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**THE RELATION OF THE TEACHER TO THE  
BOYS' CORN CLUB WORK**

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**HOW TO ORGANIZE A CLUB**

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BY  
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# THE RELATION OF THE TEACHER TO THE BOYS' CORN CLUB MOVEMENT

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## HOW TO ORGANIZE A CLUB

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BY

L. N. DUNCAN AND J. B. HOB DY

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### TEACHER'S MOTTO

**To interest at least five boys, and more if possible, in my school and community, in the Boys' Corn Club work, and get them to grow a prize acre of corn.**

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### INTRODUCTORY.

The Extension Department in this institution was created and is maintained jointly by the Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration work of the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama.

### OBJECTS OF THE CORN CLUB MOVEMENT.

The objects of organizing the boys under twenty-one years of age in Alabama into Corn Clubs are to increase the production of corn, to improve the seed, to aid the young farmers in better methods of cultivation and a more intelligent use of fertilizers, to increase the interest of the farm boys in agriculture, and to encourage them to get an education along agricultural lines and remain on the farm. Of course arousing interest in one crop will lead to similar lines of work with other crops, and will ultimately result in more careful study of better methods along all lines of farming. This will lead to increased production of the farm and will lay the foundations for better schools, better roads, better churches, improvement of the social life in the rural districts and a more contented and happier people.

## AN APPEAL.

This pamphlet is placed in the hands of those teachers who are desirous of making their schools the centers of community interest as an appeal for their hearty co-operation and assistance in carrying forward this very interesting work. The movement which it would further, is pedagogic in character and of vital importance to every pupil whose destiny the teacher, more than any force except the home, is shaping. Its every tendency is to conserve the best interest of farm life. From an economical standpoint, its results cannot be over estimated.

Each teacher in the public schools of Alabama is an integral factor in the great advance movement for better farming. A failure to co-operate in this practical agricultural work is a failure to give efficient service, clogs the wheels of agricultural progress in their respective communities and tends to decrease the momentum of a movement which is state-wide in scope.

Past experience has convinced those in charge of the Corn Club work in Alabama, that numbers of teachers in several counties in the state are indifferent to the work because of, (a) failure on their part to recognize its educational value, (b) an imagined inability to take hold of, and maintain an organization, (c) fear of extra work for which there is no compensation, and (d) general indifference.

(a). Any movement, which has for its ultimate object the dissemination of information which will better acquaint the farmer with the possibilities of the soil which he tills from day to day, is educational in character. It is no longer a theory, but a proven fact, that the teacher of the rural schools, who has become thoroughly aroused to the possibilities of the Boys' Corn Club work, stands forward as a factor in the revolution of farming methods in his community, in that he is leading in a movement for dissemination of knowledge.

(b) There are a number of earnest, progressive teachers who are at a loss to know how to launch the movement in their schools, and even some who have been successful in the organization of a club, become discouraged and doubtful as to their ability to further handle the situation. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to so definitely explain the organization and maintenance of the work that the most timid may undertake it without misgivings.

(c) Those teachers, who fear extra work without compensation, must admit that this is a progressive movement, and one that is abreast of the times, and of vital im-

portance to the agricultural interest of the State. It is by far the most popular educational movement of recent years. Numbers of communities are demanding club work and those teachers thoroughly imbued with its spirit, are in demand, for in them, parents of the farmers of the future, see a guiding spirit impelled by a desire to open up an avenue which leads to independence and contentment on the farm. The service of such a teacher is enhanced, and club work, prompted by unselfish motives, in a short time proves of material advantage to the co-operating teacher.

(d) Let it be borne in mind by the indifferent teacher that any affair of vital interest to the citizenship of his school district is decidedly an affair of his, and the sooner he makes inquiries into this movement, with the view of recognizing its value, the better prepared will he be to lend his influence and some of his efforts to encouraging it.

#### HOW THE TEACHER MAY ORGANIZE A CLUB.

To begin with, it is important to get the boys interested. Explain to them the work, ask if they would not like to grow a prize acre of corn at their homes, and contest for some prizes that are to be offered for the best acre. Assure them that it will cost nothing to join the club and all that will be expected of them will be to exert their best efforts to grow a good acre of corn, keep a record of how they grew it, and submit a report of the steps and results of the work, in the fall.

