

*Dwyck*

A PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR AN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM (78-79)

As You Sow - A Study of the Small Farm

This 3 quarter program will study the small farm as an imperiled institution in contemporary society. We will begin by examining the farm's roots in the family and village community and - through a study of the origins of domestication and the development of agrarian societies through history - come to understand the nature of agriculture as a human experience. We will adopt as our theme the impact of technological innovation in agriculture on the farm, on the community, and on the soil. Particular emphasis in this regard will be directed toward understanding the scope of agricultural change through the industrial revolution's recent extension into agriculture through widespread mechanization and reliance upon petroleum based fertilizers and crop protectants. We will compare and analyze various predicted scenarios for the future of agriculture and estimate the continued viability of the small farm as an option for land stewardship, resource conservation, and production efficiency.

If small farms are to play a part in our agricultural future, there will be a need for more practitioners of the arts of husbandry. A significant portion of the program will therefore be devoted to studies in practical agriculture and the agricultural sciences. We will maintain the college's organic farm both as a garden and as a prototype small farm. Students will maintain a notebook detailing all farm activities and recording observed results. A series of researched reports will relate farm observations to information exposed by other aspects of the programs.

We will survey all of the agricultural sciences which, *relate to small* farm management, *dash* economic botany, horticulture, agronomy, soil science, entomology, plant pathology, and agricultural economics - in order to become more proficient and insightful as farmers and gardeners. We will develop a view of farms as specialized ecosystems which are subject to all of nature's laws and predilections. A new ~~de~~ dimension of our understanding of agriculture in terms of human experience will emerge as we view farming as an ecological discipline and as a shared way of life.

Students entering this program should have some background in natural sciences and a desire to apply that background to understanding agriculture. Students should also be willing to divide their time between involved academic pursuits and physical participation at the Organic Farm. The format will include lectures, seminars, individual research, laboratory courses, as well as a possible tour of farming areas in the state.