Some Ideas for Recruitment in a Dairy Science Department

A. W. RUDNICK, JR.
Department of Animal Sciences, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

While the title of this paper limits coverage of recruitment to dairy science departments, I wish to expand it at times to cover all agriculture, because our problem is not unique. It is evident in other areas or departments within agriculture.

While there is almost geometric progression in the increase in university students as a whole, few colleges of agriculture are keeping pace. Many are more than satisfied if they enroll no fewer undergraduates than they did the previous year.

With food becoming critical in the world, with hunger rampant in many areas, with so much land in far less than optimum production, with so great a processing and distribution problem, it makes one wonder why agriculture in general, and more specifically dairy science, is not the chosen field of more instead of fewer students. With so much to be done in the area of food production, processing, and distribution, why are we not attracting more outstanding students?

Public Lacks Awareness
If any single factor exists for the student enrollment problem in our area and in other areas in agriculture, I think that factor could be stated as awareness. People are not aware that agriculture is important, that keen minds must be put to solving its problems, that a time of crisis is fast approaching in the field.

Oh yes, people driving along the countryside see waving fields of grain, the peaceful pastoral scenes of grazing cattle, the dizzying regularity of corn rows, the terraced hillsides. But do they associate these observations with 8,000 and more items they see in the supermarket? This is what I mean by awareness. The public just doesn’t know what we do and cares even less, as long as they eat well and cheaply. This, then, makes recruiting of good students difficult. We are like a very small cheese factory competing with a large national company. Our product may be of equal quality, but as long as nobody has heard of it there are few sales.

Areas for Recruitment
This leads, then, to areas we need to use in our recruiting programs, both in long and short range. I have divided these into five categories and in this order of importance: 1) parents of prospective students, which means the general public; 2) industry help and cooperation; 3) junior college, general college, lower division or community college students, such as freshman and sophomore students who have yet to select a major; 4) high school guidance counselors; and last, 5) high school students.

Studies show that parents and friends probably exert more influence on a young person’s choice of career than any other single force. Parents are interested in their children having careers that will have status. (I hate the term, but, as in other things, Madison Avenue has given it a real meaning.) Parents want to be proud of our son, the doctor, or our son, the lawyer.

In a survey of high school counselors, I asked them what parents wanted their children to be. As you would expect, it was doctor, engineer, lawyer, scientist, etc., with no parent speaking of agriculture, let alone dairy science or even food processing. This reverts back to lack of understanding of the public concerning the function of agriculture, dairying, and processing.

Publicity A Prime Need
We need publicity. We should tell people what we are doing. We should tell people the type of education they will get in dairy production or manufacturing. How many people...
know that a survey supported by the Carnegie Corporation stated that of all colleges studied, students received the best preparation for life in colleges of agriculture? The student is exposed to a problem-solving atmosphere and taught by people used to solving problems.

How many people are aware that in most of our preprofessional curricula there is as much or more science, humanities, and social studies as there is in a college of arts and sciences? To quote Kellog and Knapp, in their book The College of Agriculture: "Unless both rural and urban people throughout a state know that the curricula in the agricultural college have been remodeled and designed to educate broadly, that college cannot expect to attract both more and able students . . . agricultural colleges can present this picture more widely than most have in the past." I say they must do so or fall by the wayside.

Possible Approaches

Positive things can be done. At the University of Kentucky, we are inviting community leaders to visit the college. A bus brings the people in and they tour various departments. Each department is organized to give a summary of its teaching, extension, and research. The response is one of awe. Most people come away with the comment, "We weren't aware that all of this was going on in agriculture."

The New York Section of the Institute of Food Technologists has organized a speakers' bureau. Purpose of this set-up is to furnish good speakers to various organizations in the area to explain the job of a food technologist. They go to school groups, clubs, church groups, or any place they are invited and where there are consumers present. I have heard they have reached more than 50,000 people in a year in this way. Why can't our Dairy Technology Societies do the same thing? It is long-range recruitment by making the public aware of our need and purpose.

Role of Industry

The second area of recruitment somewhat overlaps the first, in that it is aimed at making people aware of the dairy industry. I do not imply that our industry is not helping, but they can do more. Present help is in the form of scholarships and financial support of special days and programs. These are fine and we need them. Professor Henderson of Georgia points out that industry-sponsored scholarships make students aware of the value industry puts on trained personnel. But, industry could do still more in line with this awareness I am talking about.

