

ATTITUDES OF MISSOURI NEWSPAPER EDITORS
TOWARD AGRICULTURAL NEWS

By

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PREFACE

This study attempted to determine what Missouri newspaper editors foresee as their needs for agricultural information in the near future, how agricultural information competes for space with other types of news in Missouri newspapers, what sources of agricultural information are most important to Missouri newspaper editors and the usefulness of the information disseminated by the University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC) Agricultural Editor's Office.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Agriculture has always been an important news area for Missouri newspaper editors. Certain events and situations in the past few months have served to make it even more so.

Although the percentage of Missourians who live on farms has decreased from 21.8 per cent in 1950 to 7.7 per cent in 1970, the impact of agriculture and related industries on Missouri's economy remains great.¹ In fact, the Missouri Department of Agriculture reported in 1972 that agri-business is Missouri's largest industry, accounting for about 50 per cent of the state's personal income.²

Missouri ranks first in the nation in feeder pig sales, tall fescue seed production, charcoal production, novelties made from cedar and production of walnut wood and walnut meat.

The state ranks second in number of beef cows and number of calves born, as well as production of orchard-grass and timothy seed. Nationally, Missouri ranks third in number of hogs, number of farms, and production of American and cheddar cheese, and fourth in turkey and soybean production.³

Missouri farm income cash receipts rose \$2.7 million during 1972 to a record high \$1.97 billion. Including government payments, value of

home consumption and rental value of farm dwellings, gross 1972 Missouri farm income was \$2.28 billion.⁴

Aside from Missouri agriculture's economic importance, a number of incidents and situations in the past year or two have contributed to a growing interest in agricultural news by rural and urban newspaper readers in Missouri and across the nation.

The United States' wheat sales to Russia and China have helped put agriculture on page one, as farmers and non-farmers have voiced their feelings about the wisdom of the deals. Some point to a healthier U.S. economy and higher incomes for farmers as a result, while others complain that agreements with the Russians and Chinese have forced up domestic food prices.

Food cost itself was among the greatest public concerns of 1973. Higher grocery bills, consumer boycotts of meat and other commodities, shortages of certain foods and governmental control on the price of food all made top headlines in Missouri and other states during the past year.

Greater attention to profits made by farmers and others in related agri-business industries has resulted from the public's concern with rising food costs.

Other recent or current situations of great concern to farmers as well as non-farmers in Missouri are the effects of heavy rains and flooding in the spring and fall of 1973 on profits and food prices, skyrocketing livestock feed prices and the shortages of fuel and fertilizer.

Some agricultural leaders have become concerned that non-farm audiences be kept informed of developments in agricultural production. These leaders fear that lack of adequate information about agricultural

problems may cause the consuming public to react to higher food prices by pressing for short-sighted, harmful legislation.

Coupled with greater public interest in agriculture today are the problems of rising printing and labor costs for Missouri newspaper editors and newsprint shortage. The latter has forced editors to experiment with the kinds and amounts of news they offer.⁵

In essence, then, the Missouri newspaper editor seems to be faced with a demand for more agricultural news in a dwindling newshole.

Does this mean that Missouri editors are running more agricultural news and less non-agricultural news? Or does it mean that in spite of greater public interest in agriculture, the editors have decided to use about the same, or perhaps even less, agricultural news?

This in turn raises a problem for those who supply Missouri newspaper editors with agricultural information.

Should these sources disseminate a greater quantity of agricultural information and hope that editors will find room to use it? Or are sources wasting their time increasing their output in light of a dwindling newshole?

One source of agricultural information to Missouri newspapers is the Agricultural Editor's Office at the University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC), where the author is an information specialist. After nearly two years as the office's only press specialist, and one of two major writers of its agricultural information output, the author believes that feedback from Missouri newspaper editors on such questions as types and usefulness of agricultural information is essential.

Objectives

In this study the author sought to determine (1) what Missouri newspaper editors foresee as their needs for agricultural information in the near future, (2) how agricultural information competes for space with other types of news in Missouri newspapers, (3) what sources of agricultural information are most important to Missouri newspaper editors and (4) usefulness of the information presently sent out by the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, as perceived by Missouri newspaper editors.

Results of this study should help the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office staff decide how much and what kind of information is expected and desired by Missouri newspaper editors.

It also should help them determine how their present agricultural information output competes with other kinds of news sent to Missouri newspapers and whether certain adjustments would enhance the UMC service.

The wide range of possible agricultural and extension programs and events makes it impossible for the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office to cover all programs without costly staff additions. Therefore, knowing what Missouri newspaper editors deem most important, and especially what they expect to print, should help those in the Editor's Office provide a more meaningful service to Missouri newspapers and more efficient support for University programs.

A major function of the Cooperative Extension Service, as stated in the Smith-Lever Act passed in 1914, is "... to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information

on subjects relating to agriculture. . . ."6 This study should enable the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office more adequately to fulfill this stated function and to determine the best methods for doing so.

Basic findings on what editors want to use may help other agricultural agencies and farm groups as well.

Also known as Extension Information, the Agricultural Editor's Office is situated in the UMC Agriculture Building on the oldest and largest of the University's four campuses and the only one offering an agriculture curriculum. (Other campuses are in Kansas City, Rolla, and St. Louis.) The office has 16 professionals, with academic rank, who assist campus extension specialists in developing effective educational programs and serve as a news outlet for the UMC College of Agriculture.

The office maintains support programs in publications, broadcasting, print media, development of instructional materials, communications training for extension field staff and other functions as requested. In this study, the Agricultural Editor's Office is referred to only in its capacity as a source of agricultural information for Missouri newspapers.

The office offers four basic services for Missouri newspapers: daily news releases, photo releases, the Missouri Farm News Service and the Garden Spotlight.

Daily news or feature stories are sent to some or all Missouri daily newspapers as judged to be warranted by the professionals in the Agricultural Editor's Office. Most days one or more releases are mailed. The information may be about agricultural developments at the University or about someone or something in Missouri of interest to the University and presumably to other areas of the state. More than 300 of these releases are mailed to Missouri dailies annually. A daily release

is sometimes sent to a weekly newspaper, especially if it contains a reference to the community or area or a local resident.

A photo release is a glossy photograph and cutline sent from the Agricultural Editor's Office to a Missouri newspaper pertaining to a newsworthy event or situation in the UMC College of Agriculture or Extension Division. A photo release may accompany a related daily release.

The Missouri Farm News Service is a nine-by-twelve-inch weekly printed clipsheet mailed to every Missouri newspaper, but primarily intended as a source of agricultural information for Missouri weeklies. The four to six stories per issue are set in type, headlines included, so that offset papers may clip and use them without resetting. This is the only camera-ready copy service provided by the Editor's Office. Many Missouri weeklies--and some dailies--use the stories in whole or part, either as sent or as reset. Occasionally a halftone and cutline are used in the clipsheet which may or may not be related to a news article appearing in the same issue. Some of these also are used by editors as camera-ready copy.

The Missouri Farm News Service is the oldest continuous service to Missouri newspapers from the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, having been published regularly since 1911. The author updated the mailing list in spring 1973 to insure every daily and weekly newspaper in Missouri is receiving the clipsheet. Every newspaper included in this study had the opportunity to be familiar with the clipsheet for at least several months. The Missouri Farm News Service also is mailed to many farm magazines, vocational agriculture teachers, state and federal

agencies interested in agriculture, the College of Agriculture faculty at UMC and others.

The fourth basic service to Missouri newspapers is the Garden Spotlight, a typed and duplicated column mailed every week from the Editor's Office to about 90 Missouri newspapers requesting the service. Written by an extension horticulturist at UMC, it contains subject matter of interest to those who raise flowers and vegetables or who plan or care for home landscapes.

Samples of each of these four services are included in Appendix A of this study.

FOOTNOTES

¹Rex Campbell and C. Edwin Vaughan, Urban, Rural, and Rural Non-Farm Population, Data for Missouri, Extension Division, University of Missouri-Columbia, Series 8502 (October, 1970).

