

In addition, the Extension Service organizes 4-H clubs and home economics clubs. The 4-H clubs, usually organized in public schools, enroll young people in projects which provide information and demonstrations on such subjects as farming and career exploration. The home economics clubs provide women with information and demonstrations on such subjects as food preparation, family budgeting and money management, health and sanitation.

The Extension Service programs, however, are not reaching many poor people. No special plan to reach low income people has been devised in Alabama. Dr. Fred R. Robertson, the State Extension Service Director, said that there are some demonstration programs but that they are inadequate because they are "vastly under-funded." The failure to reach low-income people particularly affects black people, who in the 16 county hearing area constitute 66 percent of the rural population and over 87 percent of the rural poor. Common responses to Commission investigators by black farmers and women were that they had never seen or had rarely seen Extension agents.

A reason for the Extension Service's failure to reach low income black farmers was suggested by Calvin Orsborn, black owner of a cotton gin in Selma and business manager of the predominantly black Southwest Alabama Farmers Cooperative Association (SWAFCA). Mr. Orsborn told the Commission that the inability of many poor black farmers to follow recommended farming practices stems from their lack of resources to finance the necessary costs.

[We] can determine how many pounds or tons of fertilizer a man needs or what variety of seeds he needs and all this. And how much insecticide he needs on his crop. That is all well and good, to tell this man this. But now, if this man cannot follow recommended practices, if he doesn't have the finances and . . . the means to get finances to follow recommended practices, you are telling him [something that] does no good.

I think Extension realizes this, and if they are short staffed, then why bother with these little people who can't follow recommended practices anyway? . . . you're spinning your wheels really, so Extension has to concentrate on people who can follow recommended practices so their program will be successful. . . .

Mrs. Clara Walker, a farmer in Dallas County and an administrative assistant in SWAFCA, testified that many members "didn't even know what a soil test was, they hadn't heard about it."

The Department of Agriculture programs has under the Farmers Home Administration which provide loan funds to farmers to follow recommended practices. But, as the hearing testimony on the Farmers Home Administration indicated, the loan programs of the Farmers Home Administration have little impact on the poorest black farmers. SWAFCA has attempted to remedy this by lending money to its members so that they can put into practice the recommendations of SWAFCA's field representatives and horticulturists.

Discriminatory and unequal service to Negro farmers

Even when black farmers receive services, they generally are not equal to those received by white farmers. The inequality stems from the fact that (1) nearly all visits by white agents are to white farmers and nearly all visits by black agents are to black farmers, (2) black agents have a much heavier case-load than white agents, since there are many more white than black agents serving a population which is predominantly Negro, and (3) white agents have received better inservice training than Negro agents and have been able to specialize, while Negro agents remain generalists.

(a) *Racially segregated services.*—Historically the Extension Service in Southern States was segregated. Black agents were trained at segregated agricultural schools, occupied separate offices and worked only with black farmers, families and youth. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, and the Department of Agriculture in implementing regulations specifically prohibited "discrimination in making available or in the manner of making available instructions, demonstrations, information, and publications offered by or through the Cooperative Extension Service." Nevertheless, the Commission in its 1965 report, "Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs" made the following finding:

Responsibility for work with Negro rural residents, in counties where Negro staff are employed, is assigned almost without exception to the Negro staff and the caseloads of Negro workers are so high as not to permit adequate service.