

## Historical Highlights at Michigan State University in Areas of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management (1855-1965)

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**Part I of the Series**  
History of the Work in Farm Management  
and Agricultural Economics at Michigan State  
Misc. Series No. 1968-9 (July 1968)

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- 1855 Michigan Agricultural College was founded. The enabling law was signed by Governor Kingsley S. Bingham on February 12, 1855.
- 1857 First students were enrolled at Michigan Agricultural College.
- 1860 According to the U.S. Census, there were 62,422 farms and 749,113 persons in Michigan.
- 1898 First Michigan Agricultural College bulletin published in the area of farm management was entitled , 'Suggestions on Farm Accounts," by C.D. Smith, Dean of Agriculture. M.A.C.'s 43rd year.
- 1900 At this date there were 203,261 farms and 21,420,982 persons in Michigan. At the turn of the century there were 652 students at M.A.C., an increase of 25 students over the previous year.
- 1906 Farm management instruction at Michigan State was offered for the first time in course entitled, "Business methods" for short course students in agriculture. Taught by C. D. Smith, Dean of Agriculture.
- 1906 Department of History and Economics established with Wilbur O. Hedrick, formerly Instructor in English 1891-93 and Asst. Prof. in the Department of History and Political Science, 1893-1906 at M.A.C., as Head of the Department. M.A.C.'s 51st year.
- 1908 R. S. Shaw, Professor of Agriculture at M.A.C. since 1902 was appointed Dean of Agriculture to succeed C. D. Smith, who had resigned to become president of a college in South America.
- 1911 Teaching in agricultural economics was initiated by Wilbur O. Hedrick, of the Department of History and Economics, for degree students at M.A.C. with a two-credit course, "Agricultural Economics." M.A.C.'s 56th year.
- 1912 Extension work in farm management in Michigan was initiated with the appointment of M. J. Thompson as Field Agent, Farm Management Field Studies and employed directly by the Extension Division of M. A. C.
- 1913 Research in farm management was initiated by the Dairy Section of the Agricultural Experiment Station with the employment of Fred T. Riddell to devote full-time to a study of the cost of milk production.
- 1914 Teaching of farm management to degree students was offered for the first time at M.A.C., by Dean Robert S. Shaw. There were 1,999 students at M.A.C. of which 1,235 were in the Division of Agriculture and Forestry
- 1915 First extension specialist in agricultural marketing. James N. McBride was appointed as State Market Director and located in the agricultural extension service but under the direct authority of the governing board of M.A.C. M.A.C.'s 60th year.
- 1916 Department of Economics was established with W. O. Hedrick as head of department with staff consisting of Charles S. Dunford and Paul C. Miller and to offer teaching only with no research or extension activities.
- 1916 At this time there were only four Divisions at M.A.C.; namely, agriculture, engineering, home economics and veterinary medicine. Students interested in arts and science courses enrolled in the Division of Agriculture which provided for a high proportion of required and elective courses in these areas.

- 1916 Teaching of the subject, Farmers' Cooperatives, was initiated at M.A.C. with a two-credit course entitled, "Rural Organizations," by W. O. Hedrick. It was perhaps the second course in farmer cooperatives taught in the United States. The subject was discontinued at the end of three years.
- 1920 Economics Department was admitted to the M.A.C. Agricultural Experiment Station and research work was initiated by the appointment of Wayne Newton to study rural taxation. There were 196,447 farms and 3,668,412 persons in Michigan and 2,036 students at M.A.C. M.A.C.'s 65th year.
- 1921 Farm Management Department established within the Division of Agriculture with the appointment of Howard M. Eliot as head. Prof. Eliot had been Extension Specialist in Farm Management at M.A.C. since June 24, 1920. The department was to participate in all three types of activities; teaching, research and extension. There were 8 members in Farm Management staff and 2 members in the agricultural economics section of the Economics Department.
- 1921 Economics Department was assigned to the newly established Division of Applied Science. The department was now doing both teaching and research in agricultural economics.
- 1923 Farm Management Department terminated by President David Friday. All but one of the 10 members of the department were dismissed. Fred T. Riddell was retained to continue teaching one course in farm management and was assigned to the office of the Dean of Agriculture.
- 1924 Economics Department was transferred from the Division of Applied Science to the newly established Division of Arts.
- 1925 Michigan Agricultural College, name changed to Michigan State College on May 13, M.A.C.'s 70th year.
- 1927 Extension work in agricultural economics in the Economics Department was initiated by the appointment of R. V. Gunn as extension specialist in agricultural economics.
- 1928 Farm Management Department was re-established with the appointment of E. B. Hill as head. Prof. Hill had been Asst. to the Dean and Director of Agriculture, M.S.C., since 1920.
- 1928 The farm management extension project in farm accounting and farm business analysis initiated by H. A. Berg. This project has been in continuous operation since that date and became known as the TELFARM project in 1964.
- 1928 Joseph F. Cox, Head of Farm Crops Department, became Dean of Agriculture, succeeding Robert S. Shaw, who was appointed President of M.S.C.
- 1929 First cooperative appointment, M.S.C., Farm Management Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture was Paul G. Minneman with the assignment--"Farm Management Aspects of the Corn Borer Situation in the Corn Producing Area of Southeastern Michigan."
- 1930 Harold Patton was appointed as the new head of the Department of Economics to replace W. O. Hedrick, who was shifted to teaching and research until he retired in 1938. There were 4,428 students (3,857 degree students and 571 short course students) at M.S.C., 169,327 farms and 4,842,325 persons in Michigan. At this time there were 12 Agr. Econ. staff members in the Economics Dept. and 5 in Farm Management. M.S.C.'s 75th year.
- 1930 Ag. Economics-Farm Management student club started.
- 1932 Ernest L. Anthony, Head of the Dairy Department, was appointed Dean of Agriculture to succeed Joseph F. Cox, who was dismissed by the M.S.C. Governing Board.
- 1934 First issue of Agricultural Economic News, a joint project of the Departments of Economics and Farm Management. Name changed in 1945 to Michigan Farm Economics. Issue No. 292 carried the May 1967 date line.
- 1935 Land Use Planning in Michigan initiated by H. A. Berg, Extension Specialist in Farm Management