²Missouri Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Missouri Agri-Business (Columbia, Mo., 1972), inside front cover.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Missouri Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Missouri Farm Facts--1973 (Columbia, Mo., 1973), p. 36.

⁵"APME Poll Indicates Cut in the News Hole," Editor & Publisher (October 13, 1973), p. 66.

⁶Frederick B. Mumford, The Land Grant College Movement (Columbia, Mo., 1940), p. 118.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although many studies on the general topic of newspaper editors' interest in, and use of, agricultural news have been documented, only one was done at the University of Missouri-Columbia. David J. Miller, a former information specialist for the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, examined Missouri newspaper editors' attitudes toward news and information distributed by that office. This 1967 study found few editors used more than one-fourth of the material in the Missouri Farm News Service. Most used it mainly as filler.¹ Miller concluded that a weekly mat and proof service, if nothing more than one mat per week, might be a more effective use of office time than continuing the Missouri Farm News Service.² However, the service is nearly the same in 1974 as it was at the time of Miller's study.

Miller suggested making the type in the Missouri Farm News Service bolder for offset papers, but no change was made in typography until April, 1969, when the present type faces--slightly more readable but no bolder--were first used.³

Miller also found a relatively low use of daily releases.⁴ On the average, editors in his study used about one-fourth of this material. He concluded that perhaps fewer releases of more general interest would be worth considering.

At the time of Miller's study, the Garden Spotlight, which now is

sent from the Editor's Office every week, did not yet exist. However, a similar feature, "This Week's Yard 'n' Garden," was mailed weekly from March through October. Miller found this feature was received as favorably, or more so, than any service of the Agricultural Editor's Office.⁵ Some editors indicated that illustrations could be used to advantage with the column; however, none is sent today with the Garden Spotlight. The editors also said the old column should not exceed one and one-half to two typewritten, double-spaced pages. The current Garden Spotlight rarely exceeds two pages. Miller called for greater effort to make sure every editor in the state was aware of the old feature. However, today the Garden Spotlight is sent to only 92 Missouri newspapers, whereas its predecessor went to some 150.⁶

Miller found Missouri editors did not expect anything in particular from the Agricultural Editor's Office. The office should feel free to make necessary changes in its service without fear of alienating editors, he concluded.⁷ Other suggestions made by editors in Miller's study included writing localized stories for four- or five-county areas, and being more specific in releases and feature stories.⁸ Miller did not attempt to evaluate Missouri newspaper editors' attitudes toward photo releases, as this author did. Also in this study a random sampling technique to represent the entire population of daily and weekly newspaper editors was used, whereas Miller selected two daily and three weekly newspapers from each of eight extension districts in Missouri. He used a table of random numbers to make his selections, although he limited his sample to not more than one newspaper per county.

Miller's study apparently is the only one in the literature dealing with agricultural needs and interests of newspapers or editors in

Missouri. However, as indicated earlier, several studies exist on other states.

These studies may be examined and compared in at least seven areas--those related to (1) amount of newspaper space devoted to agricultural news, (2) factors affecting use of agricultural news, (3) types of agricultural news most popular with editors, (4) intended audiences, (5) major sources of agricultural news, (6) use and evaluation by newspaper editors of agricultural news disseminated from college and university information offices and (7) the effect of the newsprint shortage on types of news editors will print.

Space Devoted to Agricultural News

A 1934 study by J. M. Stedman illustrated the trend that newspaper editors devoted an increasing amount of space to agricultural news before 1930.⁹ In his sample of 58 daily newspapers in 13 states, Stedman compared the amount of agricultural news printed during one week in 1914 and one week in 1930. He found 66 per cent more agricultural news articles in 1930 than in 1914. However, individual agricultural stories had become shorter during those 16 years. In terms of column inches, agricultural lineage increased 45 per cent between the two time blocks.

In a Wisconsin study of 63 United States dailies in 1948, it was found that agricultural news made up 0.3 to 2.3 per cent of all non-advertising space.¹⁰ In a related analysis of 38 Vermont newspapers in 1954, G. Gross found that dailies devoted 3.6 per cent of their total news space to agriculture. Daily editors there also indicated that

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were the heaviest agricultural news days.¹¹ Paul J. Deutschmann's 1959 analysis of five Ohio dailies showed agricultural news made up 0.2 to 2.4 per cent of the total news and editorial space.¹²

Michael W. Sampson reported in 1974 that about three-fourths of Washington state's daily and weekly editors said they plan to use the same amount of agricultural news in the coming year, and about one-fourth plan to use more. Only eight per cent of weekly editors said they wanted less agricultural news from all sources.¹³

Factors Affecting Use

In his study of agricultural news usage, in certain Illinois daily newspapers, James Haskell White found editors using a large amount of farm news rated agricultural material higher in news value than did editors using a light amount. He further found that editors with a heavy use of farm news were more inclined to feel that farm news could contribute to the profitability of their newspapers.¹⁴

White indicated the editor's background had little to do with the use of farm news,¹⁵ and that mechanical problems such as sending news to the wrong person at the newspaper did not necessarily influence its use.¹⁶

James F. Evans indicated in 1966 that, although most editors did not consider farm news pages as "money-makers," they planned to continue printing about the same amount of agricultural news.¹⁷

In a 1969 Georgia study, Donald J. Johnson found that newspaper editors for the most part use agricultural news items mainly on the bases of reader interest and local adaptation.¹⁸ Even at that time,

Johnson found that about a third of daily and weekly editors thought their non-farm readers were becoming more interested in agricultural news.¹⁹

Forrest D. Cress, in a 1973 California survey, found that local angle, dependability of source and subject matter were ranked in that order by most dailies as top considerations to print agricultural news releases. The same three considerations were ranked in slightly different order by weekly editors--local angle, subject matter and dependability of source, respectively.²⁰

Sampson found that Washington's daily and weekly editors ranked reader interest and adaptability to a local situation as key factors in deciding whether to use a particular news story.²¹ This corresponds with Johnson's Georgia data, in which 95.8 per cent of the weekly editors and 83.4 per cent of the daily editors in that state considered reader interest as important in deciding to use a story.²²

Fifty-six per cent of all editors in Sampson's study said their non-farm readers were mildly interested in agricultural news, and slightly more than half said their non-farm readers were not changing their interest in agricultural news.²³

In choosing their most important source of agricultural news, Washington editors reported the main factors in their choice were subject matter (content), timeliness and the dependability of the news source. Four-fifths of the daily editors placed high value on timeliness, while two-thirds chose subject matter and dependability of source. More than four-fifths of the weekly editors chose subject matter as the most important factor, followed by almost three-fourths who chose timeliness.²⁴

Preferred Types of Agricultural News

Results of several studies pointed out that dailies stress agricultural articles about events and economics.

In a 1950 study of 41 New York dailies, Alfred N. Schwartz found that marketing and economic topics made up 42 per cent of all agricultural news printed. Rural-life topics made up 36 per cent, and stories about agricultural production made up the remaining 22 per cent.²⁵

Gross found that dailies used spot news more than subject matter stories (those on agricultural topics but not related to a specific event or "news peg"). He concluded that economic subjects proved most popular among newspapers he sampled in Vermont.²⁶

Holim Kim found in a trend study of agricultural news in New York there was a significant rise in research reports. He also found a decrease (eight per cent) in reports about persons, awards and announcements.²⁷

Less emphasis on economic articles was apparent in Howard Frisbee's 1961 study of Ohio daily editors. The 51 editors he interviewed listed the following in order of preference: youth organizations, crops, adult organizations, animals, conservation, forestry and wildlife, food buying and nutrition, lawn and garden, food marketing, clothing, engineering, and interrelationship of town and country.²⁸

P. J. Tichenor, G. A. Donohue and C. N. Olien concluded in a 1963 Minnesota report that "...event stories received preferential display in comparison to subject matter articles." Nearly half the special event stories were located on page one of the sampled weekly and daily papers. Only 14 per cent of the subject matter stories got page-one

treatment. Among the daily papers, 10 per cent of the event stories were located on page one, and only three per cent of the subject matter stories received this play.²⁹

In a 1967 Arizona study, George Alstad reported that daily editors combined showed stronger preference for agricultural stories than they did for family living stories. Weekly editors showed over-all preference for 4-H stories.³⁰

Intended Audiences

Kim's New York study showed that eleven per cent more agricultural stories were written for a general audience in 1960 than in 1955.³¹

Joel Wolfson's 1960 study of Midwestern dailies in metropolitan areas indicated that farm editors of eight such papers were writing for both the city reader and farm reader.³²

Frisbee reported that three-fourths of the 164 Ohio weekly and daily editors he sampled aimed their agricultural news at rural readers. He found that two-fifths tried to reach suburban readers and one-sixth tried to appeal to urban readers.³³

Evans' Illinois study indicated about three-fourths of printed agricultural news items were directed mainly toward farmers. About one-half were placed in identified agricultural news sections. Nearly one-third of these farm news stories were in the fourth quarter of the editions.³⁴

Sources of Agricultural News

Many studies were found in the literature which pertained to the

question of where newspaper editors turned for agricultural news and information.

