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REVIEW OF
RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE REORGANIZATION OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September, 1957

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Vietnam Advisory Group

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MSUG issued a Report on the Organization of the Department of Agriculture in July, 1956 based on a survey of the Department. As is customary when submitting recommendations pertaining to the organization of a department, MSUG indicated its availability for advice and assistance in the implementation of any of the recommendations. However, the Department of Agriculture proceeded to carry out its reorganization and streamlining without requesting MSU aid.

A review to determine the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report has been made. In general, recommendations which involve other departments have not been implemented. It was pointed out that these recommendations can only be implemented by Presidential direction. On the other hand, most of the recommendations pertaining to internal organization and operations have been implemented, are in process of implementation or their implementation is being planned. In this connection a proposed arrêté will provide for changes which have already been made and additional changes being planned. It was noted by the MSU researchers that the Department of Agriculture has done and is doing a wonderful job in improving its administration. The status of implementation of the specific recommendations (as set forth on Pages 1-3 of the report) is as follows:

Recommendation I. Organization of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

A. The Department of Agriculture be hereafter entitled "The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources."

This has not been done since other natural resource activities have not been transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

B. All agrarian reform activities be transferred from the Department of Land Registration and Agrarian Reform to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

It is not desired to integrate the Land Registration and Agrarian Reform activities into the Department of Agriculture now because "agrarian reform" is a political symbol of the government's concern for bettering the way of life of the Vietnamese peasant. The existence of a department of state named "Agrarian Reform" helps make this more obvious to the population than would a directorate of the same name in the Department of Agriculture. It is also true that the agrarian reform program will undoubtedly get more concentrated attention in a separate department at this time, exactly when it is most needed, than it would in another department. After a major portion of the land is distributed, when emphasis turns to helping the new landowner make the most of his new land, the program should be transferred to the Department of Agriculture, as recommended.

C. All agricultural credit agencies and bureaus presently in other departments be consolidated in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

This recommendation has been implemented to the extent that all agricultural credit activities have been consolidated into the National Agricultural Credit Agency established by Arrêté 67 DTC/DD of April 1, 1957 within the Department of Land Registration and Agrarian Reform. This agency was assigned to the Department of Land Registration and Agrarian Reform inasmuch as the majority of loans are made to new landowners and the granting of such loans facilitates the agrarian reform program. In the past the processing of a loan required passage through nine offices, including both national and provincial levels, before being approved. It is noted, however, that the National Agricultural Credit Agency is now attempting to facilitate the processing of applications so as to cut down the length of time for giving approval.

D. The Maritime Fishery Service be transferred in toto from the Department of Public Works to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources along with all equipment presently assigned to it for its use.

The Maritime Fishery Service (formerly in the Department of Public Works) and the Inland Fishery Service (formerly in the Department of Agriculture) have been consolidated and placed in the Department of National Economy. Not only is fish one of the principal food staples of the average Vietnamese family

but the exportation of fish products provides one of the major sources of foreign currency at the present time. For these reasons it was decided to merge the two Fishery Services and place the agency in the Department of National Economy, both as a means of giving the export of fish more emphasis as a source of foreign currency and to help control the cost of living. This is believed to be a temporary expedient and that eventually this agency will be transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

E. Responsibility for compilation of agricultural statistics be transferred from the Department of National Economy to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

This recommendation is presently in the process of being implemented. The Agricultural Statistics Section in the Department of National Economy is dormant and a Bureau of Agricultural Economy and Statistics has been established in the Department of Agriculture.

Recommendation II. Elimination of Duplication and Unnecessary Functions.

A. Research activities be grouped under one directorate.

Implementation of this recommendation has been included in the proposed arrêté. There will be a Directorate of Education and Research which will include five services, one of which will handle all research activities relating to the Department.

B. Tax-collecting functions be turned over to the Department of Finance.

This is being implemented in that there is no provision in the proposed arrêté for this responsibility in the Department of Agriculture.

C. Administration of the National School of Agriculture at Blao be turned over to the Department of Education with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources retaining responsibility for technical matters.

This recommendation has been adopted in the proposed arrêté. A service within the Directorate of Education and Research will handle the technical aspects of this branch of education.

D. A central administrative service be established to replace the numerous bureaus of administration and finance now in existence.

