



Montana veterans in farming, a study of the institutional on-farm training program
by Don G Lee

A THESIS Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science in Agricultural Education
Montana State University
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Abstract:

This study of the Veterans Institutional On-Farm Training Program, -under the G.I. Bill of Rights, was conducted to determine the progress that enrolled veterans had made in (1) establishment in farming, (2) establishment in home and community, and (3) reactions to present and future agricultural education programs for adults.

Schedules were taken by personal interviews. One hundred Type "A", or self-proprietor farmer-veterans were chosen at random from schools that had maintained training classes for two or more years. All veterans in the survey had had at least two years of training prior to being chosen for the survey. Veterans selected were widely scattered throughout the State to give the best possible picture of the veterans progress and agricultural conditions in their respective areas. Schedules were taken largely by Field Supervisors of the Vocational Agricultural Department of the State Department of Public Instruction.

The study reveals the progress made by veterans over a span of two years. In general, veterans are becoming better established in farming as shown by an increase in size of farms, a rather stable tenure status, an increase in the land used for crops, increased yields, and a decided increase in labor income and total net worth as sound investments in farming. In addition, livestock management has shown an increase in animal units per farm and increased rate of production of meat and livestock products. There is a gradual trend toward a more diversified type of farming which fits well with climatic and economic conditions for the State as a whole.

Veterans are, in the main, rather well satisfied in farming, although they are conservative about their opinions on satisfaction of living conditions. The veteran does not possess strong inclinations to join civic, social, or cooperative organizations, He is more interested and active in community improvement projects and school affairs.

The veteran's reaction toward the present training program is quite favorable. Eighty-six percent are interested in similar agricultural education classes for adults in the future. This interest is substantiated by a willingness of 93 percent of all veterans to pay tuition fees for an instructional program.

Means of improving adult educational programs are recommended, including methods of class instruction for adults, increased on-farm individual instruction, systematic planning and development of adult classes, and means of presenting a broadened program supplemental to agricultural education.

MONTANA VETERANS IN FARMING

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A STUDY OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ON-FARM TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MONTANA

ABSTRACT

This study of the Veterans Institutional On-Farm Training Program, under the G.I. Bill of Rights, was conducted to determine the progress that enrolled veterans had made in (1) establishment in farming, (2) establishment in home and community, and (3) reactions to present and future agricultural education programs for adults.

Schedules were taken by personal interviews. One hundred Type "A", or self-proprietor farmer-veterans were chosen at random from schools that had maintained training classes for two or more years. All veterans in the survey had had at least two years of training prior to being chosen for the survey. Veterans selected were widely scattered throughout the State to give the best possible picture of the veterans progress and agricultural conditions in their respective areas. Schedules were taken largely by Field Supervisors of the Vocational Agricultural Department of the State Department of Public Instruction.

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Means of improving adult educational programs are recommended, including methods of class instruction for adults, increased on-farm individual instruction, systematic planning and development of adult classes, and means of presenting a broadened program supplemental to agricultural education.

PART I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the progress made by World War II veterans enrolled in the Montana Veteran's Institutional On-Farm Training Program. This study was designed to determine progress made in three principal areas, namely:

1. Establishment in farming.
2. Establishment and development in home and community life.
3. Reactions to present and future programs in agricultural education for adult farmers.

As much as it is desirable to soundly establish returning veterans in farming, it is important that each veteran become socially as well as economically adjusted for the optimum welfare of himself and for his community.

Of a secondary, but vital, nature, the purpose of this study lends itself to the testing of the thinking and reactions of the former servicemen to the possibilities of a continued adult education program. It is felt that the two years training each veteran has had, prior to the filling out of the schedule used in this study, will have given him a background on which to judge and indicate his likes and dislikes concerning future adult education classes in agriculture.

Need for Study

The following items will suggest the need for this study:

1. Over two billion dollars has been expended on the program to date in the United States. Setting aside the large sums used for

subsistence payments, the remaining sum represents a figure of about three times the amount spent on federally-aided vocational agriculture from 1917 to 1950.