Schwartz's study showed that newspapers' own staffs provided 22 per cent of the agricultural news; county extension agents, 20 per cent; wire services and syndicates, 15 per cent; state department of agriculture and markets, 15 per cent; and the state extension service, six per cent. Farm organizations and commercial firms provided the remaining 22 per cent.³⁵

William B. Ward found in a 1941 study of sixty-three daily newspapers from thirty-one states that these newspapers were using more agricultural news from county extension agents than any other source, with state extension services not far behind.³⁶

Frisbee's study indicated that "...although numerous sources were named, the Ohio Agricultural Extension Service, including county and state offices and 4-H clubs, was listed as the most important source of (agricultural) news..." for the 164 Ohio newspapers he sampled.³⁷

Evans found Illinois dailies relied more heavily on wire service material and less heavily on Cooperative Extension Service material.³⁸

Johnson found that the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service was rated second only to county extension agents as the most important source of agricultural news for Georgia newspapers.³⁹ Johnson concluded that, with the passing of the "farm editor" on the staffs of most Georgia newspapers, agricultural news sources such as the Extension Service were being depended on to provide the necessary information to keep editors and the state abreast of developments and over-all situations in agriculture.⁴⁰

All 31 active members of the Newspaper Farm Editors of America

responding to a 1971 survey conducted by J. Cordell Hatch at Pennsylvania State University said they received news material from county extension agents, and 90 per cent said they received material from agricultural college editors.⁴¹ Ninety-six per cent reported receiving releases each week from county agents, with 14 per cent of the editors saying they would use "much more" material and 32 per cent saying "some more" material. Fifty per cent received photos weekly from county agents, and 82 per cent reported receiving photos from college editors. Asked if they could use more photos, 31 per cent of the newspaper editors said they could use "many more," and the same percentage said "some more."

Hatch also reported in 1971 a similar study surveying members of the American Agricultural Editors Association, which brought replies from 82 members. Of this total, 99 per cent received material from agricultural college editors, and 61 per cent received material from county extension agents. Forty per cent of photos received by those who responded to the survey came from county agents, and 81 per cent came from college editors.⁴²

Both of the surveys conducted by Hatch dealt with likes and dislikes of editors in regard to agricultural news, suggestions of ways in which service could be improved and subject-matter areas editors would like to see covered by their agricultural news sources.

In the 1973 survey of California newspapers, Cress asked many questions of editors similar to those asked in this study. Representing the University of California Agricultural Extension news service, Cress found that one-third of the dailies replying to his mail questionnaire said they used 50 per cent or more of the news releases sent by that

office.⁴³ Three-quarters of them used 25 per cent or more of the stories. Two-thirds of the dailies in northern California and one-third in the south said they wanted more photos from Agricultural Extension news sources, and, statewide, one-third of the weeklies wanted more photos.⁴⁴

Sampson studied relative importance of agricultural news sources to weekly and daily editors in Washington and found that the county extension agent is the No. 1 source by a large percentage. He also found farmers ranked second by daily and weekly editors, although in the case of daily editors, the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service tied for second with farmers.⁴⁵ Sampson reported that 80 per cent of daily and weekly editors in his state said that they wanted more photos from their agricultural news sources.⁴⁶ As to distribution of agricultural news from extension sources, most editors agreed they would like to receive the same amount in the future as at the time of the survey.⁴⁷

Evaluation of Agricultural Information

In a 1963 study, Janet L. Wallace concluded that, although the weekly agricultural news packet sent out by the University of West Virginia had some shortcomings, it was judged a worthwhile service by both newspapers and extension agents. She said it had to be of high quality to compete with all other news that editors received.⁴⁸

Editors in Johnson's study rated the material received from Georgia extension news editors as "good" on a scale of excellent-good-fair-poor. Most frequent suggestion for improving the extension news services was that more local-interest material be provided.⁴⁹

Cress concluded that California's daily newspapers generally value--and make considerable use of--information in Agricultural Extension news releases. Agricultural Extension is recognized by the state's newspapers as being a most important source of agricultural news.⁵⁰

The editors in Sampson's study in Washington state ranked the four areas of subject matter, timeliness, story length and style on a scale ranging from "excellent" to "poor." For the most part, the editors there ranked the four areas as "good."⁵¹

Newsprint Shortage

Only one study was found regarding the effect of the newsprint shortage which hit many editors in 1973 and continues to be a source of concern in 1974. A 1973 survey by the graphics and photo committee of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association showed that 295 of the 470 participating newspapers had cut some news from their papers because of newsprint shortage. Others cut advertising or reduced circulation. The type and size of cutbacks varied with the size and location of the newspaper. Sixty per cent of the papers with a circulation of less than 25,000 cut news, at an average of 40 columns a day, or 60 per cent of the previous size.⁵²

Summary

Although the studies mentioned in this chapter covered a wide range of topics in regard to newspaper editors' use of agricultural news, some general conclusions may be drawn.

First, daily newspaper editors tend to place more emphasis on

articles dealing with events and economics than with subject matter, when deciding use of agricultural stories.

Second, agricultural news sources continue to aim most of their material at farm readers, whereas daily newspaper editors prefer to have agricultural news directed at both urban and rural readers.

Third, agricultural news makes up a small share of the total lineage in most newspapers, especially dailies in metropolitan areas.

Fourth, most agricultural news stories are placed toward back sections of newspapers.

Fifth, agricultural extension news sources--including county and area field specialists and editors in land-grant colleges and universities--compete favorably with other sources of agricultural news in getting their news printed in daily and weekly newspapers. On the whole, extension news is considered good by editors, and most of them say they want and will use more agricultural news and photos from extension sources.

Sixth, editors rate reader interest and local adaptability very high in selecting agricultural news, but also consider timeliness, subject matter and dependability of the source as important.

In presenting a rationale for this study, it must be noted that the situation in agricultural news has changed dramatically since the aforementioned studies were done--including even Sampson's 1974 study (the questionnaire to which the editors in his study replied was mailed in late 1971).

In other words, the author felt that a new study on the general topic of newspaper editors' attitudes toward agricultural news was warranted, considering that prior studies were done before the U.S.

started selling wheat to Russia and China, before the inflation of food prices of 1973, before the so-called energy crisis caused fuel and fertilizer shortages for U.S. farmers and before newspaper editors started feeling the shortage of newsprint.

Even without these recent developments, it was time for a study of editors' attitudes in Missouri, since the last one was done in 1966-67. Even more recent studies in other states such as Georgia, California and Washington could not be considered valid in Missouri, since each state has its own set of circumstances and problems.

Therefore, although this author studied some of the same questions as have been examined in many other states in the past 40 years, this 1974 Missouri study was carried out against an entirely different background--supposedly greater public interest in agricultural news coupled with newsprint shortage.

This study, unlike any of the above, sought to determine how agricultural news competes for space with other news in Missouri newspapers. Editors were asked how likely they were to cut back on several general categories of news, including agricultural news, if faced with a need to reduce their newshole.

Another difference between this and previous studies is the author's attempt to determine any difference between daily and weekly editors' interest in several subcategories of agricultural news and, in addition, if there was a regional difference in interest in agricultural news in Missouri.

