

TAMPA IDFA LABOR PROGRAM

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Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a distinct pleasure to have this opportunity to speak before you on this vital subject.

I have a deep and involved concern for what I consider the number one pressing problem of the dairy industry, Labor!

Before I get involved in the subject to which I have been assigned, I would like to tell you a little about our cooperative and how we got involved in the labor program.

Our leadership some time ago decided that a cooperative such as ours should do more than just involve itself in the field of marketing, never forgetting, however, that marketing is the most important of all services that a dairy cooperative can perform.

We have involved ourselves in the hauling of our entire membership's milk from farm to market. We have assisted our members in the purchase of items such as automobiles, trucks, tractors, tires, appliances, lawn mowers, clothes and any such items where there exists a possible saving through collective purchasing. We have assisted members with their tax and legal questions. We have assisted qualified young men on dairy farms in securing draft deferment. We have provided a complete and sound market for our members. We check butterfat, bacteria and leucocyte and verify weights of all member milk. We provide a qualified, quality control man to assist our members in producing high quality milk. We provide production projections for anticipated market needs to assist the members in planning future production. We balance market needs with market production for optimum utilization. We provide a regular newsletter to keep our members current on market conditions. We represent our membership in all areas of Federal Order hearings and work with legislative and congressional matters.

It should be noted that these services are no more than those offered by other dairy farm cooperatives. However, we do attempt to assist our members in an area normally avoided by cooperatives such as ours and that is in the placement of labor on dairy farms. I, like many others, felt that we would be involving ourselves, too much so, in the actual operation of the dairy farm, and could easily find ourselves as cooperative managers, in a rather precarious position.

Approximately three years ago, the leaders of our cooperative expressed a growing concern related to the securing of adequate and qualified personnel for work on the dairy farms. At this time, I was instructed to investigate any and all areas open to us for possible assistance.

The local County Agent, Mr. Jean Beam and his assistant, Mr. Paul Glasscock informed us that the Manpower Development Training Act offered a program, On-the-Job Training, and that such might be available to us. Much time was spent investigating possible establishment of an actual school for dairy farm labor, but after close investigation, it was determined that the costs of such a school would be prohibitive.

We, with all the assistance that could be found, applied to the Manpower Development Training Act people for a grant to train 100 laborers, on-the-job,

at farms throughout the immediate area. After applying and re-applying several times, we were finally granted a contract, a coordinator was hired, and the first attempt at operating such a program was under way.

The dairy farmers were reimbursed \$15.00 per week for 16 weeks to train the man on-the-job in all areas of dairy farm work.

The intention of the program was that new people would be trained for dairy farm work and existing persons on the farm would be given additional training in order that they might be promoted to higher positions.

In the early day of this program, it was a complete failure. After many flops in one way and then another, we decided that the reason for failure was ours and not that of the program. The coordinator that we hired, the farmers participating in the program, and myself had no confidence in the program. Unfortunately, a lot of us felt that just because the government was involved, that it would be nothing other than a failure. When we finally came to our senses, we changed our attitudes and our coordinator. Mr. Dick Jolly, who is now with the Dairy Division of the State Department of Agriculture, was hired and the program became a success. Immediately after the conclusion of the original program, which lasted a total of one year, we applied for another. This program was harder to secure than the original due to the poor performance of the original program.

After several months of waiting, we were finally awarded a trial program to train 50 laborers during a six month period of time. Mr. Ken Crothers, who was already with our staff, was hired as the coordinator to manage this program. The program was an even greater success than anyone predicted. We employed and placed on the program 67 different people and the fully allotted 50 trainees completed the course.

The majority of these trainees are still on local dairy farms. All were added laborers to the total work force and for the immediate moment helped eliminate the critical labor shortage. This pleasant experience of having relief from labor problems was but for a short period of time.

Upon the conclusion of this, we immediately applied to the Manpower Development Training Act people for another On-The-Job Training Program and were informed that such was no longer available.

After much discussion with local officials of the labor department, we learned that we might qualify for a contract with the JOBS program, and after much investigation, we decided to present a bid application for such a program.

