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## EC2000 Nebraska Rural Youth Handbook

T. H. Alexander

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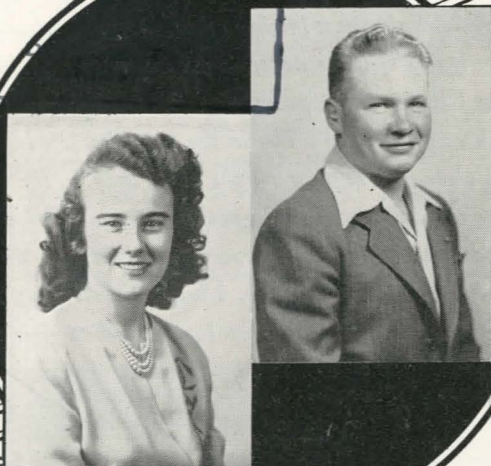
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# Nebraska RURAL YOUTH HANDBOOK

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E.C. 2000

## *The Country Boy's Creed*

*I believe that the country which God made is more beautiful than the city which man made; the life out of doors and in touch with the earth is the natural life of man. I believe that work is work wherever I find it, but that work with nature is more inspiring than work with the most intricate machinery. I believe that the dignity of labor depends not on what I do, but on how I do it; that opportunity comes to a boy on the farm as often as to a boy in the city; that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in the town; that my success depends not upon my location, nor upon my dreams, but upon what I actually do; not upon luck, but upon pluck. I believe in working when I work and in playing when I play, and in giving and demanding a square deal in every act of life.*

—EDWIN OSGOOD GROVER.

# Nebraska Rural Youth Handbook

T. H. ALEXANDER

Older Rural Youth is an activity of the Extension Service carried on in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Local groups may organize on a county or community basis under the guidance of County Extension Agents. The state program is under the supervision of the State Rural Youth Leader.

Membership is limited to rural young men and women 17 years of age and over. Regular meetings are usually held once a month. A balanced program consists of education, recreation or social activities, and community services.

## Objects of the Organization

The objects of Rural Youth Groups are:

*To increase and improve the contacts, stimulate fellowship, and develop leadership among rural young men and women.*

*To encourage the discussion of topics among farm youth for their own development and preparation as leaders in rural communities.*



## **Educational Topics**

A few of the many different topics are listed below. These suggest the type of programs that have been used by various clubs in the state. The best programs are developed locally as a result of group planning.

Yard beautification	Appropriate dress and grooming
Farm Home remodeling	Safety
New buildings	Farm law
Soil conservation	Health
Highway etiquette	Travel talks and pictures
Citizenship talks	Photography
Personality development	Farm unit planning
Foods and nutrition	Home furnishings
Home management	Farm and home accounts

## **Other Educational Features**

Debates	Spell downs
Group discussions	Demonstrations
Moving pictures and slides	

## **Recreation and Social Activities**

Although some groups tend to lean toward one type of recreation, such as dancing, a well balanced recreation period is to be preferred. This might be divided into three phrases.

*Games for early comers*—These games should be of the type that few or many can play them. Table games, puzzles, get acquainted games, stunts or small group games fit well into this period.

*After meeting games*—Most groups follow the educational or business part of the program with an hour or so of spirited games, relays, folk dances, musical games, social dancing and other activities. This is a very important part of the meeting and should be carefully planned.



*Special Parties*—Special events are planned for various occasions such as—

Special dates—Halloween, Christmas, Valentine Day, etc.



One-Act plays  
Basket socials  
Waffle suppers  
Annual banquet

Steak fry  
Hay rack party  
Bowling  
Roller skating

### **Community Service**

Taking part in the planning and carrying out of worthwhile community projects is of benefit not only to the individual but also the group. The members gain from the leadership experience. The group benefits from the favorable publicity and close working relationship that results from cooperative action. The community service should be of importance to the local community and often may be tied in closely with some phase of Extension activity.

A few community service projects are listed below.

Sponsor county corn husking contests

Assist in organizing 4-H clubs

Assist in county fairs

Cooperate with local churches in observing Rural Life Sunday

Sponsor drives for community halls

## Organization Plans

According to the 1940 United States Census, there were 177,699 farm young men and women in Nebraska between the ages of 17 and 30. In addition to these farm young folks, there were 125,194 young men and women in towns classified as rural. These figures changed greatly from 1940 to 1945 because many of these young people served in the armed forces and many moved to war jobs. A careful survey in any community will reveal a large number of young men and women between the ages of 17 and 30 who are interested in a program of education, recreation and community activities.

