

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE AVOCADO ASSOCIATION

PROFESSOR F. L. GRIFFIN

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to represent the College of Agriculture in your State University. I shall endeavor to tell you very briefly some ways in which the College of Agriculture hopes to be of service to the members of this association.

As many of you know, the work of the College of Agriculture is divided into three great branches: research, teaching and extension. The research, or Experiment Station work is the basis of all the activities of the College of Agriculture. Without the discovery of new knowledge and of more efficient ways of applying old knowledge, teachers and extension workers would soon reach the "bottom of the barrel." The part that the Experiment Station is playing in the development of the avocado industry is well understood and appreciated by some of you who have had occasion to make use of your own Citrus Experiment Station at Riverside.

Teaching, or resident instruction, has to do with the training of young men and women who enroll for the regular four year degree course in Agriculture. It is too long a story to tell here. Suffice it to say that the leaders and investigators of the future are being prepared now in the agricultural colleges and science departments of the universities all over this country. The University of California hopes to maintain the position it has attained in training investigators, leaders and teachers.

To the members of this association, interested as you are in education, I would bespeak the high school as an instrument for your use in developing an increased interest in the avocado industry. At the present time approximately one hundred departments of vocational agriculture have been established in California high schools. We ought to begin in the elementary schools to interest the coming generation in agriculture. Shall we support a vocational department of agriculture in our local high school? Some of you may be called on to answer this question. I am constantly visiting high schools in this state and I am more than pleased with the very excellent work that is being done in agriculture.

As to the extension activities of the University, there are two kinds,—the University Extension service carried on by the University and the Agricultural Extension work carried on within the College of Agriculture. Most of you are familiar with the county agent work. This is the most important kind of extension work that we have under way. Those of you who have to deal with your county farm bureau and who have met Mr. Hodgson know whereof I speak.

Another phase of our extension work, and that is what I desire to emphasize here, is that of correspondence course instruction. It is unfortunate that the great majority of the

people interested in agriculture do not even avail themselves of the short courses in agriculture. Only a very few can take resident instruction.

In order that the College of Agriculture might be of the greatest possible service to the people of the state, Dean Hunt started the correspondence courses soon after assuming his duties in California. He had inaugurated similar work in Ohio State University and at the Pennsylvania State College. The correspondence course work is designed for the man on the land who wishes to pursue systematic instruction. He enrolls for the course of his choice and soon after receives the first two lessons. As soon as he has studied the first lesson and has prepared his answers to the questions that are a part of each lesson, he mails his answers to the University and begins on the second lesson. As soon as the answers to the first lesson are received at Berkeley they are carefully gone over by the correspondence course instructor, points not well understood are explained, the lesson is graded, its receipt recorded, and it is returned. The third lesson is mailed at the same time. Special technical questions are referred to the specialist best able to answer same. This, in brief, is the mechanics of correspondence course study.

A few years ago a correspondence course in Avocado Culture was prepared by Dr. Coil. Up to the present time approximately one hundred people have availed themselves of that course. In eight years over 42,000 people in this and other states have made use of the agricultural correspondence courses. Not all of those who start courses finish them, but a large percentage carry them through to completion. We have hopes of making these courses of the greatest possible service to the people of the state. I know that this work has already helped to get a large number of city people on the land. The courses have also helped many farmers and farmers' wives to increase their income.

When the Avocado Culture course was issued four years ago varieties were recommended that are not recognized now. New facts have been discovered and new varieties have demonstrated their worth; hence it has become necessary to revise the lessons. Some of this work has been too long delayed. The war came on and Dr. Coit was drafted for work in this county and soon after returning to Berkeley he resigned from our Faculty. We lost over a fourth of our staff this last year, including Dr. Condit and Mr. Hodgson. For this reason, it is impossible to get the Avocado and other sub-tropical fruit lessons revised by our own experts in Citriculture. I am glad to report, however, that within the past ten days a way has been opened up whereby we can get our Avocado course brought up-to-date and by the first of the year the latest information will be available, in correspondence lesson form.

Those of you who might be interested in the correspondence course can undertake the Avocado Culture course with the understanding that we are going to give you all the service that can be rendered by the College of Agriculture. We have hopes of so tying up the work of the Department of Agriculture with this Association that we can keep the avocado course up-to-date. I hope that those of you who have taken the course and have found some things that need changing will call them to our attention.

Although it became necessary, beginning July 15th, to charge a fee of two dollars for each correspondence course to cover the cost of paper, materials, labor, etc., we hope

that will be for this fiscal year only. Dean Hunt believes we should give our services to the people of the state.

Mr. President, I want to assure you that the College of Agriculture, insofar as I may speak for the College, hopes to co-operate with this Association and its members in every possible way. There is no other agency in this state that is capable of promoting the avocado industry or the growing of semi-tropical fruits to a greater extent than this organization. We hope to work with you so that our activities will always be of the greatest possible benefit to your members.

PRESIDENT SALLMON FOLLOWING PROF. GRIFFIN

I think on behalf of the association I can assure Professor Griffin of the hearty co-operation of this association, especially in the revision of the course in avocado culture. Some of us have taken that course and found it to be extremely valuable, but we have found also that it is not down to date and now contains some inaccuracies due to the discoveries made in these latter years. We are pledging our full co-operation with Professor Griffin's department to secure a revision of that course at the earliest possible moment.

The next speaker is a man well known in California with long experience in semi-tropical fruits, a man whose voice was heard at our Los Angeles meeting with interest when he spoke to us on The Avocado for the Dooryard. I have never been able to get a copy of that address, but I wish that at some time it might be delivered again. There are many of us who never will be orchardists but who ought to grow the avocado at home, and this was the kind of plea made to us at that time. This man is the author of a book which is on our tables— The Garden Beautiful in California. When he comes to revise that book I hope he will include a chapter on the avocado tree. I don't think anyone has yet done justice to the beauty of the avocado tree. We have heard a great deal said about the fruits and about the merits of the different varieties. Mr. Spinks burned in upon us the desirability of getting the tree first, the right kind of a tree, a strong, sturdy, resistant tree, a well shaped tree, a tree that will produce results. He has said to us in our meetings that the tree is more important than the fruit. But nobody within my hearing has yet raised his voice in praise of the beauty of the avocado tree. We sometimes say it is like the magnolia, and there is something attractive about the magnolia. It is beautiful in a formal way, stately and formal, but the avocado with its rich evergreen leafage and its variety in shape, form and development has something intimate and responsive about it—it becomes friendly to those of us who work with it. I am reminded of those lines of Joyce Kilmer on trees. You will remember he wrote:

I think that I shall never see

A poem as lovely as a tree-

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest

Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day

And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain,

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.