the project placed on either expense keeping records or decision making skills and concepts.

In the 1961 Montana Extension Home Economics Annual Report under a sub-division on youth programs in Family Economics it says, ". . . still in planning stage, to be based on the developmental stage of boys and girls so that at times we will have individual projects and at other group activities and experiences . . . to help the boys and girls have a better understanding of money as a tool for translating their energy, time and talents into satisfactions . . . aimed not only at 4-H but for all youth and youth organizations in the state." The current absence (1972) of any such program would seem to signify either it

never got beyond the planning stage or as with the experience in the 1930's the keeping of financial records (method by which the teaching of consumer education seems to start) was not made relevant to the experiences of the youth.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

During the late 19th century consumer cooperatives and social reform appeared in the urban areas. The promotion of consumer education as a discipline was evident as the Consumer Interests Committee of the newly founded American Home Economics Association (1908) advocated introduction of consumer education into the school. In 1911, the American Home Economics Association devoted an entire session at their convention to consumer education. Twenty-five per cent of the high schools were teaching choice making, budgeting and market selection by 1915. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 made business management of the home a specific part of the vocational home economic's curriculum (Uhl, et al., 1970: 13).

In the mid-1920's, two outspoken consumer advocates of that day, Stuart Chase and F. J. Schlenk, wrote: "The time has gone--possibly forever--when it is possible for

each of us to become informed on all the things we have to buy. Even the most expert today can have knowledge of only a negligible section of the field. What sense then is a specialized industrial society if each individual must learn by trial and error again and forever again" (Knauer, 1970).

The consumer education movement during the 1920's was characterized with an anti-business and a protective philosophy, an approach typical of the times and attitudes of the people. Likewise during the 1930's consumer education evolved from a base of poverty, whereas in the 1940's it evolved from a war economy and in the 1950's from an unprecedented economic boom.

During the 1930's, Congress acted upon many new concepts and laws which would forever change some of the consumer economic patterns. Such legislative bills as the Social Security Act, the Farm Security Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority would be felt in urban and rural areas alike. The National Association of Secondary School Principals conducted a consumer education study in the mid-1940's with emphasis on developing a mature consumer, cognizant of market deception but able to purchase wisely and function positively in a marketplace of abundance (Uhl,

et al., 1970: 18). Greater emphasis on science and technology in the 1950's undermined national interest in consumer problems and education. The American Council on Consumer Interests was established in 1953.

The forty years between 1920 and 1960 saw interest in consumer education rise due to poverty and then fall back due to abundance. The educators maintained an acute interest but seemed tied to the economic consideration of consumer behavior. Without more than a passing reference to the psychological and sociological influences on the consumer much of the material studied and presented, though of prime importance, was not relevant to the individual in his particular time and place.

Since 1960, educators and legislators have tended to recognize the need to redefine and redirect our previous concept of consumer education. It is truly an uncharted chapter in the economic annals of history. Legislation has a way of following public opinion; it rarely anticipates (Cooley, 1924: 8), and so it seems to be with consumer education. In contrast to the consumer movements of the 1930's the present movement is fueled by concern with abundance rather than poverty (Uhl, et al., 1970: 20). In 1964 President Johnson called upon the federal government to

improve its consumer information programs and to provide leadership in this area. Each session of the Congress and individual state legislatures sees a multitude of good, bad, and indifferent consumer bills proposed. Commercial companies, in an effort to help sell their product or to help the buyer in the proper use of the product, often appear to have taken the lead in consumer education.

"In order to facilitate the growth and development of consumer education programs, a national policy of lifetime consumer education is recommended. The rapid obsolescence of consumer skills in our dynamic economy necessitates a comprehensive approach to consumer education over the entire life of the consumer" (Uhl, et al., 1970: 133). This can be achieved only by a coordination of efforts between the formal and informal education processes and the commercial organizations.

The Future of Consumer Education in 4-H Club Work

The youth of today are seeking answers. They are searching in the most complex of worlds in which some long-held values are being questioned. Increasingly there is the plea to relate education to the realities of the pupil's daily life--to help him find answers to the real problems he faces (Van Hooft, 1968: 5).

In 1943, Ruby Green Smith, then State Leader of Home Demonstration Agents, Cornell University, said, "A second prophecy is that extension service in Home Economics must be expanded to include city homemakers" (Bliss, et al., 1952: 299). No one could have foreseen the consumer economic changes thirty years were going to bring to the United States. Nor could one have foreseen the role Extension has to play in rural America's present primary problem, the adjustment to change (National Advisory Commission on Food and Fiber, 1967). The Extension Service has demonstrated skill and know-how in its past educational role. It should not stop at the city limit sign for there is an entire segment of society, often referred to "as the people left behind" that need their talents. The similarity between these people and the eastern Montana farmer of 1917 is quite striking.

The same boy's and girl's club work which helped advance rural life will work in suburbia and in the inner-city and with those people left behind. It can't be a formal corn growing contest club, but the philosophy will be the same--teach and help the child in his environment so he may improve his present and future life, and in the process his parents will learn. "If one of the 4-H Club

objectives was designed to develop leadership in 4-H members and develop their potentiality for future development, then this objective seems to be met . . ." (Wu, 1968: 132).

Consumer education is especially relevant to the present 4-H program with its inherent background, its "learning by doing" philosophy and its new clientele. Four-H members must learn they have alternate choices in all phases of living. Whether the idea is approved or not, money is the common denominator in the majority of consumer decisions.

The Extension Service has not lagged behind the schools in consumer education, but neither has it led the way in teaching consumer education as a primary goal (Uhl, et al., 1970: 65). Robert F. Davis, University of California State 4-H Club Specialist, surveyed seven western states during 1969 as to enrollment in eighty-two different project areas. Three of the listed projects he inquired into showed no enrollment throughout the seven state area. Consumer Education was one of those three.

In a detailed study of the 38 major project areas Montana offers its 4-H members, there is only one subdivision which is explicitly cited as consumer-oriented. In "Clothes Become You," development of consumer skills

in clothing selection and management is the expressed objective. A study of the project materials and record sheets in the other project areas ranging from "A," automotive, to "V," veterinary science, show consumer education continuing to appear in the secondary role of income-expense keeping accounts. The decision making process that goes into a cost-value-profit situation is not included much better today than it was thirty years ago.

To learn in real life situations, 4-H provides as excellent a laboratory today as it did when it began. To offer today's youth, no matter where he lives, a learning experience as real and valuable as that which inspired early pioneers in Extension is today's challenge (Davis, 1970: 35). Consumer education must be emphasized if Extension is to be successful in this challenge.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the current state of consumer education in the Cooperative Extension Service's 4-H home economics program.

SAMPLE

Each state has an individual Cooperative Extension Service organization which joins federal, state and county under the Federal Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Each organization has its own administrators. In order to evaluate consumer education activities in extension, the administrator of each of the fifty units, as listed in the 1970 County Agents Directory, was sent a questionnaire. Each administrator was requested to forward the questionnaire to the appropriate individual within his state. In this way, the supervisor would be aware this information was being solicited and the person most intimately concerned with 4-H consumer education would be supplying the information.

INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was used to collect the information in order to obtain the data in the most meaningful manner. It was designed to be brief and specific so that only a small time expenditure would be required on the part of the respondent. It was further specified, the response was to be concerned with only the state in which the respondent was presently employed.

