

PUBLIC LIBRARIES/AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENCIES
POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION

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Chapter I

The Problem and its Setting

Need for the Study

There is currently no known ongoing cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies. Knowing how common these agencies are and that their goals in important respects are similar, it would seem very likely that the public would benefit if cooperation did exist.

The Background

Located in each of the 100 counties in North Carolina is a branch of the agricultural extension service. Also located in the counties are regional, county, independent municipal, and branch public libraries. In each of these branch organizations one will find either an agricultural extension agent or a public librarian. These people are responsible for disseminating information to their respective, often overlapping, audiences.

On the state level, the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service is one of the services within the Schools of Agriculture at North Carolina State University and A&T State University. Its mission is to extend the Land Grant Univer-

sity to the farms, homes, and people who would not otherwise benefit from the research and teaching on the university campus. The services are broken down into four areas: agriculture, community and rural development, youth and 4-H, and home economics.

Within the state library is the Public Library Development Section. The basic concern of this section is library service on the local level: to improve and equalize library service in all parts of the state. The Public Library Development Section is broken down into four categories of consultants. They are: the children's consultant, the young adult consultant, the adult/continuing education consultant, and the community relations consultant.

It is significant how closely parallel the organizations of these two agencies are, both in their locations and in their priorities in helping people on the local level.

The Statement of the Problem

This research is an exploratory study into the potential for cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

There are several questions raised in this study. Firstly, is there a need for them to cooperate? Secondly, what aspects of the mission of each organization deal with delivering information to county citizens? Thirdly, who carries out the mission and how? Lastly, what overlaps are there in the work done to carry out the mission?

The Delimitations

This study is limited to public libraries although a role

can be seen for school and community college libraries.

Chapter II

The Review of the Related Literature

The literature review for this exploratory study was based on information retrieved from books, journal articles, on-line literature searches, published reports, proceedings, and state government documents.

Many of the journal articles were retrieved by searching Library Literature (from 1932 to the present) and the Bibliography of Agriculture. The state government documents were retrieved by searching the card catalog in the documents section of the North Carolina State Library. The following subject headings were searched: cooperation, library extension, rural libraries, college and university libraries--extension, library community relations, education, extension and advisory work and economics, development and rural sociology. The researcher examined the articles and documents which were available from local libraries and chose those articles recognized to be of value. After examination, only three documents and six journal articles were considered usable.

Heasley and Preston in their article "The Changes in Rural America" state that:

A need for increased interorganizational linkage exists. We would like to suggest that a linkage should be established between the rural library network and the Cooperative Extension Service network. The latter organization has offices in each of the approximately 3,100 counties of the United States. Furthermore, the goals of the two organizations are similar. Both seek to provide educational opportunities for their rural clientele.¹

Libraries and extension agencies are similar in that both seek to provide educational information for their respective audiences. This mutual goal would seem to increase the possibility of cooperation between these two agencies. But, a review of the literature indicates little has been written about cooperation among public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

Instead, there is an array of articles on extension departments within agricultural colleges with the purpose of "extending the use of a particular library beyond its immediate clientele" as stated by Marjery Bedinger in 1927.² The connection between the college library and the extension service is not well organized. What the relationship between these libraries and extension services should be is not entirely clear.

Present in the literature are publications indicating library cooperation with public agencies through information and referral (I&R) services. Marta Wolf states in her article, "Cooperation Between Libraries and Other Agencies in Information and Referral," that I&R services have expanded rapidly in response to the needs for linking service users to an increasingly complex arena of social services. This

service, as explained by Wolf, is "that process that begins with the receipt of a request for services or information, includes a brief assessment of the situation, and concludes with the link of the client or patron with the proper resource."³ For it truly to be a cooperative effort there would need to be included follow-up which in most cases does not happen.

On the organizational level, the School of Library Science at Clarion State College established the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship during the early part of 1978. One of the focuses of the center's activities is the small public library. One of the objectives of the Center is "to stimulate imaginative thinking relative to rural library service."⁴ This "imaginative thinking" could present ways in which public libraries could cooperate with agricultural extension agencies.