Discussion of findings of this study will indicate similarities and differences with the findings of other closely related studies mentioned in this chapter.

FOOTNOTES

¹David J. Miller, "Newspaper Editors' Attitudes Toward Extension News" (unpub. master's thesis, University of Missouri, 1967), pp. 65 and 69.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 91.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 92.

⁸Ibid.

⁹J. M. Stedman, A Study of Agricultural, Home Economics, and 4-H Club Articles in Representative Daily and Weekly Newspapers in 1914 and 1930, U. S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service Circular 202 (Washington, D. C., 1934).

¹⁰Content of Selected U. S. Dailies, October 23-November 1, 1948. Department of Agricultural Journalism, College of Agriculture, Bulletin 16 (University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., 1948), p. 19.

¹¹G. Gross, "The Use of Agricultural News in the Vermont Press," Vermont Agricultural College Extension Service, 1954.

¹²Paul J. Deutschmann, Newspage Content of Twelve Metropolitan Dailies (Scripps-Howard Research, New York, 1959), pp. 96-117.

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- ³⁴Evans, p. 30.
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- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 68.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 69.
- ⁴⁸Janet Lee Wallace, "Effectiveness of West Virginia University Agricultural News" (unpub. master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1963).
- ⁴⁹Johnson, p. 73.
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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Although most people probably think of Missouri as a Midwestern state, some elements of its population have allegiance to the South and even to the Southwest. History records the state's divided loyalties in the Civil War.

Missouri is one of two states (along with Tennessee) which border on eight others and, as a result, links disparate physical features and life styles such as the plains of Nebraska and Kansas with the hills of Kentucky and Tennessee and the heavily populated and relatively affluent agricultural states of Illinois and Iowa with the more sparsely populated and agriculturally poorer states of Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Within its own borders, Missouri contains two of the nation's largest metropolitan areas--St. Louis and Kansas City--as well as the agriculturally productive northern counties and the heavily forested and hilly southern counties, loosely called the Ozarks.

Agriculture is a greater source of income for counties in northern Missouri and for a six-county area in extreme southeastern Missouri known as the Bootheel (because of the area's resemblance in shape to the heel of a boot) than it is for the remainder of southern Missouri.¹ This would indicate there might be a significant difference in interest in agricultural news among newspaper editors in different parts of the state. The author suggested that this study would show significantly

greater interest in such news in certain areas of the state.

Hypothesis

The author also believed the study would reveal a significantly greater interest among editors of weekly newspapers for news about raw agricultural products than among daily newspaper editors. The daily editors, it was hypothesized, would show significantly greater interest in news about finished agricultural products than would weekly editors.

For this study, "raw agricultural products" were defined as those not yet harvested or gone to market--in other words, those still in hands of the farmer. These include grain and forage crops, hogs and feeder pigs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, and poultry and eggs.

"Finished agricultural products" refer to those closer to the consumer than to the farmer. Topics include retail food prices, nutrition for consumers (as opposed to nutrition for animals), world food supplies, processing of food, and food safety and storage.

Rationale for this hypothesis was the author's belief that daily newspapers generally are read more by non-farmers and that weekly newspapers generally are read more by farmers.

Questionnaire and Related Objectives

The device chosen by the author to gather data for meeting the four basic objectives of the study, as well as testing the hypothesis, was a mail questionnaire (see Appendix B). It was designed to elicit responses (from newspaper editors) relevant to the objectives and hypothesis.

The first section of the questionnaire asked for the location and

name of the newspaper, title of the person responding, degree of his responsibility for deciding how much agricultural news is printed in his newspaper, and his predominant background (i.e., farm, rural non-farm area or town of less than 2,500 or town or city of more than 2,500). The cover letter requested the publisher of the newspaper to give the questionnaire to the person on his newspaper staff most directly concerned with choosing agricultural news content.

The remaining 27 items on the questionnaire were specific questions designed to meet the objectives and hypothesis and other types of general information helpful to the staff of the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office.

The first objective was to determine Missouri newspaper editors' perceived needs for agricultural information in the near future. Questionnaire items related to this objective were 6, 12, 15, 18 and 19, dealing with editors' anticipated use of agricultural news in 1974 compared to 1973, as well as their interest in receiving daily news releases, camera-ready copy (such as in the Missouri Farm News Service), and photo releases from the Editor's Office in the coming year.

The second objective was to determine how agricultural information competes for space with other types of news in Missouri newspapers. Questionnaire items 21, 22 and 24 were intended to comport with this objective. They dealt with where in the newspaper agricultural news is printed, use of farm sections or farm pages and how likely editors would be to cut back on 10 general content categories if faced with the need to do so.

The third objective was to establish what sources of agricultural information are most important to Missouri newspaper editors.

Questionnaire item 25, covering relative frequency with which various sources of agricultural news were being used, was most closely related to this objective.

The fourth objective dealt with usefulness of information presently sent out by the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, as perceived by Missouri editors. Questionnaire items designed for this objective included 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 27, 28, 29 and 30. They touched on how much use was made by editors of the four basic services of the Editor's Office and how respondents would evaluate each one on a range of "excellent" to "poor."

To determine whether there were regional differences in Missouri editors' interest in agricultural news, the author compared responses to questionnaire items 4 through 8, 11 through 13, and 18 and 19. These items attempted to determine how much agricultural news was being used, the editors' perceived estimate of their readers' interest in such news, whether their use of agricultural news was likely to increase in 1974 and how much use was made of the four basic services of the Editor's Office.

The hypothesis that daily editors would show significantly greater interest in news about finished agricultural products than would weekly editors was tested strictly by questionnaire item 25, which asked editors to check on a five-point scale their relative interest in ten agricultural news topics, five of which were about finished agricultural products and five of which were about raw agricultural products.

It should be noted that some questionnaire items were used for more than one purpose, i.e., to relate to the first objective as well as to help test the hypothesis. On the other hand, some items (Nos. 1, 2, 3,

9, 16, 17, 23 and 26) asked for general kinds of information not directly related to any of the objectives nor the hypothesis.

Also, some questionnaire items were designed for multiple answers, such as No. 9 on situations affecting reader interest in agricultural news. However, some editors gave multiple answers to other items as well.

Sampling Procedure

According to the 1973 Missouri Newspaper Directory, issued by the Missouri Press Service, Inc., the state has 59 hometown dailies and 274 weeklies, plus four metropolitan dailies.² So that weekly editors' opinions would be based on a reasonable number of readers, no weekly with a circulation of less than 1,200 was included in the study sample. This seemed reasonable since the average circulation of Missouri weeklies in 1973 was 2,640.³ All but 54 of the 274 Missouri weeklies have a circulation of 1,200 or more.

To achieve the greatest representation of editors' attitudes toward the study topics, and still keep the size and framework of the research manageable, the author attempted to get responses from 20 dailies and 70 weeklies. This seemed appropriate since there are about three-and-a-half times as many weeklies in the state as dailies (counting only those weeklies with a circulation of more than 1,200).

The 90 newspapers were selected by a table of random numbers. The random selection process theoretically enabled the author to generalize study results to all Missouri newspapers, within tolerable error limits and without having to survey the 337-paper universe.

Stratification by area of the state was considered but deemed

unnecessary since the random sample was distributed rather evenly over the state. Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of dailies in the sample, and Figure 2 shows the geographical distribution of weeklies.

The questionnaire was pre-tested. Five persons holding advanced degrees and active in the field of mass communication or applied research were asked to participate in pre-testing. A number of changes were made in the final draft based on pre-test respondents' suggestions.

The first mailing was January 8, 1974, with a cover letter (see Appendix B) to the publishers of sampled newspapers. Another mailing to non-respondents was made two weeks later, January 21, with a second cover letter (also in Appendix B) emphasizing that the greater the return, the greater the possibility of generalizing the results to the entire population of Missouri newspapers. An addressed, postage-paid envelope was enclosed in both mailings. The second letter asked for a return by February 1. Returned questionnaires were received by the author as late as February 13, 1974.

