



Reaching Rural People

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University of Minnesota

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ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

Poorly attended meetings. TV competition. Seldom-viewed demonstrations. These are real problems. Is the answer fewer meetings? More publicity? More gimmicks? More personal contacts? In Goodhue county, Arnold Wiebusch and "Dick" Kunau working with Harold Jones and Ed Jensen and the info. staff, came up with one answer for one situation.

By now the results of the "Corn--Yesterday and Today" demonstration are well known.

The climax--a field day--was a disappointment. No more than 60 people were on hand. Yet the whole demonstration was a great success because the story was also told effectively to a huge audience. How? Through mass media and development of teaching aids will be at your disposal soon. They include:

1. A slide set "Corn--Yesterday and Today" with a taped discussion.
2. A short movie for TV or meetings.
3. An agent fill-in story on results.
4. A future summary story in Minn. Feed Service and possible poster reprints.

Then look at the coverage to date:

1. Radio & TV--Network shows on CBS, AEC, and NBC--individual shows on WDAY, (Fargo), WCCO, KAAA (Red Wing,) KUOM, WOW (Omaha), WNAX (Yankton) plus tapes to 18 Minnesota stations.

2. Press -- Stories in Farm Journal, The Farmer, Minnesota Farmer, Crop Life, Crops and Soils, and several professional journals plus dailies.

Total audience at field day...60.

So Total of potential audiences, nationwide...60,000,000.

Sure this is an extreme. You won't increase your audience from 60 to 60,000,000 but by planning your use of mass media and making your teaching tools work over and over again, you can go from 6 or 60 to 600. --Harold Swanson

TO THE H.A.'S --

All Agents, Please Note--

For those of you who will have delegates to National 4-H Congress, here's the procedure on news releases.

As soon as you have notified your delegates, give the news to your county papers and radio stations. This applies to your state winners, too.

Before Club Congress, the National 4-H Committee in Chicago will send to all Minnesota papers mats and stories on each delegate. Each story will announce four winners and carry pictures of them. It's important that you get out your local announcement of winners before this story is sent from Chicago.

On Nov. 8 and 10 we'll send to all dailies, radio and TV stations stories listing winners, so you should make your announcements to papers by that time. We will also ask delegates for their pictures, so Minneapolis and St. Paul papers and The Farmer can carry a spread.

About National 4-H Winners--

Announcements or 4-H national and sectional winners will be made by our office. If your delegate is one of the lucky winners, we'll send a story announcing the honors to all daily papers, radio and TV stations in the state, as well as to your county weeklies.

But, please note: Every announcement of a national or a sectional winner has a release date set by the National 4-H Committee to coincide with the event at which the winners are announced at Club Congress. Sometimes that release date gives weekly papers a bad break--and editors complain. If that happens this year and an editor complains to you, please explain that neither you nor we set the release dates.

--Jo Nelson

THE NEWS ANGLE --



We visited a bit the other day with one of our new county agents and he told us some of the things he is doing to "re-activate" the news set-

up of his county office and tailor it to fit the situation as he sees it. He has one daily newspaper in his county and thus must use release dates. Although he may write a story on Saturday or Monday, he puts a following Thursday release date on it so the daily will not use it before the weekly. In the case of something very urgent or highly newsworthy, must let the daily have it, even if it beats the weeklies three or four days. (Of course, what works in one daily-weekly county may be poison in another, so you have to "feel" your way around a bit to find a good plan).

Labels His Stories -- In the flood of typed and mimeo material that comes over an editor's desk, how is the fellow to choose what is really news ---a choice he sometimes must make because of limited space? This new agent solves this problem by labeling all his stories. If it is a high-priority news story, in contrast to a story recommending certain practices, he makes some note at the top so the editor knows it is spot news--and warrants an "immediate" priority over strictly advice and fact stories. Maybe most of you are now doing this or have some similar plan. It should be worth it, making for warmer and more cordial relations with a busy editor, who must sort and interpret many kinds of news, from Axilrod to Zinnia. Some of the labels include "fillers," "spot news," "meeting announcement."

He Wants a Column -- This new agent will start a column soon. He feels that it is really about the best way to establish "constant contact" between the extension office and the county farm people. He regards it as an addition to--and not a replacement for--his other weekly news service of stories. It will be fun to look in on him in October, 1956, and see his progress--which should be notable.

--Harry R. Johnson

ACROSS THE MIKE --



Sixty-five Minnesota county extension agents took part in 125 TV shows last year. That's the best record yet and it looks like 1955-56

will be even better.

"In building a TV show the crazier the idea, the better. It's easier to tone down than to think up," said G. N. True, creative thinking specialist at a recent national TV clinic. "If the show is plodding along safely in its dull, goody-goody way, we know it isn't going to get much better. If it starts with a bang and keeps banging away, we've got something good," said Ben Parks of NBC. "Give the viewer something unexpected."

Ideas for radio come easy if you plan. Why get ulcers whipping up today's program 30 minutes before air-time? One can't possibly figure out what's timely, valuable or interesting that quickly. So why don't you refer to your weekly report of 2 years ago? They are your diaries. The problems will be the same--the recommendations may differ.

Your annual report for this past year should provide material for at least one radio program. And don't forget to include your use of radio and TV in the report. We and the national office want to know how they help your total program.

For further information on radio or TV--listen to or watch good shows, ask farmers and homemakers what they want, try something new and see what happens. Read page 12 of the October issue of Agricultural Leaders Digest, ask us for help, check our U. Farm and Homemaking radio schedule, order TV films from visual aids catalog, read page 24 of the October issue of Better Farming Methods and finally, send us a taped interview and straight talk of your best radio program for the info. contest.

Radio-TV Topics for November

- Nat'l. 4-H Achievement Day.
- Bulk Tanks for Handling Milk.
- County ACP &/or SCS Program for '56.
- Insulation & Ventilation of Buildings.
- Thanksgiving--Turkey and Best Buys.

--Ray Wolf

P. S. Don't forget to send a tape to Information Contest by Nov. 18.