

History of Farmer's Fair tells story of development thru 24 years

By Jean Lambert.

Farmer's Fair is no longer just another activity. It is and has been the crowning event on Ag campus so long that it has become an institution. For almost a quarter of a century it has been the biggest student-sponsored event in the university.

There is some reason to look back with pride and satisfaction on the record of this time-tried activity, for Farmer's Fair has not just come about by accident. It has been the result of hard work, ingenuity, and perseverance pitted against no small number of adversities. It has survived a war and a major business depression, to say nothing of typical "Farmer's Fair rains," which more than once have almost become blizzards.

First in 1916.

The first Fair was staged back in 1916 with L. A. Townsend as its first Manager. The idea had been borrowed from the ag college at Missouri. As in many such innovations, the first year's show was not a colossal success. That first Fair board had to blaze new trails and travel uncharted paths. They even had the hard luck of drawing a cold, rainy day for the initial show. Despite these facts, though, they did show to about 500 visitors. Farmer's Fair had come through the pangs of travail and birth.

In 1917 preliminary plans were laid for another fair. Then in April of that year the United States cast her lot with the Allies. Farmer's Fair activities were relinquished for the more serious business of making war. Many of the men of the college of course left and were called to training camps; others had to return to the farms to produce "food for the world." For three years conditions were not in the least conducive to such a non-bellucose activity as a Farmer's Fair.

Resumed in 1920.

The school year 1919-20 came and with it came the return of many of the A. E. F. boys. Peacetime activities were resumed. May of 1920 saw the second Farmer's Fair planned and this time staged. The management of the fair was largely in the hands of the ex-service men. This second effort proved much more successful than the first, and as a result Farmer's

Fair gained a nice foothold.

In 1921 and 1922 rain dampened the fair's operation to some extent, but each year saw the fair expand its program and its reputation. In 1921 the first "tanking" occurred, and this same year the Wild West Show was added to the program. The first pageant was put on by the Home Ec girls in 1922. It was also 1922 when admission to the fair was first charged.

By 1923 the fair had assumed

Home ec schedule

- 11:00 Dressing the Salad, Foods Laboratory.
- Flower Arrangement, Design Studio.
- Fine Points of Pressing, Textiles Laboratory.
- 11:30 Card Weaving, Design Studio.
- Stain Removal, Textiles Laboratory.
- Draping, Clothing Laboratory.
- 12:00 Slip Cover Finishes, Design Studio.
- Textile Testing, Textiles Laboratory.
- 2:30 Around the Clock with Rice, Foods Laboratory.
- Fine Points of Home Pressing, Textiles Laboratory.
- 3:00 Card Weaving, Design Studio.
- Stain Removal, Textiles Laboratory.
- Give the Cushion a Break, Design Studio.
- 3:30 Slip Cover Finishes, Design Studio.
- Textile Testing, Textiles Laboratory.
- 4:00 Good Cakes Made with Lard, Foods Laboratory.
- Flower Arrangement, Design Studio.
- 4:30 Give the Cushion a Break, Design Studio.
- Draping, Clothing Laboratory.
- 5:00 Fine Points of Home Pressing, Textiles Laboratory.
- Card Weaving, Design Studio.

Peterson tells teachers of ag English courses

"Business English for Students of Agriculture" was the title of the address given by Professor M. S. Peterson of the department of English on the agricultural college campus at the meeting Saturday of the newly organized Association of Teachers of Business English in Nebraska Colleges. Peterson stated that a survey he made recently showed that the average Nebraska farmer writes about thirty business letters a month. Because of this Peterson stressed that the farmer needs instruction in practical uses of English. He also described the new course in scientific writing which is to be introduced next semester. Miss Mamie Meredith of the department of English at the university is corresponding secretary of the organization.

Chemists go to ACS convention

Three members of the chemistry faculty attended the convention of the American Chemical Society held in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. C. S. Hamilton, Dr. B. Clifford Hendricks, and Dr. T. J. Thompson, dean of student affairs and a teacher in the chemistry department, represented the University. Chris Keim, Lincoln graduate student also attended. Dr. Hamilton, chairman of the chemistry department, presided over the meetings of the organic division. Dr. Hendricks read a paper on examinations before the education section of the meeting.

quite large proportions. Tents, stands, and bleachers were spread over much of the campus. To handle a crowd of eight to ten thousand people, though, required a lot of space.

Rain again.

It was in 1923, when the Fair Board with memories of rainy days the two preceding years decided to insure against bad weather. They got coverage up to 10 p. m., but the weather man played them another rather dirty trick. Clouds formed in the evening, and at about 10:10 p. m. rain started to fall, routing most of the evening crowd, losing most of the revenue from the night's entertainment, besides depriving the management of their insurance indemnity by a bare ten minutes.

Nineteen twenty-four is pointed to as the most prosperous year in all the fair's history. Ten thousand people attended. One thousand dollar profits were declared. For the first time the exhibits were housed under a single "big top" which covered a space 70 by 100 feet. The day's entertainment was a huge success in all respects.

The 1925 Fair was dampened to some extent by a big rain on the preceding night. Eight thousand people were in attendance however.

In 1926 the big event of the Fair was the horse show, which was the first of its kind to have been staged in Lincoln.

The new Activities Building was used in the 1927 Fair. That year the Style Show was added to the list of attractions.

In 1928 the horse show was again the star event of the program.

Riding contest.

The intersorority riding contest was a new event in the 1929 show and proved to be such a success that it was continued in following years. Kappa Kappa Gamma was the winner in each of the first two years.

Nineteen-thirty was another red letter year as far as crowd was concerned. 12,000 passed through the gates that day. The pageant, entitled "Mother Goose Day," seemed to be one of the outstanding events on the program.

In 1930, apparently, the effect of the 1929 boom days had not worn off, and people had not begun to feel the pinch of the depression that was soon to follow. Nineteen thirty-one, however, was a different story. Money was becoming scarce, the college enrollment was falling off, and there was a general spirit of dissatisfaction and gloom. The "Snorpheum," men-sponsored theatrical performance of long standing, was discontinued. Other events of the Fair were also deleted from the program. The Fair along with other enterprises fell prey to the business depression. In 1932 the parade had to be discontinued because of the cost involved. Since that time it has been uphill business, putting on a Fair. It has been a task which has challenged the best in the students of the college. They have risen to the occasion admirably, however.

Revival of interest.

With larger enrollments, a general revival of interest, and somewhat better business conditions the Fair has forged ahead again in the past two or three years. Last year, 1939, for the first time in several years the Fair realized a profit.

Now we look forward to another Farmer's Fair, the twenty-second one, with faith that it will be another of which the student body can be proud. This year, as in every previous year, three main objectives of the Fair will be foremost. They are: (1) advertisement of what Ag College has to offer, (2) building and strengthening friendships, and (3) development of leadership and co-operative effort.

Let's hope old Sol shines on us next Saturday.



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