Most of the data presented in Chapter IV are expressed in percentages. Where deemed appropriate, probability tests were used, especially where data applied to the hypothesis. The question of geographical variation in interest in agricultural news across the state was tested with a t-test, which measured whether there was a significant difference in the mean interest scores of the highest and lowest sections of the state.

The hypothesis--that of an expected difference in interest in raw vs. finished agricultural product news among daily and weekly editors--was tested using an analysis of variance and correlation ratio.

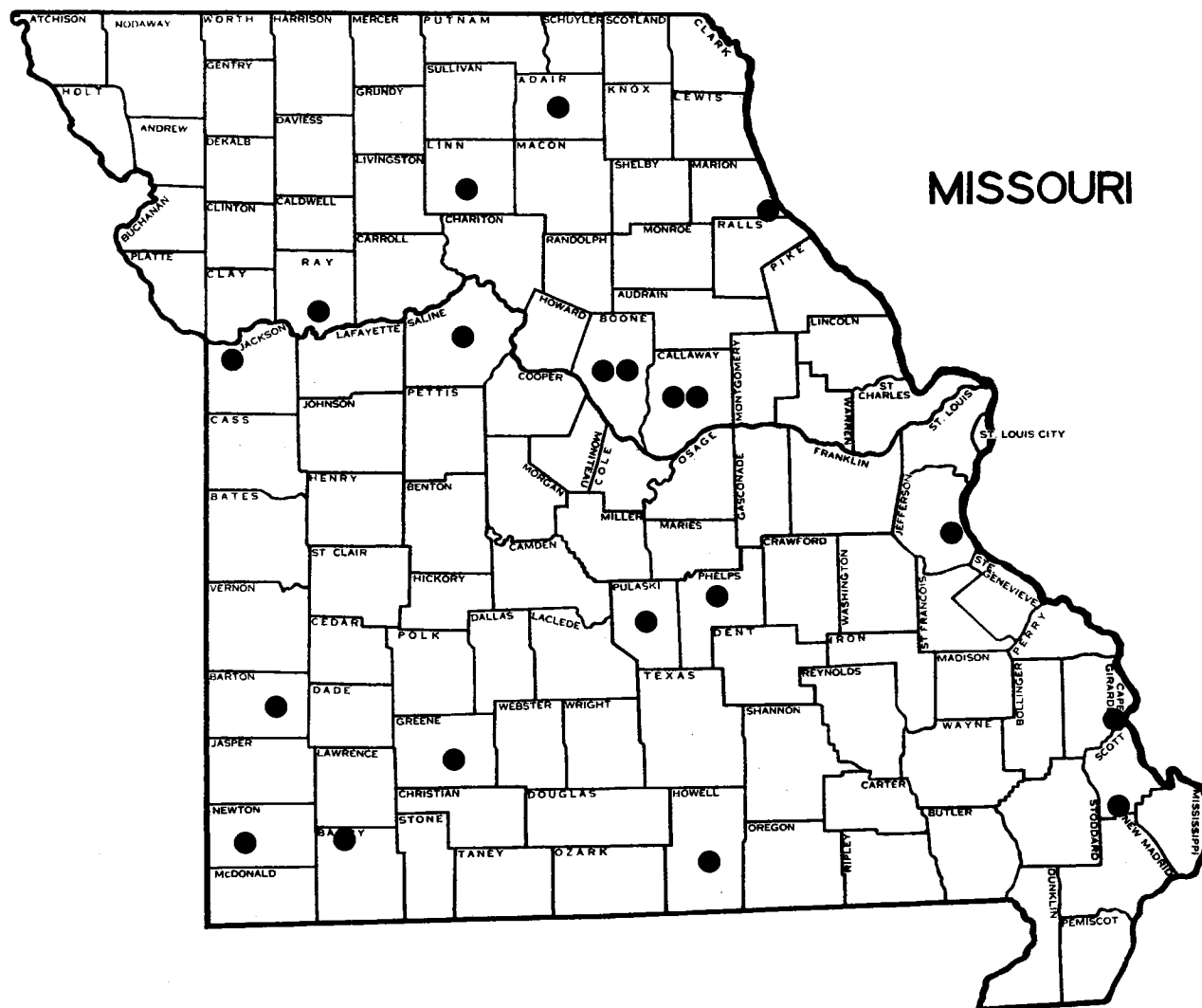


Figure 1. Location of 20 Daily Newspapers Receiving Questionnaire

About 70 per cent of the editors wanted copies of the results, which were mailed in early March.

FOOTNOTES

¹Missouri Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Missouri Farm Facts--1973 (Columbia, Mo., 1973).

²Missouri Newspaper Directory, 1973 Advertising Ratebook, Missouri Press Service, Inc. (Columbia, Mo., 1973), p. 3.

³Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A return rate of 80 per cent was established for daily newspapers, as 16 questionnaires of the 20 sent were returned. Of the 70 questionnaires sent to weekly newspapers, 51 (73 per cent) were returned. Of the 51, one was returned with the explanation that the newspaper had ceased publication in the past year. Another weekly newspaper returned the questionnaire with only seven of the items completed. Not counting these two questionnaires, the return rate for weeklies was 72 per cent (49 of 68).

Figures 3 and 4 show the location of the newspapers that returned the questionnaire.

Titles of persons answering the questionnaire varied. Most common among dailies were managing editor (5), farm editor (3), editor (2) and general manager (2). Other respondents from dailies were assistant editor, publisher, editor and publisher, and city editor, mentioned once each.

From weeklies, the titles named more than once included editor (13), publisher (8), editor-publisher (5), publisher-editor (3), managing editor (2), general manager (2), city editor (2) and news editor (2). Titles mentioned only once among weeklies were editor and co-publisher, general manager-editor, assistant publisher-editor, partner, assistant to the editor, agribusiness editor, part owner, owner,