The questionnaire contained four divisions: 1) the present status of a primary consumer education program; 2) the status of consumer education as a secondary goal; 3) a value judgment as to the adequacy of the program; and 4) statistics as to 4-H enrollment.

These divisions would aid in the analysis of the data. In addition, the order of the questions afforded by the separate areas would aid the respondent in viewing the entire questionnaire with a clear perspective.

The instrument was pretested with the help of the Montana State University extension personnel. Clarification of wording was shown to be needed, but no basic changes were required for understanding the instrument.

The final form of the questionnaire and the cover

letter (Appendix A) were mailed in April 1971. This time was chosen because it would be during the planning phase of the 4-H programs in the various states and prior to the heavy summer schedule making it possible to obtain a higher rate of return.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to obtain information concerning the nationwide status of consumer education training in the 4-H program. A determination of this status was made by obtaining details as to the focus of consumer education projects in the various states.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

A major function of the Cooperative Extension Service is to provide informal adult and youth education. This education centers around providing people with ideas, knowledge and leadership guidance in order to help them make their lives more satisfying, productive, and enjoyable. Extension is the off-campus arm of each state's land-grant University (Montana Extension Service, 1970). It is the link between the Experiment Station and the community. An extension agent is a member of the faculty of the land-grant University having as his classroom a county, parish, or township, and as his students the entire populace of that assigned area.

The fifty individual state's Cooperative Extension

Services are aligned under the Federal Extension Service. No direct rules are applied by the Federal office, however, in what or how to teach. Each state takes the direction which seems to be most feasible in presenting subject matter material appropriate to its clientele.

As each Cooperative Extension Service is free to set its own methods and goals, so in each state the job descriptions of the personnel may vary. Generally, the county extension agent will have either a bachelors' or masters' degree in home economics or one of the numerous agricultural fields. Supervisors are employed to oversee and coordinate the teaching done by a group of county agents. These supervisors have often been former county agents. Depending upon the state, the supervisor may be a "personnel," "program," or "subject matter" supervisor. Above this individual in the chain of command, but under the Director of that state's Extension Service, will be one or more administrators.

A questionnaire was sent to the home economics and/or youth program administrator of each of the fifty Cooperative Extension Services. It was requested that the administrator forward the questionnaire to the appropriate

individual within his state (Appendix A). Responses were received from forty-five states, a ninety per cent return. States not responding were Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire and West Virginia. Not all these forty-five questionnaires were completely usable as on occasion one or more areas would be left blank by the respondents. In tabulating results, the number of states responding to the inquiry in question is specified. This results in having some responses stronger and more representative than others.

CONSUMER EDUCATION IN 4-H CLUB WORK

Is consumer education the primary focus of a specific project within the state? The answer would help determine the emphasis on major consumer education teaching efforts and an exact number of youngsters being reached. All forty-five returned questionnaires answered this question. Thirteen states, 28.8%, stated they did have specific consumer education projects. Six states, 13.3%, responded they did not currently have such a project but were readying one. These states gave 1972 as the target date for the material to be ready for use either on a pilot basis or for the club year starting that fall. In addition,

two of the states already having a consumer oriented project (.44% of total questionnaire response) declared they were committed to preparing more material in this area.

The status of consumer education in 4-H Club work throughout the United States as of May 1971 is shown in Table 1. An alphabetical listing of the states and each individual response is given in Appendix B.

Through the Cooperative Extension Services are not grouped into specific geographic alignments, the United States is considered to be divided into four areas based upon agricultural similarity. The west is composed of the states from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean--Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, California, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii. From the Appalachian Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean north of the Mason-Dixon line is the eastern division. The south includes the Civil War states and the old Northwest Territory. The actual states in these regions are available from the National Director of the Extension Service.

Table 1. Status of Consumer Education in 4-H Club Work, May 1971

Classification of Response	States Responding Affirmatively	% of States Answering	% of Total States
Presently have Consumer Education project	13	28.8	26.0
Preparing Consumer Education project	6	13.3	12.0
Consumer Education taught in other project areas, not primary focus	26	57.7	52.0
States not answering	5	----	10.0
Total	50	99.9	100.0

A cursory examination of Figure 1 shows the western half of the United States land mass having far less emphasis on consumer education as a primary focus in their 4-H program than has the eastern half. None of the western division states record a consumer education project and only three, Oregon, Hawaii, and New Mexico, are in the process of preparing one.

In the eastern division two states have a project. This still is not the emphasis on consumer education that either the south or north central divisions have. According to census figures the average income in the south is less than it is for the rest of the nation. The industrial

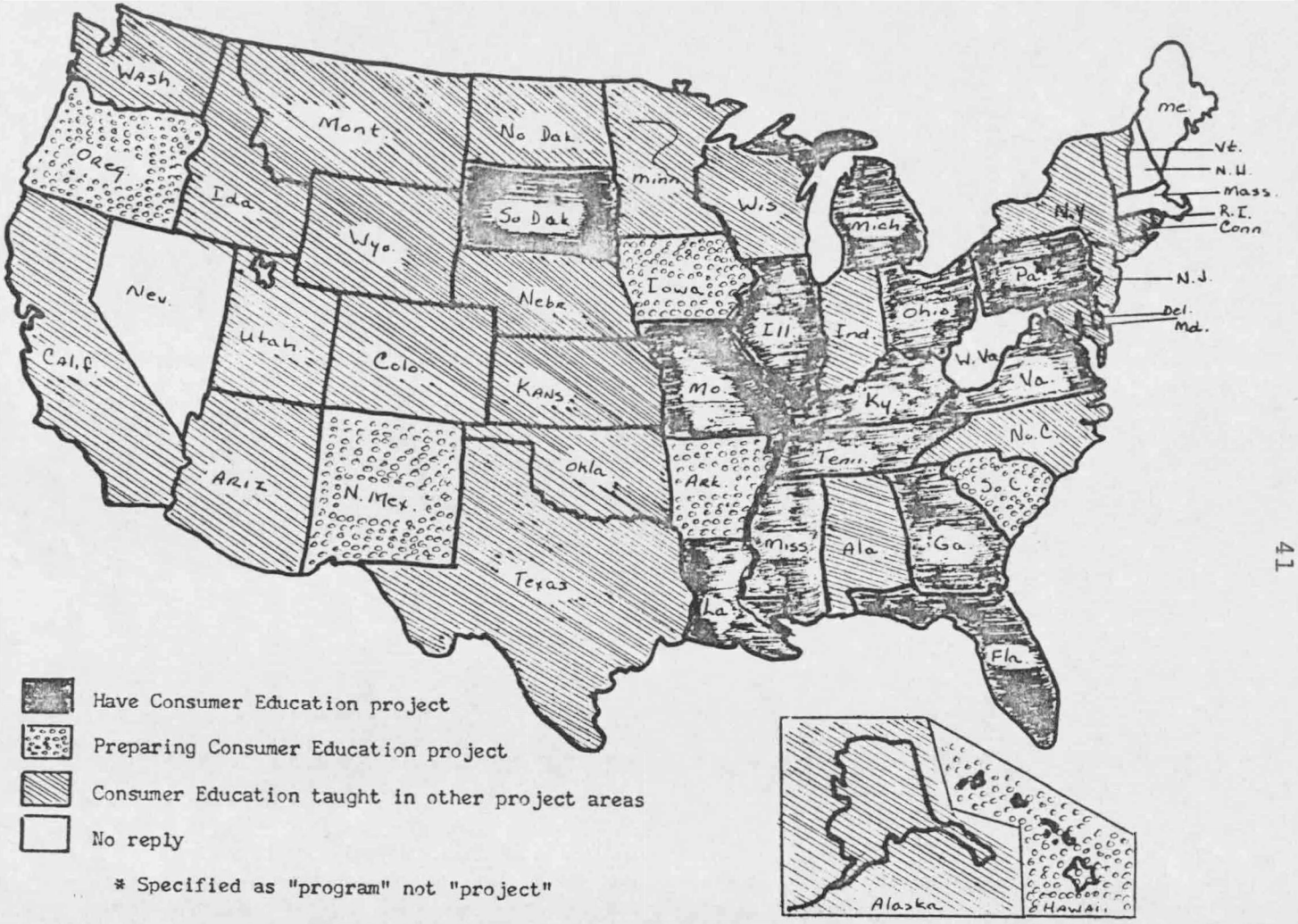


Figure 1. Status of Consumer Education in 4-H Club Work, May 1971

states contain more blue collar workers. This relationship and the position of importance given to the teaching of consumer education in 4-H Club work may be important.