As indicated, there has been mention of cooperation between rural public libraries and agricultural extension agencies. Stanley A. Ransom, in his article "The Rural Imperative: New York's Public Library Systems Face the Challenge," writes that, "many rural systems work with Cooperative Extension Offices' in supplying books, films, and other materials in such fields as wood heat, energy, and food preparation."⁵

As mentioned above, the goals of the two organizations are similar. The missions of public libraries as stated in North Carolina's Libraries, Their Role, Statements of Missions and Purposes is "to make available the recorded knowledge of

civilization, in whatever format, to all citizens and thus promote and foster the free flow of information and ideas."⁶

In contrast, the mission of the Agricultural Extension Service as stated in the opening remarks in the People's Plan 87: Delivering Technology to the Citizens of North Carolina, the long-range program of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, is: "Agricultural Extension is a dynamic educational agency which strives constantly to relate its resources to the needs of people."⁷

As indicated, the literature review did not show much written about cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies. The articles that do mention this cooperation are current and encourage researchers to look further into the possibilities. One such encouragement is stated by Heasley and Preston, "Rural librarians and Cooperative Extension Service personnel could work together...to provide appropriate and accessible educational services."⁸

Chapter III

The Research Methodology

The research methodology includes interviews with the directors of public libraries and agricultural extension agencies on the state and county levels. The researcher, through these interviews, explores (A) what cooperation exists among public libraries and agricultural extension agencies now, (B) what cooperation they would like to exist

in the future, and (C) how this future cooperation could be brought about.

The Data

Two counties were chosen for the study: Wake County because of the availability of the directors of the State Library of North Carolina and the State Agricultural Research Service located at North Carolina State University, and Durham County because it was similar to Wake in many sociological and demographic particulars. The directors of the Wake County and Durham County Public Libraries and the chairmen of the Agricultural Extension Agencies were interviewed.

The researcher arranged, by telephone, an appointment for a personal interview with the state and county directors. If a director could not submit to an interview, the researcher asked the director to suggest an alternate. Approximately one week before the appointment, a follow-up letter (see Appendix A) was sent to confirm the interview time. This letter included a list of questions to be asked at the interview (see Appendix B). It was the plan of the researcher to tape record the interview with the prior knowledge of the interviewee. This was communicated by telephone when arranging the interview appointment.

The Treatment of the Data

Findings are presented in narrative form on the basis of the research problem, rather than reporting on individual answers. The researcher discusses what conclusions can be drawn from the collected data.

The Results

Five of the six people chosen to be included in this exploratory study consented to interviews. The sixth person, because of time constraints, referred me to a member of his staff. The state level personnel were the State Librarian and the Continuing Education/Staff Development director in the Agricultural Extension Service. The county level personnel were the two directors of public library systems and two chairmen of the agricultural extension service.

A. Past and Present Cooperation

1. Costs and Benefits of Cooperation

Costs and benefits refer to the efforts or sacrifices made to achieve an end. In the interview process, all of the respondents made references in terms of dollars and cents.

The respondent's comments on the costs and benefits involved in cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies varied. The state librarian reported that there is "no authority for cooperation" between public libraries and the agricultural extension service. He stated that cooperation between and among the same types of agencies (libraries, for instance) seems easier to get than cooperation between other agencies (schools and public libraries, for instance). The response of the state person within agricultural extension followed along the same thought lines, that there is "no formal letter of agreement" and "that it is not surprising because it is not typical for

agricultural extension to have such a kind of formal understanding." However, she went on to say that the agricultural extension agencies operate in each of the 100 counties and the Cherokee Reservation as relatively autonomous entities, and that most cooperation would be at the local level and would vary according to the degree of urban population. This cooperation could exist by way of connections which have been built up between extension personnel and library personnel. The impression she receives from agricultural extension agents is that they would probably consider going to the public library for information.

