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# The Farm Home of the Future

Ola Powell Malcolm



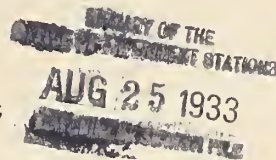
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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THE FARM HOME OF THE FUTURE\*

By  
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Senior Home Economist



If I should tell you all that I know about the subject of the farm home of the future it would consume considerably less time than has been assigned for this talk. All in the world I can do is to express some opinions, mine and others, interspersed with hopes and a few fears, and make an effort to balance them.

You will agree with me that right now amid confusion and uncertainties in the business of farming it may not seem wise to make forecasts and predictions of what the future will bring, although we are all anticipating and contemplating and even concentrating on our hopes for the future. Many of us, right in this room, have farm homes and farm families very deeply associated with these hopes. What will the farm home of the future be? This is a question we have asked ourselves over and over again, in an effort to find an answer that will be satisfying and at the same time will coincide with views that some of our best thinkers are holding. Because of the human relationship, agriculture often shows a surprising capacity in meeting apparently impossible situations. We have become conscious of the fact that "the matter of paramount importance in the world is the adjustment of the home", and it is also realized that "the great force that readjusts the world originates in the home."

The views, predictions, and forecasts which I will present are based upon the observations made and the experiences I have had during this past panic. And we are hoping that it is truly past, even though there may seem to be a little doubt, as there was with an old negro woman, who went to the bank to draw out her money. The banker cashed her check and she stood by the window looking at her cash, counting it over and over. The banker said, "Aunty, what's the matter, isn't it all there?" "Yes sir! but it gess is." If the panic is past, it "gess is."

I feel more sure of this and more confident of what the future holds for the farm home since my contact with demonstrators, county home demonstration agents, and the various staff members I have talked with in the last 10 days. There is a real future for the farm home and the farm family. The outlook is hopeful, if what has been accomplished this past year can, even in a measure, indicate what may be expected next year and the next and the next. The spirit and zeal with which farm people are now working will result in improved farm homes, a higher standard of living, and a happier, more-cultured citizenship.

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DISTRIBUTION: A copy of this circular has been sent to each State extension director, State and assistant State home demonstration leader, and to each agricultural-college library and experiment-station library.

Since the farm home reflects the standards and the ideals of the people who live on the farm, and we know it is the direct result of the education for farming and for home making which the family have received, we can see the future of the farm family and of the farm home in the balance. And we realize that the march will be uphill and steady, just to the extent to which agricultural leadership grips the hearts, the minds, and the imagination of farm people. Their course will depend largely on what this grip carries with it, or what agricultural leadership has to offer. With the realization always that the individual develops best by doing things for himself under wise guidance and leadership rather than by having too much done for him, I agree with what President Smith said the first day of the meeting - Farming groups must possess not only the knowledge of what should be done to bring about necessary changes and readjustments in agriculture, but they must be inspired in holding up their aims and purposes. Emphasis must be placed on the idealistic; in other words, we need to have the whole plan dramatized through to the ultimate goals to keep up the zeal and enthusiasm that will move the procession onward and upward.

In thinking of the farm homes of the future, consideration must be given to those people who are moving to the farms at this time. You are aware that 207,000 more people moved from city to country in 1931, than from farm to city. In 1930 the balance to the farm was 39,000. For the 7 years preceding 1930, the trend was toward the city. The point of view of the newly made farmers or returned farmers, as well as of farmers of old standing, must be changed to the belief that farming is not a means of living but a mode of living. Individual aid must be given to these new families to help them to realize and appreciate the opportunities for making a living which farming offers. Few businesses now exist in which the family as a whole may participate; so the farm thus occupies a unique place in family life. "In towns, more than half of the population does nothing toward earning support if we count all the men, women, and children who could do something. The half-grown boys and girls could make a garden and raise the fruit and poultry to support the family if they would. It might brown their skins and soil their hands, but it would help them to do something and to know something. It would aid the family pocketbook and help the family character."

The extension forces are still working to carry out the ideals presented by Dr. S. A. Knapp in the beginning of demonstration work, as is so clearly shown by the following quotation: "We try to teach the farmer greater thrift, to raise his own provisions, to can his vegetables, so that he may have them the year round that he must put this money into a better home, and so percolating and drifting through his home there will be a broadening element; and there will be a gradual uplift of conditions, and as there is an uplift and improvement of conditions, the men themselves will become a little broader and a little straighter and a little firmer, until by and by this home society where he must live, this rural society, will be a great dominating force in the land, and we shall become a pattern, not only to our own country, but to all countries, showing how a great and free people were able to readjust their conditions."

