

Disabled

# County Farm Training Program Aids Mentally Retarded Youths

The day of keeping the mentally retarded child hidden in the home without self-respecting responsibilities is slowly passing.

One of the new programs helping this to pass is pre-vocational farm training sponsored by the county schools.

This is for the severely mentally retarded. There are 72 persons in this category in the county ranging in ages from five to 21 years.

Pending now on the state level is a grant for \$220,000 for purchase of 10 acres of land on which will be developed a farm.

According to Richard Struck, director of guidance and special education for the county schools, a farm program is, in fact, currently under way.

Eight students are enrolled in the experiment, only they are working on farms owned by private citizens who are volunteering their time and equipment for this purpose.

Tony LoBue is the teacher. An agriculture major in college, he takes the youngsters to vari-

ous farms exposing them to different kinds of farm work.

While they work he is evaluating them to determine their basic skills and work they can or cannot do.

Struck said if the grant is made, in the form of a loan, 40 per cent of it will be repaid out of county taxes over 20 years. The Freedom school district, in which the land is expected to be located, will repay 10 per cent. The state pays the other half.

"If we were to send these 72 youngsters to the Porterville state institution, it would cost the county \$288,000 a year," said Struck. "We have about 60 children and adults there now from this county."

"Santa Cruz county has been expanding its mentally retarded education and training program over the past seven years. It costs about \$4000 per child per year in Porterville. We conduct a program costing about \$1300 per child. Of this money, 80 per cent is state money and the rest is paid by the county."

"I think this is the beginning of a change in state philosophy, letting the counties develop their own programs."

"When we have trained these students on the farm, they will be sent out to work in agriculture under supervision. It will be their life's work."

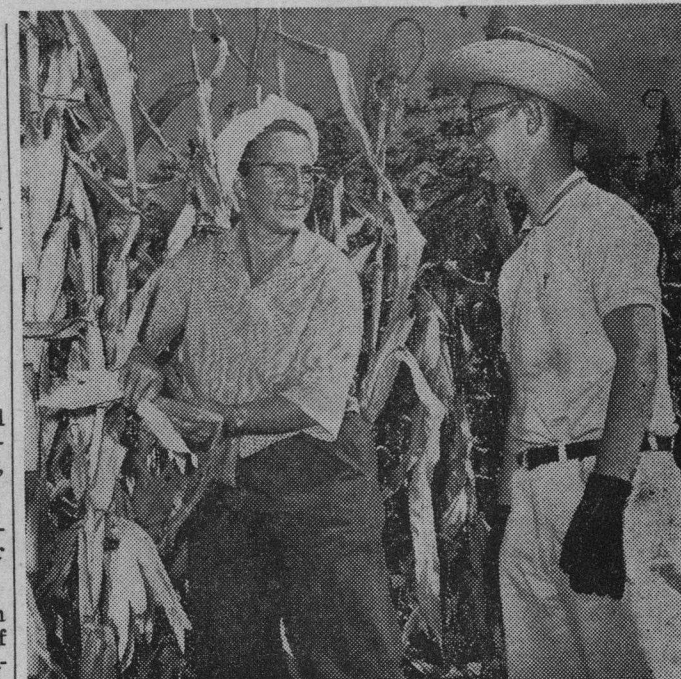
"Now we have 60 at Porterville (some of them have been there for 20 years) and some 60 adults on the welfare rolls, unemployed," he said.

These school youngsters will be trained to pick tomatoes, apples, beans, clear the fields, hoe, and plow.

"I am optimistic that the money will be granted to us for the project," he said.

Struck said he and Norman Lien, county superintendent of schools, will attend a state allocations board meeting November 10 in Los Angeles.

"We hope to come home with definite word one way or another," said Struck.



Mrs. George Hammond, who maintains a vegetable garden on Grant street, shows Vincent some of the steps in picking corn. There are many

farming jobs these youths can accomplish. Otherwise they are kept at home and many finally become welfare cases.

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(Political Advertisement)

## Please Forgive Us, Mr. Goldwater..

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Tony LoBue, instructor for the fast-developing agriculture program for severely mentally retarded students in Santa Cruz county, left, in photograph above, guides students in techniques of unloading a pickup. These students will some day work on farms under supervision. In photograph at left two boys are part of an experimental group of eight who are being trained in various tasks in agriculture as a part of a County Schools project. A grant is expected from the state which will allow the school to buy 10 acres of farm land for the project.

### Disco Opens Eureka Store

Mac/Disco of California, Inc., which operates Disco at Capitola, today announces the opening of the chain's fifth store at Eureka.

The spacious store, which covers 87,200 square feet, cost approximately \$1,250,000, not including land cost or fixturation, said W. L. Simmons, board chairman, and C. M. Watt, firm president.

The Eureka store is the third to open this year and the third

