

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

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Agriculture is one of Ontario's major industries. Farm cash receipts amounted last year to approximately 2.75 billion dollars. The real value of farm production to our Ontario economy is not realized until food commodities find their way through the processing, distribution and retail chain to the eventual consumer. The importance of Ontario's contribution to the total Canadian food supply is well documented. Approximately one-third of Canada's total livestock production originates in Ontario—and high percentages of the many specialized crops including corn, soybeans, fruits and vegetables.

To enhance the growth and competitive advantage of the agricultural industry the Ontario Ministry maintains active programs in education and research. The Ministry assumes responsibility for post secondary agricultural education at all levels below degree.

To ensure that specialized training opportunities are available in agriculture, Colleges of Agricultural Technology are located strategically throughout the Province to service the regional educational needs. They include Ridgeway in south western Ontario, Centralia in western Ontario, Kemptonville in the east and New Liskeard in the north. In addition, under a contractual arrangement with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, diploma programs in Agriculture are offered at the University of Guelph.

There has been a dramatic increase in student interest in agricultural education over the past five years. Student enrollment has been increasing by approximately ten percent per year and with no evidence of this levelling out. It is encouraging to see such an interest in agricultural education even though expanding enrollment is taxing College facilities. It is difficult to predict what might happen in the future.

University enrollments are dropping in arts and sciences but not in professional programs. Interest in educational programs that have an early application in the world of work such as those offered at the Ministry Colleges is still increasing. It is our projection that enrollment will continue to increase for at least the next five years with a levelling off occurring by 1983. This projection will mean that enrollment will increase from the present level of 1,300 to an estimated 2,000. It is also projected that approximately 60 percent of the graduating classes will go directly into farming, and the remaining 40 percent will find employment in agribusiness, or because of their specialized training at the Colleges, in such areas as food service management, animal health technology, or agricultural laboratory technology.

It has been estimated that we require approximately 1,000 replacement farmers in Ontario each

year. It is an objective of O.M.A.F. to have approximately 50 percent of replacement farmers trained at the diploma or degree level in agriculture by 1983.

Several specialized courses leading to diplomas are offered at the Colleges. In most cases these courses are in place to train graduates for careers in the large Canadian food system.

THE DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURE. A diploma in agriculture is offered at each of the Colleges. Although courses of study are developed independently they do reflect the special needs of agriculture in proximity to that College. The modern farm manager is faced with the responsibility of obtaining optimum production levels and yet must manage his business and resources to provide reasonable assurance of profit. The farmer faces these responsibilities in a period of rapidly escalating input costs in his farming operation. At all of the Colleges the curricula introduces the range of technology required in a successful farm business and attempts to teach the student how to utilize this technology to make sound farm management decisions.

Over 60 percent of the graduates in agriculture return to farm, the remainder find jobs in a range of positions in agribusiness. Some of the typical positions are in management or sales in agricultural services and supply industries. Other opportunities exist in agricultural finance or in extension.

No longer is agriculture a man's world—in recent years a significant increase in female registration has been noted. Between 10 and 15 percent of students in agricultural diploma programs are girls who in several instances plan to farm after graduation.

THE DIPLOMA IN FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT. The food service industry has grown rapidly in recent years. In Canada there is a growing tendency for families to eat away from home and this is coupled with an increasing institutional requirement in cafeterias at places of work, health care and other institutions. The service component is extremely important to ensure that well prepared and attractive food is served which meets dietary requirements. The Food Service Management programs at Centralia and Kemptonville train personnel to assume management responsibilities at different levels in various segments of the food service industry.

THE DIPLOMA IN ANIMAL HEALTH. The technicians graduating in animal health are skilled and qualified to perform the many tests used by veterinarians in diagnosis of health problems in livestock. As well they are trained to serve in a supportive role in the veterinary clinic or to work as technicians in research or regulatory agencies. The contribution and help of the animal health technician is invaluable to the veterinarian in the diagnosis and treatment of disease in livestock. In this manner they make very significant contribution to the food supply system by improvement of productivity through the prevention and control of disease in livestock.