

Who are the local 4-H homemaking club leaders?

During the winter months of 1978, the Home Economics Branch carried out an intensive province-wide survey among the leaders attending spring training schools. A questionnaire made up of sixteen questions was answered by 2,495 4-H Homemaking Club leaders.

Once completed, the questionnaires were parcelled off to Toronto, where members of the Economics Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, edited and prepared the answers for key punching and the creation of the computer tape. Armed with a great deal of information that spilled out of the computer, Central Statistical Services, Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Inter-Governmental Services, tabulated and analyzed the data and prepared a report.

From all areas of Ontario, the most important reason given for becoming a leader was a belief in the merits of the program. The next most important reasons were either because the leader had been requested to lead a club by the local Women's Institute or because her own children were 4-H Homemaking Club members.

All Women's Institute members will be delighted to learn that the Institutes are very active in the sponsorship of the clubs. In fact, the Institutes sponsor over 75% of the clubs, many giving financial support.

Many ladies are reluctant to divulge their age and, exerting their prerogative to remain silent, 423 leaders kept their age a secret. Of those who did reply, the largest number fell into the 36-45 year age group. Of the entire group, three-quarters were between the ages of 18-45 years. Twenty-four leaders were over 65 years.

Of the 1,858 leaders who had children living at home, 1,078 of the children belonged to a 4-H Homemaking Club.

The leaders had previously led an average of 7.3 clubs. 461 or 18.6% of the people completing the questionnaire were new leaders. This is a high percentage, and the Home Economists hope this trend will continue, in order that the province can be assured of sufficient leaders in the years ahead. It was indeed gratifying to discover that 83.5% of all the leaders fully intended continuing with club work. In Temiskaming, 100%, that is, all 28 of the leaders, said they would be leaders again.

The Home Economics Branch staff wondered how many leaders had been either 4-H Homemaking or

Agricultural Club members themselves. It was discovered that 46.5% had belonged to the Homemaking Clubs and a further 12.7% had been Agricultural Club members. Grey County had the largest number of leaders who had been club girls themselves; a total of 61.3% of their leaders. Grey was closely followed by the leaders in Brant, Carleton, Perth and Waterloo. Previous 4-H Agricultural Club membership was highest in Bruce and Perth Counties.

Over 47% of the leaders had completed high school and a further 27% had a university degree or college diploma. Dundas and Kenora had the highest number of leaders with a post-secondary education.

It was interesting to discover that the leaders really do live in the rural areas of the province. Almost 97% live in rural Ontario. Of the 2,495 leaders surveyed, 1,318 actually live on a farm, 587 live in the country and 508 live in a village or small town. Not unexpectedly, Huron, Perth and Middlesex had the largest number of farm dwellers. Algoma and Nipissing had the largest number of leaders living outside rural areas and one out of every four leaders in Nipissing are city dwellers.

One-third of the leaders were also members of the Women's Institute. In Muskoka, nine out of the ten leaders surveyed belonged to an Institute. In Elgin, Middlesex and Prince Edward Counties, 75% of the leaders were not Institute members. Perhaps the branch and district public relations officers in these counties would bear this in mind, when holding recruitment drives.

Huron, a truly agricultural county, had the highest number of leaders; a total of 157. Kenora and Muskoka tied with the smallest number, ten leaders each.

Attending the training schools presented no problem for 71% of the leaders. Fourteen per cent found it more difficult because of work commitments, while 15% found it hard to obtain a baby sitter.

In conclusion, the Home Economics Branch wishes to thank all of the 2,495 leaders who took the time to complete the questionnaires that have revealed so much useful information and for conducting the clubs throughout the spring months of the year.

The branch also would like to thank all the Institutes who sponsored clubs. Their efforts really are much appreciated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Characteristics of a typical 4-H Leader

1. lives on a farm.
2. was a 4-H Homemaking Club member herself.
3. has a daughter enrolled in 4-H.
4. has led 7 clubs.
5. has completed high school.
6. is sponsored by the Womens' Institute.
7. believes in the 4-H movement.