In starting the work, it would be a good plan to call a meeting of all the boys of the school and community, letting it be well known that the purpose of the meeting is to organize a Corn Club. It would be well to invite the patrons of the school to this meeting, and have the Demonstration Agent, for your county, make a talk to the school and visiting patrons on the Corn Club work. If possible, have your County Superintendent at this meeting and ask his aid in this organization work.

In the organization of the work, the county should be the unity, the County Superintendent of Education the leader for the county, and the teacher the leader for his or her community.

In some cases, where there is a larger school and several boys who wish to enter the club, a local club may be organized. Where this is done a simple Constitution and By-Laws may be adopted, officers elected, and meetings held as often as the teacher may deem best, in the evenings after school or at nights. A local club may be organized

and conducted about as a debating society. The debates and discussions should be confined largely to agricultural questions. Boys joining such a local club would also become members of the main county club, and would be allowed to contest for any county prizes offered. Each boy joining the club must agree to grow a prize acre of corn. A teacher organizing such a local club, might get up some prizes in the community to be contested for only by the boys in the local club.

If only a few boys are interested in the work, and it is impossible to organize a local club, encourage the boys to enter the county contest and forward their names at once to your County Superintendent of Education. The names of all the boys entering a local club should be sent to the County Superintendent of Education in order that they may get the literature bearing on corn growing, and that the Superintendent may be able to determine and announce the winners of the county and state prizes.

#### WHO MAY BECOME MEMBERS.

It is our desire to have every boy, not over twenty-one years old and large enough to work on the farm, become a member of the corn club in the county where this work is started. We wish to have boys who live on the farm engage in this work. If a father owns a farm and lives in town, his son may become a member, or if a boy has no land and has enough interest in the work to rent the land and enter the club, we shall be glad to have him also.

#### SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

##### Constitution.

Article 1. This organization shall be known as the  
 ..... County Boys' Corn Club of Alabama.

Article 2. Any boy of school age shall be eligible to membership.

Article 3. The purpose of the club shall be to make farm life more attractive and farming more profitable, to assist the public schools in teaching the fundamental principles of agriculture in a more practical way, and to assist the State College of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture in carrying information directly to the farm.

**By-Laws.**

1. The members of the Club must agree to read all instructions on Demonstration Work.

2. Each boy must plan his crop and do most of his own work. If necessary, he may have assistance in breaking and bedding his land and other heavy work.

3. No boy in a county shall be allowed to contest for a prize unless he is a member of the County Corn Club.

4. The amount of yield by weight and measurement of land must be certified to by each boy and attested by at least one disinterested witness.

5. Each member shall gather the corn on his acre and weigh it all in the shuck. Weight of corn in shuck, . . . . . pounds. Weigh 100 pounds of corn in the shuck; shuck, shell and weigh the grain. Weight of grain, . . . . . pounds.

6. No boy shall be allowed to receive more than two prizes.

7. Every member of the club must make an exhibit at the annual county contest.

8. In estimating profits, \$5.00 per acre shall be charged as rent of land. The work of each boy shall be estimated at 10 cents per hour, and the work of each horse at 5 cents per hour. Manure shall be charged at the rate of \$1.00 for each one-horse wagon load, and \$2.00 for each two-horse wagon load.

9. The judge, or committee of judges, for the annual contest shall be selected by the managers of the club.

10. Prize winning corn may be sent from the county to the state contest by the club manager.

11. In awarding prizes, the following basis shall be used:

(a) Greatest yield per acre.....	30 points
(b) Best exhibit of ten ears.....	20 points
(c) Best written account of crop.....	20 points
(d) Best showing of profit on investment....	30 points

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Total . . . . . 100 points

**PRIZES.**

As a matter of stimulation and encouragement to the boys, prizes and premiums should be offered for the boys getting the best results on their acres. Where local clubs are organized, the teacher in charge may offer prizes for the boys in the local club. These same boys, of course, would also have a chance at the county prizes.

If the County Superintendent will present the matter to the business men of his community before this organization meeting is held in the early spring, he will have a fine list of prizes to announce to the boys.