Another factor she brought up is that public libraries and agricultural extension agencies "are different in some ways: of course...both are concerned about providing information to people who need it. But extension's mode of providing information and its reliance on the process of involving the clientele in the decisions about what are the problems that we need to find some sort of solutions for is very different from the way in which the library works." She went on to say that she thinks this is "a very significant difference and it certainly would not permit--or we would not encourage--cooperation unless the library was part of the advisory group within the Agricultural Extension Service."

On the county level, the directors of the public libraries both feel strongly that no costs would be involved in cooperative efforts. One public library director went on to say that he does not "feel that it should cost either agency to cooperate, both agencies are already funded, cooperation

therefore should not be an additional cost, nor necessarily will it be less expensive if they cooperate." (Of course, cooperation would involve resources that could be used in other ways.) Furthermore, the missions of the two agencies are different. The agricultural extension people are far more specific in scope than public librarians. Each of the agricultural extension agents has his own area of expertise. The librarian is a generalist. The agricultural extension agents are truly specialized, and that specialization is going to differ from county to county. For instance, in Wake County, because of the urban/rural mix, the agents specializations will be broader in scope than in a sparsely populated rural county.

The other public library director stated that the cost involved would be staff time. The county personnel in the agricultural extension service view the costs of cooperation somewhat differently. They feel the costs are incurred by the citizens of the county indirectly through taxes.

About the benefits provided by cooperation, the state librarian stated that in 1977 "the North Carolina General Assembly added a new section to the powers and duties of the State Library giving it the responsibility to plan and coordinate cooperative programs between the various types of libraries within the State of North Carolina, and to coordinate state development with regional and national cooperative library programs." He stated that cooperation will occur "between and among the same types of agencies instead of with other agencies because it seems easier to get at than

cooperation between other agencies." The state agricultural extension service person feels cooperation would be beneficial only if it does not cost much and only if extension initiated a specific project.

On the other hand, all four county level people saw definite benefits to cooperation. Both public library directors saw benefits to the users of both agencies. The same person could be a user of both the public library and the agricultural extension agency. This would allow more access to information. The two agricultural extension service people saw benefits in terms of more users of all services.

2. Factors limiting or prohibiting cooperation

Each of the six people interviewed had a different view concerning factors that would limit or prohibit cooperation. As previously stated, the state librarian is concerned with regional and national multi-type cooperation between and among the libraries. It is his responsibility as state librarian to initiate and administer any legislative change. The cooperation he spoke of between and among libraries was directly related to G. S. 125-2-10.⁹

The state agricultural extension person stated that "extension's mode of providing information and the reliance on the process of involving the clientele in the decisions about what are the problems that we need to find some sorts of solutions for and the way one goes about designing educational programs is very different from the way the library works."

One of the county public library directors feels that a limiting factor would be staff time. Also, she sees "turf problems and jealousy occurring." Her experience of working on a cooperative venture in the past taught her that, "many people believe or fear that by cooperating with other agencies that you will lose users instead of increase usage." But, she notes this has not been the case; in fact, there has been an increased usage of agencies through the Interagency Council this particular county has. The Interagency Council was started by the County School System. It is now an independent group coordinating all groups in the county which are educational or recreational in scope.

The other county library director had several views concerning limiting or prohibitive factors in cooperation. He has seen "failure of agencies to cooperate in the past, and the fact that perception by agencies themselves are separate and different, they don't have common goals. The internal structure that usually occurs in county departments makes them isolationists." They look out for themselves. Also, the agency itself is threatened by having to set up a new structure and a new leader.

One of the county chairmen for the agricultural extension service feels that a limiting factor in cooperation would be a loss of identity for agencies. The other agricultural chairman perceives two limiting factors. Firstly, there is different funding, because the county agricultural extension service receives money from the state and county governments. Secondly, the mission statement of the agricultural

research service is different from the public library's, the mission statement of the agricultural research service being: "To diffuse [information] among the people." The agricultural extension service carries out this mission by providing materials on agriculture and home economics. The information is taken from the shelves of university and research libraries and organized into a package that can be used locally.