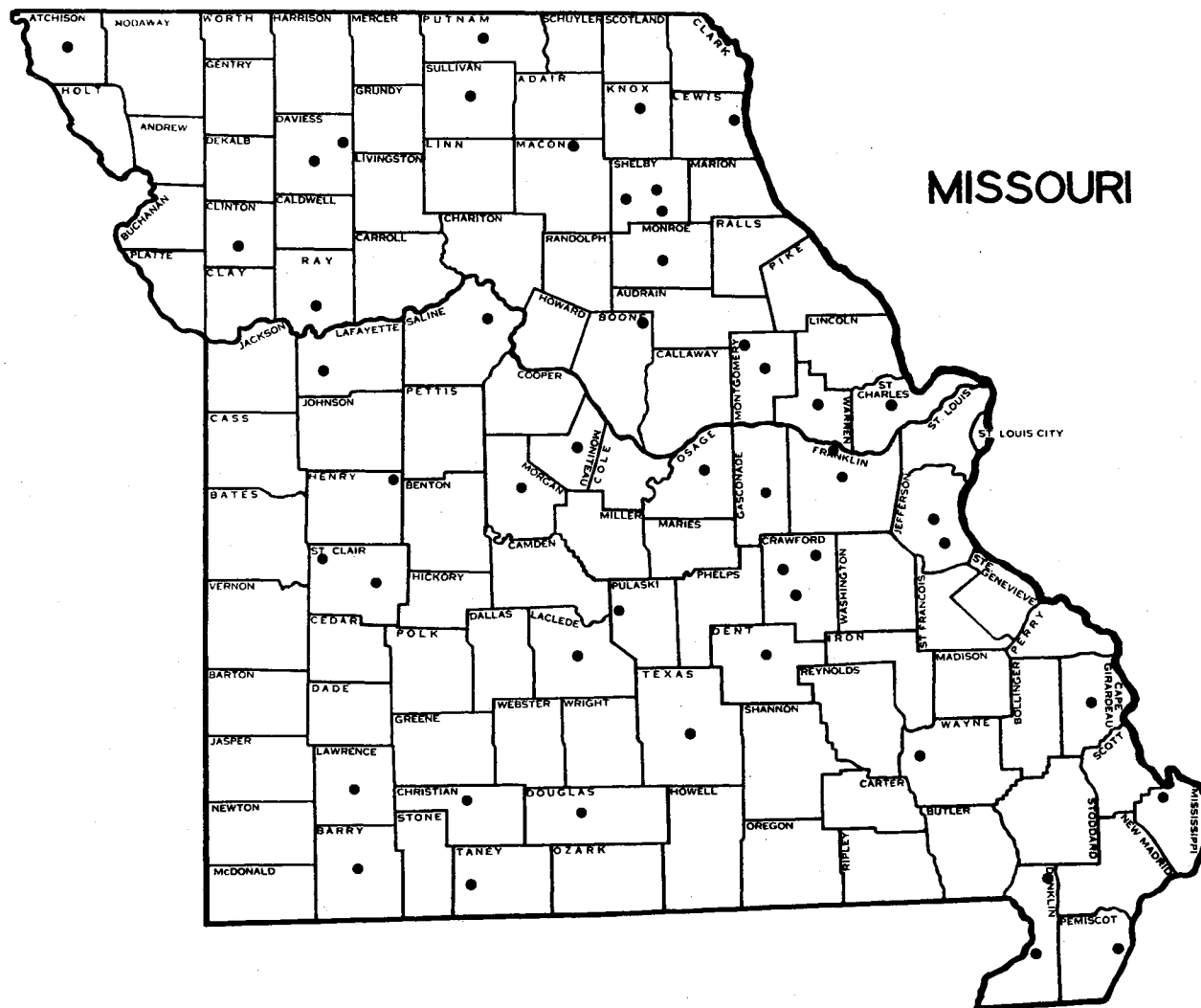


Figure 4. Location of 50 Weekly Newspapers Returning Questionnaire

farm page editor, assistant publisher and managing editor, reporter, and bookkeeper. One was not specified.

Because most of the respondents perform the editing function, the term "editors" will be used to refer to the respondents as a group in reporting the study findings.

More than half the respondents (54 per cent) said they had "complete" responsibility for deciding how much agricultural news to print. Another 31 per cent said they had "most" of the responsibility, and 14 per cent said they had "some." One respondent said he had "none" of the responsibility, but this was a special case. He was general manager of the Columbia Missourian, a daily newspaper produced by students in the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. He was acting on behalf of the paper's new managing editor. Even though responsibility for deciding how much agricultural news went into the Missourian was out of his hands, he was judged by the author to be well enough informed about his newspaper to be able to answer the questions accurately.

Twelve respondents (19 per cent) were from a predominantly farm background. Forty-four per cent grew up in a rural non-farm area or town of less than 2,500, and the remaining 37 per cent in a town or city of more than 2,500. Most respondents from dailies said they were from a town or city of more than 2,500, whereas respondents from weeklies were mostly from rural non-farm areas or towns of less than 2,500 (see Table I).

TABLE I
 PREDOMINANT BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Background	Daily Editors		Weekly Editors		Combined	
	N*	%	N	%	N	%
Farm	4	25	8	17	12	19
Rural non-farm area or town of less than 2,500	3	19	25	52	28	44
Town or city of more than 2,500	9	56	15	31	24	37

*Indicates number of respondents.

Use of Agricultural News and Reader Interest

On the question "What percentage of your issues contain agricultural news?", no single answer prevailed. One-quarter said 81-100 per cent; 16 per cent responded with 61-80 per cent; 9 per cent, 41-60 per cent; 16 per cent, 21-40 per cent; and 34 per cent replied 0-20 per cent of their issues.

When asked to compare their use of agricultural news in 1973 with 1972, most of the respondents (62 per cent) said they used "about the same" each year. However, one-quarter said they used "more," and another 8 per cent said they used "a lot more" in 1973. Only 5 per cent said they used more in 1972. This would indicate greater interest in, and use of, agricultural news in the past two years.

As for 1974, nearly half the respondents (48.5 per cent) thought

they would print more agricultural news in 1974 than they did in 1973. About 30 per cent said they did not expect to, and another 21.5 per cent were uncertain or said it would depend on the amount and kind offered by their sources.

When asked about over-all reader interest in agricultural news, 17 per cent replied that interest was "very high"; 41 per cent replied "high"; another 41 per cent "average"; and one per cent "low."

Almost half the respondents (49 per cent) said they felt readers were becoming more interested in agricultural news in general. About 32 per cent felt readers were not changing their interest, and 9 per cent said readers were becoming less interested. Nine per cent voiced no opinion.

Respondents were asked to tell what situations affected reader interest in agricultural news in 1973. Rising food prices, grain sales to Russia and China, and flooding in Missouri already were printed on the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to specify other situations as they wished. Eighty per cent checked rising food prices; 56 per cent checked grain sales to Russia and China; and 53 per cent checked flooding in Missouri. Two respondents mentioned the "energy crisis." Other specified situations included rising grain and cotton prices, rustling, shortages (i.e., of fuel and fertilizer), high cost of farm land, rising production and equipment costs, government policies on farming, conservation and ecology movements, specialization of farming operations, low feedlot profits, growth of subdivisions and mobile home parks, and "a general realization that man is a child of nature, is of the earth."

Editors' Interests in News Release Topics

Respondents were asked to rate their interest on a five-point scale from "very high" to "very low" in 10 different agricultural news topics. Table II, showing distribution of responses from daily editors, indicates a moderate to high degree of interest in every topic. Similar responses were made by weekly newspaper editors, as shown in Table III, although this group gave a greater percentage of "low" responses for about half the topics.

TABLE II
NUMBER OF RESPONSES FROM DAILY NEWSPAPER EDITORS IN
EACH OF FIVE POSSIBLE DEGREE-OF-INTEREST
CATEGORIES FOR TEN AGRICULTURAL
NEWS TOPICS

Topics	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Grain and forage crops	4	6	5	1	0
Hogs and feeder pigs	5	5	6	0	0
Beef cattle	5	5	6	0	0
Dairy cattle	2	5	5	4	0
Poultry and eggs	0	3	10	3	0
Retail food prices	3	6	7	0	0
Nutrition for consumers	3	2	11	0	0
World food supplies	2	2	10	1	1
Processing of food	0	4	11	1	0
Food safety and storage	1	6	7	1	1

TABLE III
 NUMBER OF RESPONSES FROM WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EDITORS IN
 EACH OF FIVE POSSIBLE DEGREE-OF-INTEREST
 CATEGORIES FOR TEN AGRICULTURAL
 NEWS TOPICS

Topics	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Grain and forage crops	5	17	24	1	0
Hogs and feeder pigs	9	24	11	3	0
Beef cattle	4	24	12	2	0
Dairy cattle	4	7	22	6	7
Poultry and eggs	0	6	21	13	4
Retail food prices	12	15	20	2	1
Nutrition for consumers	3	11	15	12	2
World food supplies	1	8	14	15	7
Processing of food	0	4	22	13	6
Food safety and storage	0	6	25	12	1

The hypothesis of this study was that there would be a significantly greater interest among editors of weekly newspapers for news about raw agricultural products than among editors of daily newspapers, and that daily editors would show significantly greater interest in news about finished agricultural products than would weekly editors. This hypothesis was based on the assumption that daily newspapers are geared more to consumers while weeklies are geared more to farmers.

The first five topics in Tables II and III were defined in the previous chapter as making up raw agricultural products, while the last five topics in the tables were defined as making up finished agricultural products. To see how each topic fared over-all, a raw interest

score for each response and topic was computed by assigning values to the possible answers as such: 5 for "very high," 4 for "high," 3 for "moderate," 2 for "low," and 1 for "very low." Daily and weekly editors' average interests for each of the 10 topics are presented in Table IV, along with the differences in each average between dailies and weeklies.

TABLE IV
AVERAGE INTEREST IN, AND MEAN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN,
TEN AGRICULTURAL NEWS TOPICS FOR MISSOURI
DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Topics	Dailies	Weeklies	Difference
Hogs and feeder pigs	3.94	3.83	.11
Beef cattle	3.94	3.71	.23
Grain and forage crops	3.81	3.55	.26
Retail food prices	3.75	3.70	.05
Nutrition for consumers	3.50	3.02	.48
Dairy cattle	3.31	2.89	.42
Food safety and storage	3.31	2.82	.49
World food supplies	3.19	2.58	.61
Processing of food	3.19	2.53	.66
Poultry and eggs	3.00	2.66	.34
AVERAGES	3.49	3.13	.36

5 = Very high 4 = High 3 = Moderate 2 = Low 1 = Very Low

From Table IV, it seems obvious that the average interest of weekly newspaper editors does not exceed that of daily newspaper editors in any category.