The manner and extent to which farmers and farm women are making their home and farms self-sustaining is an important and determining factor in the improvement and advancement of conditions in the country. This is the basis upon which special help and instructions must be furnished to the thousands of newcomers to the rural sections, if they are to survive and not to become a liability to farming folk. Farming groups are realizing what this new situation may bring, and during the

past year have made plans to reach others, and to help to spread the influence of the demonstration work which has been of inestimable value for many years, but more so during these years of depression.

Some of the criticisms may have been deserved, that home demonstration agents for several years continue to work with the same group of women, in clubs, that they meet regularly, but now, in times like these, it has been convincingly shown that the women who have received this careful training and have years of experience back of them are the best-qualified women to aid the agents and the home demonstration councils, not only in making plans, but in carrying out plans for extending home demonstration work to the farm families throughout the counties. In many hundreds of counties in several States, these women, as demonstrators or leaders through accomplishment, have made it possible for from 85 to 90 percent of the farm families in counties employing agents to have home demonstration assistance.

In a great many places where community canning kitchens were installed and equipped by public-spirited leaders of business and manufacturing enterprises, for the benefit of the unemployed and others in villages and towns, these plants were operated under the supervision of women trained by the county home demonstration agents and employed by the plant management. Hundreds of thousands of containers of fruits, vegetables, and meats were canned in such community canning plants. Canning on shares was another way farm women earned money to pay for their equipment and at the same time furnished means for teaching other women the principles and method of canning. For example, in one county alone, 35,000 cans were filled on the share basis. Women who did not have money for cans, filled them for people who would buy cans on a 50-50 basis. This plan meant something to eat, whereas these women could not otherwise have canned anything.

Why so much about canning and food preservation work, you ask, in a talk about the farm home of the future? Well, production, conservation, and utilization of food are essential parts of the plan of making a living, of attaining and maintaining the standards of living in the farm home, of protecting the family health, and of making it possible for more families who love the country to remain on the farm. The story of Mrs. Trant's pantry illustrates this point well.

When Mrs. P.K. Trant heard that she was appointed pantry demonstrator of the Prospect Club, she made her plans to do the work well, and filled out her budget as it should be for a family of four. She planted her garden to fill this need and waited. String-bean time came. She had no canner or sealer, because she had never canned these nonacid vegetables before; but now her budget called for them, and she wanted to get them. She went to a hardware store and demanded a cooker and sealer, promising to pay something each month if her husband got work, and if not, the store would just have to wait until she could pay. She got the cooker and sealer. Then came the satisfaction which comes of accomplishment. Mr. Trant and the two boys, 8 and 12 years, helped. It was not long until some place had to be provided for storage. The house was too small to allow for building a place for storage, and there was no back porch. A 2-room "rent house" in the field was torn down and moved into the back yard, and a canning and storage room made. Across the southeast end of this room Mr. Trant showed his carpenter's skill in the 75 feet of shelving built there, and especially in the eight bins made for the storage of dried products below the shelving.

Mrs. Trant had no fruit, her tomato crop was short, and there was no salmon. All these things were called for in her budget as very essential and in definite quantities. To get them and other products such as honey, sirup, whole-wheat flour, etc., suggested for variety, she canned her surplus, exchanged or sold it and bought these essential items. She declared, "It's lots of fun, this bartering off what I have and do not need to someone else for what I want."

Mrs. Trant has canned 974 quarts of food in 2,359 containers. Of this amount she has canned 160 quarts of 10 varieties of leafy vegetables, 69 quarts of starchy vegetables, 80 quarts of others, 90 quarts of tomatoes, 150 quarts of fruit and fruit juices, 85 quarts of pickles and relishes, 80 quarts of preserves and jellies, 201 containers of meat, 59 quarts of miscellaneous canned products such as soup, hominy, peanut butter, molasses, and honey, with a total value of \$219.30. Other stored products including potatoes, dried peas and beans, etc., had a value of \$63.40, making a total value of all food stored for 1932 of \$282.70.

