Student-Farmers Plan to Pass Days in Fields, Nights at Studies

Brooklyn College disclosed yesterday that plans are being completed for college summer schools on the farm where city students will pass about four weeks harvesting crops and at the same time attend classes for which they will receive full college credit.

Simultaneously the Board of Higher Education announced that the four city colleges will begin this month to recruit student and faculty members for summer farm work designed to help solve the man-power shortage. The colleges will work with state and Federal agencies in placing students. However, Brooklyn College was the only school ready yesterday to give details of its summer program.

The originator of the Brooklyn plan for the combination of brain and brawn in work-study camps, is Professor Ralph C. Benedict, chairman of the Brooklyn College Committee on Student Employment, who said yesterday that the farm schools will probably be open to all students in city colleges.

Under present plans, Dr. Benedict said, students studying similar subjects and their faculty will live co-operatively at camps situated mainly in sections of the state where fruits and vegetables are grown. He said that his committee was particularly interested in establishing camps in these regions because “experience has shown that green hands are most useful in harvesting these types of crops.”

Dr. Benedict, who passed last summer at farm camps near Red Hook, where one hundred students in city colleges were employed, said that classes would be held on evenings and rainy days. He added that “our experience with farm camps last summer made it clear that many such days and evenings could be devoted to courses, provided that faculty members would make themselves available to give them.”

“By April 1” Dr. Benedict said, “we expect to have student groups organized under faculty leaders. The only remaining factor then will be negotiation for farm-camp sites.”

“Standard courses, similar to those taught at regular summer sessions at city colleges, will be available to the student farmers,” Dr. Benedict said. Among them will be English, foreign languages and mathematics. The farm life will be far from an ivory tower refuge from the war, however, since other courses will prepare boys and girls for war service. These will include military mapping and physiography.

Dr. Benedict will himself give a course in farm biology this spring at Brooklyn College to students who plan to work at the camps and will continue his course at the farm schools this summer. A series of orientation lectures also will be given at the college this spring at the suggestion of Federal farm agencies. Prospective student-farmers will get in trim for their summer workout by doing some gardening on Brooklyn campus plots.

The importance of the summer farm-school to boys and girls who wish to accelerate their college programs because of the war was stressed by Dr. Benedict yesterday. He pointed out that in addition to the many boys under eighteen in the colleges who face induction soon, there are hundreds of girls who wish to speed up their educations so that they may work in war industries or the auxiliary services.

He said, however, that the first purpose of the camps was to aid the New York State farmer who faces man-power difficulties.