Of the thirteen states having Consumer Education projects, ten lie east of the Mississippi River. Five of the six states preparing such a project lie west of the Mississippi. Assuming all the states preparing such a project carry it to completion and incorporate it within their 4-H program, the states east of the Mississippi River would number eleven having Consumer Education projects and those west of the Mississippi would still register less with only eight.

Objectives of 4-H Consumer Education

To produce a satisfactory end result in any endeavor, especially when developing a specific program, there should be an objective (goal) in the mind of the creator of that endeavor. The more definite, the more well-reasoned, the goal the more satisfactory the end result will be.

Of the thirteen states replying they had 4-H Consumer Education projects, only eleven listed specific goals for their program. Two states that listed themselves

as already having a consumer education project indicated they were developing further project materials and each gave rather in-depth goals. Two states that indicated they were preparing consumer education projects gave goals for those projects. Four states that said they were preparing 4-H Consumer Education projects did not give goals, though all four gave the name and title of the individual responsible and three even gave the projected completion date. One state even noted that the goals were not determined, but the project was to be completed within the year.

Each of the recorded goals is worded differently. To draw out the overall view of 4-H consumer education across the nation it appears appropriate to record a portion of the stated goals. These included:

a) To help our youth become alert, responsive, and responsible consumers.

b) Enable 4-H members to function as national consumers.

c) Better decision making toward improved quality of life for resources used.

d) To help youth acquire knowledge and skill . . .

e) Decision making for maximum utilization of resources.

f) 4-H club members and youth to gain a better understanding of their role in the economy.

g) To help young people develop attitudes and practices that will improve their decision making skill in money management.

h) Help consumers know protections provided by law.

i) For 4-H youth to develop skills and knowledge to use in making wise decisions at the market place.

j) Teach 4-H'ers about their role and responsibilities as consumer.

k) To place emphasis on consumer education as related to the individual and the home.

l) To help youth and adults become intelligent buyers.

m) Help youth make informed decisions . . .

n) Through each 4-H project to provide member with experience in establishing values to use in setting standards for making choices wisely--decision making.

o) To prepare 4-H members to make more intelligent decisions related to buying, use and care of products.

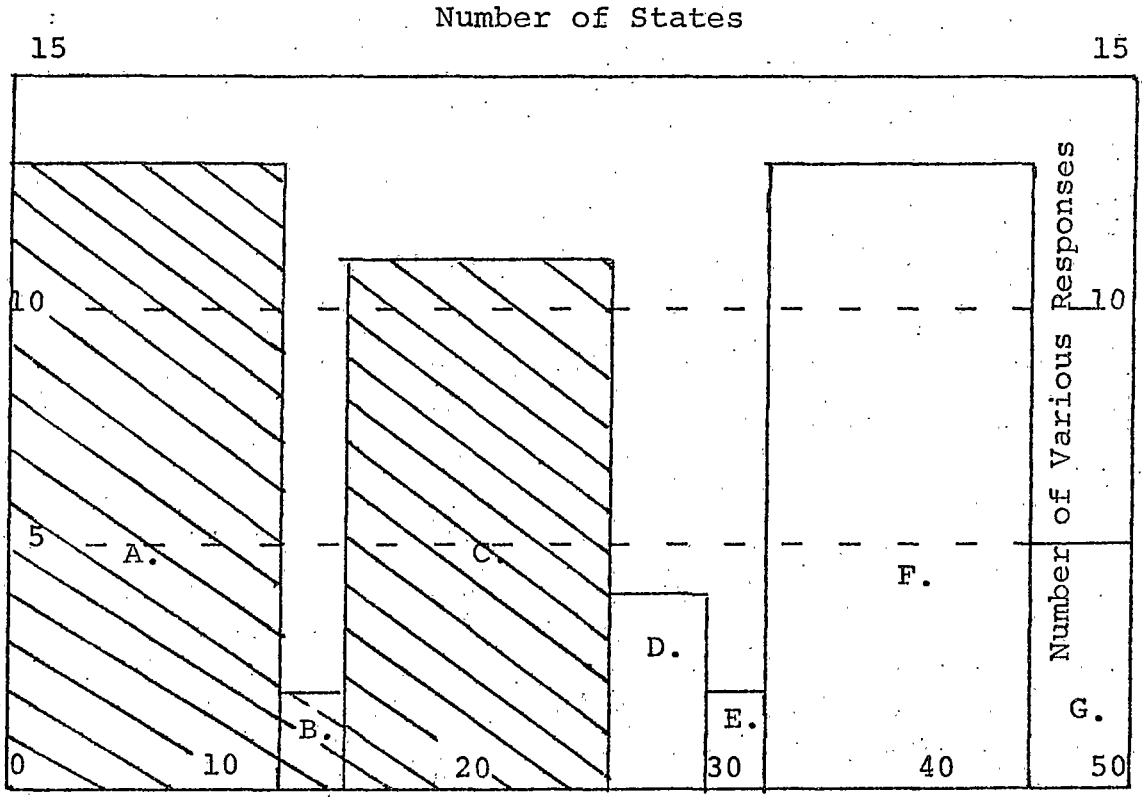
p) To help youth become more knowledgeable purchasers and users of consumer goods and services.

q) 4-H'ers to learn to satisfactorily manage resources for desired consumer products.

r) Make them informed consumers.

One of the eastern seaboard states further noted that they believed consumer education should be integrated into most projects or program areas in order to avoid fragmentation and give meaning to consumer information as it is part of everyday living. This appears to be the intent of the individual state goals.

A corporate goal of consumer education in 4-H club work seems appropriate. Whether consumer education is incorporated within a different subject matter material area or if a project has consumer education as the prime focus seems to make little difference. The goal, therefore, of consumer education in extension appears to be: To help youth become alert, responsive members of their community ever aware of the responsibility of their decision and/or choice making experiences.



A. No Consumer Education Project ..Goals given for consumer education as incorporated in other projects (13)
B. States developing Consumer Education project.. goals given (2)
C. Have Consumer Education Project ..Goals given .. Includes two states preparing further materials (11)
D. States developing project .. no goals given (4)
E. States having project .. no goals given (2)
F. States returning questionnaire .. no response (13)
G. States not returning questionnaire (5)

Figure 2. Numerical Response of States to Consumer Education Goals

Elimination of Consumer Education Projects

In the process of developing, changing, reviewing, revamping 4-H projects, often it is found that the original intent of a project is no longer adaptable to the clientele and/or situation at hand. It may be feasible to completely abandon a project. Review might reveal what had been an individual project would be more effective if combined within another project area. Often the statistics alone are enough to warrant cessation of a project. If the enrollment is not great enough to justify the cost of the materials and time involved, the administrators have no choice other than to drop the project no matter how worthwhile they may believe it is.

