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Reaching Rural People ... with information tools



University of Minnesota
August 31, 1956

 * Please read, check and circulate *
 * County Agricultural Agent *
 * County Home Agent *
 * County 4-H Agent *
 * County Asst. Agent *
 * Secretary for filing *

TO THE H. A.'S AND 4-H AGENTS --
September Ideas for Radio, TV--
 Better Breakfast Month
 Back to school clothes
 Tips on sewing plaids
 Fall Fashions
 Making pickles
 Freezing peaches

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

How do you rate on your public relations? Here are a couple of important questions from a list prepared by the Colorado County Agent Association:

1. Have I helped our office secretary meet the public in a way that will bring credit to our service?
2. Do I let our secretary know where I can be found and when I'll return?
3. Do all callers at my office feel that they are welcome? Does the office reflect a friendly, efficient atmosphere?

More Information Series Scheduled

With this Tip Sheet you'll receive another Information Service Series No. 9, "Planning Better Posters." Your suggestions on what you want have been most helpful. The issues on floats and exhibits came from your suggestions. If you have other ideas, let us know.

Only 87 Days Left

That's the number of days you have to get those information contest entries to us. We'll send you special entry blanks about mid-September. Pennington County's Paul Sternaschuk already has the distinction of having the first entries.

And a Final Thought

The late Raymond Clapper, famous newspaper columnist, said: "Don't overestimate the knowledge of your audience. And never underestimate its intelligence." -- Harold B. Swanson

Interestingness Important

How would your radio programs rate as far as interest is concerned? "Interestingness" is an important factor in making a broadcast understood. Studies show that the most interesting radio talks for the average or low average audiences are those which deal with concrete subjects of a practical kind which are familiar to listeners in their daily lives or which affect them personally. Here are some other qualities which increase the likelihood of a broadcast being understood: Limitation of the number of teaching points to less than half a dozen; clear summaries; liveliness of style.

For Better Understanding

Here are some qualities which make broadcasts ineffective and difficult to understand: Too speedy delivery, overlong sentences, difficult vocabulary, and complex sentence construction.

There's Many a Slip --

And one of the frequent slips we hear and see in use of media as singular. The form media, like data, is always plural; therefore, you say these media, but this medium, (and these data, not this data). -- Jo Nelson

OFF THE PRESS-----



We all know that names make news, but we don't take advantage of that axiom as often as we could. In the August 3rd issue of the Clara City

Herald, Gene Pilgram showed one good way to effectively use local names. His column technique is simple, but full of good ideas. He used names of six local farmers in five one-paragraph column items. One farmer had told him how low fertilizer rates had damaged county corn crops. Another farmer had done well by using a ration-a-day pasture system. Three others had been successful with soil conservation practices.

There's another way to use names to a good advantage, and that's where I come in. I'd like to do some feature stories on individual farmers who have been successful with one or more recommended practices. That way, we can show how better farming pays off and tell the advantages of extension cooperation at the same time. Such stories would get widespread distribution from our office. We need your tips to make this work, though. If you have any local farmers to suggest for such stories, drop me a line. Then I'll try to interview them in the next month or two.

Another plug for farmers' questions:

Last month, one county agent wrote in a common question among farmers. The question was on corn drying, and made good subject matter for a news release. It would be a big help if we got more tips on 'what farmers are asking'.

Don't underestimate the timely story.

A Minnesota daily editor recently told us that what he wanted was more how-to-do-it stories. "Agricultural research has top news value," he said, "but readers also want to know the right way to feed livestock, mend fences and repair equipment. I can use many times more stories on such subjects than I'm now getting." And I've got a hunch that more editors would say the same thing.

-- Phil Tichenor

ACROSS THE MIKE --



It was good to see so many of you at the State Fair. Radio is apparently holding its own! Radio (someone said) has its spontaneity, televi-

sion its illustration, and newspaper the lasting word.

Among the counties sending tapes to the home station from State Fair were: Big Stone, Houston, Becker, East Polk, Mower, Anoka, Chippewa, South St. Louis, Dodge, Stearns, and Brown.

Notes From Agents at Fair --

Marion Larson (McLeod) says their office arranged a talent show featuring 4-H and Bahamas (migrant workers). Parts of the show were taped and used on radio with remarkable results. This is a good way to get variety in radio and at same time build better world understanding.

Robert Webb (South St. Louis) takes his recorder and visits two or three 4-H homes to get on the spot programs for his 6:30 a.m. Saturday programs. The station likes the idea very much.