3. History of Cooperation

Five of the six agencies have cooperated in the past. The state librarian related that through the years (he was not sure when) materials on parenting were given to new mothers through the agricultural extension agents and may have been a county by county activity. All the other cooperation described by the respondents, between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies, has been recent and is still ongoing.

One of the public librarians mentioned that in past the state library worked with the agriculture extension agency to develop reading lists. The public library had the material on hand and made these materials available through the library and through bookmobile service. Also, the agricultural extension agents have brought and still do bring, 4-H groups to the public library for programs.

The other public library director told of a cooperative effort between the agricultural extension service and one of the branch public libraries. This cooperation consists of a

children's librarian giving a story hour simultaneously with an agricultural extension agent giving a program to the mothers. In this same county the public library system and the agricultural extension service are acquiring property together to establish a County Office Park. The public library and the agricultural extension interviewees both requested separate buildings because of the different operations that will be going on. The library facility will house the administrative quarters and technical services. The agricultural facility will house the county agricultural extension services. The property they purchased is adjacent to a major road system. The library facility, being the distribution center for a multi-branch system, has to be near good transportation. The agricultural extension agency also needs good transportation access, because it will have many visitors. The public library and the agricultural extension service are sharing the same site, because one needs quick access going out and the other needs quick access for coming in. Other ways these agencies have cooperated are through sharing of facilities and through distribution of literature. The public libraries often provide space for the agricultural extension agencies to set up a case containing agricultural literature for the use of the people visiting the libraries. Also, the information and referral center in Wake County distributes and disseminates agricultural literature.

4. Funding

None of the agencies have any existing money earmarked for cooperative ventures. Officials do, though, suggest possibilities for receiving money for cooperation. The state librarian said, "the only money that 'says' cooperation is the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), Title III." He proposed that LSCA could underwrite a cooperative effort with the agricultural extension service. The state agricultural extension service person suggested that it could be conceivable that the county would get a grant for some particular community development work, in which case she feels one should involve as many agencies as possible.

On the county level, the public library that acquired property along with the agricultural extension service to build the County Office Park could not have done so without the agricultural extension administration and the public library administration cooperating in this decision. And, because of this consensus between the two agencies, money was set aside for construction. This joint effort between the public library and the agricultural extension service gave both of them the opportunity to do what neither of them could have done alone.

Furthermore, this same county library director does not "think money should be the basis for cooperation." In fact, the library director feels strongly about agencies' cooperation in the use of grant monies. He considers how frequently grants are approached on the basis of "there is grant money out there, let's get some money." Next, the grant proposal is written on the basis of money available and not because

there is a program created. The library director suggested that there should be a program or an activity which one wants to present but can not due to funding problems. One should then find out if there are any grant funds available which will assist in making the programs available. If there are funds available, then apply for them. The director recommended that one always question one's motives in receiving funding from grants to see if it fits into one's programs goals and objectives.

The other public library director discussed the possibility of applying for extra money from LSCA if there was a particular program desired. All of the respondents felt there could be joint funding to serve a particular program.

5. Joint Planning

To explore the potential for joint planning the researcher asked if there were now any joint planning efforts, if there were any possibilities of joint planning and if there were any potential for joint planning. All of the respondents answered that they did not know of any existing joint planning between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies on the state or county level.

On the possibilities of joint planning, the state librarian did not foresee any joint planning because the agricultural extension service has a different mission. They have a mission of educating and informing people on specific topics. Plus, the agricultural extension agents should know about information sources in their community, one of which is

the public library. The state agricultural extension service person saw no problem in cooperating in joint planning but only if there was a felt need or focus and only if extension initiated it.

One of the county public library directors stated "that there is not enough individual planning going on." He states that we should cooperate with other agencies in programs and not duplicate another's work. The librarian, who is a generalist, should call in the agricultural extension agent, who is an expert. This library director goes on to say that the mission of the public library is different from that of the agricultural extension service. The mission of the public library is to be the center that fosters and promotes the life of mind among the residents of the county. There are many ways to do that, but "the primary way we are doing this is through books. The people of the county are telling us they want books." In meeting the mission all money and effort is going towards the acquisition, organization and dissemination of books. (The director points out that this concentration on the major functions is from In Search of Excellence.) The other county public library director thought that the best route for cooperative planning was through the Interagency Council unique to her county.