The first step in organizing a Rural Youth Group is to make a survey in cooperation with the County Extension Service. The result of this survey will indicate if there are enough young men and women above 17 years of age who might be interested in such an organization. The school census might be used as an aid in the survey. The next step is to decide how large a territory should be included in the group. Many organizations have been organized on a county wide basis. Others are organized on a community basis. There are advantage and disadvantages to each plan.

Groups organized on a county wide basis usually hold their meetings in a centrally located meeting hall. However in some counties, the meetings are rotated among the various towns and community halls.

Community groups usually hold the majority of their meetings in their own community hall, local school house or some member's home. Two or three times a year the community groups meet in county wide meetings.

## **Assistance from County Extension Office**

Since Rural Youth work is an Extension project, the county extension office is the central point for all Rural Youth activities in the county. A number of valuable services are available from the county office. Some of them are:

Assistance in organizing a local group.

Educational assistance from the county agents dealing with agricultural and home economics projects.

Bulletins and reference on discussion topics.

A mimeograph service for the printing of programs and other material.

Counsel and guidance in formulating yearly programs of work and in other activities of the group.

## **Assistance from the State Rural Youth Office**

Working through county extension agents, the State Rural Youth Office offers the following aids:

Assistance in organizing new groups.

Assistance in program planning by meeting with local groups or with the officers of the groups who are planning the yearly program of work.

Arrangements for state specialists to attend local meetings with material of educational nature.

Publication, with the aid of the state and local reporters, of a Rural Youth news column in the State Extension News.

Publication of a bi-monthly Rural Youth circular giving ideas for programs including education and recreation.

Assistance in planning and carrying out state and district events.



## Procedure for Organization

Select a suitable meeting hall centrally located in the community to be organized. This should be a place that has light, heat and movable chairs so that a period of recreation after the business meeting may be had.

Invite a few young people over 17 years of age to attend a meeting called to discuss the possibilities of a Rural Youth Group. This may be a select group or a general meeting of all interested young people. Older 4-H members make a good nucleus of the group. It is usually advisable to invite leaders of the church, and farm organization and civic groups to the first meeting to gain their support.

Explain the Rural Youth program and, after a thorough discussion, take a vote on the question of organizing.

If the vote is favorable, elect temporary officers to serve until a permanent organization is formed.

Decide on the regular meeting date and place of meeting. Appoint committees for first meeting. (Program; Recreation; Lunch) Also appoint a constitution committee to draw up a suggested constitution and by-laws to present at the next meeting.

Arrange for a meeting of the officers to act as a program planning committee to draw up a year's program, (appoint committees for each meeting, select topics for programs, plan special events). A member from the State Rural Youth Office will meet with this committee when requested.

A well planned program should provide interesting meetings that will include education, recreation and community service.

## Programs That Work

At the beginning of each year the executive committee, together with the program chairman and other standing committee chairmen, should meet and plan a program for the year. This includes the dates of meetings, meeting places, times of meetings, topics of discussion or special events, the committees in charge of the program, recreation and lunch. Many groups prepare a special year book which includes the program of work, officers of the group, advisors, past officers and other events of interest to the group. It is advisable for the county agents to be present at the program planning meetings to give assistance in building a complete program.



Some groups hold monthly meetings of the executive committee and the committee for the coming month in order to more fully plan each meeting and to make sure their plans really will click and be of interest to the group.

A program for Rural Youth should:

- Be based upon the needs of the young people in any given community.

- Include both boys and girls. The interest and needs of older youth are largely coeducational.

- Be balanced. Include educational features, recreation and social activities.

- Allow for maximum amount of self direction.

- Be based on adult tasks. Youth of this age are ready for undertakings that tax their ability.

- Be organized on a community level. This need not prevent some type of county, state or national program.

- Provide for cooperation with other rural agencies that contribute to a better rural life.

## **Sponsors**

Rural Youth groups which have elected local sponsors have found them to be very satisfactory. Parents and the public look with favor upon meetings sponsored by well known and respected adults. The county extension agent should keep in close contact with the group and its sponsors.