since 1928. Mr. Berg was appointed State Leader in Land Use Planning 10/1/37 and continued in that position until 10/30/44 when he was appointed Asst. Director of the Cooperative Extension Service at M.S.C. M.S.C.'s 80th year.

- 1940 American Institute of Cooperation, 16th Summer Session held at M.S.C. July 8-12. There were 10 Agr. Econ. staff members in Economics Dept. and 8 in Farm Management Dept. at this time.
- 1941 John A. Hannah, Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and of Michigan State University and previous to that, Ext. Spec. in Poultry Husbandry at M.S.C., became the 12th President of Michigan State College. M.S.C.'s 86th year.
- 1944 Economics Department, including Agricultural Economics Section, now located in the newly formed Division of Science and Arts.
- 1946 Herman J. Wyngarden, Prof. of Economics at Michigan State and Acting Head was named as the new head of the Economics Department succeeding Dr. Harold Patton who was hit and killed by a motor-bus in Washington, D.C. while on leave-of-absence in military service in that city.
- 1948 Public Policy Extension Education project initiated by Arthur Much of the Agricultural Economics Section of the Department of Economics, M.S.C. This was the first, or among the first, of public policy extension education Projects in a Land Grant College. The project was initiated under the name of "Market Price Analysis and Economic Education for Agriculture" and funded by monies made available by the 1946 congressional Research and Marketing Act (R.M.A.). Dale E. Hathaway was a co-worker on the project 1948-50.
- 1949 Merger of the Agricultural Economics Section of the Economics Department, Division of Science and Arts with 20 staff members, and the Farm Management Department with 11 staff members into the Department of Agricultural Economics and located in the College of Agriculture.
- 1949 Thomas K. Cowden appointed as head of the newly created Department of Agricultural Economics. M.S.C.'s 94th year.
- 1952 American Institute of Cooperation, 24th Summer Session held at M.S.C., August 10-14.
- 1952 Eighth International Conference of Agricultural Economists held at M.S.C., August 15-22.
- 1953 Clifford M. Hardin, a staff member in Agricultural Economics since 1944, was appointed Dean of Agriculture, July 1, 1953, to succeed Ernest L. Anthony who retired.
- 1953 Electronic Data Processing initiated by Warren A. Vincent as a farm management research project involving mail-in farm records from 100 Ingham County farmers.
- 1954 Lawrence L. Boger appointed as Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics to succeed Thomas K. Cowden who was appointed Dean of Agriculture. There were 138,922 farms, 7,066,000 persons in Michigan, 17,392 students at M.S.C., and 40 staff members in the Department of Agricultural Economics.
- 1954 Thomas K. Cowden, Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Economics since May 1, 1949, was appointed Dean of Agriculture on July 1 to succeed Clifford M. Hardin who had resigned to become Chancellor of the University of Nebraska.
- 1955 M.S.U. celebrated its 100th anniversary and changed its name from Michigan State College to Michigan State University.
- 1955 American Farm Economic Association, Annual Meeting held at M.S.U. August 1-3.
- 1960 Agricultural Marketing and Utilization Center set up with Robert C. Kramer as the Director. M.S.U.'s 105th year.
- 1964 The Telfarm electronic data processing extension project was initiated by John C. Doneth and farm management extension colleagues and expanded to include all farm account cooperators who were now put on a fee basis. Financed in part by a grant from the Kellogg Foundation of

Battle Creek, Michigan. There were 93,504 farms, 8,161,000 persons in Michigan, 31,268 students at M.S.U., and 49 staff members in Agricultural Economics.

- 1964 American Institute of Cooperation, 36th Summer Session held at M.S.U., August 9-12.
- 1965 Consortium for the Study of Nigerian Development, with M.S.U. participating, was set up with Glenn L. Johnson of the M.S.U. Department of Agricultural Economics as Director.
- 1965 Rural Manpower Center set up with Daniel W. Sturt as Director and within the Department of Agricultural Economics.
- 1965 Kellogg Farmers Study Program initiated. Designed to be a leadership training program for young farmers. M.S.U.'s 110th year.