

Part Five of the book discusses the most important issue faced by the developing countries—food aid. The utilization of food aid by Taiwan and Korea to develop domestic resources which reduced the need for aid in the long run is indeed remarkable. The study by Sang Gee Kim provides a broad outline to all developing countries for the effective utilization of aid. The case study of the Philippines by Mahar Mangahas provides forecasting procedures which can be applied for various crops in other countries. The study related to the agricultural export tax system in Thailand by Bertrand M. Renand and Phiphit Suphapiphat is also of general validity since it suggests alternative policies to achieve the same objective.

The book is generally a very well written, thought provoking, and useful discussion of the agricultural problems of the Asian countries. The editors have done a useful job; the papers have been properly arranged in accordance to the importance of the issues dealt. Most of the conclusions are generally applicable, while the remainder are adoptable for different environments. This scholarly publication will be of substantial value to anyone dealing with agricultural problems in the Asian Societies.

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Serving Agriculture As An Administrator. By A.T. Mosher. (New York), Agricultural Development Council, Inc., XIV+64 pp. \$1.5.

Development of agriculture is receiving considerable attention nowadays, especially in the developing countries. With increased emphasis on agricultural development, numerous publications and writings focusing on overall strategies and policies for helping agriculture to develop, or emphasizing on various specific and socio-economic and technical aspects have appeared. It is now realized that in order to accelerate the pace of transforming traditional agriculture, new farm inputs, technological innovations and their diffusion among farmers must be stepped up. Also, institution building is now recognized as important for rapid agricultural development. It requires making present organizations more effective and creating new ones, in order to respond to the ever increasing and changing requirements of the agricultural sector.

Successful accomplishment of these activities requires good, imaginative, creative, and not just mediocre and time serving, administrators. Administrators with lots of drive and initiative, willing to take responsibility and to put up with the restraints imposed by the overall system, but striving continuously to improve the efficiency of their units and organizations. But relatively little attention has been given to the wise and efficient management of these activities supporting the cause of agricultural development. Nevertheless, enlightened and efficient administrations of various programmes and projects aimed at agricultural development is crucial to the success of these efforts. History of agricultural development is replete with programme failures, because of poor administration, and thus many valuable opportunities for improving the lot of farming communities were lost.

Because of heterogenous and varying requirements, different organizations serving in different parts and different needs of agriculture, specific and foolproof guidelines may not improve the administration of agricultural programmes. Agricultural programmes and efforts need to be tailored and adapted to a wide variety of geographical, institutional, and cultural environments.

“Serving Agriculture As An Administrator”, one of the products of a series of seminars, organized under the auspices of the Agricultural Development Council, is intended and designed to provide a nontechnical introduction and guidelines on good administration to persons working in various agencies related to agricultural development, who have had technical training and want to learn more about administration.

The monograph is divided into five chapters. Chapter I, “Getting Acquainted With an Administrative Position”, emphasizes that each organization has a task and objective and it has to pursue this within a given framework of political, socio-economic, and institutional environments. These factors are mostly outside of the organization itself but exert substantial influence on the effectiveness of the organization. The author observes that understanding the task environment is as important as to understand the task itself.

Chapter 2, discusses the essential task of administration. The author argues that administration is not so much one task as it is a set of tasks, all of which are important to effective administration. A good administrator should recognize the various component tasks that together add upto good administration. The author broadly categorizes the tasks of an administrator into: (1) essential tasks and (2) strategic tasks. Essential tasks are defined as those tasks that must be performed just to keep the organization and its programme running. The author specifically lists twelve essential tasks: (1) setting performance objectives for the next fiscal period, (2) budgeting, (3) determining a work schedule, (4) planning information flows, (5) assigning tasks, (6) supervising personnel, (7) authorising expenditure, (8) maintaining physical facilities, (9) resolving conflicts, (10) revising programmes to fit emerging situations, (11) reporting and assessing progress, and (12) selecting and promoting employees. The first four categories of these task are termed as prior planning and the rest are classified as execution.

