CHAPTER XII

The Future

The Red River Valley Winter Shows began as a service and research reporting outreach of the Land Grant University of Minnesota through its Experiment Station and School of Agriculture located at Crookston. The educational and service objective has continued, adapting to the changing scene of three-fourths of a century of living-on-the-land in the Red River Basin. The changes which will be faced in the next 75 years are likely to be just as numerous and far-reaching as in the last 75 years. Certainly a lot of refinement and sophistication is appearing on the food and fiber production scene. The number of people living on the land is going to be smaller; however, these people will still have their homes anywhere from 250 to 400 miles away from the seat of state government and of the Land Grant University.

The government of the Winter Shows will probably continue to be a nonprofit service and educational corporation. The Land Grant University will continue to provide expertise and leadership for some 21 or more other similar regional or statewide organizations chartered under the nonprofit corporate laws of Minnesota. The Winter Shows will continue to improve the quality of life as long as there are volunteers out in the 14-county area who consider the Winter Shows a worthy investment of their personal time, effort, energy and money.

Agriculture will still be the foundation for the economy of this section of the state.

A MID-WINTER BREAK

Considering the capriciousness of weather, we will continue to experience a long and rather lonesome winter in the Red River Basin. The midwinter break will always be welcome. If for nothing else, it's a chance to have a change of pace, to get away, to renew friendships, and have a little fun. Too, and probably more important for most visitors to the Shows, there is an opportunity to pick up new or check out evolving ideas.

FINANCING THE WINTER SHOWS OPERATIONS

There will never be enough money to do all the things the board of managers would like to do and that people out in the region would like to have done. The individual board members need to continue being actively involved in management. The routine of day-to-day affairs will be in the hands of a capable and service-minded office staff and manager. An undue overhead of paid staff must be avoided. The example of deficit spending by the federal government has most citizens worried and must be avoided for the Show's ongoing operations. The management has usually operated in the black. This prudent fiscal policy must be pursued if the faith and trust of the public are to be maintained.

STRENGTHENING TIES OUT IN THE COUNTIES

The grassroots leadership needs to be maintained and strengthened wherever necessary. The more interest created among those who produce crops and pure seeds in the Crops Show, the better the Crops Show will be -- likewise for livestock and other farming enterprises.

The Valley Farmer and Homemaker award identifies the real builders of grassroots leadership who have risen to their golden years and are still respected leaders in each county. The Livestock and the Dairymen's Associations each have a continuing role to play.

The King Agassiz project probably has unusual potential for the continuing grassroots support and patronage of Winter Shows. Northwestern Minnesota has always produced more than its share of leadership at the state and national levels. The Agassiz project can insure a unique system of doing that job on a continuing basis and doing it even better in the future.

It's just possible that the youth programming needs a youth committee including FFA and 4-H expertise and lay persons to make evaluations yearly and to provide the coordinating role with youth programs.

The involvement of the weekly press has lagged in recent years. There has been advertising in local weeklies -- yes. But that feeling by the weeklies of being among the cooperators who arrange this show each year needs more involvement.

THE RED RIVER VALLEY WINTER SHOWS FOUNDATION

A group of leaders have completed establishing a nonprofit, tax exempt foundation as a subsidiary corporation to work hand in hand with the Winter Shows. Starting such a foundation today is a meticulous process because of the precise and exact nature of setting up nonprofit, tax exempt corporations under the current federal laws. The purpose of the foundation is to assist the Winter Shows board of managers with appropriate projects. The foundation recognizes that the Winter Shows will carry on routine operations of the show. The foundation, however, will be an arm of the Winter Shows. It will continually look toward strengthening educational programs and provide leadership assistance in unusual major building projects.

The first project of the new foundation was to establish a permanent endowment entitled "The Program Fund". Already over $20,000 has been pledged or paid in cash toward the initial $100,000 goal. The aim is to complete this goal within the next three years. Once the permanent endowment has been established, the funds therein will be invested in safe income-producing securities. The income from the program endowment will be used entirely by the Winter Shows for program expenses such as seminars, speakers, and youth activities. The Winter Shows foundation will in time provide opportunities where grassroots citizens may wish to will a quarter section of land or other asset to be used in the mission of the Red River Valley Winter Shows. Machinery is now established to make such a gift possible.