Both agricultural extension service agents see possibilities for joint planning. One of them stated that it could be possible "for special efforts but not for total programs." This same chairman said it depended on the directors and department heads how joint planning would be done.

The other agricultural extension service chairman sees possibilities through the Community Education Network of his county. It is a group of cooperating agencies educating the community in life-long learning. Both the county agricultural extension service and the county public libraries are members.

As for the potential for joint planning, one county librarian stated that there is always potential. The other county librarian says that "planning should be separate but we should also be aware of and look at other agencies and that there should be joint planning in how we can cooperate."

6. Service

Another element investigated was services. The researcher felt that, to a limited degree, public libraries and agricultural extension agencies provide the same type of services. The state librarian does not think there is much overlap in services. All the research and basic knowledge that is disseminated by agricultural extension is known and held in other places. The agricultural extension service takes a wide range of information and tailors it and packages it to meet a need.

The state agricultural person said that the two agencies, to some degree, provide the same type of service. "Both have a purpose, at least in part, of disseminating information," but the agricultural extension agents "rely very heavily on the process of involving people early in the planning stage and where we go is contingent upon persons involved." She

also notes that libraries do much in developing resources and programming that deal with individual public library clientele.

Both of the county library directors agreed, to some extent, that the two agencies provide the same type of services. They commented that both agencies give out information, and that is the extent to which these two agencies provide the same type of services. One public library director pointed out that the public library provides more of the resources for information and that she does not think the services of the two agencies overlap. She stated, "I don't think we are doing the same things and don't think there is any duplication in services. I don't think what we're doing takes away from what they're doing."

The other public library director said the public librarians are generalists and the agricultural extension agents are specialists. He stressed that both agencies provide important county services, but "you can't replace the librarian with an agricultural extension agent and you can't replace the agricultural extension agent with a librarian." The public "librarian gives you the books and the agricultural extension agent tells you how to do whatever it is to do."

One of the chairmen of the agricultural extension service said it was true that services are of the same types to a very limited degree, in that both give out information. He went on to say that the agricultural extension agent on the county level goes into more depth, but still not as much as the researcher on the North Carolina State University cam-

pus. In comparison, he thinks that the librarian is a generalist.

The other county chairman of agricultural extension believes both agencies provide the same type of services. He said both are making information available and educating the mind. The agricultural extension service is helpful to the public by "giving information, developing a skill and changing your attitude." He feels reading will do the same three things. This chairman is the only one who addressed the issue of the possibility of public libraries and agricultural extension agencies cooperating in carrying out services. He believes all agencies are going to have to cooperate in providing services because of money constraints. This chairman thinks there should be a Director of Community Education whose function is to oversee the cooperation of educational agencies, including the public library and the agricultural extension service.

7. Dissemination of Information

In exploring the possibility of public libraries and agricultural agencies cooperating in providing information services and products, the two state level people did not see any purpose in doing this. One reason is that the agricultural extension service "can't afford to produce and disseminate to a non-targeted audience all the bulletins and newsletters that they do produce." The state librarian feels that "in cooperation the professional librarians' knowledge of what they do and the agricultural peoples' knowledge of

what is available in public libraries may be as far as you need to go."

The public library directors were not sure how the two agencies could cooperate in providing information services and products. Both made mention of their respective information and referral publications that list agencies in the community. They suggested that the agricultural extension people could identify other agencies that could be included in the publications. One librarian noted that in smaller communities the two agencies would probably be better suited to cooperate, because they would be the strong powers in such communities.

One of the agricultural chairmen noted that the problem with sharing the responsibility of providing information products is that the updating of materials would be more difficult for the library. The agricultural extension service information packages are technical in nature and are constantly updated by the researchers on the university campus. The other agricultural extension chairman also saw difficulty for the reason that the "library stores their information in the library and the agricultural extension agent carries their information with them wherever they go."