Often the painful evaluation that occurs when such a situation arises teaches more than years of preparing and presenting a specific subject matter material. This maybe particularly true if the same format has been used over a period of years for the subject.

Only one state, out of the forty-five returns, replied that they had eliminated a consumer education project. The reason given by that state was a terse "For the awards program." Without the reasoning, and without further explanation, no conclusions can be drawn or projected.

Incorporation of Consumer Education in Present Projects

Consumer education can be either a teaching technique or a body of subject matter (Armstrong & Uhl, 1971: 525). It is a teaching technique when consumer problems are used to illustrate other disciplinary concepts or principles. For example, learning the care of the fabric she selects, enriches a girl's entire scope of not only clothing construction but the textile industry.

In contrast, consumer education can be the primary focus of the education process. In this technique, consumer problems become the prime consideration and appropriate disciplinary tools are brought to bear on the problem. As an example, being charged with the family's food purchases for a week involves not only budgeting and money management but food preferences, preparation time, and nutrition as well.

This study was equally concerned with consumer education as the secondary goal, the supportive discipline used to help teach the primary focus, as it was with consumer education as the prime consideration within a project.

Historically, the 4-H member and his project have

been involved in not only "Making the Best Better" but in making a monetary profit while doing so.

> . . . club work is for demonstration purposes as well as to help the individual member grow crops at a profit . . . (Montana Extension Service, 1915).

> Club members keep records . . . when a girl makes a great profit she can prove by figures how she has made her money and how she has canned her vegetables . . . (Montana Extension Service, 1916).

Today's definition of consumer education encompasses a much larger concept than those quoted above.

> . . . consumer education . . . is the preparation for the art of everyday living which enables an individual regardless of age or income to make intelligent choices based on knowledge and information (Furness, 1968: 23).

> . . . consumer education is the development of the individual in the skills, concepts and understanding required for everyday living for one to achieve within the frame work of his own values, maximum utilization from his resources (Human Resource Development Staff, 1971).

Forty-two states (93.3%) of the return responded that consumer education was incorporated in their present projects. One state responded that it did not incorporate it in other projects and two of the returned questionnaires did not have that section completed (Table 2).

Table 2. Consumer Education Incorporated in Present Project Areas

Type of Response	Number of States	% of Return	% of Total States
Affirmative	42	93.3	84.0
Negative	1	2.2	2.0
No Answer	2	4.4	4.0
Questionnaire not Returned	5	---	10.0
Totals	50	99.9	100.0

Appropriate project areas which included consumer education were provided as: Clothing, Foods, Home Management, Livestock, Field Crops, Gardening, Mechanical Science, and Other. The majority of respondents indicated consumer education was incorporated in more than one project area. There were forty-two total affirmative responses to the question "Is Consumer Education incorporated in any of your present projects?" These included 174 total project areas, an average of 4.14 projects per state.

Table 3. Project Areas in Which Consumer Education is Incorporated

Project	Number of States Replying Affirmative	% of Total Affirmative Replies	% of Total Returned Questionnaires	% of Total States
Clothing	40	95.2	88.0	80.0
Foods	38	90.5	84.4	76.0
Home Management	34	81.0	75.5	68.0
Livestock	16	38.1	35.5	34.0
Field Crops	7	16.6	15.5	14.0
Gardening	12	28.5	26.6	24.0
Mechanical Science	10	23.8	22.2	20.0
Other	17	40.4	37.7	34.0

Seventeen states used the opportunity provided by "Other" to be more specific in their response. As noted in Table 4, twenty-nine different projects were listed. It is evident that the terminology used varies as greatly among the individual states as their mode of operation. Automotive and Snowmobiling, for example, could easily have been included as the assigned Mechanical Science area. Knitting and Buying Clothes for School appear to be a part of the Clothing project area. The Food area would seem natural for the designation--Food Preservation. The item "Home Management" might have encompassed the Home Furnishing, Housing, and Equipment, Interior Design, Home Improvement and Money Management, if it had been broadened to read "The Home -- Management, Furnishings, Equipment, Etc."

The Personal (Creative) Development area specified as including consumer education seems to point out a new direction that consumerism may be taking. Consumer Education used as a teaching technique in Human Development, Child Development, Art, Crafts, Health, Photography and Woodworking projects illustrates the creativity among Extension Personnel in the states involved.

Table 4. Specific Replies to Project Area Designated "Other" as Given by Seventeen States

	Number of States
Home	
Home Furnishings	8
Home Improvement	3
Housing and Equipment	1
Interior Design	1
Money Management	1
Personal (Creative) Development	
Human Development	1
Child Development	1
Art	1
Crafts	1
Health	1
Photography	1
Woodworking	2
Clothing	
Knitting	1
Buying Clothes for School	1
Foods	
Food Preservation	1
Mechanical	
Automotive	1
Snowmobiling	1
Miscellaneous	
Self-Determined	1
All Projects Have Some	1

The Self-Determined project is one in which the member selects his/her own goal and the methods by which to reach it. There are no specific project manuals written and each enrollee is responsible for finding his own background materials. Different states, and in particular Montana, report consumerism done by individuals under the Self-Determined project. Studies on credit,