The following duties and characteristics of sponsors are suggested.

- Be interested in young people.

- Be able to attend the meetings regularly and take an active part in games and parties.

- Be available for individual or committee conferences at reasonable times.

- Be ready with sound advice but avoid a domineering attitude. Let the young people run their own organization but through constructive suggestions see that the group maintains high ideals and stresses character building activities.

- Encourage the development of leadership.

- Be alert to see that new or shy members are made to feel welcome.

- Keep in close touch with the county extension agents.

Sponsors can make or break a Rural Youth organization by their attitude and the way they work with the group. Sponsors are advisors and counselors, and should not try to run the group.

## **State and District Events**

One state wide and two district camps are held each year. The state wide camp is usually held early in August and the state officers are elected at this camp. These officers consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and News Reporter. An advisory committee of two agricultural and two home extension

agents are also elected at the camp. This committee meets with the state officers to recommend programs, projects and other events of state wide nature.

The two district camps have been held at Chadron and Curtis. These are overnight camps and are mainly recreational in nature. Other district camps will be set up as other groups are organized in other parts of the state.

In addition to the state and district camps which are held during the summer months, district meetings during the winter months have proven popular. These are usually sponsored by a local county organization. Members from the neighboring counties are invited to attend and participate in the meeting. These meetings usually are an evening affair, beginning with a banquet or supper, followed by a speaker or a group discussion on some topics of importance to rural youth and ending with a period of recreation. These meetings have a definite place in the rural youth program as they provide contacts between various county organizations and help keep up the interest of the members.



**COUNTY  
AGENT**



**EXECUTIVE**



**TREASURER**



**SECRETARY**



**PR**



**COMMUNITY ACTIVITY  
COMMITTEE**

**RURAL YOUTH  
That R**



**LOCAL  
SPONSORS**



**COMMITTEE**



**IDENT**



**VICE-PRESIDENT**



**NEWS REPORTER**



**GRAM  
ITTEE**



**RECREATION  
COMMITTEE**

**H PROGRAMS  
ally Work**

## **Important Points in Conducting a Good Meeting**

The President arrives early, checks with the committees, and calls the meeting to order on time.

Have the members seated comfortably in concentric semicircles if possible. The president and secretary should be seated at a table in front of the group.

Open the meeting with the flag pledge, or a patriotic song.

Conduct the business meeting with good parliamentary procedure. Do not allow it to drag or to get out of hand.

Roll call

Minutes of last meeting

Unfinished business

New business

Reports of committees

Election of officers (Annual meetings)

Announcement of program and committees for next meeting

Committee chairman in charge of program take over the meeting and announce the topic and introduce the guest speaker.

Recreation plans are announced by recreation chairman.

The lunch should be simple.

Clean up the meeting place and leave it in order.

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

To receive and dispose of a motion of business:

Member rises, addresses presiding officer, "Mr. President."

Chairman recognizes member with first name or Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ or Miss \_\_\_\_\_.

Member says, "I move that ———," never "I make a motion" or "I move you."

Motion may be seconded without rising or addressing chair.

Chairman repeats the motion and calls for discussion.

Any member can make remarks for or against, after being recognized.

After discussion, chairman states, "Are you ready to vote on the motion?"

A member from audience may call, "question."

Chairman puts motion by restating it and, "All in favor say "aye," opposed, "no."

Chairman states whether motion is "carried" or "lost."

A motion introducing a new subject may not be made while there is another motion before the meeting. Only motions that affect the original motion may be made at that time, such as: to amend, to lay it on the table, to postpone, or to adjourn.

To receive and dispose of a motion and its amendment:

Motion may be amended by:

- a. Adding or striking out words
- b. Substituting a different motion
- c. Dividing the question

An amendment requires a second.

An amendment is debatable and can be amended.

Vote on amendment first, then the original motion.

If a motion is not seconded, it is declared lost by the president without a vote. Most motions are debatable except a motion to adjourn, which is in order at any time unless a member holds the floor. It must be considered immediately. The only way to delay a vote on it is by substituting a motion to adjourn to a specified time or place. A motion to adjourn may not be reconsidered if it carries. Only regular members in good standing are eligible to vote.

## Nominations and Elections

The annual meeting varies with different groups. Some begin their year in September, others in January. One group elects their officers in May, but they do not take office until September. This give the new officers time to plan the year's program.