B. Future Cooperation

The second major part of the inquiry is future cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies and what the interviewees would like to see exist. The state librarian again restated that his agency is tied up in multi-

type cooperation. The state agricultural extension service person thinks that "if someone wanted to develop a relationship with another organization that there is nothing standing in the way." But, again, if there are no obstacles there still has to be an incentive. If there is an incentive, one may think of libraries.

One of the public library directors mentioned that she has monthly meetings with the county commissioner as do the other department heads, including the chairman of the agricultural extension service. She said each county agency could find out exactly what the others are doing, and there could be some basis for cooperation on that level. Also, her library is trying to continuously utilize community resources to bring information to the people and even more so do the branch libraries. In fact, a couple of the branch libraries are calling on the agricultural extension agents to do programs in order to reach more clientele. The other public library director does not see the two agencies cooperating because of the difference in goals, internal organizational structure and leadership.

One of the agricultural extension chairmen thinks that if the county officials would make it known that they expect these two agencies to work together there would be more cooperation. The other county chairman for agricultural extension believes they need to continue to keep the public library updated on information that is available from them and that this is a form of future cooperation.

1. Future Funding

The next area of investigation into future cooperation is funding. The state librarian said, "It is so easy to pontificate, especially from my seat, so I try to resist it. What I think about funding has no value at all any more than yours or anybody else's." The state agricultural person sees "no reason for funding." She does not "know why we would need funding unless there was a clear reason for funding."

One public library director stated, "Money should not be the basis for cooperation." The other public library director said if there were any funds for future cooperation she "wouldn't be asking for specific funding."

The agricultural extension chairmen both discussed what funding they would like to see exist for future cooperative ventures. One stated that as we make greater use of new educational tools, namely computers, perhaps there could be resource sharing to form a network, so the two agencies could pass information back and forth. The other county agricultural chairman thinks funds should be made available for cooperative efforts: "It would take planning and it would take studying before money could be shared by the public library and the agricultural research service."

2. Joint Planning

The next issue discussed is joint planning in future cooperation. The state librarian said he knew there was "cross-pollination and that planning in state government is not done in a vacuum." There is in the department of admin-

istration a planning section that coordinates various kinds of planning, and there is a great deal of interagency cooperation in planning. He went on to say that he does not believe the agricultural people have a central place to store materials, except for pamphlets. He thinks the public library would be a logical place, as the public library has a rack for materials supplied by the North Carolina Bar Association. The extension agents could use their public libraries to house a lot of materials and make them available. The public library is receptive to allowing public and private organizations to provide information packages for dissemination.

Only one agricultural extension chairman saw any need for joint planning. He saw a definite need for the two agencies to plan a way to match the two systems up online to increase the accessibility of information for the people. He also suggested that he would like to see more joint planning in establishing small places for people to use for programs and meetings.

3. Future Services

Another area examined for future cooperation was services. This was one area which all but one respondent thought should be shared. The state librarian made the observation that the agricultural extension service does not have a central place to store information. He proposed that the agricultural extension agents make their publications available through the public libraries. The state agri-

cultural person advised that the public libraries help by having supplementary texts available to support the agricultural extension programs.

One public library director asserted that he would not like to see services shared but rather contact points with the public shared. "We should assist each other in letting our clients know about the other." He maintains that there are "some real turf problems when you start getting involved with different agencies. Who is going to be in charge? Who will administer it? 'If you are going to administer then we are not going to have anything to do with it.' Our cooperation should be through referring the customer to the other agency. This is non-threatening to the internal organizations of the two agencies." He went on to say that there should be sharing of facilities but no sharing of personnel.

Both agricultural extension chairmen believe there should be future cooperation in services. One simply stated that the public will eventually demand cooperation in services on the county level. The other asserted that the services that should be shared are access to buildings and computers, and this cooperation will make services broader. Also, he maintained that, as society gets more interested in life-long learning, the public library and agricultural extension could cooperate in providing this service. He also maintained that, as the population grows and becomes more diverse, more agencies will have to cooperate in providing services to all. In his view of future events, he discussed how the county manager will become administrator of coopera-

tive services among all agencies.

