

## Dean H. Umberger to Governor Payne Ratner

This letter to Governor Ratner from Dean H. Umberger of the Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science in Manhattan, Kansas, details the progress of the Victory Garden Program. Victory Gardens were planted throughout the United States during World War II to help ease the burden on the public food supply in the U.S.

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Date: August 26, 1942

Callnumber: Governor's Files, Governor Ratner, Box 20, Folder 4

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 217008

Item Identifier: 217008

[www.kansasmemory.org/item/217008](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/217008)



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KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE  
DIVISION OF EXTENSION  
OFFICE OF DEAN AND DIRECTOR  
MANHATTAN, KANSAS

August 19, 1942

RECEIVED  
AUG 24 1942  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Honorable Payne Ratner  
Governor of Kansas  
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Governor Ratner:

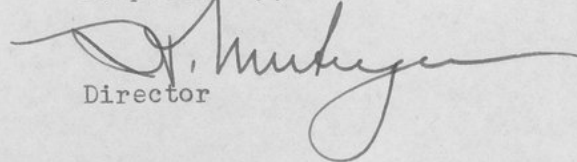
I promised that I would keep you informed  
of our Victory Garden Program.

A request has just been received from our  
Federal Extension Service for a summary article  
on the Victory Garden Program in Kansas; there-  
fore, I am sending you an advance copy of this  
article to be published in the near future,  
which I believe quite adequately covers the  
state-wide program in which you and state and  
federal agencies and other interests cooperated.

I trust that the measured success of the  
Victory Garden Program, 1942, may furnish a  
good foundation for continued and further ad-  
vancement of this vital crop production program  
in 1943.

We shall endeavor to keep you adequately  
informed.

Respectfully,

  
Director

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SPECIAL TO:

Extension Service Review

Kansas aimed at a 35-per cent increase in the number of farm gardens in 1942, when the state Victory Garden campaign was launched. Recent reports show that the number of gardens planted in the state this year was actually about 60 per cent above the 1941 figure, and that most of the gardens planted by habitual vegetable growers were larger and more varied than usual.

Favorable weather must be given part of the credit for this accomplishment. But the lion's share of the honor is due to the method of organizing the campaign, which united the efforts of a wide variety of public and private agencies in a concerted drive for more gardens. The approach proved so successful that a rather similar system probably will be used in 1943.

The hop-off for the Kansas campaign was a state-wide Victory Garden conference called by the Governor of the State and held in the Hall of Representatives in the state Capitol building on January 12. At the request of the Governor, Director H. Umberger of the Kansas Extension Service served as chairman. His first step in convening the conference was the appointment of four committees. One was assigned the responsibility for organizing the farm garden campaign and subject matter, and was headed by the Extension horticulturist and the state home demonstration leader. The second was charged with development of school and community gardens, with the state director of vocational education as chairman. A publicity committee was appointed, with the Extension editor as chairman. And a fourth committee, under the direction of the secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, worked on the campaign budget and the problem of seed, fertilizer, and insecticide supplies.

--M O R E--



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Gardens--2

A large number of agencies and institutions participated in the conference. Included were the AAA, WPA, NYA, SMA, FSA, BAE, FCA, FSCC, SCS, the United States Employment Service, Forest Service, and the Kansas USDA War Board--all connected with the Federal government. In addition, there were Parent Teachers Association representatives; ornamental horticulture representatives; officers of the state agricultural planning committee; members of the state nutrition committee; officials of the State Board of Agriculture; a regional Boy Scout executive; representatives of the Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission; staff members in agriculture, home economics, home economics education, and horticulture from Kansas State College; garden club representatives; nurserymen; fruit growers; seed dealers; bankers; members of the State Industrial Commission; chamber of commerce representatives; teachers association members; social welfare workers; representatives of the state department of public instruction; vocational agriculture and vocational education executives; and staff members from 11 newspapers and 6 radio stations.

The entire group heard an address by the Governor, which was broadcast to the state, listened to reports of the National Defense Gardening Conference, and then went to work in committee sessions to draft the Kansas campaign.

That campaign started off with district meetings attended by county agents and local representatives of the various agencies interested in the movement. This was followed by county conferences where the plan for the county campaign was definitely drawn and the responsibilities divided among the organizations concerned.

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Gardens--3

A basic feature of every county plan was a house-to-house canvass of all farm neighborhoods, conducted by selected local leaders. These leaders were the forerunners of the later-developed "neighborhood leader" system for all wartime Extension programs.

The neighborhood garden leaders were provided with ammunition in the form of pledge cards for families to sign, indicating their intention to produce a Victory Garden in 1942; wall placards--printed in red, white, and blue--which were given to those families signing pledge cards; and printed folders containing a family garden budget for good nutrition and also giving technical suggestions--such as vegetable varieties, rate and date of planting, and similar information. All of this printed material was financed by the State Board of Agriculture and the Kansas Industrial Commission.

A statewide program of demonstrations on food preservation and storage was arranged by the Extension home economists to promote the most effective use of the abundant vegetables. Home demonstration agents conducted public canning demonstrations in their counties, and emergency nutritionists were employed to handle the work in the remainder of the state. Women neighborhood leaders were especially urged to attend the demonstrations to get first-hand information. A series of six circulars was printed by the Extension Service to provide reference notes for these leaders and others. Included in the series were pamphlets on canning, freezing, brining, drying, and storage. Sixty thousand copies of each pamphlet were distributed.

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A constant campaign of newspaper and radio publicity was carried on throughout the entire gardening and canning season. Articles were prepared each week by members of the College horticulture department staff and by Extension horticulturists. Some of these were sent to all the 500 weekly newspapers in the state as part of the weekly Extension news service; others were sent to county agricultural agents for localization and adaptation and were turned over to the newspapers by the agents; and still others were used on KSAC, the College radio station, and syndicated in a manuscript service to 29 cooperating commercial radio stations. Three or four articles a week were prepared, beginning in February and continuing almost without interruption until fall. Every release distributed carried a symbol at the top indicating its connection with the garden program--the words "Victory Gardens" surrounded by asterisks. Newspaper editors also were supplied with a 1-column mat of the Kansas Victory Garden symbol to be used as a heading for a weekly garden column.

The campaign got results. The number of Kansas farm gardens jumped from 85,000 in 1941 to approximately 140,000 in 1942. Most of the gardens were larger than in past years; and there was an encouraging increase in the use of windbreaks, tile irrigation, and other "insurance" practices.

Definite data on the results is being secured by means of personal interviews with farm families in every section of the state, and by means of a questionnaire mailed to a few of the regular listeners of Radio Station KSAC.

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The personal interviews were handled by emergency nutritionists, and the families interviewed were selected on an impartial spot-check basis. Interviews were made in one county in each of the state's 15 type-of-farming areas. From one to three townships in the county were involved. All farm families were listed alphabetically, and the third, thirteenth, twenty-third, etc., families were visited. Questions asked pertained to the family garden, the amount of food canned and stored, and the extent of other home food production--including meat and milk. The same questionnaire was used in the mail survey.

The tabulation of results has not been completed, but it is evident that there are more gardens and larger gardens than usual this year, and there is a greater variety of vegetables in those gardens. The nutrition score of the average family should be higher than in other recent years.

But not every Kansas farm had a garden; and not every garden was as large or as well-managed as it should have been; so Kansas plans to do the job in a bigger and better fashion in 1943.

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