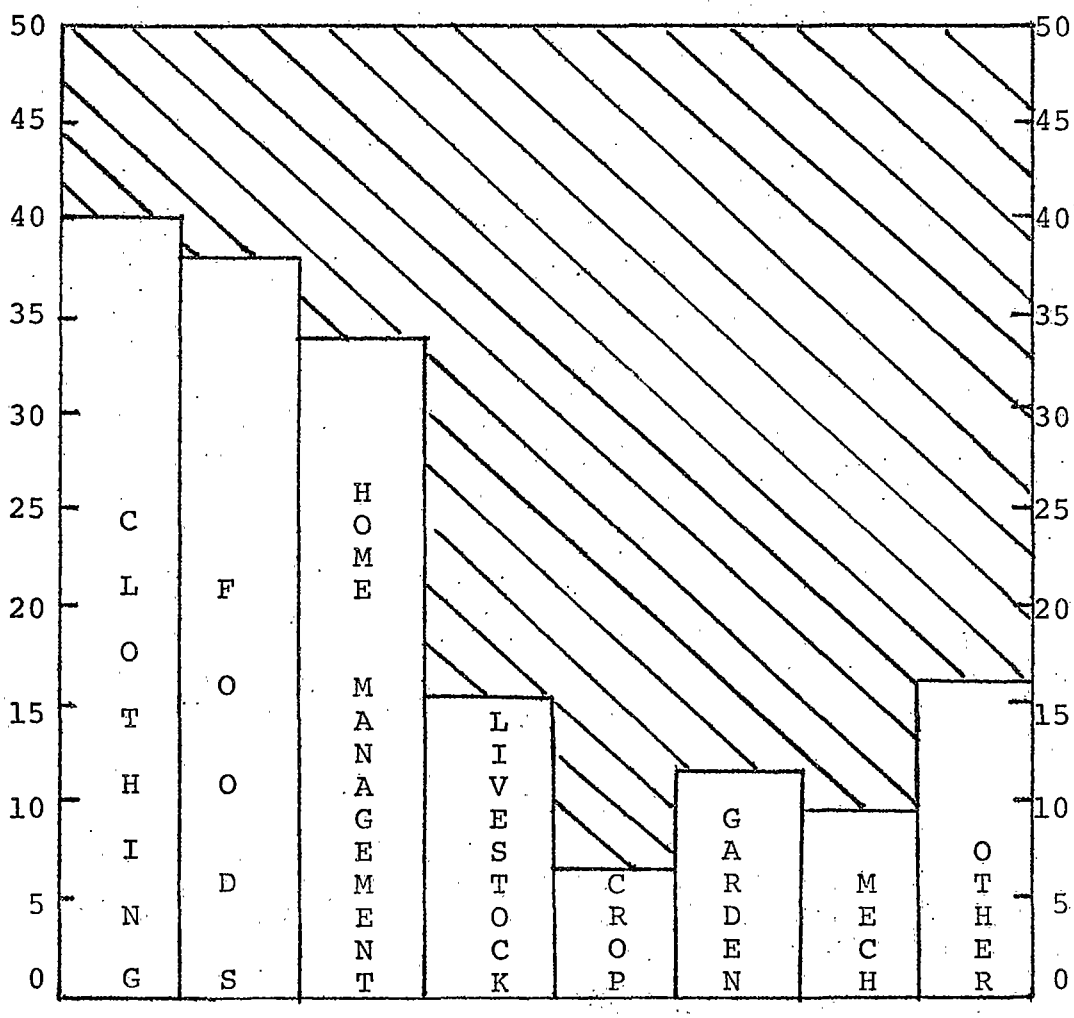


Figure 3. Number of States Incorporating Consumer Education Into Project Areas Specified

comparative shopping, and budgeting of time and energy have been developed by interested 4-H members with the help of their respective County Extension Agents.

The response "All projects have some" seems to summarize the entire concept of consumer education in the 4-H program. The effectiveness of the teaching (learning) of consumer education will be in direct relationship to the interest, skill, and knowledge of the member, volunteer leader and Extension staff involved.

Present Adequacy of Consumer Education Program

Many unmeasurable factors are a part of determining the adequacy of a program. The respondents' replies should, therefore, merit little consideration except in an attempt to view the overall direction of corporate thinking. A major factor influencing a respondents' reaction to the present adequacy of the program within the state might be that individual's direct relationship to the program. For if the respondent authored or initiated the present program, or had a direct line of authority over consumer education within that state, it might be reflected in the respondent's reaction.

Thirty-three respondents (73.3%) said their present

program was not adequate, while eight (17.7%) said their program was. Four of the returned questionnaires left this inquiry blank.

A "broader view of consumer decisions in more project areas, emphasizing quality of life and effect of choice on environment--not just how to buy . . ." seems to summarize many of the individual's expressed comments.

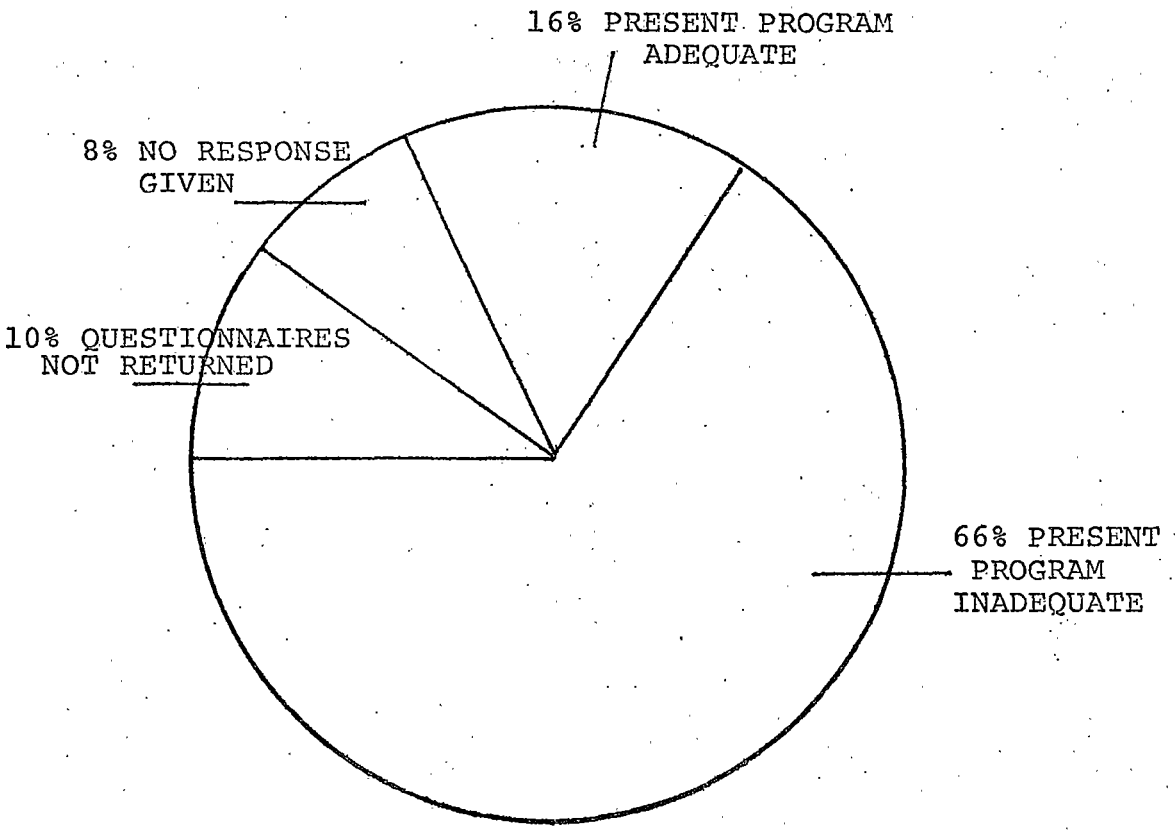


Figure 4. Respondent's Reaction to Inquiry on Adequacy of Their State's Consumer Education Program

Improvements needed were suggested from such open-ended statements as "Improvement needed in every phase of the program" to the more definite statement "Development of specific project of this type with additional information on the subject included in present projects." The need for a more formal plan to include consumer education within the present projects was cited several times. The lack of project materials appeared in numerous responses as the major hurdle that needed to be overcome.

The respondent who used the term "appealing teaching materials" would certainly have been in agreement with the one who said we need to sell the project. Responses from the mid-western states could be summed up with "need to define what we mean by 'Consumer Education' and start developing programs from the very beginning as it is difficult to know exactly what and how much actual consumer education the youth are receiving within the present projects."

Fifteen of the respondents used either the specific term "money management" or referred to this area with terms such as "consumer in the marketplace," "wise buying decisions," etc. These respondents corporately believed

that consumer education might well be most effectively presented as a specific project with emphasis on decision making. Learning experiences such as field trips, store visits, comparison shopping, study of marketing and packaging and labeling were proposed. The need for guidelines for Extension staff people as well as the volunteer leader was mentioned several times.

One respondent suggested that she wasn't sure the members wanted a separate project so we need to do a better job incorporating more consumer education into existing project areas and/or special interest or study groups.

Among the respondents who stated they believed their present program was adequate the only further reaction was that they needed to "sell the project."