The library director who thought services should not be shared stated: "I don't think we are doing the same thing and don't think there is any duplication in services."

4. Dissemination of Information in the Future

The last area of future cooperation explored is dissemination of information. The state librarian does not see any future cooperation with the agricultural extension service in disseminating information. He explained that "We have a rather traditional view of what the public library's business is. It is to be an educational institution, an information agency, provider of cultural enrichment and serve a recreational function." Each public library should have all information it can get that is pertinent to its community. The library services are planned by the seventy public library systems in North Carolina after analyzing their communities. There is hardly a community without a rural agricultural element, and information relevant to this part of the community should be available in the public library.

The two public library directors suggested that the agricultural extension agents be aware of the resources available from the public libraries. One library director also discussed how the librarians could ask the extension agents whether there is anything the public library could purchase of a general nature that could be made available to the agricultural extension service customers. One of the agricultural extension chairmen suggested that public officials

should be more knowledgeable of what the two agencies could do through cooperation. Through this effort there could be more sharing of facilities and equipment and information.

Chapter V

Conclusions

Keeping in mind that this study is exploratory and based on only six interviews the following observations are offered.

In the potential for cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies, size and composition of the county may be a factor. In the large, mostly urban counties, cooperation will be less likely because the county departments tend to become isolated due to the variety of resources in that area. For example, in Raleigh, county seat of Wake County and capital of North Carolina, there are an assortment of government and private organizations, and several institutions of higher education, as well as state and county libraries and agricultural extension services. These agencies are not oriented towards cooperation, as they have an established clientele whose needs they are designed to meet. However, the public librarian and agricultural extension agents should still be aware of all information agencies in their community. In the smaller, mostly rural counties, cooperation will be more likely to exist, because the public library and the agricultural extension agency will probably be the two strongest agencies in the county. This

cooperation will occur because of the relationship built up over the years between the public librarians and agricultural extension agents due to the limited resources in a sparsely populated area.

The difference in missions is factor tending to limit or prohibit cooperation. The public library serves the function of making available information, in whatever format, to all people of the community, and thus promotes and fosters the life and minds of the citizens. In contrast, the agricultural extension agency deals with the process of involving the individual in the solution of the specific problem. The librarian is concerned with matching the customer with the information he wants or needs. The agricultural extension agent is concerned with finding the proper action to eliminate the problem and teaching the customer how to do it.

In speculating on the potential for joint planning, two different organizations were mentioned that would do the planning for agencies that wanted to participate. The first is the Interagency Council. It is an independent group which coordinates all groups in the county which are educational or recreational in scope. The public library is a member. The second organization is the Community Education Network. It is a group of cooperating agencies educating the community in lifelong learning. Membership is open to any agency or group offering educational, recreational or life-supporting services to the community. The public library and the agricultural extension agency are both members.

If these two organizations, the Interagency Council and

the Community Education Network, were available in some form in all 100 counties in North Carolina this would offer a potential for joint planning for all. This would allow for coordination of programs, thereby increasing awareness and attendance.

The types of services provided by the public library and the agricultural extension agency differ. The librarian is a generalist and provides information in whatever format it is available. The agricultural extension agent is specialist. The agent tells the client how to perform whatever task he has set out to accomplish.

The way the two agencies carry out their missions is a factor in cooperation in providing services. The public library has a central storage area where material is kept. The agricultural extension agency lacks a central location for housing all materials except pamphlets, so it relies on other agencies to distribute its literature. An outcome of this is that agricultural extension agencies depend more on the public library for sharing resources and facilities. The reliance of the agricultural extension people on the library could result in overlapping audiences. Public libraries and agricultural extension agencies are both important organizations within a community. The more these two organizations share resources and facilities the more an overlap in users will occur.

This exploratory study is only the starting point for further research into cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies. Research needs to be

conducted in the following areas: formal cooperative efforts between these agencies in sparsely populated rural counties, identification of all the information resources in a urban county, grant money available for funding of a specific program, joint planning through one organization which would coordinate all educational and recreational agencies in a county, possibilities of having an employee in county administration department responsible for cooperation between all educational agencies.