Mrs. Trant says, "One of the most interesting things about my canning this year has been teaching others to can by using my steam pressure cooker and sealer. I have taught 19 women to use the cooker and sealer. Of the 2,359 containers of food I have canned, 971 were for other people. I have had pleasure in exchanging things I raised for things I did not raise. I have in my pantry 104 varieties of good things to eat. I have kept my grocery bill down to the small amount of \$31.95 since January 1, 1932. The smallest amount for any one month was 84 cents; the largest, \$5.64, came early in the year before I had started on my program. Mrs. Trant said, "Wait until next year. These bills just won't be anything." The Trant family were able to show in their achievement program that sales had been made from pantry products that completely paid for the expense of the pantry.

The Trant's have served fresh from their garden each month the following number of vegetables: January, 5; February, 5; March, 8; April, 11; May, 15; June, 20; July, 14; August, 6; September, 8; October, 10; November, 12.

Mrs. Trant has sold 130 containers of food for \$38.79; 610 dozen eggs for \$61, and the family sells cream and butter which has amounted to \$131.40 since January 1, making a total of \$231.19.

Mr. Trant declared, "This has been the happiest year of our married life." The results in happy families and family relationships is worth far more than all the improvements made in the homes and the total value of the supplies stored.

Through doing for her own family and other families of the community, the farm woman has won her place in the sun. Because of this service, and equipped as she is with inspiration and information, coupled with a desire to help others, progress in increasing the number of better homes on better farms will continue. We not only have the farm folks with their spirit and soul in the work that is needed, and agricultural and home economics leaders with a vision of ways and means of obtaining the desired goal in our country homes, but we have thousands of country homes which stand as demonstrations and object lessons. If one ever doubts the interest of folks in visiting and studying demonstrations, some of that doubt may be dispelled when I tell you that in the case of Mrs. Trant's pantry alone, there have been more than 500 visitors - more than 500 people - who have come from her own community - from all parts of Brazos County, and from



many adjoining counties, yes, and from Washington and Hawaii, to hear and to see, and to go home wanting to do as well or better. Such results are significant and of great value, because they strengthen the economic position of agriculture.

As our roads have changed from cow trails to ox roads, to wagons, to buggies, to the graded road on to the macadamized road, and finally to the long, white, smooth stretch of pavement; so has home demonstration work developed from the canning of tomatoes, to well-planned, well-filled, and well-organized pantries; to well-selected and constructed family wardrobes, with adequate storage and closet space; to yards planned and planted; to comfortable and inviting homes, with interested and growing individuals living within. On these new highways via successful demonstrations, increasing numbers of farm families are traveling farther and farther up the roads leading to rural richness.

A home-improvement story will help here to illustrate in part, I believe, the joys which come from obtaining some of this rural richness with no cost except labor and love.

Mrs. McLaurin, a yard demonstrator, described how she has beautified her yard without cost. She said, "Though we have made no great showing in the yard this year, I want to state some of the things accomplished. The farm is an old, settled place, being one of the oldest in Lynn County, and rather sandy and hard to fill in and fix up. The first thing we did in the front of the house was to fill in an old cistern or well and level up the front yard. About the first of last February we started on plans which were drawn by our county home demonstration agent. These plans have been of much help to us. There was a concrete walk from the front doorstep to the front-yard gate. The yard was all leveled and filled in, so the next thing we did was to build a cobblestone walk from the back doorstep to the cistern and smokehouse and on to the back gate. The cistern is located between the back door and the smokehouse, so the walk was built all around the cistern. In February our home demonstration agent gave us instruction for placing our foundation plantings - that's half of it. The next thing to get started was a lawn. We had no grass and could not buy any. One of my neighbors gave me a handful of Bermuda grass. I set this out between the stones of my cobblestone walk, and by June there was enough grass to start the north half of the yard. This I did, and this year (1933) there will be plenty of grass to plant all the yard. I want to say, too, that my stones for my walk came from an old cement tank which was in the field and was an eyesore there. We tore this tank up and broke the cement into large-sized stones, irregular in shape and smooth on top. They are excellent for a walk. In all our plantings we planted

	<u>Planted</u>	<u>Living</u>
Trees.....	30	21
Foundation shrubs.....	16	16
Shrubs for border plants.....	40	35
Native shrub plants.....	3	3
Cutting beds.....	25	<u>25</u>
		100

Total cost NOT ONE PENNY

"One can do much with so little if one will only try. "You can do anything if you want to badly enough!, is what our agent tells us, and at first I doubted it, but now I believe it, because our yard hasn't cost us a penny in cash and we are anxious to see the snow melt so that we can get started digging our flower beds and cultivating our shrubs."