There is a moderate-sized plant in our state that owns a school bus. Nearly every day this bus brings in a load of school children to tour the plant. This not only helps make future customers; it makes the kids aware of an industry they didn't know existed. I hope other plants are doing this throughout the country. A milk carton panel is valuable advertising space. It could be used to acquaint people with our problem.

General Motors, and the General Electric Company, and others run big advertisements in local papers for engineers, mathematicians, physicists, and other experts. People know the jobs are available. Doesn't our industry need dairy engineers, technologists, geneticists, nutritionists, sanitarians, and the like? Dairy companies should be induced to put inserts in their national advertising directed toward young people seeking a career. Let people know opportunity exists. Make them aware of the need.

Campus Recruitment Valuable

In the third area of recruitment we have a big job to do and one that, except in a few places, seems to have been ignored. This is recruitment on our campuses and associated units. This is education of our colleagues in other colleges. How many of them even know what goes into a dairy curriculum? How many know that dairy departments were the leaders in setting up the technology, science, and business options? How many know that colleges of agriculture are leaders among professional colleges in recognizing need for and establishing broad educational programs? Medicine, engineering, law, and commerce colleges are just beginning to move toward such programs.

With the trend toward placing freshmen and sophomores into one group, fertile areas for recruitment are available. Most places select advisers for these students across the board. Be willing to advise all students, not only those indicating a preference for dairy or agriculture. It is hard work, but just the atmosphere of your office helps in recruitment, especially of those who come to school undecided as to a career. And this is 70 to 80%.

Make your beginning courses attractive. I don't mean easy. Word gets around among students about these things. If they can see real value, they will come. It is up to you to keep them.

Search Junior Colleges

With the growing development of junior and community colleges, personal liaison is needed.
This can be done by an academic staff member or probably more easily by an extension agent. Get to know the key personnel, deans, directors, counselors. It is a fruitful hunting ground. Referring again to Professor Henderson, he reports few freshmen but many junior college transfers. Furthermore, Georgians do not confine themselves to institutions in their own state. This is but one school, hunting in fertile territory. If we all start in this area we may have to have ADSA letters of intent similar to those of the NCAA. Here is a fruitful field others are exploiting. I know one college of medicine which has a full-time man on this job.

Help Counselors

The fourth area of recruitment is a broad one in which we are welcomed with open arms. Most high school guidance counselors are in need of help and material. In preparing this paper I interviewed counselors of a number of high schools. This covered city, county, and parochial schools. Only in one was I turned down. A rather exclusive private school was very cool when I mentioned agriculture. Also, I talked to a counselor in a junior high school.

In every case, our problem came back as awareness. I began talking about dairy science in these interviews, but quickly changed to agriculture, in general, due to the cool responses I received. To many, the term dairy science or agriculture meant only farming. One counselor told me, "I never talk about agriculture as a career because I thought farm population was decreasing and we don't need more farmers." Similar attitudes were met throughout the interviews.

Need Information

Background information was greatly lacking. Several of the schools subscribed to the Chronicle Occupational Briefs, Moravia, New York, and which I read. Dairying is listed and so is food processing. The description of positions is inadequate in both cases. There is little indication in this information that college degrees are available or even needed.

At the junior high school I visited they made use of Careers Research Monographs from the Institute for Research in Chicago. This series seemed to give a much better picture of dairying and other areas in agriculture.

I was interested in their classification—professional, service, agriculture, and several others. Under agriculture were listed various types of farming. Under professional, among others, were agronomist, forester, and veterinarian. No dairy or food technologist or dairy scientist was listed, however. Perhaps contact should be made with these services by our Association.

Give Classroom Aid

When we asked how we could make them aware of student needs and opportunities, every advisor said, "Give us information. Direct it to us, not the principal or the teacher in vocational agriculture." They suggested counselor seminars, such as those in California. These people are willing to take extra time to learn. They also suggested giving kits to biology and science classes that would use agricultural examples to illustrate basic concepts. The metallurgical engineers have already done this and it appears to be well received. The counselors as a group were much impressed with this kit and the idea. Our JOURNAL and other similar materials in the high school libraries is another way that could be used to emphasize science in dairying. This was the suggestion of a high school student.