This has been adopted in the proposed arrêté. Within the Secretariat General there will be two departmental services: the Service for Administration, Personnel and Legislation and the Service for Finance and Material. The proposed arrêté does provide that in each directorate there shall be a Bureau for Administration and Personnel and another for Finance which will also handle the administration of foreign aid, but there will be only a clerk assigned to handle these functions. There is now a clear delineation between the administrative and operating sections of the Department. At the time the research study was made this demarcation was not very clear.

Recommendation III. Organization of the Field Functions of the Department.

A. Field services be grouped in central locations within the areas.

This recommendation has been adopted in principle but the grouping of the field services in one location is dependent upon building facilities available. The proposed arrêté, however, provides for the consolidation of the services in each province and the elimination or consolidation of some services. As proposed, the provincial services will include only three categories: Agriculture and Extension Service, Water and Forest Service, and the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service. Previously some provinces have had as many as six different services in a province. In addition to this regroupment, sectors have been established which embrace in most cases three or four provinces. The Agriculture and Extension Service will have nine sectors, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service will have nine sectors, and the Water and Forest Service will have fourteen sectors.

B. The Extension Service be strengthened and given greater emphasis.

The Vietnamese Government budget contribution has been stepped up from about 1,000,000\$ to about 3,000,000\$. Personnel have been added to bring the total to 73 from 53. The number of leaders has just about doubled, to almost 4,000.

C. Field Services be strengthened by increasing staff.

This is expected to be done. The Government is now encouraging the return of students from abroad in order to get qualified people for personnel needs.

D. Administrative practices in the field be improved by:

1. Establishment of Area motor pools.

This recommendation has not been implemented due to the lack of vehicles for forming pools (in some cases there is only one in a province).

2. Authorization of direct two-way communication between the field and central offices.

Improvements in communication have been accomplished following the abolition of the regional administration level.

3. Establishment of petty cash funds to pay for local public transportation costs.

This recommendation has not been implemented as it involves not only the Department of Agriculture but also other departments having field operations. Any change in this matter would have to be accomplished by a change of procedure for making petty cash available by the Finance Department.

Recommendation IV. Utilization of Personnel.

A. Central Office personnel in excess of actual requirements be transferred to field duties:

This is being done, but slowly. Only about five employees have been transferred.

B. Agricultural technicians now in other departments and not following agricultural pursuits be placed in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

This is being done not only with respect to agricultural technicians but in all branches of government activities; personnel are being reassigned according to their areas of competence.

C. Short agricultural training courses be established for selected farmers and village councilmen through the extension program.

The proposed arrêté provides for the creation of a specific bureau within the Directorate of Education and Research in charge of periodic training classes.

D. The instructions contained in Ordinance 17, December 24, 1955, which directs that "The different administrative personnel and technicians of the regional administration will be administered by the ministerial Department involved" be implemented and that regional agricultural personnel be redistributed and relocated where most needed.

This recommendation is no longer apropos in view of the abolition of the regional administrative level.

Recommendation V. Farmers' Associations.

A. An aggressive and energetic program be initiated to foster and encourage the organization and development

of Farmers' Associations throughout Viet-Nam and that agricultural cooperatives now in existence be coordinated with the Associations.

This recommendation has not been implemented. In fact, the Directorate of Agricultural Cooperatives has been removed from the Department of Agriculture and placed in the Department of National Economy together with all other cooperative agencies. The cooperative movement is one of the means which the Government is using for strengthening the national economy and it is believed that this agency, like the Fishery Service, can be given more emphasis in the Department of National Economy.

Recommendation VI. General Administrative Practices.

- A. Duplicating machines be used in the Department.
- B. The practice of requiring signatures on all copies of correspondence be eliminated and that an authenticity system be established.
- C. An aggressive in-service training program be inaugurated.
- D. Working conditions be improved.
- E. A central motor pool be established and excess vehicles be transferred to the field.

These recommendations, except for item E, have either been implemented or will be implemented in the near future. In a Departmental staff meeting the establishment of a central motor pool was considered but this recommendation was rejected because the Agricultural Services are too scattered throughout

the city to make a central pool practicable. It is further believed that assigning cars to the various Services, along with responsibility for maintenance and service, results in greater care being given the vehicles than would be the case of an Area motor pool.

A Deputy Director position is being established in each Directorate to expedite the handling of routine matters and will give the Director more time for supervising and carrying out inspection trips.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that the Department of Agriculture is undergoing extensive reorganization and change and further reforms are being planned, many of which are in line with the spirit of the MSUG recommendations.