

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH STATION COMMITTEE

For several years, the California Avocado Society has been concerned about the lack of land on which long-range experimental work can be conducted, in behalf of the avocado industry. The Directors have given much thought to the obtaining of a "research station", or large field plot, either by the industry or by the University of California. The substance of the Society's more recent activities in this direction is indicated by the following excerpts from the minutes of meetings held since the beginning of 1950. (Except where otherwise noted, the meetings are of the Board of Directors.)

January 6, 1950 . . . There was discussion of ... an adequate fertilization test program ... It was suggested . . . that the avocado industry consider a grant of land to the University, to be used in conducting fertilizer trials. It was agreed that any such experimental project should be supplemented by supervised test plots on individual groves

August 4, 1950 . . . The Society should make land available to the Variety and Rootstock Committees so that this land would be under the complete control of the Society . . . The Society needs about 20 acres.

September 1, 1950 . . . the University of California's avocado plot The building program at U.C.L.A. is encroaching on the orchard lands, and ... the Riverside plot is also subject to loss, as the campus is expanded. The danger exists that the variety plots may thus be lost to the industry . . . Suggested the possibility that the Society buy land for experimental work, and arrange with the University to maintain trees on it ... raised the question of location, and method of financing, and whether a separate corporation should be set up. On motion, . . . the President was instructed to appoint a committee to investigate the matter of establishing a permanent avocado experimental plot under ownership of the Society . . . The President appointed J. N. Thille (chairman), M. B. Rounds, and H. B. Griswold to constitute the committee named in the preceding motion.

October 6, 1950 . . . Concerning the matter of establishing variety plots ... a meeting has been scheduled with Experiment Station Director Sharp, to be held at 10:00 a.m., October 18 ... (The President) suggested that the variety Plot Committee approach the City of San Diego regarding the use of the Torrey Pines Station for experimental work. The Station is not at present fully active, and offers the advantage of free water and Federal labor. In discussion, it was pointed out that the conditions at Torrey Pines are not typical, and might cause misleading results. It was decided to defer action on this suggestion until after the conference with Dr. Sharp.

November 3, 1950 . . . Reported that the Committee met with Dr. Sharp on October 18th. Dr. Sharp is receptive to the project, and has agreed to meet with others of the University staff to consider the various possibilities. He indicated his feeling that an experimental plot should be located so as to be convenient for observation by University

personnel. ... (A Director) raised the question whether title to the project property should be retained by the Society or deeded to the University of California . . . Title should be retained by the Society. Following discussion, it was decided to give the variety plot project committee the permanent title of Research Station Committee, and that its members be J. N. Thille (chairman), H. B. Griswold, and M. B. Rounds. The Committee appointments were made by President Trask.

December 12, 1950 . . . Dr. Paul Sharp has conferred with personnel of the Citrus Experiment Station, who expressed interest in the Society's research plot project . . . Grower cooperative plots . . . loss of continuity in ownership.

December 16, 1950 (From minutes of the California Avocado Research Committee meeting.) . . . Dean Hodgson presented a list of new or additional work on avocado which he and his colleagues believed desirable: . . . Procurement of orchard land for field research. (Adequate land is not available on either the Riverside or Los Angeles campuses. The need is for 70-100 acres of land in a typical district, and reasonably convenient in location.)

January 5, 1951 . . . There was discussion of the problem of lack of land for experimental work on avocados. It was felt desirable to investigate carefully the possible locations for experiment plot land. A decision on this question of location was considered of prime importance in developing the experiment-plot project . . . Possibility that land might be acquired through or from the Irvine Foundation, in the Tustin area ... to be investigated. With recognition of the limited funds held by the Society, the question of the means to acquire land was briefly discussed. It was suggested that a campaign to raise money for the purchase of land could be successfully conducted within the industry.

February 2, 1951 . . . The Society's plan to acquire experimental plot land. The question of the best location of a plot was considered, with the Fallbrook and San Gabriel Valley areas being considered as most advantageous. It was reported that there is a possibility of acquiring from the government a parcel of land on the Santa Margarita Ranch. . . . The possibility of acquiring land from the Irvine Foundation was also discussed.