The author correctly remarks that all the essential tasks of the organization cannot be accomplished by one person. The task of an administrator is not to do all of them himself but to manage and preside over an administrative process that gets them done. Moreover, it is psychologically advisable to bring many members of his staff into the administrative process but not to burden them unduly with administrative tasks. This will give them a feeling of having a real voice in decision-making, which is essential for maintaining staff morale.

The author rightly observes that these tasks are of vastly different relative importance in different organizations. It is important that an administrator be concerned about all of them, but not become frustrated with respect to those that are beyond his control. It is equally important that enough authority be delegated, to the sub-ordinates, in order to handle various aspects of these tasks and spare enough of the administrator's own time to be devoted to the strategic tasks.

Chapter 3, is devoted to a discussion of strategic tasks. These are (1) maintaining staff morale, (2) staff development, (3) thinking ahead, (4) fostering linkages with complementary organizations, and (5) expanding the organization's resources. The strategic tasks of an administration are not substitutes for the essential tasks but are additional tasks, which, the author notes, mediocre administrators ignore but to which good administrators accord considerable attention and importance.

In order to maintain staff morale, the author suggests, the administrator should try to fit tasks to the competence and interests of employees, give them confidence that the tasks of the organization are important and that the system of the organization is appropriate to the tasks at hand. The administrator should facilitate the work of the technicians rather than directing them and treat the employees as persons and human beings, rather than as units of labour. Defining the lines of responsibility clearly, consulting sub-ordinates, giving adequate praise and credit when due, and rewarding the competent and efficient employees, would go a long way in maintaining staff morale, the author argues. The administrator is also advised to avoid favouritism and nepotism; not to delay decisions unnecessarily, and not to pretend to know more than he actually does, in the interest of maintaining staff morale and efficient administration.

A good administrator is one who keeps growing faster than his present job, by thinking ahead various improvements in his organization according to the changing requirements and needs of the time. Fostering linkages with complementary organizations has acquired a new dimension in this period of growing interdependence. The author rightly observes that good administrators take genuine interest in developing functional and working relationships with other sister organizations. Moreover, good administration would try to expand its resources through adequate publicity of its task accomplishments and public relationing.

It is very important that an administrator gain command over his time and discipline himself to allocate it rationally among the competing claims over his time; Chapter 4 of the monograph provides some useful hints and guidelines in this direction. The author stresses that the administrator should take stock and assess the existing situation and allocation of his time: it is emphasized that of all of the responsibilities of an administrator none is more important than how he uses his own time. No doubt there would be certain limitations and constraints on what he can do, but still by carefully analysing the essential and strategic tasks of the organization, delegating enough authority, and effectively disciplining himself to follow a planned programme, optimum allocation of scarce time is possible and would achieve favourable results.

Chapter 5, the last chapter, of the monograph is devoted to a discussion of the temptations which a good administrator should avoid. The author correctly stresses that a good administrator should avoid blaming the system and his subordinates for the failures of the organization, in accomplishing its task. As a team leader, since he takes credit for the organization's successes, he should accept the responsibility for its failures as well. Accepting the burden of being responsible is part of being an administrator. He should also avoid claiming too much for his organization, making snap judgements, and losing command of his attention and isolating himself.

The author goes on to argue that although an administrator has power, he should avoid playing God and realize that power is for the purpose of keeping the machinery of the organization going and to provide for adjudication among differing judgements. Power is to be used sparingly and only with great respect for its limitations and for one's own (most administrators tend to ignore this).

The author correctly stresses that not every one is cut out to be an administrator, and those who are not should avoid such a position. But for those who are, who can assume administrative positions and can stand the heat and avoid temptations, such positions offer great opportunities in improving the lot of people.

The monograph is a very valuable addition to the literature on agricultural administration. It would be especially useful for persons who have no previous training and/or experience in administration. But even persons who have had administrative experience would find their time well spent in browsing through this monograph.

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