It seems ever to be true "what a man hears he may doubt, what he sees he may also doubt, but what he himself does, he cannot doubt." What this kind of improvement and beautification work has meant to farm life is found in sentences from women themselves. One woman told me "Our yard is a constant joy to our family and a pride to my husband." Another says, "My yard has been a source of pleasure to me and my family. We love to watch it grow, and it seems now that we have just a little more in common than before we started our yard improvement." Home demonstration agents realize more than ever before that "their value lies not in what they can do, but in what they can get others to do."

More interest has been shown in improving and beautifying homes during these years of depression than during more prosperous times. I wish that I might show three pictures I have of a tiny shack/<sup>in Arkansas</sup> a square, box-shaped, drab frame house before improvement - where a little mother lived who was doing the best she could with what she had. When her son, who was a stonemason, lost his job and had to come home, they gathered together enough stones from the fields and woods to veneer the whole house. A huge stone chimney with a big open fireplace in the living room was added. The house sits back from the highway with only the chimney tops showing above the trees which surround it. The work done on this house and the planting about it were a labor of love, and the home is more dear to them than ever before. Now this little mother and her son are enjoying one of the greatest satisfactions of their lives because of their accomplishment. They have built a place of beauty and joy forever, and they are both not as sorry as they might have been for this period of unemployment and scarcity of money.

These country homes of the future will not be like the homes of our grandmothers. Farm homes are keeping pace with all sorts of improvements. The use of labor-saving devices and of power for small machinery, transportation facilities and good roads make it possible to do more on farms, not only in becoming self-sustaining, but in making it possible to sell the surplus. All these developments affect the whole situation. During this past year farm women and girls have marketed more home produce and home-manufactured products than ever before. Yesterday I had this statement from North Carolina: 42 home demonstration markets were operated during 1932 in 36 counties. The total value of farm-home products sold through home demonstration agencies, on markets, to hotels, individuals, via parcel post, and in carload shipments amounted to \$324,918.85 in this one State. Similar marketing of farm-home products by women and girls is being carried on in a number of States. The fact that the farm offers opportunity to the family for participation in useful pursuits is given recognition in the extension plans of work. You will recall that Dr. S. A. Knapp said, "Every member of the farm family should contribute to the family's support." When this is done the 15 and 16 year old country girls can continue to live at home and make some money, and will not have to seek employment in towns. It is recognized that the farm home offers opportunity for the employment and efforts of the family as a whole.

Many farm women have managed, without a nickel of money, to buy equipment needed. Last week I learned that 16,000 steam-pressure canners and cookers and 10,000 tin-can sealers were purchased by farm women last year in Texas, because they realized the value of such devices in properly and efficiently doing their

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jobs as home makers. The installation of these devices represents real progress in improving the home and the equipment.

One hundred million containers of fruits, vegetables, and meats were canned in the State in 1932, as compared with 55 million the previous year. These 100 million containers were put up under modern scientific conditions by thousands of farm women and girls under the guidance of 160 white and negro home demonstration agents in the State.

Utilizing the machinery and science at the same time in such work as the demonstration agents are advancing, is making for greater progress on the farms and in the homes. Best of all we see in the application and practice of scientific truths, that ambition is stimulated and that farm women and girls realize the opportunity for development. "The demonstrator grows faster than the demonstration." Women and girls thus find the golden key that unlocks books, the treasure houses of human wisdom.

Achievement days, pantry-stores week, and special visitation tours planned for many to see in the farm home the excellent accomplishments attained by application of this live-at-home plan have given enthusiasm and information alike to editors, bankers, preachers, business men, commissioners, legislators, and club women in such a way that they never have failed to understand and appreciate the great value of such demonstrations to the individual and to the community. As the editor looks at the well-filled, balanced, and organized pantry and sees the little children of the family about the house, he conceives the great idea, "This farm family will not perish, these children will be properly nourished, and we need to have thousands more just such demonstrations to save the Nation." And he rushes back to his office and writes editorials. Preachers have preached better sermons, business men and legislators have made finer speeches after an inspiring visit to a farm woman's pantry demonstration. City club women have given publicity to and have aided in increasing sales for farm surplus products. Miss Zimmorman, in charge of home demonstration work in Hawaii, bought and took back with her some of Mrs. Trant's standardized products to show to agents and farm women some of the possibilities in the evolution of the demonstration idea and how it seems to unfold.

