

Franklin County Extension Meeting

Farmers Need Aggressive Product Marketing To Survive

BY
BONNIE HELLM BRECHBILL
 Franklin Co. Correspondent
KAUFFMAN STATION —
 "Thirty-two peaks in Colorado are higher than Pike's Peak. Name one," Walt Buescher, nationally-known humorist and agri-speaker, challenged his audience. "Zebulon Pike told people about his peak. You gotta tell people! If you don't sell your product, who will? Uncle

Sam? Do you really want the guy who runs the Post Office to do your advertising?"

Buescher not only encouraged farmers to aggressively sell their commodities, but also to keep their production up. The world market may be highly competitive, but there are thousands of people being born every day, "and they all get into the habit of eating quite early in life."

The occasion for Buescher's remarks was the 69th Annual Meeting of the Franklin County Extension Association, held Jan. 26, at Kauffman's Community Center.

J. Fred Rock, Franklin County Commissioner spoke on Franklin County's \$19 million budget, \$100,000 of which is earmarked for Extension use. "Agriculture is important in Franklin County," Rock said.

Retiring from the Extension's Board of Directors after serving six years were Walter Grove, Jack Diehl, Robert Meyers Jr. and Fannie Harbaugh.

John Shearer, county extension director, thanked the 350 people in attendance for their presence despite the postponement from Friday evening, and added that their interest is important to the type of Extension service he and the other staff can develop. "It's been a good year in Extension," he stated. Over 30 percent of the Extension staff's time was devoted to agriculture and natural resources, Shearer reported. Volunteers gave over 8,000 hours to Extension programs last year.

Newly elected to the Extension's board of directors were Jeffrey Grove, to represent Southampton

Township; Raymond M. Bricker, Saint Thomas Township; and Gerald J. Reichard, Washington Township. Incumbents Jeffrey Funk, Washington Township and Joe Middour, Quincy Township, were re-elected to another term.

A message for the farm community was woven into Buescher's jokes and visual presentation.

The United States tries and fails to get American farmers to raise less food, and the Soviet Union tries and fails to get Russian farmers to raise more food, he observed, calling the PIK program a "recycling program."

"Four presidents in a row have said no to selling food to Russia. We scared 'em real good, didn't we? They got out of Afghanistan and Eastern Europe real fast, didn't they?" he said. "The American farmers are the ones who got punished, not Russia." He said that he now sees the same thing happening with South Africa.

"Americans aren't eating as much bread, potatoes, sugar, beef, pork and eggs as they used to — and when you multiply that by 228 million people, that makes quite a difference to the farmer."

Although Americans spend only 14 percent of their disposable income on food — less than any other

nation — Buescher cited price as one reason for the drop in consumption. He explained his statement by saying that the housewife buys furniture only twice in her life — when she gets married and when the kids leave home — and she doesn't remember how much it cost the first time. But she goes to the grocery store every week, and she notices when things go up a few cents.

Although price is a factor in decreased consumption, Buescher says the biggest culprit for farmer's loss of domestic market is the advice of "nutrition experts."

"A lot of businesses guess wrong on inventory," he said. "And when they do, they have a sale. But the political wave, for the last 50 years, has told farmers to cut back. Twenty-five percent of the jobs in America are related to agriculture. If farmers cut back, 5 million jobs could be cut also. Every business would be affected if agriculture, the nation's largest business, cut back," he declared.

While he praised dairy farmers for their advertising campaigns and encouraged them to continue pushing their product, he also chided them.

"You dairymen have the best drink at the best price and soda is outselling you. Why, when you read the ingredients on a can of soda, you don't know whether to put it in your stomach or your radiator. And they charge more for this stuff than for milk."

"Orange farmers tackled this job many years ago. When I was a boy, I got an orange once a year — in church on Christmas Eve. Then the California orange growers got together and formed Sunkist. Now you can buy oranges 364 days a year — the only day you can't get them now is Christmas — because the stores are closed."

After reviewing the many everyday items, such as nylon stockings and aerosol cans, that have been invented since the Depression, he said, "We came out of the depths then, and we can do it again."



Directors elected to the Franklin County Extension board of directors include, from left, Raymond Bricker, Gerald Reichard, Jeff Grove and Joe Middour.

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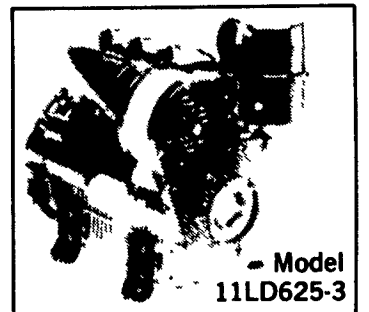
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