Nominating committees are usually appointed by the president at the meeting preceding the annual meeting. This committee should select two candidates for each office and give their report at the annual meeting. The president should then call for nominations from the group. Voting is usually carried on by written ballot and the candidate receiving the majority of votes is declared elected.

### Duties of Rural Youth Officers

#### President—



Notify the vice-president or advisor if he cannot be present.

Be present at the meeting before the appointed time and check with committee chairmen on final arrangements.

Preside, call the meeting to order and direct the business meeting.

Know in advance what general business should be taken up.

Have knowledge of parliamentary law.

Keep meetings spirited, brief and practical.

Appoint temporary secretary if regular one is absent.

Receive and put to vote all motions and propositions presented by the members.

Appoint all committees except elected chairmen for permanent committees. Delegate responsibilities to committees and call for reports.

Cast the deciding vote in case of tie.

Approve payments of accounts after group action.

Keep in touch with advisors, county extension agents, and committee chairmen.

Show courtesy to visitors.

### **Vice-President—**

Study duties of president.

Preside when president is inactive.

Preside when chairmen wishes to discuss or vote on a motion.

### **Secretary—**

Keep a permanent record of the group and minutes of each meeting. Include kind of meeting, date, place, names of presiding officers, statement of disposition or each item of business, roll call, committees, and motions carried or lost.

Serve as presiding officer if both president and vice-president are absent.

Take roll call and record attendance.

Sit at table next to president, keep tab on all activities, remind president of any business that he forgets.

Write all communications for the club.

Prepare annual summary for county extension office.

Keep an accurate membership list.





### **Treasurer—**

Keep an accurate account of all money.

Deposit funds in a manner approved by the group.

Pay all bills on order of president and after approval of group.

Recommend plans for replenishing treasurer and investment of surplus funds.

### **News Reporter—**

Write announcement of meetings and reports of activities of the group for newspapers.

Send a report of each meeting to the State Rural Youth Office.

Include who, what, when, where and why in first sentence or paragraph.

Collect news items of group's activities for secretary's permanent record.

Sign name as reporter at end of news items. Otherwise it is an anonymous letter and news editors frown on them.

Above all, remember that other people are interested in the activities of the group. Tell them all about it.

### **Standing Committees**

Some organizations have standing committees or chairmen appointed or elected for the year. These are usually the program, recreation and community activities committees. Each of the chairmen should:

Attend the meetings of the board of directors.

With the other members of his committee, plan in detail their part of the program for the year.

The education chairmen should plan who, how, and when for each topic chosen, should arrange for speakers, inform them of the meeting topics and length of time to spend, and give them information concerning the group.

The recreation committee should be sure there is recreation for every meeting. Games should be provided for "early comers." Committee members may lead recreation or appoint other members of the organization to have charge of this part of the program. It

is the responsibility of the committee to see that recreation is provided. The committee has charge of special parties and events. Special activities may include:

Development of group singing.

Introduction of folk games.

Planning for special events, carnivals, banquets, socials, etc.

The community service committee should analyze the situation of the community and suggest one or more events that might be sponsored by the local group during the year. When the group decides upon any one event the community service committee should work out detailed plans and consult with the president as to the appointment of committees.

### **General Committees**

General committees appointed for each month's program are used by many groups in place of the standing committee. These committees are appointed by the President or the executive committee. The most successful groups appoint the general committees for each meeting of the year at the same time they work out their yearly program of work.

The most common general committees are, program, recreation and lunch. Community activities are usually handled by the executive committee.

Some groups appoint the entire committee which usually consist of three members. Other groups appoint the chairman of the respective committees and give him the privilege of selecting his own committee members. Each method has certain advantages and disadvantages. When the President or executive committee appoints the entire committee, more members are apt to be given some responsibility in carrying out the program. However in some cases, where the groups cover a large territory, the committee is scattered too widely to function properly. In either case the President or executive committee should check with the committees before each meeting to be sure that they are functioning properly.

# **Suggested Constitution and By-Laws**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Article I—Name**

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the \_\_\_\_\_ County Rural Youth Group.

### **Article II—Purpose**

The purpose of this organization shall be:

Section 1. To increase and improve the contacts and stimulate fellowship and develop leadership among rural young men and women.

Section 2. To encourage the discussion of activities among farm youth for their own development and preparation as leaders in rural communities.