Negative Recruiting Points

There were two negative points these counselors made. The first was the use of career days at the University. One was frank enough to tell me that she had never had anybody attend who was of college caliber. They went just for the ride.

The other negative point, in my mind at least, was the criticism of the vocational agriculture program. They felt it discouraged good students, was dull, and did little to emphasize the use of science in agriculture. At every school I visited that had such a program, the counselors felt this was an area for dunderheads.

Several of the counselors were former teachers of vocational agriculture and had quit because they felt the program was too stifling and the material too trifling. What, then, would your better high school students think of it?

I know experiments in enlarging and enriching the program in vocational agriculture are going on, but still there is little direction in it for college-bound students. A stigma on agriculture is impressed in high school and this carries over to college.

I have left the recruiting of the high school student until last. He is the one we are after, but all these other things influence him directly or indirectly in making a choice, if he makes one, as he leaves home.

Career Days, Field Days, Open House are of not much value in my opinion—an opinion, you will note, supported at the high school level. Support of science fair projects and this type of meeting should be of more value. This is quite a successful tool in North Caro-
I understand. It has an impact similar to the kit idea for the high schools.

Use Personal Contact

But best of all recruitment of high school students is done by personal contact. Extension specialists and resident staff alike should be willing to follow up on the trails of good students. This is expensive and hard recruitment, but I think most effective. Industry can help by locating boys in their areas, then talk to the parents and give them worthwhile jobs.

We must make the prospective student aware we exist. I think that "image program" discussed here has at least one definite value. It brings our name before the public. People will know we exist as a career opportunity.

It isn't very flattering, I know, to realize that the public is not conscious of our existence. John Q. Public doesn't realize he is spending 2% less of his income for better food now than he was 20 years ago. He doesn't realize why this is possible. Until we let him and his son know of the opportunities in dairy science and agriculture, we are not going to get top-quality students.

Let's talk about our importance. Let people know we have a hungry world to feed. Let people know the progress we are making. Let people know how our efficiency has improved. Let people know the quality of our courses. Let people become aware of us. Get publicity-conscious. Other professions are.

Biological Science for Undergraduates in the Animal Sciences

KEITH HUSTON
Department of Dairy Science, Kansas State University, Manhattan

My purpose is to present a report of the Animal Science Action Committee, one of seven committees (Agricultural Education, Animal Science, Bioengineering, Food Science, Natural Resources, Plant and Soil Science, and Social Science) organized by the Panel on Preprofessional Training for the Agricultural Sciences of the Commission on Undergraduate Education in the Biological Sciences (CUEBS) and the Commission on Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (CEANAR). These seven committees are to prepare reports on the needs of undergraduates in their areas for biological science and related physical sciences and mathematics. From the reports, a general report will be prepared that presumably represents all agriculture. For those not familiar with the two sponsoring commissions, they both receive financial support from the National Science Foundation. Both were created to provoke discussion of education in their respective fields. The leadership for their activities is taken by paid employees who are doing an effective job.

Committee Composition

Members of the Animal Science committee consisted of two animal husbandmen, one dairy husbandman, two poultry husbandmen, one animal parasitologist, one entomologist, and one biochemist, chosen from across the United States, all from land-grant universities. It is not yet clear whether the committee was to speak for only the animal science students or for a wider group, including entomologists, parasitologists, and preveterinary students.

I shall use the term animal science to identify all students of animal husbandry, dairy husbandry, and poultry husbandry, excluding those whose primary interest is in food sciences and who otherwise might be included in the animal sciences. I used the term husbandry in place of science because it is the term used by the U. S. Office of Education. The committee met twice. A report was prepared that included biological science course recommendations which have general approval of the committee; it also included some statements concerning the philosophy of education of animal science students which are unacceptable to me. We are trying to resolve these differences now. Since there are no disagreements about the recommendations concerning biological science courses, I shall present them. However, before doing so, and especially since they require only a few minutes, I shall present some background information that may give you a better perspective of the committee's and my activities. I have been enjoined by Dr. P. L. Kelly to speak candidly about this subject.

My own experience with course and curriculum activities is limited to one university where I have served, or am serving, both as a member and as chairman, of all major committees con-