The pantry stage and the smokehouse naturally lead to preparation, cooking, and serving, and interest is stimulated in learning the better methods and new directions for utilizing all of the many kinds of products in a variety of ways. Canned, dried, cured, and otherwise preserved foods are being made more appetizing, savory, and attractive. Greater pleasure and real comfort are enjoyed by more farm families at more frequent celebrations of family birthdays and holiday dinners, to which neighbors are invited. Entertaining guests, like the job of housekeeping, is the family affair. Such occasions have helped to create a feeling of satisfaction and a proper pride and confidence in the ability of members of the household. The interesting and satisfying combinations of different foods - the fruit sauce with meats, garnishes, relishes, and fresh salads - are now considered of much more importance than just for decoration. More and more farm women and girls are recognizing and appreciating the value of protective foods and greater use is being made of fresh fruits, vegetables, and milk in the daily diet. Organized pantry demonstrations are teaching in a more vital way, not only the great economic value of preventing anemia and pellagra, but the greater importance of keeping members of the farm family in vigorous health.

Dr. Louis Berman in a recent book cites the well-recognized fact that the properly fed children of the postwar generation are healthier, better built, more intelligent, more beautiful, more resistant to disease, and, on the whole, superior specimens of humanity, as compared with their predecessors - and all on account of better feeding. We do believe that stronger, more-vigorous, and more-intelligent farm families are developing through the opportunities they are grasping for self-growth and the visions they are obtaining through better management in the production, conservation, and utilization of the family food and feed supplies.

Thousands of farm women have found their opportunity on this higher plane of development through attaining, as Dr. Knapp suggested, profit, comfort, culture, influence, and power. Those more-vigorous farm people will continue to develop and continue to make farm homes better places in which to live, just to the extent that the resources of the farm home and farm communities are developed.

Basing our predictions for the future on the development of home demonstration work in the past, and particularly on its accomplishments during the last 2 or 3 years, can we not rightfully hope for better farm homes for the future? Can we not hope that all folks, the farm folks especially since we are now thinking of them, have learned a lesson from this depression which will react for their good? Can we not hope that more farm folks will realize that making a living and living a life come first, and when these are taken care of, making money, which is secondary, will take care of itself. If we can hope for these things, then you can see, as I see, the farm home of the future - a home where peace and quiet and happiness reside. Let us hope as we approach the farm home in the future that we shall be able to see a painted house, adequate in size and carefully planned for the convenience of all members of the family, surrounded with trees and shrubs, brought from the woods and fields; out-of-door living rooms, or shady and inviting spots on the well-kept lawn; hidden out buildings, screened with native shrubs and vines; walks and drives conveniently placed. Such improvements resulting from family cooperation, mean much in the hearts and minds of the family - improvements that are dearly associated with all-day trips to the woods, with special holidays and happy associations with neighbors. Inside these farm homes, can we not see pantries well filled, clothes closets, and labor-saving devices for efficient work and to safeguard the woman's strength and health, and other equipment necessary for making the farm a factory for producing its own products? Can we not see wholesome examples of home-made recreation that contribute so much to better family and community growth? Can we not also hope to see books, magazines, pianos, radios, and other things which will make for culture and happiness? In creating such homes we know that there must be growth and development on the part of these farm folks, and Dr. Knapp's saying will always be true. "A country home, be it ever so plain, with a father and mother of sense and gentle culture is nature's university, and is more richly endowed for the training of youth than Yale or Harvard."

Dr. Knapp's philosophy is just as applicable to conditions today as it was when these utterances were made many years ago. We are not viewing this campaign for production and development of farm resources from a national standpoint, but rather as Dr. Knapp said, "We are thinking of the people, of the rose-covered cottage in the country; of the strong, glad father and his contented, cheerful wife; of the whistling boy and the dancing girl, with schoolbooks under

their arms, so that knowledge may soak into them as they go. We are thinking of the orchards and the vineyards; of the flocks and herds; of the waving woods and of the hills carpeted with luxuriant verdure; of the valleys inviting to the golden harvest. What can bring these transformations to the South? - greater earning capacity of the people."

The live-at-home plan is the first step in this direction. "As the influence of this work spreads, increasing numbers of women and girls will add to the comforts of the home, shape its environment into lines of beauty, and increase its attractiveness till the home shall become the greatest magnet of our people, and for once in the history of civilization, we will have a common people thoroughly trained within the lines of their duties; full of the science of how to get a living; refined, courageous, and loyal to government and to God."

