CHAPTER VIII

Activities and Events

In 1910 the N.W. School and Experiment Station began organizing adult educational service, including agricultural meetings for the men, homemaking meetings for the women, general lectures making meetings for the and the Farm and the Farm Northwest Experiment Station. Today as the Red River historical events or sections of what we know Shows.

Winter oldest who was then the agronomist planned ings, culture was quality Professor Bergh suggested that the and that fact was except among some of the local

people. He suggested that samples of the crops be brought in for the Farm Crops Show. Further, he recommended that to attract show samples from farmers, extraordinary effort be made to provide substantial premiums for winners in the crops competition.

The Kiehle building on the N.W. School campus was new, with an up-to-date auditorium seating 500, and equipped with a stage, lights, and the latest 35mm movie projection equipment. It included a gymnasium with space for the first Farm Crops Show. What an exciting setting for adult education to be launched for the pioneer farm families! Except by word of mouth, many people hadn't heard much about this new Experiment Station or School of Agriculture. No extensive mailing list had been developed yet in the office. To establish a mailing list, Conrad Selvig wrote to each of the postmasters up and down the Red River Valley requesting from each the names of 25 farmers being served by the post office. Many names were received and information on the annual Short Course and Farm Crops Show was mailed. Communications were sent to selected business and industries for premiums to be awarded winners. The best ten ears of corn were awarded a 14" x 30" Playfold cement silo worth $330. The best single ear of corn was awarded 20 rods of fencing for first place and a

Cyclone seeder for second place. The sweepstakes award for wheat received a Jack Jr. gasoline engine worth $75. The winning oats sweepstakes competitor received a Bluebell cream separator. While this level of interest and support by industry was great at the outset, it soon became too much of a financial burden for the business community to provide these costly premium awards year after year.

Again, people of the Red River Basin rose to the occasion and suggested that crops were important to everyone and maybe all should share in the expenses involved in staging an annual Crops Show and providing premiums, more modest of course, for winners in the competition. To assume the responsibility for such an idea, the Red River Valley Development Association was born in 1914. Each county board of commissioners appropriated a modest sum to be used by the Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association, which organized itself into a non-profit promotional and educational corporation under Minnesota statutes. The Crops Show became a major Winter Shows project of the Red River Valley Development Association beginning in 1914 and has continued so to the present, with other groups joining in the project. The expenditure of some $3500 paid out for premiums annually is currently underwritten by the 14-county Red River Valley Development Association. The total available for premiums is augmented today by support from seed processors. The Crops Show and the beautiful panorama of the RRV landscape are the first sights to catch the eye as today’s visitor enters the south arena. The Agricultural Extension Service has a booth located strategically in the middle of the Crops Show traffic as visitors examine the attractive arrangement of Crops Show samples. The county extension directors, area agents, and scientists for the Experiment Station are on hand throughout the week to answer questions from visitors.

Today, the Crops Show is planned and arranged by a committee representing various crop commodity organizations and individuals in the Red River Basin. The committee meets annually sometime after the show closes to evaluate and begin the next year's planning. The Crops Show committee includes the Extension Service, the Minnesota Crop Im-

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