

NOTES ON THE CONFERENCE ON ELEMENTARY SOIL TEACHING,  
HELD AT LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, JUNE, 1920

P. E. KARRAKER, *Secretary*

*University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*

Representatives of the agronomy or soils departments of sixteen state agricultural colleges met at the University of Kentucky on June 23, 24, and 25 to discuss the teaching of the first, or general, soil courses. The entire field of the teaching of these courses was considered but the attention of the conference was directed in particular to the securing of greater uniformity in the giving of the work in the various colleges and to the determination of what should properly constitute the laboratory part of this work.

The conference unanimously recommended that the first, or elementary, soils work should be given in a uniform general course dealing largely with the scientific principles underlying the successful management of soils with such practical application as good teaching and local conditions demand; this course to be required of all agricultural students, to be taken in the sophomore year when practicable, and to carry approximately 5 semester hours credit.

The minimum prerequisites recommended for this course were one year of general inorganic chemistry, one term of general geology and either high-school or college physics.

Further recommendations were that the subject matter of the course should be presented in well correlated lecture, recitation and laboratory work, that at least three-fifths of the time should be spent in lecture and recitation, and that it is desirable that a standard text book be used.

A suggested general outline of laboratory exercises was worked out. In this outline, for the most part, the common stock exercises are omitted. Exercises involving mainly quantitative work also are largely omitted if the laboratory work is confined to one credit hour per week.

The advantages of such a course, as brought out in the discussion, are that the student is enabled to obtain a survey of the entire subject in one course, that the preparation of standard text books, illustrative material, and standard laboratory equipment will be made possible and that transfer of credits from one institution to another will be facilitated.

The institutions represented at the conference were: University of Maryland, Georgia State College of Agriculture, Louisiana State University, University of Kentucky, Pennsylvania State College, University of Tennessee, Cornell University, Montana State College, University of Missouri, University of Illinois, A. & M. College of Texas, Michigan Agricultural College, University of Vermont, Ohio State University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Nevada.