

## AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL • THESSALONICA, GREECE

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*News-Letter*

## SPREADING "KNOW-HOW" THROUGH COMMUNITY LEADERS

Between July 1, 1951 and the end of April this year, nineteen Short Courses were held at the American Farm School, attended by 153 girls and women and 621 boys and men - a total of 774. They came from 240 towns and villages, from 26 out of the 51 prefectures in Greece. The statistics are dry, but the human story behind them is exciting.

Black-frocked priests: Imagine those 80 village priests, in black gowns and long beards, who came for two weeks to learn something about new ways of farming. And imagine the influence each can have when he applies the things he has learned to his own farm, and encourages his parishioners to follow his example!

Family cooks: Or picture the young women who took a Short Course in meat preservation, each returning to her village with a can of pork to demonstrate what she had learned. That can of pork could cause quite an excitement in a village where there was no refrigeration and where, when a pig was killed, it had to be eaten immediately. A lot of canning has now been going on, and many pounds have been saved from spoiling. The women who took the course have been teaching others, and when Mrs. House visited one class after a snow storm, she found it full of men! The women, it was explained, didn't have proper shoes, and so had sent their husbands.

Trained farmers: Then there were the courses for our School graduates, to enlist their help in the "productivity drive." Lack of good seed has been one cause of low production; those taking this course agreed to help carry out a program of seed development initiated by the Plant Breeding Institute. Some men planted new varieties of cotton; others maintained hybrid corn plots, and one

who did so was able to sell 80 kilos of improved seed last fall. This graduate, Michael Spyropoulos, has helped the Agricultural Extension agent in his area to start a night school, and because he has contributed so much to community improvement, the Salonica Rotary Club has given him an award "for special merit."

Extension agents: The Extension Service is new in Greece. When the agents were appointed, the American Mission provided jeeps so they could get around to the villages. But few Greeks can drive an automobile, and garages do not exist where these agents would be. Government officials requested the School to train the agents, who now can run the cars, get the best possible mileage from them and make necessary repairs.

Beekeepers and agriculturists: Probably more people in Greece keep bees than drive automobiles; but their methods are antiquated. To promote the production of more honey, which will add substantially to the meagre income of farmers in the mountainous regions, courses were given for beekeepers and Government agriculturists, with special instruction in queen rearing and combatting bee diseases. By applying the new techniques, production per beehive can be increased up to 500%.

Builders - of youth and other things: Courses to develop farm youth activities brought 69 Boy Scout leaders and 17 Girl Scout leaders to the School; the intricacies of tractors "and other earth-moving equipment" were explained to 50 men from northern Greece; and one course was devoted to Farm Structures and Fixtures - "how to do your own building."

These Short Courses were carried out by the School with help received from the U.S. Government's "Point 4" program.



## GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

It is often said that the American Farm School can find a use for anything-**ANYTHING**. The all-inclusive nature of its needs and activities is illustrated by two gifts gratefully received this spring - five goats and a grand piano.

The goats - two nannies, two kids and a billy - were given through the Rochester Association for the United Nations by a farmer who bred them. In time they should improve the breed raised near Salonica. Mrs. House reported their safe arrival: "The nannies, with their kids, are quiet and rather indifferent to affection, but the old billy, homely as a hedge fence, I find most appealing. My, but he's smelly! They say the better the breed, the more smelly the billy; and if that's true, this one must be **SUPER!**"

The saga of the piano began last fall when a correspondent for the Boston Herald visited the School, observed a need, and wrote a letter which his paper published: "The school's piano has just worn out. Uncle Charlie, certainly no musician, has had to borrow an accordion and play it as an accompaniment for the hymns. Can't some Bostonian send him a piano, any kind of a piano that will play?" The New England Conservatory of Music responded handsomely with a beautiful Steinway grand, which will delight many people for years to come.

A third gift "in kind" resulted from Bruce and Tad Lansdale's appearance over radio and TV in NBC's program "Welcome Travelers." A "Milk-Master" milking machine will enable the School to function more economically during the months when the boys are not there to help with the milking.

## AMERICAN VISITORS

More than 250 American sailors have toured the School this winter when their ships were at Salonica. Many were from farming areas in the U.S., glad to see a farm again and talk about their farms at home. Mr. House conducted an Easter sunrise service on board the S.S. MIDWAY.

## EXHIBIT OF FARM PRODUCE

An interesting and instructive project was sponsored by the School's Agricultural Committee, composed of boys. Before the students went home for the Christmas holidays, those who could were asked to bring back something from their farms for an exhibit. As a result, 100 boys exhibited 32 kinds of winter farm products.

Most striking were a bunch of bananas from Crete, and ears of corn "as big and fine as our Missouri farmers raise."

## CAN YOU SPARE A BALL?

Recreation and out-of-school occupation for the young people is one of the urgent needs in the villages. Last year Theo Litsas of the staff spent 6 months in the U.S. gathering ideas which he has since been putting to work in Greece.

He has organized the free time of our boys as a model for village youth clubs, and has put on demonstrations for the University of Salonica, the Extension Service, and a number of village communities. So far he has carried out some 60 programs of various kinds.

In March Mrs. House wrote: "Theo is off on a tour to Kastoria, in the mountains towards Albania, to give a course in recreation to some extension workers. He'll demonstrate games that can be made in the villages and games without equipment. He took about 20 home-made games with him - made of boards, paddles, tin cans nailed to sticks, the only boughten things being some used tennis balls. The school carpenter worked on the games but the boys helped, and Theo had the boards painted green, yellow and red so they looked most attractive."

They could use LOTS of the used tennis balls - and Mr. House as well as Mr. Litsas could find a use for paint!

But of course the most urgent need of the School is always cash to pay the teachers and to buy supplies that are essential for the training of the boys.