A key principle of Extension is to know your audience and then to work within the frame of reference those people most readily accept. This principle seems to be kept in the foreground of each respondent's reaction to the 'where' and 'how' improvement is needed. A definite trend for the need to do more in consumer education can be noted. Not each state and its clientele, however, would function effectively with a project in which consumer education was the primary focus.

Project material was mentioned most often as the item most seriously needed at the current time. The direction to take in developing this material appeared vague. Leader training was the second most often mentioned item needed. Only one respondent suggested that Extension staff perhaps needed training in consumer education.

Number of 4-H Members Being Reached

Thirteen states reported they had consumer education projects. Six states are preparing consumer education projects. An average of 4.14 projects per state use consumer education as a supplimentary means to teach the primary focus (consumer education incorporated in other projects). Only as the actual number of individuals reached by any or all of these methods is determined can there be a firm understanding of the extent (spread) of 4-H consumer education work.

Each state is required annually to prepare the statistical form, ES-237, for the Federal Extension Service. The ES-237 asks not only for enrollment by sex but for enrollment by place of residency as either Farm; Towns under 10,000 and Open Country; Towns and Cities 10,000 to 50,000; Suburbs of City over 50,000; and Central City of over 50,000. No specification was given in this study as

to what should constitute rural or urban as an in-depth residency count did not appear necessary. What is rural in one state may be considered urban in another due to population density, for as was noted in one return, "Urban figures for cities under 50,000. None larger in this state."

To find the actual number of 4-H'ers presently involved or participating in either consumer education projects or projects incorporating consumer education was one intent of the study. Many problems were encountered in interpreting the respondent's answers.

There were twenty-five states that gave their enrollment in a numerical, completely usable, form (Appendix B). Six states did not complete the statistical portion of the questionnaire. Respondents in numerous cases did not correlate the boy-girl enrollment figures with other data (Appendix B).

Of the fourteen responses that were not in a form that could be used in the final tally where nine states that gave their boy-girl enrollment as a percentage. Though these states gave no total numerical enrollment, the results are of interest. Due to the reasonable direction or assumption to which these statistics seem to point, they are being included here.

In the nine states, the percentage of boys in the total 4-H enrollment was stated as ranging from 33% to 70% with the average being 42.1%. The percentage given for girls ranged from 30% to 67% with the average being 57.88%. The boy-girl ratio for the 27 states that reported exact enrollment figures compares favorably with these nine states as shown in Table 5. A much greater variance appears when comparing these figures with those used by the National 4-H Service Committee in their 1971 news releases (4-H Bridges the Gap, 1971).

Table 5. Reported Boy-Girl Ratio in 4-H Club Work

Source of Information	% of Boys	% of Girls	Total
This Survey			
27 States Reporting Exact Statistics	42.24	57.76	100.0
9 States Reporting Enrollment by Percentage	42.12	57.88	100.0
National 4-H Service Committee, 1971	46.3	53.7	100.0

As one compares the boy-girl enrollment percentages in Table 5 to the reported percentage of project areas incorporating consumer education in Table 3, it appears many more girls are being reached in their club work with some

meaningful level of consumer education than are the boys. (95.2% clothing projects incorporate consumer education compared with 38.1% of the livestock projects reported).

The 1971 National 4-H Service Committee report states that nearly four million youths are served by 4-H and/or Extension. The 27 states responding to this survey with actual enrollment figures accounted for 1,408,876 members, or at least 35% of the total youth served (Table 6).

Table 6. 4-H Enrollment Figures Received in this Survey

Source	Boys	Girls	No sex given	Total
Totals from Appendix B[1]	520,742	713,895		1,234,637
States not included in Appendix B[2]	45,150	60,175		105,325
Enrollment in TV[3]			18,557	18,557
Enrollment in Home Ec projects[4]			50,357	50,357
TOTALS	565,892	774,070	68,914	1,408,876

[1]25 states that gave their enrollment in completely usable numerical form

[2]Two states that gave boy-girl enrollment, but no place of residency (Virginia and Florida)

[3]State gave enrollment in TV program in addition to enrollment incorporated in Appendix B (Georgia)

[4]State gave enrollment for only Home Economics projects, no breakdown by sex (Illinois)

Members Participating in Consumer Education

The number of 4-H members who are presently being

reached by consumer education as either the primary or secondary aspect of project work was needed to help determine the status of consumer education in relation to the overall 4-H program.

In this survey figures were given by 31 states for the number of members being reached with some form of consumer education. These states reported 54,817 members enrolled in a consumer education project where decision making was the primary focus of the work. These same 31 states reported 679,998 members involved in projects that incorporated consumer education as a secondary discipline.

The twenty-four states that gave numerical enrollment figures for both total enrollment and enrollment involved in consumer education showed 26,961 enrolled in consumer education projects and 458,998 enrolled in related projects (Appendix B). Seven of the nine states that had given their enrollment breakdown in percentage of the total gave numerical totals for the members reached by consumer education. Those totals were 27,856 in consumer education projects and 221,000 in related projects.

No meaningful conclusion concerning consumer education projects can be drawn from the figures reported in this survey. It is reasonable though, from the figures

given, to propose the possibility that twelve times as many 4-H members are reached with consumer education taught in a secondary manner than are reached when it is taught as the primary focus.

The reported enrollment for the 27 states given in Appendix B is 1,339,962 or approximately 33.5% of the total youth served by Extension in the United States. These states reported 36.2% of their membership being reached with some form of consumer education with 94.4% of that consumer education being in related projects.

The reliability of any of these figures is open to question because of the manner in which the respondents completed the inquiries. Six states, for example, that said they did not have a consumer education project did not complete this portion--is there no consumer education incorporated in other projects in those states? Five states that said they did have a consumer education project did not give enrollment figures for either the consumer education project or related projects. One state reported a membership of 170,000 and then gave no enrollment in consumer education stating that type of breakdown was unavailable, but had signified consumer education was incorporated in at least five other project areas.

The following, however, can be reported with some degree of assurance. (1) Extension personnel recognize at least one-third of the youth served is presently being reached with some level of consumer education training. (2) Over 90% of the time this consumer education training will be found incorporated within a project as a supplimentary device to help teach some other type of subject matter.

CONSUMER EDUCATION IN MONTANA 4-H CLUB WORK

In Montana there are 14,485 4-H members. Of this total, 5,050 (34.8%) are boys and 9,435 (65.1%) are girls. The national average as reported to this survey was 42.2% boys and 57.76% girls. Montana's 4-H members are approximately 1.03% of this reported membership and less than half of one per cent of the total youth reached by 4-H and Extension.

Montana reported no projects where consumer education was the primary focus. Clothing, foods, home management, livestock, field crops and "other" (specifically noted was self-determined projects) were designated as project areas in which consumer education is incorporated as a secondary discipline. Montana reported six project

areas incorporating consumer education. This is 44.92% more than the average 4.14 project areas.

Three-fourths of the Montana membership (10,875) is reached with some form of consumer education as incorporated in other project areas. From statistics of this study, at least one-third of the United States 4-H membership were presently being reached with some form of consumer education. Montana, therefore, has over twice the emphasis on 4-H consumer education than the average for the nation.