2. Congress has set a termination-of-training date as of July 25, 1956. An analysis of the present program will contribute to a better program for the remaining veterans enrolled and for new groups of the Korean veterans.
3. Resources of many agricultural education agencies have been pooled to provide a kind of education not before experienced. Much can be learned by cooperation of agencies in bringing a concerted program to the farmer so that all may benefit by it.
4. A program of systematic instruction has been provided year around, and over a period of several years, appealing to the young farmer's groups most neglected in previous programs.
5. New procedures and methods have been introduced in classroom work for adults, coupled with on-the-farm supervision for the directed follow-up training and application of new and approved practices. Will it be possible to use similar devices in future adult education programs?

Design of the Study

This study is a part of a movement to evaluate the Veteran's Institutional On-Farm-Training Program on a national scale. Data from Montana's veterans collected in this study will be used in the national study.

It is interesting to note, that in the writing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, P.L. 346, which is commonly referred to as the "G.I.

Bill of Rights", that no provisions were set down to allow the Veteran's Administration to study and analyze its training and service program. Therefore, in order to evaluate the program, it was necessary that the study be initiated by agencies outside the government.

In December, 1948, the Research Committee of the Agricultural Section of the American Vocational Association proposed that a national conference be provided to promote research relating to future programs in agricultural education. Major attention was to be given the Veteran's Training Program, and any corresponding program that might develop from it. Thus, in March of 1949, such a conference was held in Washington, D.C., to hear and discuss recommendations for the study of the Veteran's Training Program.

From the series of committee meetings and conferences held throughout 1949, plans were drawn up for the research study, and a schedule (see Appendix) was developed to secure the necessary information from the veteran for the research committee.

Sampling of the Group

The sampling for the State study was arbitrarily set at one hundred samples. This number of cases represented 22 percent of the "Type A", self-proprietor type of veteran who had been in the program for two or more years by December 31, 1950.

The method for securing names for the sample of one hundred was as follows: The names of all veterans who qualified by having at least two year's training and who were operating their farm as a self-proprietor, were placed in a hat. The names were drawn at random for the sample.

Actually, a stratified random sampling was effected, since non-proprietors, or "Type B" veterans were excluded from the drawing.

Each veterans' training school in the State was prorated on basis of enrollment. An attempt was made to secure at least one schedule from each school in the State.

