

THE
JEWISH AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY, Inc.



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THE JEWISH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY ITS AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Jewish Agricultural Society was founded and is maintained by funds derived from Baron de Hirsch foundations and by virtue of a revolving fund which these endowments created. Its purpose is to encourage and advance farming by Jews in the United States.

Through a DEPARTMENT OF FARM SETTLEMENT, the Society advises those who intend to take up farming as a livelihood and helps the qualified person to get the right farm at the right price and on the right terms. The Society acts on the premise that a prime requisite for successful farming is a genuine desire on the part of the individual to farm and that an artificially stimulated desire is apt to wane as soon as the sober realities of farm life are confronted. In the last ten years over 10,000 people sought the Society's advice and the Society was responsible for the establishment on farms of 964 families directly, many more indirectly. Of the 739 families settled by the Society since 1939—and the five-year period is taken because the first five years are the crucial years for the new farmer—692 are still on their farms.

The Society's FARM LOAN DEPARTMENT makes loans not usually obtainable elsewhere, based not strictly on tangible security but also on human factors—faith in the ability of the borrower to make good; a service which any self respecting man can accept without the sacrifice of prestige or dignity. Since its inception in 1900 the Society has approved 14,371 loans aggregating \$8,907,268 in forty states.

For the Jew farming is an acquisition, not an inheritance. The task of making a farmer out of a Jew is one of orientation as well as of craftsmanship. Because of his loss of contact with the soil the Jew needs a special type of service suited to his background and which no public or governmental agency can be expected to provide. Recognizing this, the Society maintains a DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND EXTENSION designed to bring to the new Jewish farmer agricultural information on all phases of farming. In the more populous Jewish farming districts, Jewish agricultural experts carry their teachings from farm to farm. During 1943 these travelling teachers made 3,134 farm visits, held 144 farm gatherings of various types with an aggregate attendance of over 7,500. This was in addition to 2,527 individual letters of advice and 4,464 circulars and 2,429 office consultations. The Society conducts agricultural night classes for farm aspirants in New York City and Chicago; publishes *The Jewish Farmer*, an agricultural magazine; maintains a purchasing service for individual farmers and farm cooperatives. It works with farm youth groups.

The Society's FARM EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT has made 19,669 job placements in thirty-two states since its inception in 1908. Some of these workers have developed into successful farm operators.

The Society's DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SANITATION carries on work to promote higher standards of sanitation in and about the farm premises. Through farm gatherings, public meetings, demonstrations and lectures, this Department has reached many thousands of rural folk.

The Society makes loans for the erection of synagogues and center buildings in Jewish farm communities. For many years it made loans to agricultural students and awarded agricultural scholarships.

Since the advent of refugees the Society has devoted effort to the rehabilitation of those who saw salvation in farming. It has helped to settle refugee families on farms in twelve states.

The Society holds that the family farm is the backbone of American agriculture. It is opposed to a system of farming which, while euphemistically termed cooperative is in essence collectivistic and lacks the voluntary motif of free persons working together toward a common end. From the experience of early Jewish colonization efforts and from recent resettlement attempts the Society has learned that the average American wants to be the possessor of his own farmstead, be it ever so modest or burdened with debt. But the Society has from the very beginning been a staunch advocate of those forms of cooperation among farmers which promote the common weal and yet leave individual ownership unfettered. It has helped to organize and it works with cooperatives in the fields of buying, marketing, processing, fire insurance and credit—all on a non-sectarian basis. It extends credit to cooperative enterprises.

Since the outbreak of the war all these activities have been mobilized toward a single end—to help Jewish farmers achieve maximum food production.