#### SOME PRIZES THAT WERE OFFERED IN 1910.

A free trip to Washington, D. C., \$100.00 in gold; \$50.00; \$25.00; \$15.00; \$10.00; \$5.00; a buggy; a bicycle; a two-horse plow; a gun; a suit of clothes; a corn planter; a pair of registered pigs; a pair of chickens, and other valuable articles. Interest has been greatly added to the work at times by the business men giving the members of the club a banquet.

#### MEANS OF AROUSING AND HOLDING INTEREST.

When the club is organized and its members are actively engaged in carrying out the work which has been outlined for them, the question, "How am I to keep up this interest?" may present itself to the teacher. Below are given a few of the many methods which have been successfully employed by teachers who have succeeded admirably with the work.

(a) Talks from the Local Demonstration Agent and any progressive farmers who are making successes of growing corn. The teacher should extend a written invitation to the Demonstration Agent to visit his school, and the prize acres of the club members, as he makes his rounds from time to time. Those farmers who are cultivating crops after the government plan can often be relied upon to give their co-operation in the work.

(b) Within two weeks after the names of members of a club have been submitted to the County Superintendent of Education, they should begin to receive literature directing them how to proceed with the work. This literature will be mailed, from time to time, as instructions are needed by the boys. Should any club member fail to receive the literature, the teacher should notify either of the authors of this pamphlet, who will promptly supply same.

The pamphlets once in the hands of the boys, they should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the contents. These pamphlets do not come so often that the teachers, having read them, could not afford to spend some time during school hours discussing their contents. They may be made the basis of several lessons in agriculture.

(c) Encourage the reading of farm journals, one or more of these go to almost every home. Request your boys



to clip out and bring to school, any items of interest bearing on corn, which they may find in these journals, read same to them, and follow the reading with a limited discussion by the club. Afterwards paste these clippings in a club scrap book for future reference.

(d) There is no surer way of interesting the home in the school than for the teacher to take the school to the homes of the patrons. Visit the homes of all club members and together with the boys and any members of their families, who can be persuaded to accompany you, go to the prize acres. In going over same with them, do not fail to see the good points in their work. In case you are not sufficiently versed in practical agriculture to know the good, just look about for something that looks good to you. There is no better way to encourage and urge a boy to extra effort than to drop words of praise where praise is due. Many teachers, especially women, do not understand the steps in corn growing. To these we would say, go to the field with the idea of taking a lesson in practical agriculture from the boy, and give him to understand that he is teaching you something. Your especial sphere is that of organizer and leader and a lack of knowledge of agricultural methods should not be a source of embarrassment, but a stimulus to you to learn, even at the hands of your pupils, truths which you have not had the opportunity of working out for yourself.

(e) Take all or a number of your club boys on an excursion to the prize acre of each individual composing the party, as you visit the several fields, have the owner tell of the method of preparing the soil, fertilizing and thus far cultivating the crop. Such trips will not only be interesting but pleasant, and will prove an entering wedge to the confidence and friendship of boys who have not been reached in the school room, should there be such in the club. These excursions can be arranged at no cost to either pupils or teacher. The results will present sufficient material for one or more meetings of the club and will stimulate the boys to extra effort in future cultivation of their acres.

(f) Visits to the crops being grown on local demonstration farms, or the farms of any progressive farmer, will prove of interest to the club, and at the same time enlist, for the teacher, a more sympathetic support, from the agents and owners of such farms, in the Boys' Corn Club work.

(g) A corn exhibit at some time during the late fall will prove a decidedly interesting feature of the year's

work, and put the boys in a happy frame of mind to begin the preparation of the soil for the next year's contest.

The exhibition should be a public one, to which the entire community is invited. A program might be arranged. This to consist of short addresses by the County Superintendent, the local Minister, the Demonstration Agent, and possibly some other invited speaker; one or more papers on corn production, methods of cultivation of corn, seed selection, or harvesting; a corn song; and closed with the presentation of prizes.

The exhibit should consist of individual exhibits of club members arranged in any way that will show the products off to the best advantage. Corn club booklets previously prepared, or written descriptions outlining methods of growing the crop should be placed on exhibition with the corn. However, no member should be debarred from exhibiting his product for not having such written material.