Appendix A--Example of Follow-Up Letter

39 Oakwood Drive
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
February 22, 1985

Dear Library Director:

I am the graduate student attending the School of Library and Information Science at North Carolina Central University in Durham, who spoke with you on February 22, 1985. I am looking forward to our interview on March 11, 1985 at 9:30 a.m. as we arranged by phone. Enclosed you will find a copy of the questions I plan to use during the personal interview.

As part of the master's degree requirement, I am conducting an exploratory study on the potential for cooperation among public libraries and agricultural extension agencies. It is my intention to interview personnel on the state and county levels.

The information received will be used only for this research project. If you wish to be "off the record" at any point, I shall honor that request. I would like to tape record our interview since it will permit accurate reporting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

Appendix B--Personal Interview Questions

PLEASE REVIEW THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

I. Current Cooperation--What cooperation exists among public libraries and agricultural extension agencies?

A. Cooperation

1. Please discuss the costs and benefits of cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.
2. Are there any factors you feel limit or prohibit cooperation?

B. History of Cooperation

1. Have you in the past cooperated with any public libraries or agricultural extension agencies?
2. Explain any past cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

C. Funding

1. Do you know of any existing money for cooperative efforts?
2. Discuss the possibilities of receiving money for cooperation.

D. Joint Planning

1. Is there now any joint planning between state/county administration in public libraries and agricultural extension agencies?
2. Discuss the possibilities of joint planning by public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.
3. What is the potential for joint planning by public libraries and agricultural extension agencies?

E. Services

1. It seems to me that, to a limited degree, of course, public libraries and agricultural extension provide the same type of services. Do you think this is at all true?
2. If you agree with the above, discuss the possibility of public libraries and agricultural extension agencies cooperating in carrying out these services.

F. Dissemination of Information

1. Discuss the possibility of public libraries and agricultural extension agencies cooperating in providing information services and products; for example, HELP for the Citizens of Wake County published by Wake County Information & Referral Center, and Extension Teletip published by North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

II. Future Cooperation--What cooperation you would like to exist between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies?

A. Cooperation

1. Discuss your views on what cooperation you would like to see exist, if any, between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

B. Funding

1. Discuss what funding you would like to exist for cooperation between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

C. Joint Planning

1. Discuss what joint planning you would like to exist between libraries and agricultural extension agencies.

D. Services

1. Discuss the services you would like to see shared between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies.
2. How should they be administered and delivered?

E. Dissemination of Information

1. Describe what you would like to see exist between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies in your handling of information.
2. Discuss what cooperation you would like to exist between public libraries and agricultural extension agencies in providing information services and products.

NOTES

1. Daryl Heasley and Deborah Bray Preston, "The Changes in Rural America," Rural Libraries IV (1984), p. 15.

2. Marjery Bedinger, "What the Agricultural Librarian Can Do to Further Library Extension," Agricultural Library Notes 2 (1927), p. 118-21.

3. Marta Wolf, "Cooperation Between Libraries and Other Agencies in Information and Referral," Public Libraries 20 (Summer 1981), p. 61.

4. Charles Economus, "Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship," Public Libraries 18 (Spring 1979), p. 15.

5. Stanley A. Ransom, "The Rural Imperative: New York's Public Library Systems Face the Challenge," The Bookmark 38 (Spring 1980), p. 362.

6. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of State Library, North Carolina's Libraries, Their Role, Statements of Mission and Purposes (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1983), p. 3.

7. The North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, People's Plan 87: Delivering Technology to the Citizens of North Carolina, a Working Document (North Carolina: North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, 1983), p. 7.

8. Heasley and Preston, p. 15,16.

9. The North Carolina Division of State Library, Biennial Report July 1, 1982-June 30, 1984; With a Chronology of Accomplishments Since 1977 (North Carolina: North Carolina Division of State Library, 1984), p. 11.

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