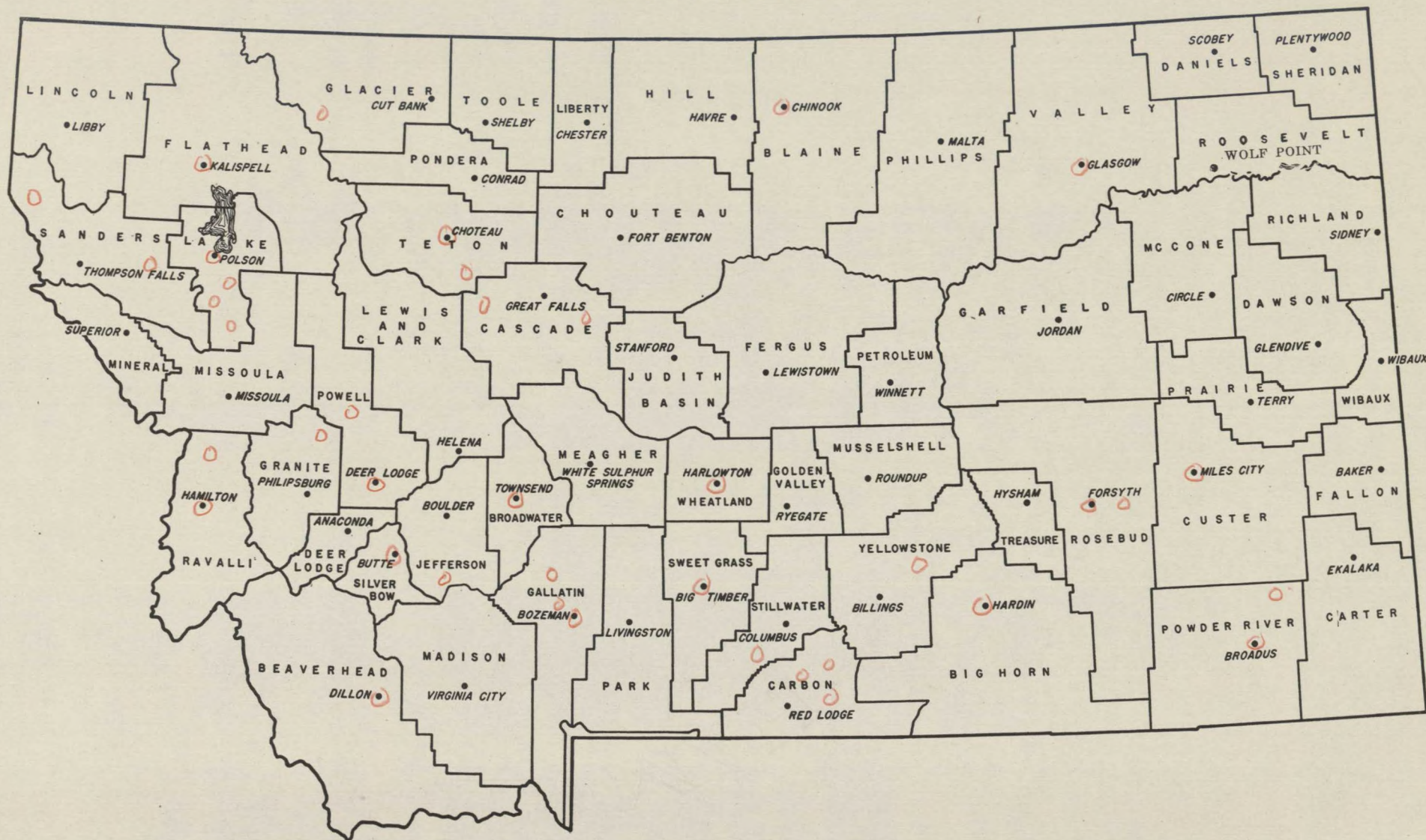
Schools Participating in the Survey

The veteran training schools in the State that had been in service for two years or more, and from which at least one survey schedule had been secured, are listed below:

School	*	School	*	School	*	School	*
Absarokee	1	Charlo	2	Hamilton	3	Polson	6
Belgrade	1	Chinook	3	Hardin	4	Powderville	2
Belt	2	Choteau	2	Harlowton	1	Roberts	4
Big Timber	2	Deer Lodge	3	Helmville	2	Ronan	5
Bozeman	2	Dillon	1	Hot Springs	3	St. Ignatius	2
Bridger	2	Drumond	1	Kalispell	3	Simms	2
Broadus	1	Fairfield	2	Manhattan	2	Stevensville	4
Browning	4	Forsyth	3	Miles City	3	Townsend	2
Butte	1	Fromberg	4	Noxon	2	Whitehall	3
Cartersville	4	Glasgow	3			Worden	3
						TOTAL	100

Note: * Number of Schedules Furnished

MONTANA



Methods of Securing Data

With the names of the veterans to be interviewed on hand, the veterans were contacted individually. These contacts were made, in the main by Field Supervisors in their respective districts working under the direction of the Vocational Agricultural Education Department of the State Department of Public Instruction of Montana. The several Field Supervisors and their areas of the State are, as follows:

1. William P. Wollard, Western Area
2. James W. Michels, Eastern Area
3. Jeff Mathews, Southern Area (later replaced by Russell Steen)
4. Basil Ashcraft, Northern Area

Assistance was given by several other persons in securing the schedules. Considerable time was used for each veteran in arranging for a meeting, often in the evenings, and a work time of at least two hours per schedule was necessary. Some of the schedule-interviews were considerably longer than two hours, made necessary in attaining a proper rapport with the veteran, who, in some cases, was suspicious of the contact. In other cases, misplaced or lost records caused delay, in addition to time sometimes used unconsciously or on purpose in discussing implications of the questions in the schedule.

Persons outside the State Department who helped secure completed schedules were Dr. Leo L. Knuti, Head, Department of Agricultural Education, and Mr. H. E. Rodeberg, Associate Professor of Agricultural Education, both of Montana State College. In addition, several schedules were taken by the author and a few were taken by Vocational Agricultural

