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Make Your Career A County Home Economist

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I'M GLAD THAT I am a county extension home economist. Some folks call us home demonstration agents or home advisors. We work with some of the finest folks in the world—farm men and women and their sons and daughters who are striving for more pleasant living for themselves and their communities.

A county extension home economist is a combination friend, prophet, teacher, counselor and social arbiter. It's a job for a girl with a rural background, who has a speaking acquaintance with gardens, chickens, household equipment and knows her way around a farmhouse.

She practically lives at the wheel of her car, knows more people than a politician, likes them all, takes an interest in their children, their clothes and their kitchens.

Since a home economist is paid by federal, state and county funds she is virtually a public educator interested in better rural homes and the development of community leadership. As a member of the staff of Iowa State College and a graduate of the school, she is respected in the county for her training in home economics.

Maybe this all sounds a bit "stuffy" so perhaps a cross section picture of a day's work may tell you what we really are.

Off goes the alarm—it's 7 o'clock. On goes the coffee pot and the gray suit almost simultaneously. (We really get a routine worked out to save us time.) There goes the phone. It is Mrs. Jones—"Sorry to call so early. I know you have a meeting, but could you give me some information on selecting a dish-washer?" "Yes," I say as I go into the points in buymanship of that piece of equipment. I don my hat and rush out to get "Gertie," my 1941 car. I peer cautiously at each of her four feet—all up, what a relief. (Those tires have such an affinity for nails, it seems.)

"Let's have an office conference," requests the county extension director as he greets me. So with the secretaries gathered around the oak table we compare notes on schedules, program for the week and work which the girls will be doing.

Stacks of Mail

The mail beckons—what a lot of it, too. Everything from the Food Notes from the U.S.D.A., a couple of intriguing magazines, some ads and a couple of new ISC bulletins to be saved for closer scrutiny. The regular fan mail comes next—the 4-H news reports telling of the recent club meetings. Yes, I asked for them. They are quickly disposed of in the publicity file for next week's news. My, I'm glad to get the letter from the district home economics supervisor. I can always count on her for helpful suggestions for solving a problem.

The requests from the homemakers will take longer. What curtains would we suggest for a north room with such and such coloring? Could I drop in to look over some proposed plans for a remodeling project the next time I am in that community? Where could
a 4-H leader get more information on making an orange crate dressing table? Could I send a recipe for the chicken salad we used in the demonstration last week? (My, but I'm glad to have had help from the nutrition and home management specialists on these salad and remodeling questions!) Dear! Oh Dear! "Betty, better bring your shorthand pad and half a dozen sharp pencils for those answers.

As I push my pencil across the paper getting the finishing touches on some newspaper publicity—designed to make every homemaker who reads it plan then and there to come and bring her husband to the night meeting on "Planning Household Storage," Mrs. Stephens, the county women's chairman, drops in to discuss plans for the next county women's committee meeting. She is anxious to call the 15 township chairmen and the county officers together to work out details of cooperating with the County Health Unit on a program to improve the sanitation of the farm milk supplies.

Off to Demonstrations

There goes the noon whistle and time for lunch. It's lucky that I purchased enough supplies for the demonstration yesterday to supplement the main essentials to be brought by the township committee.

By one o'clock I'm in "Gertie," all set for a 20 mile jaunt. "I'll just stop at the county 4-H chairman's home to take a last look at the plans for the 4-H officers training school on Saturday," thinks I. "I must remember to ask her if she and the county officers have worked out that get-acquainted game."

Just 20 minutes to get the demonstration set up. I'm thankful that the committee of five homemakers are ready to swing into action. I'm glad, too, for the lovely stream-lined kitchen and the new range—quite a contrast to the setup yesterday, but a home economist must adjust and do it fast. The 43 homemakers were practically under my nose as I showed them how meats, vegetables and fruits make delicious meals when cooked properly in the broiler. (It's something, trying to keep my head, hands and tongue wagging all at once.) The women asked lots of questions and enjoyed tasting the food. They seemed enthused about trying their own broilers and promised to report their experiences at the next meeting.

4:00 p.m. I load up "Gertie" again. What's this, a jar of canned pears and some bittersweet with a note—"I canned 20 quarts of Bartlets this morning and I thought you would enjoy some too. The bittersweet was gathered by the youngsters in our back forty." Now, wasn't that nice of her.

There's still time to stop for a short chat with that new homemaker on my way home. Do you suppose she might be interested in helping the new 4-H Club as an assistant leader? I hope so.

Yes, a county extension home economist must believe in helping folks to do things to help themselves. Developing leaders among farm folks is her deepest concern, and helping them solve their problems gives her great satisfaction.

It isn't a snap being a county extension home economist. The hours are what you make them; the work is far from easy; it takes ingenuity, thought,
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friendliness and all the warmth a woman has to give. You just can't coast on the job!

And there are so many good things, too. For a girl with vitality and knowledge, and a real love for people, the scale tips way over. The surroundings are unusually pleasant. Freedom from routine means a lot. Working at top capacity with people of the community and at a job you are interested in means more. The biggest thrill, however, is being able to see the results in better informed folks, better fed families, in more convenient homes, in happier communities and in the growth of farm folks themselves to take their rightful places among the citizenry of the country.

Dream Man
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more. He should want to live in a house rather than an apartment and in a city about the size of Ames.

He'd better keep away from cigars and flirtations with other women if he wants the approval of more than half of these members of the fairer sex. The others said they could overlook such habits.

But for the benefit of any male readers who've decided they just can't meet these qualifications, remember the women said personality counts first. And just to speculate a bit, it is probably a good guess to say that if the poll had been reversed, the men might have said they're looking for personality more than looks in their future wives, too.

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