A principal objective of Montana's 4-H Consumer Education is to incorporate it into existing projects. From the response to this study it appears this goal is being accomplished. It was further stated that Montana did not believe its present consumer education program was adequate. No reasons were given for this reaction. The need for consumer education materials was noted, but the type of material was not specified. There was no mention of any future plans for developing a project having consumer education as its primary goal.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Since the inception of 4-H Club work, members have been required to keep cost-profit records on their projects. To "Make the Best Better" and to make a monetary profit while doing so is not only implied, but indicated in much past and present 4-H project materials. Of relatively recent concern to Extension personnel is how to teach the application of the cost-profit decision making principles in other less tenable facets of the club members experiences.

The 4-H program in its unique, informal educational approach has stressed skill type projects. With our consumer-oriented nation and the newly made committment of Extension to work with urban as well as rural young people, the 4-H program now needs to become more management than skill oriented.

Consumer education was defined in this study as the ability to make decisions within the frame work of one's values in order to achieve maximum use of available resources. The purpose of this study was to determine the current status of consumer education in the 4-H Club program with particular attention to Montana.

To determine this, a questionnaire was sent to the administrator of youth or home economics work in each state requesting information concerning consumer education in relation to their 4-H program. The respondents were asked not only to signify if they had a specific consumer-oriented project but if consumer education was incorporated as a secondary discipline within other project areas.

Forty-five states returned the questionnaire. Not all the questionnaires were completed in toto and not all the answers given were in a usable form. The results of certain of these inequities weakens the position of the final conclusions.

Thirteen states (28.8% of those responding) said they had a project where consumer education was the primary focus. Six states (13.3% of those responding) said they did not presently have such a project but were preparing one. Twenty-six states (57.7% of those responding) reported they did not have a consumer education project, but that consumer education was incorporated in other project areas in their respective states. A total of forty-two states (93.3%) reported consumer education taught as a secondary discipline.

An average of 4.14 projects per state were noted as incorporating consumer education in the secondary role. Results showed a greater percentage of home economics projects incorporating consumer education than agriculturally oriented projects. Of the states responding, 95.2% incorporated consumer education in clothing areas whereas only 16.6% reported incorporating it in field crops. The 36 states reporting some form of usable enrollment figures showed 57.82% of their membership as girls.

Completely usable questionnaires represented 35.23% of the total youth served by 4-H and/or Extension. Statistics from these states show at least one-third of these young people are receiving some type of learning experience in consumer education. Less than 10% of the 4-H members covered in this survey were receiving consumer education training as the primary emphasis of a project.

Montana reported that it does not presently have a project in which consumer education is the specific primary focus. No plans to develop such a project were noted and the goal was stated as "incorporate consumer education into existing projects." Montana further reported that at the present time it has six project areas that incorporated consumer education as a secondary

discipline with 75% of its membership being reached in this manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Consumer education is being incorporated at the present time in 4-H projects. It is incorporated as a secondary discipline rather than the primary focus. This is supported by 27 states reporting that 94.4% of their consumer education is in related projects. The first hypotheses that consumer education is being incorporated as a secondary rather than a primary goal of instruction is therefore substantiated by this study.

Six states (12%) reported plans to develop a project having consumer education as the primary focus. This will increase the current 26% having such a project to 38% of the states having a primary consumer education project. The second hypotheses that consumer education will be increasingly presented as the primary goal of instruction in new projects therefore is substantiated.

As with the present majority of other states, Montana does not currently have a project in which consumer education is the primary focus. However, Montana does have six project areas incorporating consumer education as a

secondary discipline compared to a nation-wide average of 4.14. In addition, 75% of Montana's membership is being reached with consumer education incorporated as a secondary discipline as compared to the 33% reported to this survey. The hypotheses that Montana has less consumer education incorporated in 4-H work than the national average therefore is rejected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For this and future Studies

The recommendations for improving this study are closely attuned to the recommendations for future studies related to any aspect of cooperative extension work. The recommendations are being presented in this manner to avoid being repetitious. Due to the diversity of background and training of Extension personnel any survey would result in more thorough and accurate results if the following points are observed.

Any survey across the entire scope of a program should be limited to only one or two specific items which can be quickly pin-pointed. The definition of seemingly like terms may differ among the geographic areas as the clientele, and consequent goals, vary. If an in-depth

study such as attempted here is desired, limit it to a smaller geographic area of like endeavors (Davis, 1970).

If the questionnaire can not be pre-tested with the aid of personnel from all the geographic areas, specific directions and definitions for the manner in which the response is needed should be given.

In the more metropolitan states specific divisions of work are a necessity and henceforth not every counterpart of the individual Extension Services' will have access to all the information requested. An accurate assessment of a specific situation may require correspondence with several different offices within a state. The development of separate questionnaires for these offices should be considered. Future studies would find two or more contact people within a state, or department, advantageous. Having only one contact name, the author experienced the following.

1. One questionnaire contained little usable information particularly as applied to the final tabulations of enrollment and consumer education incorporated. Conversation with a former Extension worker from that state provided the insight that a great deal of work was being

done in developing new programs and new teaching techniques.

2. A National Task Force on Consumer Education in 4-H Club Work held a meeting in Washington, D. C. during the writing of this paper. The author was contacted by the Task Force for the survey results reported here. Though they were specifically requested, the author did not receive a copy of the recommendations and findings of this Task Force.

3. The National 4-H Service Committee should have been able to aid the author in obtaining needed history and statistics. They responded that their organization was primarily concerned with servicing the National 4-H Awards Program as it relates to consumer education. They further stated that they did not have information on curriculum development for consumer education. A copy of From a Dream to Reality, A History of the National 4-H Service Committee, 1921-1971 was sent the author. This publication centering on development of the National 4-H Service Committee contained no usable information beyond what had been provided in other sources.

Recommendations for Consumer Education in the 4-H Program

Consumer education has always been incorporated in

4-H work. With the change in its clientele as the United States moves from the rural to the urban citizen, the producer to the consumer, it is obvious that 4-H must re-direct much of its project work from the skills to the decision making approach.

Extension has the opportunity to be leaders in emphasizing decision making outside of the classroom. One method would be a concerted effort to strengthen and coordinate the consumer education aspect of each individual project area. A broad-field consumer education project suitable for either sex, following the lines of the self-determined project, should be made available for 4-H'ers who wish to sharpen their decision making skills.

The challenge was presented to Extension in A People and a Spirit (1968: 61) to improve the quality of living for all people. If Extension is to accomplish this goal, a very real attempt must be made to relate consumer education in 4-H club work to life outside the project. The learning of decision making skills must be made relevant to the club member in his environment for his immediate usage and for his future.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter, Questionnaire

Cooperative Extension Service
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND MONTANA COUNTIES COOPERATING
GALLATIN COUNTY
Federal Building
Bozeman, Montana
Ph. 587-4511 Ext. 3266

612 South 10th
Bozeman, MT 59715
April 15, 1971

Dear

May I please have a few minutes in your busy life. In Montana we can use, and need, a 4-H Consumer Education project oriented for both rural and urban youngsters.

I would like to know how your state incorporates Consumer Education in your 4-H program. Enclosed is a questionnaire and return envelope. Would you please direct this to the appropriate individual in your state?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Beverly B. Wallace

Beverly B. Wallace
County Extension Agent

4/71

4-H CONSUMER EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in the present status of 4-H Consumer Education in your state. Please check in the appropriate spaces below and send any materials you may have by May 10.