#### SOME RESULTS OF THE WORK.

This movement has been eminently successful wherever it has been undertaken with energy, and determination. In the great agricultural states of the central west, the Boys' Corn Club work is looked to as the prime factor in stimulating the interest in better farming and in arousing the boys on the farm to the possibilities of agriculture as a profession.

In Alabama the work is well under way. At present, there are about 3,800 boys listed in the work, in about 52 of the counties. Last year there were about 2,000 boys in the work in about 17 counties.

In these 17 counties the boys were entered for state prizes where they competed directly with the men. In this contest the boys won 13 out of 17 prizes. The average yield of these boys being 86.9 bushels per acre, and the average of the men 83.5 bushels per acre.

At a meeting of a corn club, in one of the best corn club communities, last fall the boys reporting showed a total yield of over 2,000 bushels. The yields in this case were from 40 to 110.5 bushels per acre, and the average yield was over 70 bushels per acre. The average ordinary yield in this section was about 15 bushels per acre.

Below is given a summary report of ten boys, whose corn was sent to the National Corn Exposition, Columbus, Ohio.

	Bu. Per Acre	Cost Per Acre	Value Per Acre	Profit Per Acre
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Arthur Action, Birm'h'm, Rt. 4	105.	\$31.45	78.75	\$47.30
Lloyd Barron, Notasulga, Rt. 1	99.44	19.00	74.58	55.58
Lofton Brock, Cuba .....	102.	51.25	76.50	25.25
Jas. L. Elliot, Ramsey .....	153.	Not given.....		
Hughey Harden, Banks, Rt. 1	120.	35.65	90.00	54.35
J. J. Phillips, Jacksonville, Rt. 3	80.	20.00	60.00	40.00
Mack Sawyer, Jones Mill.....	110.5	not given.....		
H. H. Scott, Fort Payne, Rt. 3	76.5	17.21	57.38	40.17
Grover Shamblin, Dewdrop ...	80.	21.15	60.00	38.85
B. C. Smith, Evergreen .....	109.5	30.25	82.13	51.88
Averages .. .....	103.5	28.25	72.42	44.17

In getting the cost per acre under column (1), rent of land was charged at \$5.00 per acre, labor of the boy at 10 cents per hour, labor of a horse at 5 cents per hour, fertilizers, manures and other items at actual cost. In estimating the value of the crop under column (2), 75 cents per bushel was allowed for the corn. Column (3) is the difference between column (1) and column (2).

The average cost per bushel of this corn was slightly more than 27 cents. While this crop was being made the farmers of Alabama were paying about \$1.00 per bushel for corn. It certainly pays the farmer to raise his corn.

The most important lesson to learn from this table, however, is the wonderful possibilities of our soils. If these acres will produce such large crops at such a splendid profit, it can be done on a large scale all over Alabama.

"Many of the boys in the clubs who begin to study agriculture in this way will continue the study in the agricultural colleges; others will continue such efforts on their farms, and all of them will make more useful and more efficient citizens. From the pleasant and profitable experience of owning and managing their small plots they will develop into independent, intelligent farmers. The country needs such citizenship, and such a life offers and will offer, great opportunities for the future. The professions are crowded and the wage earners must pay high prices for the necessities of life. The wise and judicious producer can enjoy health, wealth and contentment. Success in this work is good training for usefulness in any line. The question is, 'How many boys can be reached and influenced thus to succeed?'"

To have better methods of farming adopted by the whole farming people; and to secure larger yields from our lands at the lowest possible cost without exhausting the soil are the most serious educational problems confronting us today. With the active lead of the county superintendents and the co-operation of the teachers and the schools, these problems may soon be solved.

This work offers an opportunity for the county superintendents to take the lead in the greatest movement yet projected, where real patriotic service is needed. It offers the rural teachers a chance to make the school of real service in helping to solve the many difficult problems of the farm. It will give new life to the school and make it the center of interest in the community.

In conclusion, we desire to express our appreciation for the active support and co-operation of those demonstration agents, county superintendents and teachers who have shown an interest in this great work. If the proper impression could be given to the public, the impression which we would have to go abroad, it would be that they are doing the work and we are merely helping, as best we can.