

Carrying a College to Its Students

An Agricultural School on Wheels

*International Harvester Company, Thru Its Extension Department,
Carries Direct to the Farmer Demonstrations of Scientific Farming*

By MARY ELEANOR MUSTAIN



THE United States has witnessed all sorts and kinds of schools in the last decade, perhaps the most unique of these being the agricultural and farm machinery demonstration school, which has been literally traveling on wheels over the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia within the past seven months, and which is now enroute to Florida.

This unique campaign was the thought of Prof. P. G. Holden, director of the Agricultural Extension Department of the International Harvester Company, the purpose of the campaign being to assist the farmer, his wife and family, by carrying to him, directly, useful information thru actual demonstration, on the proper methods of preparing seed beds, crop cultivation and lectures on all phases of farm life and work.

Professor Holden unfolded his plan to the equipment and sales departments of the Company. They quickly realized the practicability of the plan, and were ready to accord hearty co-operation in the furnishing of machinery, tent, and a quota of machine demonstrators.

It was agreed at the outset that nothing should be sold, nor sales solicited, that the work was to be purely educational, and is all work of the Extension Department.

The southeastern field work was just opening, and it was decided to try out the plan here. Mr. H. S. Mobley, being in charge of the Short Course in this particular field, became the manager of the first agricultural and farm machinery demonstration school on wheels.

This tour is being made by a train of eight monster motor trucks, carrying a crew of ten men, two special lecturers, and all equipment necessary for a complete all-day demonstration. There are tractors with all the various attachments for deep plowing, harrowing, discing, pulverizing, manure spreading, etc., apparatus for testing soils, charts of various kinds showing concretely the applied efficiency the lecturers so strongly urge, and a complete motion-picture outfit with eight reels of agricultural pictures.

The meetings are held in a big tent that will accommodate four hundred people. There are comfortable chairs to seat them, while the tent is lighted by electricity generated right on the spot.

Mr. Mobley thus describes a day's work:

"Generally the day's program begins at 9:30 A. M., with tractor plowing, the land being plowed to break the sub-soil as deep as possible to permit most of the top soil to be kept on top.

"The manure spreader is then hauled over the fresh ground with the tractor, horses seldom being available. The manure is spread at the rate of five or six tons to the acre, care being taken to beat the manure fine and distribute it over the whole surface of the ground.

"Following this, the ground is disc-harrowed with the tractor to a depth of about two and one-half inches, the clods being pulverized and the manure mixed with the top soil.

"After that the disc-harrow with the small set of discs, followed by the pulverizer, is run over the ground to give it a final touch or finish. This, we teach them, is a seed bed.

"At eleven o'clock the audience is called into the tent, where an explanation of what we have done is given. Literature is distributed, and announcements of the afternoon and evening program are made.

"At 1:30 A. M. Mrs. Addie F. Howie, dairy expert, the second lecturer in the party, gives a talk on the dairy cow—

using a cow chart. This is followed at three o'clock by a demonstration of the belt work of the tractor operating the corn mill and chopper.

"At 3:30 another seed bed is prepared with the tractor for the benefit of those who did not see the morning demonstration.

"Beginning about 4:15 lectures are given on soil, alfalfa, and better rural schools, charts being used to better bring out the points. These lectures continue until time to adjourn, generally between six and seven o'clock.

"In the evening at 8:30 moving pictures are shown in the tent. Eight reels are carried, as follows: Sheep on Every Farm, Tractor Farming, The Evolution of Farm Machinery, Corn is King, Making Mother's Work Easier, Cold Pack Canning, Milk, and the Chicago Garden Bureau.

"Mrs. Howie delivers a lecture on the Home following the reel 'Making Mother's Work Easier,' and after the tractor reel is shown, I give a talk on power farming."

An observer says: "These tent meetings are a revelation. Plain, simple, no frills, no formality, there is about them an atmosphere of sincerity that rings true—of helpfulness that does not patronize."