1. Does your state have, at present, a Consumer Education project?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

2. If not, are you preparing such a project?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

   If yes, approximate completion date_____

   Person responsible, and address,_____

   _____

   _____

3. What is the objective (goal) of 4-H Consumer Education in your state?_____

   _____

   _____

4. Have you ever eliminated a Consumer Education project?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

   If yes, why? _____

   _____

   _____

5. Is Consumer Education incorporated (as consumer education) in any of your present projects?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

6. If yes, please check appropriate following project areas.

   _____ Clothing
   _____ Foods
   _____ Home Management
   _____ Livestock
   _____ Field Crops
   _____ Gardening
   _____ Mechanical Science (small engines, tractor, bicycle, etc.)
   _____ Other (please specify)___

   _____

7. Do you believe your present 4-H Consumer Education program is adequate?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

8. If not, where is improvement needed?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Information on your total 4-H Program would be appreciated

9. How is your 4-H enrollment divided (approximate)?

   _____ Boys
   _____ Girls
   _____ Rural Total
   _____ Urban Total

10. Approximate number of your 4-H'ers presently participating in:

    _____ Consumer Education project
    _____ Related projects incorporating consumer education.

Additional ideas, comments, would be appreciated. Please use other side.

APPENDIX B

Listing of States and Individual Responses

STATE	HaveCons EducProj		Prepar'g Project		Complet Date	Elim'ed Project		Incorpor'd Other Proj		Projects*	Program Adequate	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No
Alabama		x		x		x		x		1,2,3		x
Alaska		x		x			x	x		1,2,8		x
Arizona		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4		x
Arkansas		x	x		1972		x	x		1,2,3		x
California		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,8		x
Colorado		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8		x
Connecticut		x		x			x	x		1,2,3		x
Delaware		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,5,6,7		x
Florida	x		x				x	x		1,3		x
Georgia	x		x		1972		x	x		1,2,3,8	x	
Hawaii		x	x		1972		x	x		1,2,3,4,6		x
Idaho		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,8		x
Illinois	x						x	x		1,2,3		
Indiana		x		x			x	x		1,2	x	
Iowa		x	x		1972		x	x		1,2,3,8		x

RESPONSE OF STATES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

STATE	Have Cons Educ Proj		Prepar'g Project		Comple Date	Elim'ed Project		Incorpor'd Other Proj		Projects*	Program Adequate	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No
Kansas		x		x			x	x		1,2,3		x
Kentucky	x						x	x		8		x
Louisiana	x						x		x			x
Maine												
Maryland		x		x			x	x		1,3		
Massachusetts												
Michigan	x							x		1,2,3		x
Minnesota		x		x			x	x		1,2,4,8		x
Mississippi	x							x		1,2,3	x	
Missouri	x						x	x		1,2,8		x
Montana		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,5,8		x
Nebraska		x		x			x	x		1,2,3		x
Nevada												
New Hampshire												
New Jersey		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,6,7,8		x

RESPONSE OF STATES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

STATE	Have Cons Educ Proj		Prepar'g Project		Complet Date	Elim'ed Project		Incorpor'd Other Proj		Projects*	Program Adequate	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No
New Mexico		x	x		1972			x		1,2,3,4		x
New York		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,6,7		x
North Carolina		x		x			x	x		3		
North Dakota		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,5,6,7	x	
Ohio	x			x			x	x		1,2,3,6,7,8		x
Oklahoma		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4 5,6,7,8	x	
Oregon		x	x		1972		x	x		1,2		x
Pennsylvania	x										x	
Rhode Island		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,4,5,6		x
South Carolina		x	x				x	x		1,2,3,4,7		x
South Dakota	x							x		1,2,3		x
Tennessee	x						x	x		1,2,3,8	x	
Texas		x		x			x	x		1,2,3		x
Utah		x		x			x	x		1,2,3		x
Vermont		x		x								

RESPONSE OF STATES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

STATE	Have Cons Educ Proj		Prepar'g Project		Complet Date	Elim'ed Project		Incorpor'd Other Proj		Projects*	Program Adequate	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No
Virginia	x						x	x		1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8		x
Washington		x		x			x	x		1,2,4,6		x
West Virginia												
Wisconsin		x		x			x	x		1,2,4 6,7,8		x
Wyoming		x		x			x	x		1,2,3,8	x	

*Projects
1. Clothing
2. Foods
3. Home Management
4. Livestock
5. Field Crops
6. Gardening
7. Mechanical Science (small engines, tractor, bicycle, etc.)
8. Other

RESPONSE OF STATES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

STATE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	ES-237 RESPONSE GIVEN FARM TOWN	TOWN CITY*	TOTAL
Indiana	33616	66317	99933[a]			70612	48370	118982[a]
California	24402	36602	61004			41484	19520	61004
Georgia	74786	81122	155908[a]			124558	33669	158227[a]
New York	74000	96000	170000[a]			76166	95232	171398[a]
So.Carolina	25391	27188	52579	19215	33364			52579
Alabama	65976	69377	135353	105350	30003			135353
Montana	5050	9435	14485	7749	6736			14485
No.Carolina	24332	32594	56926	25102	31824			56926
Colorado	10447	17884	28331	17573	10758			28331
Washington	7583	17190	24773[a]	18000	6000			24000[a]
No.Dakota	6973	10759	17732	12323	5409			17732
Arizona	6236	9461	15697	8969	6728			15697
New Jersey	12117	21221	33338	1885	31453			33338
Louisiana	33948	43257	77205	25000	52205			77205
Arkansas	7400	9600	17000	11334	5666			17000
Hawaii	1938	4198	6136	3333	2803			6136
Iowa	21120	29149	50269	38127	12169			50269
Idaho	6690	13764	20454	9788	10666			20454
Connecticut	3000	8000	11000[a]	2400	5600			8000[a]
Wyoming	3301	6194	9495[a]	8302	1310			9612[a]
Minnesota	25200	32000	57200	50100	7100			57200
Utah	4000	14500	18500	14000	4500			18500
Nebraska	14334	26080	40414[a]	24000	16000			40000[a]
Rhode Island	866	2176	3042[a]	1536	2963			4499[a]
Oklahoma	28036	29827	57863[a]	49098	13989			63087[a]
TOTALS	520742	713895	1234637	453184	297246	312820	196791	1260041

*Farm-Town includes "farm" and "town under 10,000
Town-City includes "10,000-50,000","Suburb,City over 50,000"and "City over 50,000"
[a]Figures recorded as received -- totals do not agree

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS RECEIVED

STATE	Has Cons.Ed. Project	Does Not Have Cons.Ed. Project	ENROLLMENT IN CONS.EDUC.PROJ.	ENROLLMENT IN RELATED PROJ.
Indiana		X		66,000
California		X	585	---
Georgia	X		5,611	3,213
New York			---	---
So.Carolina		X		25,000
Alabama		X	3,765	14,334
Montana		X	0	10,875
No.Carolina		X		25,645
Colorado		X		28,331
Washington		X		14,000
No.Dakota		X		17,732
Arizona		X		7,664
New Jersey		X		1,138
Louisiana	X		15,000	
Arkansas		X		2,860
Hawaii		X		6,136
Iowa		X		31,530
Idaho		X		13,764
Connecticut		X		5,000
Wyoming		X		8,588
Minnesota			---	---
Utah		X		16,000
Nebraska		X		20,000
Rhode Island			---	---
Oklahoma		X		57,863
Virginia		X		83,325
Florida	X		2,000	
TOTALS			26,961	458,998

CONSUMER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT FIGURES FROM STATES GIVING THIS INFORMATION

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LITERATURE CITED

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