Most averages are very close for dailies and weeklies on the various news topics, but daily respondents expressed a greater interest in every topic. This has led the author to conclude that daily newspapers may be geared to the farmer as much as are weekly newspapers. Regarding the hypothesis, the data tend to confirm that there probably is no difference between daily and weekly editors' preferences as to raw and finished product news.

The highest interest categories for dailies were "hogs and feeder pigs" and "beef cattle," each with a near-high interest of 3.94. "Hogs and feeder pigs" stood alone as the category of most interest to weekly newspaper editors, with a 3.83 average. It may be well to recall that in Chapter I Missouri was reported as ranking first in the nation in feeder pig sales and second in the numbers of beef cattle and in calves born. Editors' interests then seemed to be concomitant with the state's economy.

Greatest difference between daily and weekly editors' interests was food processing news. Dailies rated it 3.19 (moderate to high), while weeklies rated it 2.53 (low to moderate). Difference between means would occur by chance more than five times in 100 similar samples. Since this difference was the largest between any of the 10 pairs of averages, none of the other differences would be statistically significant, including that of the over-all averages for all 10 topics combined (3.49 vs. 3.13).

Before leaving this questionnaire item, a 2 x 2 crossbreak will be

examined, showing the average interest of daily and weekly editors in raw agricultural product news and in finished agricultural product news, as in Table V.

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS' INTEREST
IN NEWS ABOUT RAW AND FINISHED
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Type of News	Dailies	Weeklies
Raw agricultural product news	3.60	3.33
Finished agricultural product news	3.39	2.93

The data presented in Table V were analyzed for any significant degree of relationship, using a two-dimensional factorial analysis of variance. F-ratios for between the two types of news, between the two types of editors, and the interaction of all four were not significant. Therefore, it was tentatively concluded that frequency of publication and degree of interest in two kinds of agricultural news are not related.

Use of UMC Daily Releases

Turning to daily and weekly newspapers' use of daily releases from the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, only four editors said they used

more than 75 per cent of these releases in 1973. Eleven used 51-75 per cent. One-third said they used 26-50 per cent, while another third said they used 1-25 per cent. One editor said he used none. Table VI shows that daily and weekly editors used daily releases in about the same proportion--about 71 per cent in each case used less than half the volume of daily releases sent.

TABLE VI

PER CENT OF USE IN 1973 OF UMC DAILY NEWS RELEASES BY
DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS AND BOTH COMBINED

Per Cent of Use	Number of Daily Editors	Number of Weekly Editors	Number Combined
More than 75%	2	2	4
51 to 75%	2	9	11
26 to 50%	4	14	18
1 to 25%	5	13	18
None	1	0	1
Total	14	38	52

Most editors (73 per cent) said they preferred about the same number of daily releases in 1974 as in 1973. Nine editors (about 15 per cent) said they wanted more, and none wanted fewer or none at all. About 12 per cent said they wanted more local angle stories or sources for their reporters to cultivate, when asked to specify any other answer.

Use of Missouri Farm News Service

Use of the Missouri Farm News Service (MFNS) in 1973 was considerably less than use of daily releases. Nearly half the editors said they used 1-25 per cent of the four or five stories printed in the Missouri Farm News Service, in whole or in part. Table VII reports the use of this clipsheet by editors in 1973.

TABLE VII
PER CENT OF USE IN 1973 OF MISSOURI FARM NEWS
SERVICE BY DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS
AND BOTH COMBINED

Per Cent of Use	Number of Daily Editors	Number of Weekly Editors	Number Combined
More than 75%	1	1	2
51 to 75%	1	8	9
26 to 50%	2	11	13
1 to 25%	6	24	30
None	4	5	9
Total	14	49	63

The Missouri Farm News Service is designed to be used as camera-ready copy. Editors were asked how many MFNS stories they used in 1973 and if they clipped and pasted without resetting. About 20 per cent said they clipped and pasted "all" MFNS stories they used. Two per cent said "many," 9 per cent said "some," and 16 per cent said "few."

Another 16 per cent said they could not clip and paste stories they used because columns were too wide. Five per cent used no MFNS material because it was set too narrow. Twenty-eight per cent used none of the clipsheet because type was unacceptable. Five per cent used none because they ran letterpress.

When asked how much camera-ready copy (stories and halftones) they would like compared to that provided now in the Missouri Farm News Service, about one-third (36 per cent) said "no more." Seven per cent said "much more," and 41 per cent said "more." Sixteen per cent said they had no need for camera-ready copy.

Editors were asked how they preferred the copy be set. Nearly half (47 per cent) specified 8-pt. type on a 9-pt. slug, the way it presently is set. One editor said 8 on 8; 16 per cent said 9 on 9; 22 per cent said 9 on 10; and 13 per cent said they had no need for camera-ready copy. The latter figure is lower than the last mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The difference in N is nine versus seven respondents. It is possible that at least two respondents answering the former item skipped the latter, not being interested in camera-ready copy.

A question on how wide MFNS columns should be set prompted a basic three-way opinion split among editors. Columns now are set 11 picas wide, and 27 per cent of the editors said they liked the service that way. Another 27 per cent want the columns set $10\frac{1}{2}$ picas wide, and 25 per cent want them set 10 picas wide. Miscellaneous replies included two for $9\frac{1}{2}$, one each for $10\frac{3}{4}$ and $13\frac{1}{2}$, and two for 14 picas. Six editors (about 10 per cent) answered "have no need for camera-ready copy" to this question. Apparently some editors who gave this answer to previous questions about camera-ready copy skipped over this one.

Use of UMC Photo Releases and Garden Spotlight

Turning to photo releases, about 60 per cent of the editors said they used from 1 to 25 per cent of those received from the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office in 1973. Daily and weekly editors were fairly consistent in their responses to this question. Results are summarized in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

PER CENT OF USE IN 1973 OF UMC PHOTO RELEASES
BY DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS
AND BOTH COMBINED

Per Cent of Use	Number of Daily Editors	Number of Weekly Editors	Number Combined
More than 75%	1	1	2
51 to 75%	1	5	6
26 to 50%	2	6	8
1 to 25%	9	27	36
None	1	4	5
Didn't receive any in 1973	0	3	3
Total	14	46	60

About half the editors said they wanted no more glossy photos from the UMC Editor's Office in 1974 than in 1973. However, 42 per cent did report wanting "more" in 1974. Seven per cent wanted "many more." No editor responded "fewer" or "none" to this question. A few editors commented they would like to have any that have local tie-ins.

Most editors receiving the weekly Garden Spotlight feature from the UMC Editor's Office said they use it every week. A much smaller number use it less often. Many papers in the state do not receive it, and 10 editors were added to the mailing list, at their request, during this study.

Competing for Space

Editors were asked where agricultural news generally is placed. Many editors checked more than one location, but the response checked most frequently was "scattered throughout," checked 41 times. "In a special farm section or farm page" was checked 24 times, and "on page one," 10 times.

Ten editors said they ran a special farm section or page in every issue. Nine did it weekly; two did it monthly; and 27 said "never." Many other responses were made to this question, generally revolving around the idea of "irregular" use of agricultural news.

In reporting the effect of newsprint scarcity, nearly half the respondents said that they have had to reduce pages in their newspapers because of newsprint shortage. Of 68 editors, 46 per cent gave this response. Thirty-one per cent said they were not affected. The remaining 23 per cent specified other answers, such as "can't expand or add," "had to abandon weekly farm page," "reduced size of type" or "narrower columns."

The best way to gauge how agricultural news competes for space, the author felt, was to ask the editors how likely they would be to cut back on 10 general content categories, including agriculture, if faced with a newsprint shortage and reduction of newshole. Responses are

summarized in Tables IX and X. Both tables indicate heavy reliance on local news, with editorials and advertising showing up well also. Comparison of the tables shows that no content category went unused among dailies in the study, whereas half the categories were not found in certain weeklies.