The new program is referred to as JOBS (Job Opportunity Business Sector). An important thing to understand about this program is that it was designed by the National Alliance of Businessmen in cooperation with the Federal Government for the purpose of assisting the hard core unemployable persons of our society.

Many of the hard core disadvantaged persons cannot write their name other than with an "X", read a simple sign, such as in or out, ride a bus because of the inability to read where it is going. Only one in five owns a clock and knows how to use it, very few have a social security card and only a few have ever been counted in a census or registered to vote.

As has been pointed out by leading business men having involved themselves in this program, these people do want to work, and, if given

assistance, many will become worthwhile tax paying, instead of tax receiving, members of our society. This type of person needs encouragement, motivation, stimulation and incentive to overcome his fear of constant hostility and failure.

To completely understand what I am trying to say, I would like to quote from a speech of Mr. V. E. Boyd, President of Chrysler Corporation. "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life."

As a point of interest, following is the criteria for individuals eligible to participate as employee trainees: poor persons who do not have suitable employment and who are either (1) school drop-outs (2) under 22 years of age (3) 45 years of age or over (4) handicapped, or (5) subject to special obstacles of employment.

If you look closely at what I have just described, you will find that our industry, more than any other, lends itself well to the absorption of this type of person.

The JOBS program is for specific metropolitan areas, referred to as S.M.S.A. (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas). Originally, the program was available in only 50 metropolitan areas of the United States, and later it was extended to 125 and finally, through the new MA-5 contract, to 250 areas.

Many of our members were located in areas outside these specific metropolitan areas. We requested and were granted permission to place individuals on farms in suburban areas provided the recruitment of trainees was from the qualified S.M.S.A. area.

Contracts are awarded to individuals, partnerships, corporations, and consortia. We are a consortium, for the purpose of performing (1) on-the-job training for specified details related to performing the actual job and training for possible upward mobility (2) orientation and counseling for the purpose of assisting the individual to understand his job, his employer, his responsibilities and his opportunity for a better way of life. This includes counselling in the area of personal problems such as, financial and hygiene. (3) Basic education is to be offered to an extent where the individual can perform his job and have an opportunity for advancement. This is a must in all JOBS programs. (4) Supportive services must be performed for the purpose of working with the owner or manager of the business to assure a complete involvement in the program and assistance to the trainee.

This type of program is a great deal different, compared to ones previously discussed, in that it includes a total involvement on the part of the consortium bidder (the association) and the consortium participant (the dairy farmer) to see that the program is a success. In other words, retention of the trainee for a complete working year becomes a financial advantage. The participant and the bidder are reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing training services to the trainee at a rate of 1/260th of the total allocated amount for each day the trainee remains on the job.

After several submittals of application for this program, it was finally approved April 1, 1969, and we received our grant which is referred to as MA-4 contract. It should be noted that we are the first cooperative of our type to be awarded such a contract.

Our contract is for \$226,000 to be used over a two year period to train 100 farm hand laborers, 2 dairy testers and 6 trailer truck drivers. This is broken down in the following manner: for each farm hand laborer trainee, the farmer will be reimbursed \$544 for on-the-job training, \$160 for damage to cows and \$181 for waste and loss of milk. For time that the trainee spends away from his job attending orientation, counseling, and basic education classes, the farmer will be reimbursed at the minimum wage rate.

For the dairy tester, the consortium participant will be reimbursed \$1435 for on-the-job training and \$155 for breakage and waste as well as reimbursed for actual time spent by the trainee in classrooms away from his job.

The consortium participant will be reimbursed for the trailer truck driver in the same manner as the others, except at a rate of \$700 for on-the-job training and \$430 for excessive damage to truck, trailer and equipment. Likewise, the participant will be reimbursed for time spent by the trainee away from his job attending classes.

The consortium bidder (the association) is reimbursed for all expenses incidental to the program such as, salaries for the (1) administrator (2) coordinator (3) secretary (4) bookkeeper (5) counsellors (6) medical and dental expenses, and (7) transportation.