April 6, 1951 . . . With reference to the acquisition of land for avocado experimental plots, Mr. Thille stated that his Committee would have nothing new to report until after a meeting on April 9 with Experiment Station Director Sharp and his staff. There was some discussion as to the ability of the Society to finance the entire land acquisition project. Because of the capital required for the purchase of adequate land, it is possible that the Society may be unable to do more than contribute a part of the sum required. Stress was laid on the importance of the Society's maintaining control of the policy direction in connection with the use of experimental land for avocados. If the interests of the avocado industry are not protected through some such control, there is a permanent danger of encroachment by other crops. . . . The Society's avocado variety plots at U.C.L.A. will soon face the probability of elimination.

May 4, 1951 ... Mr. Thille reported regarding the matter of land for research plots. He stated that he had not heard from Dr. Paul F. Sharp since a meeting on April 9. Mr. Thille's understanding is that the University reaction to the general proposal is favorable. The University, however, desires a larger plot of land than the Society has contemplated

acquiring. If the larger unit is acquired by the University, it may be desirable for the Society to request allocation of a part of the land for avocado work, that part to be financed by the Society. The possibility exists that the University may insist on its ownership of land on which improvements are to be made by it. ... the Society should consider working out an agreement that will protect its interests, and at the same time allow the University to operate with academic freedom.

June 9, 1951 (annual meeting minutes) . . . There was discussion relative to the Society's acquisition of land for avocado test plot work in cooperation with the University of California. Discussion included consideration of policies of the University relative to ownership of land on which research is conducted by that institution.

August 3, 1951 . . . Mr. Thille reported that members of the Experiment Station Committee met with Dr. Sharp (U.C.) in Santa Barbara on July 24. Dr. Sharp let it be known that he had been advised by the Citrus Research Committee that more research is needed, and that it was his thought that the University should acquire about 100 acres to be used partly for citrus and partly for avocado research. The Society committee suggested consideration of the Irvine Ranch as a location. . . . Dr. Sharp was reported to be favorable to combining citrus and avocado research work. He suggested that the matter will be easier to present to the Board of Regents if the citrus and avocado industries will agree to put up at least part of land purchase money requirement. . . . Mr. Thille said the University, and not the industries, would hold title to the land. (The President) discussed as an alternative site for the research plot a portion of the Santa Margarita Ranch near Fall-brook. He raised the point that Congressional interest might be stimulated to result in donation of a plot of land by the Navy to the University of California.

September 7, 1951 . . . Mr. Trask reported, with reference to the Society's experiment station project, that (a Trustee of the) Irvine Foundation is interested in the matter, and will discuss the possibility of the Foundation's allocating land for a "station" at the next meeting of the Trustees. The Secretary suggested that the Ford Foundation might also be interested in the project.

October 5, 1951 . . . Mr. Thille reported that contacts with the Irvine Foundation were being made, relative to the location of an experiment station for citrus and avocado on the Irvine Ranch. There was some discussion of the proper proportioning of an experiment station's land between citrus and avocado, assuming such land is acquired.

March 7 1952 . . . The University Regents are considering acquisition of 100 acres of off-campus land for citrus and avocado experimental work, the property to be shared jointly by U.C.L.A. and Riverside departments. The property under consideration is believed to be a portion of the Irvine Ranch.

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Information was received early in May, 1952, that the University is negotiating for a 200-acre block of land in Orange County, to be devoted to experimental plots of avocado, citrus, and other crops.

It thus appears that the work of the Society has been fruitful to some degree, at least. The questions still remain as to whether the allocation of acreage to avocado projects

will be adequate and protected from the encroachment of other crops, and as to the part the avocado industry will play in instigating and supporting the projects to be established. Time will provide the answers to these questions.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

J. N. Thille Chairman

H. B. Griswold

M. B. Rounds