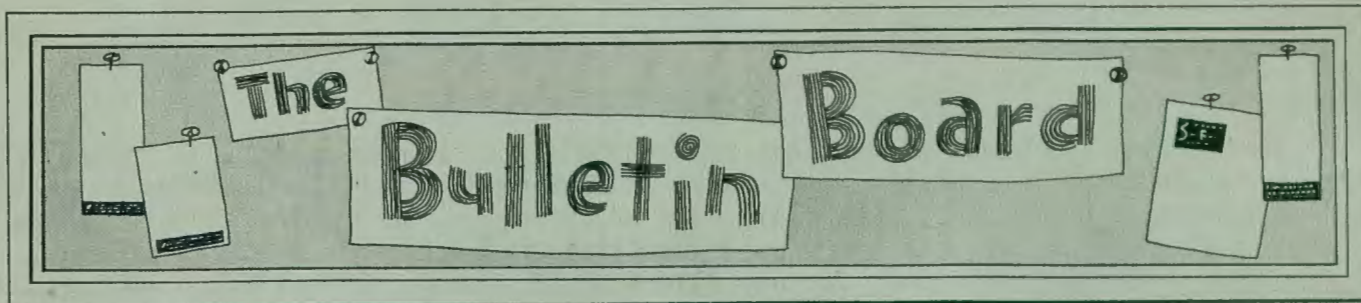
Gerald Fahning (Dodge) has introduced interviews to his county listeners. Former agents did only straight talks. Gerald says it provides much needed variety and helps build audience.

Mandt On ABC Network --

Sherman Mandt, (East Otter Tail) was featured on the ABC American Farmer network radio program August 18 for his "highly successful efforts in combating a severe army worm attack while agent in Red Lake County" a few years ago. Mandt, one of many in the area who did an outstanding job, was selected on the basis of information submitted in an extension achievement story.

Tapes and Recorders will be available for your use at Barrow Show September 11-15, Animal Nutrition Short Course September 10 and 11, Beef-Grass Day at Rosemount September 18, Swine Feeders Day September 28 and at Junior Livestock Show October 1-4. Let me know if we can be of any help in arranging guests.

P.S. -- If you want help in starting or rejuvenating your radio (or TV) show let me know. -- Ray Wolf



August 1956

NEW PUBLICATIONS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MARKETING--YMW Circular 5. 12 pp. by Harold C. Pederson and Fred L. Olson. The fifth in a series for the young farmer and home-maker. The authors include sections on how farm sales are made, market competition, marketing costs and services, and related matters. Expect a late September delivery.

THE MIDDLE YEARS OF CHILDHOOD, AGES 6-12--Ext. P. 195. 6 pp. by Charles W. Martin. Another in the family life series. A guide on the characteristics, development, and activities of children between 6 and 12. Some situations to be used for discussion at family life meetings are also included. Mid-September delivery.

PLANNING BETTER POSTERS--Information Service Series No. 9, by Earl Brigham, Gerald R. McKay, and John Fuchs. Poor posters are more often a result of lack of planning than lack of talent. Your posters may never go on exhibit in an art museum, but you can produce more effective ones when you understand better what they're expected to accomplish and what goes into planning them. Enclosed with this tip sheet.

BEING REPRINTED

Ext. Pamphlet 134--CUSTOM RATES FOR FARM OPERATION.

COMING "FEED SERVICE"

The new Minnesota Feed Service will report on information brought out at the Seventeenth Annual "Animal Nutrition" Short Course being held on the St. Paul Campus, Sept. 10-11. Since the two-day program will cover swine, ruminant, and poultry nutrition with papers by many authorities in these fields, we'll publish abstracts of the more pertinent material.

"PLAIN LETTERS"

At different times Extension people have asked those of us in Information Service if there wasn't some sort of brief, down-to-earth publication on handling business correspondence. An honest answer has always had to be, No! Even the best textbooks on business letter-writing seem to run 300 to 400 pages, about half of that on material a county agent has no need of (unless he's running a collection agency on the side, or needs advice on how to prepare A Letter Expressing Sympathy To Relatives Excluded From the Will on Hearing That An Unknown Uncle Has Died And Left You Sole Owner of His Diamond Mines, etc.)

--But now we can change that answer to, Yes! We've obtained copies of an excellent 8½ x 11 booklet put out by the Federal General Services Administration. The title is Plain Letters--and the text lives up to the name. You won't find it hard to read. You won't break an arm picking it up, either (48 pages complete, including cover, text, examples, and all).

You'll find the heart of the book in Section II on "Craftmanship". There's also a selection of very practical examples in Section III; a "Watchlist" on stereotyped phrases to be avoided, with plain ways of saying the same thing better (we're studying that one ourselves); and a good checklist on any trouble spots in office correspondence. We have enough for one file copy to each county extension office. Yours is being mailed to you.

GOOF-UP DEPARTMENT

In the current revision of Ext. Folder 181, "Grass Silage," the table on page 5 (How Much Preservative Should I Use?) fails to state specifically that figures are for pounds per ton. Maybe you haven't even noticed it yet, since nobody we've tried it on has had any trouble understanding that "pounds" was the measurement meant. But please make a note on it, and we will be checking on the best way to correct the slip-up.

-- Earl Brigham, Maxine Larson