Involvement on our part in programs of this type, has helped us become acquainted with employment agencies that we did not formerly know existed. Each of the following agencies assist us in securing labor, (1) Youth Opportunity Center (2) Neighborhood Youth Corps (3) Farm Labor office (they advertise for labor on the radio at no cost to us) (4) Florida State Employment office, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Bradenton and Sarasota (5) Neighborhood Service Center (6) Travelers Aid (7) Salvation Army and (8) Employment Program Concentrated. With all this assistance we have been able to do a pretty good job of balancing labor requirements with labor needs.

A MA-4 contract such as ours is no longer available and has been replaced with a MA-5 contract. The MA-5 contracts are said to be much simpler, but will not be available for a couple of months.

Should you be interested in more information regarding these contracts, please contact your local U. S. Department of Labor office. They will give you any assistance needed.

Our association harbors no false illusion that this or any other program is going to solve all of our labor problems. Involvement on our part in such a program is to first, help ourselves solve our present labor problems and second, to place the unemployable in positions where they become worthwhile working citizens of our society.

To involve ourselves in such programs, it becomes our responsibility to do everything in our power to make them work. We have called on and expressed to our entire membership that they cannot afford to condemn, criticize and in general, ridicule this or any other program if they want to solve their number one problem. Some have expressed they do not wish to be bothered with such as this. If we all assume this type of an attitude, how can we expect to succeed?

We have established as our goal, to HIRE, TRAIN and RETAIN dairy farm labor.

Having involved ourselves with programs of this type, there are several things we think we have learned. One is that there exists at most farms poor communications between the employee and the employer. The dairymen or managers need to become more acquainted with the employee, speak and talk to him regularly, inquire on occasion as to his problems, encourage and stimulate him, explain why and how he can do a better job, in other words, become interested in the employee and he will become interested in his work.

Far too many dairymen have an attitude that the employee is just another tool and not a human being. Where an attitude such as this exists, you will find a constant existence of labor problems. Employees working under conditions of this type immediately develop an "irresponsible, I don't care" attitude and you know what an attitude of this type can cost the dairymen. Unfortunately, laborers working under conditions of this type know that they can find another job just a short distance away.

Recently, I questioned a person that returned to our office seeking re-employment at another farm. I was personally interested in this man because I had originally placed him on his first job. He expressed to me things hard to believe about the working conditions at the farm where I had placed him. He said he had worked for seven weeks without a day off, from a minimum of 10 hours to a maximum of 14 hours per day. This created a problem in that one of his children required medical treatment on a regular basis and he was unable to take the child to the doctor. In all the time he worked at the farm, the owner spoke to him only twice and both times it was to chew him out for doing something wrong.

I admit that this man could possibly be exaggerating to me about these events, but for him to tell me this, I would think, surely he would tell others, which in turn would drive people away from seeking employment within the dairy industry.

It is a fact that among industries, where jobs are available, ours is less desired.

Living and working conditions on some farms are excellent, but far too many have conditions that are not even equal to those of peasants. We must find a way of changing our image if we are to solve any part of our labor problems. More money is not the answer for I have seen where some dairy farmers pay as much as \$140 per week plus a home and many fringe benefits.

We propose to start seminars among our dairymen for the purpose of exchanging ideas on how to do a better job of managing our labor.

In this training program, we have also learned that something should be done to screen potential employees with the thought of eliminating the undesirable from employment within our industry. We have established a focal point (our office through the coordinator) for the hiring of dairy employees and maintain a record of how he has performed on the job.

We have learned that a sincere, hard working coordinator is of greatest importance, otherwise success is unattainable.

It is my opinion, that the industry has done an outstanding job in the field of dairy production. The Universities, the County Agents, the Department of Agriculture, the feed and drug companies have done an excellent job in teaching us how to dairy, but none that I personally am aware of has bothered to teach us good labor management practices.

I personally feel much could be done in this area and that a great service would be performed for the dairy industry if we could do a thorough job of training our farmers to be better personnel managers.

I would like to challenge this great university, the dairy farm cooperatives, and the dairymen of Florida themselves, to seek methods and ways of improving our ability in the field of labor management and the image that is our stigma as to working conditions on farms. Should we fail to do this, you can expect an even greater labor crisis in the very near future.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with this thought, "the success and failure of any industry lies within its manpower and that the most magnificent, awesome and richest thing about this great country of ours, is its People."