Section 3. To make possible a more adequate social life for rural young people.

### **Article III—Membership**

Section 1. Any interested rural young man or woman over 17 years of age is eligible for membership.

Section 2. The annual dues shall be \$.....

### **Article IV—Officers**

Section 1. The officers shall be President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer; News Reporter.

Section 2. No officer shall hold the same office more than one year.

Section 3. The term of office shall be one year beginning with the month of ..... Officers will serve until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

Section 4. Nominations shall be made by ballot, nominating committee, or nominations from the floor. Officers shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting by members in good standing.

Section 5. The board may fill any vacancies caused by the resignation of an officer or failure to serve.

### **Article V—Meetings**

Section 1. Regular meetings shall be held on the ..... of each month.

Section 2. The annual meeting shall be held during the month of .....

## **Article VI—Amendments**

Section 1. This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a majority present at an annual meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **Article I—Duties of Officers**

Section 1. Duties of President. It shall be the duty of the president: (1) to preside at meetings (call them on time, conduct the business session, and in other ways to see that the programs for the meetings are orderly), (2) appoint necessary committees, (3) keep informed on the county, state, and national programs for youth, and (4) when possible, attend conferences which will further the interests of the group.

Section 2. Duties of Vice-President. It shall be the duty of the vice-president: (1) to perform all of the duties of the president when the latter is unable to serve, and assist him in his duties.

Section 3. Duties of Secretary. It shall be the duty of the secretary: (1) to keep a record of all meetings, (2) make a record of attendance and of proceedings—business conducted, motions made and passed or lost, committees appointed, and special work done by the group, (3) to see that notices of meetings are sent to members in good standing, (4) read minutes of previous meetings and make announcements to the members.

Section 4. Duties of Treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer: (1) to keep accurate account of money received and expended, (2) to pay bills upon approval of the membership and order of the president.

Section 5. Duties of Reporter. It shall be the duty of the reporter: (1) to announce all meetings—through the local newspapers, farm organization news bulletins, and any other effective way available, (2) to make reports through the above agencies of all meetings and

accomplishments of the group, (3) to assume responsibility for giving publicity, when authorized, to any project which the group may undertake, and (4) to send a summary of each meeting to the state office.

### **Article II—Executive Board**

Section 1. Membership—The officers shall form an executive board. The county extension agents and group advisors will serve as ex-officio members.

Section 2. Duties—It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to formulate policies, plan yearly programs and perform other duties as may be necessary for carrying on the work of the organization.

### **Article III—Meetings**

Section 1. Quorum—Twenty-five percent of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The order of business shall be:

1. Call to order by the president
2. Roll call
3. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meetings
4. Unfinished business
5. New business
6. Report of committees
7. Adjournment

Section 3. Notice of meetings will be sent only to members in good standing.

Section 4. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the basis of procedure at all meetings.



# Country Girl's Creed

**I** am glad I live in the country. I love its beauty and its spirit. I rejoice in the things I can do as a country girl for my home and my neighborhood.

I believe I can share in the beauty around me—in the fragrance of the orchards in spring, in the bending wheat at harvest time, in the morning song of birds, and in the glow of the sunset on the far horizon. I want to express this beauty in my own life as naturally and happily as the wild rose blooms by the roadside.

I believe I can have a part in the courageous spirit of the country. This spirit has entered into the brook in our pasture. The stones placed in its way call forth its strength and add to its strength, a song. It dwells in the tender plants as they burst the seed-cases that imprison them and push through the dark earth to the light. It sounds in the nesting notes of the meadow-lark. With this courageous spirit I, too, can face the hard things of life with gladness.

I believe there is much I can do in my country home. Through studying the best way to do my everyday work, I can find joy in common tasks done well. Through loving comradeship, I can help bring into my home the happiness and peace that are always so near us in God's out of door world. Through such a home, I can help make real to all who pass that way their highest ideal of country life.

I believe my love and loyalty for my country home should reach out in service to that larger home that we call our neighborhood. I would join with the people who live there in true friendliness. I would wholeheartedly give my best to further all that is being done for a better community. I would have all that I think and say and do help to unite country people near and far in that great Kingdom of Love for Neighbors which the Master came to establish—the Master who knew and cared for country ways and country folks.

—JESSIE FIELD.