TABLE IX
NUMBER OF DAILY NEWSPAPER EDITORS BY LIKELIHOOD
OF CUTTING BACK ON TEN CONTENT CATEGORIES

Type of Content	Very Likely	Likely	Don't Use	Not Likely	Would Not Cut
Local news	0	0	0	3	11
State news	1	4	0	8	1
National news	2	7	0	3	1
International news	6	7	0	1	0
Sports	1	3	0	7	2
Agricultural news	3	4	0	7	0
Society or women's	1	3	0	7	2
Syndicated features	7	3	0	2	1
Editorials	2	1	0	8	3
Advertising	0	0	0	7	7

TABLE X
NUMBER OF WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EDITORS BY LIKELIHOOD
OF CUTTING BACK ON TEN CONTENT CATEGORIES

Type of Content	Very Likely	Likely	Don't Use	Not Likely	Would Not Cut
Local news	0	0	0	6	41
State news	8	25	0	12	1
National news	20	10	14	2	0
International news	25	3	17	1	0
Sports	4	6	0	27	9
Agricultural news	1	7	0	32	6
Society or women's	1	7	1	28	7
Syndicated features	18	11	13	4	0
Editorials	4	8	2	18	13
Advertising	0	1	0	7	37

To obtain a numerical index of daily and weekly editors' interest in each of the ten content categories, values of 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 were assigned to responses of "don't use," "very likely," "likely," "not likely" and "would not cut," respectively. Table XI shows comparison of interests between dailies and weeklies. It also indicates a rank order of interest in the 10 categories by daily and weekly editors. Local news ranked first for both dailies and weeklies, with advertising second for each. Agricultural news was third with weeklies and seventh with dailies. Dailies ranked editorials third, showed the least degree of interest in international news, which ranked ninth for weeklies. Syndicated features ranked last for weeklies.

TABLE XI
RELATIVE INTEREST IN TEN CONTENT CATEGORIES
FOR DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS
AND BOTH COMBINED

Type of Content	Daily Editors		Weekly Editors		Combined
	Rank	Score*	Rank	Score	Rank
Local news	1	3.79	1	3.87	1
State news	6	2.64	7	2.13	7
National news	8	2.23	8	1.00	8
International news	10	1.64	9	0.74	10
Sports	4.5	2.77	6	2.24	6
Agricultural news	7	2.29	3	2.93	5
Society or women's	4.5	2.77	4	2.89	3.5
Syndicated features	9	1.77	10	0.70	9
Editorials	3	2.86	5	2.80	3.5
Advertising	2	3.50	2	3.80	2

*4 = Would not cut 3 = Not likely 2 = Likely

1 = Very likely 0 = Don't Use

Use of Agricultural News Sources

Editors were asked to indicate how often they use nine different sources of agricultural news in their newspapers. Possible responses included "very much," "often," "sometimes," "little" and "never."

A mean use score was computed for each agricultural news source for dailies and for weeklies. A rank position was designated for each, as shown in Table XII.

County or area extension specialists were ranked the No. 1

agricultural news source for both dailies and weeklies, with area farmers ranking second for each. The Missouri Farm News Service ranked third with dailies, while the Missouri Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) ranked third with weeklies.

TABLE XII
RELATIVE USE OF NINE AGRICULTURAL NEWS SOURCES
BY DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS
AND BOTH COMBINED

Source	Daily Editors		Weekly Editors		Combined
	Rank	Mean Use*	Rank	Mean Use	Rank
Area farmers	2	2.61	2	3.07	2
Extension specialists	1	3.07	1	3.34	1
USDA	7	2.00	7.5	2.00	7
Missouri ASCS	5.5	2.36	3	2.81	3
Missouri Farm Bureau	9	1.69	6	2.11	9
MFA	8	1.85	7.5	2.00	8
Mo. Farm News Service	3	2.60	5	2.17	5
UMC daily releases	4	2.46	9	1.98	6
Soil Conservation Service	5.5	2.36	4	2.65	4

*4 = Very much 3 = Often 2 = Sometimes 1 = Little 0 = Never

Dailies ranked the Missouri Farm Bureau ninth among the nine sources, with the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) seventh and the Midcontinent Farmers Association (MFA) eighth. Least-used sources

for weeklies were the USDA and MFA (tied for seventh) and daily releases from the UMC Editor's Office, ninth.

Largest differences between dailies and weeklies were in use of the Missouri Farm Bureau and of UMC daily releases. Dailies reported the MFB to be the least-used source of agricultural information, while weeklies reported it sixth. As expected, dailies found UMC daily releases more useful than did weeklies. They were fourth with dailies with ninth with weeklies.

Since the Missouri Farm News Service is intended primarily for Missouri weeklies, the author did not expect it to be ranked higher in use with dailies than weeklies, third and fifth, respectively.

Other sources specified by editors included the Associated Press, local and area agribusiness, breed associations, commodity groups, livestock groups, legislators, farm related industries, business and vocational agriculture instructors, farm organization news, and the papers' own agricultural coverage.

Factors Affecting Selection

Daily and weekly newspaper editors differed slightly in evaluating news from their sources. Daily editors valued subject matter (content) most, while weekly editors most emphasized local adaptability. Table XIII shows how editors rank-ordered eight different factors in selecting agricultural news. Both daily and weekly editors felt their background had the least to do with this selection process. They each said that writing style was seventh in the list of eight factors, presumably because they could edit and rewrite as necessary.

TABLE XIII
RELATIVE VALUE PLACED ON EIGHT FACTORS IN THE SELECTION
OF AGRICULTURAL NEWS BY DAILY AND WEEKLY EDITORS
AND BOTH COMBINED

Factors	Daily Editors		Weekly Editors		Combined
	Rank	Value*	Rank	Value	Rank
Subject matter	1	3.93	2	3.60	1
Timeliness	2.5	3.67	4	3.32	4
Style of writing	7	1.87	7	2.07	7
Reader interest	2.5	3.67	3	3.56	3
Local adaptability	4	3.60	1	3.81	2
Available space	6	2.73	5	2.98	6
Editor's background	8	1.08	8	1.20	8
Trust in the source	5	2.79	5	2.98	5

*4 = Very much 3 = A lot 2 = Somewhat 1 = Little 0 = Not at all

These findings are similar to those of Sampson and Johnson, who found reader interest and local adaptability rated highly among Washington state and Georgia editors. However, subject matter ranked first among Missouri editors. This differed somewhat from the other two states.

Data were obtained to see if editors from different backgrounds rated their background differently in regard to effect on their agricultural news selection.

Eleven editors from a farm background rated their background 1.55 (out of 4.00) in the selection of agricultural news. The 26 editors from rural non-farm areas or from towns of less than 2,500 rated this

item 1.15, and the 16 editors from towns or cities of more than 2,500 rated the item only .94 on the average. Differences in selection of agriculture news by editors from different backgrounds could have occurred by chance.

Evaluation of UMC Services

The last four items on the questionnaire related to ratings of the four basic Agricultural Editor's Office press services: daily releases, Missouri Farm News Service, photo releases and Garden Spotlight. All but photo releases were rated on the criteria of subject matter, length, style and variety. All four services were rated on usefulness and timeliness, and the photo releases were additionally rated on photo and cutline quality.

Table XIV presents the composite results of the last four questionnaire items. Values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to continuum points: "excellent," "good," average," "fair" and "poor." In other words, a typical rating like 3.50 should be interpreted as "average to good."

The highest rating was 4.44 for the Garden Spotlight on the criteria of subject matter and timeliness by daily editors. The lowest rating, 3.25, was given to daily releases on the criterion of length by weekly editors.

In average ratings, photo quality was judged highest over-all (4.31), followed by cutline quality (4.02), subject matter (3.94), style (3.89), timeliness (3.83), variety (3.80), length (3.70) and usefulness (3.51).

Greatest difference between dailies and weeklies seemed to be on story length. Dailies gave length a 4.06, compared to 3.61 by weeklies,

TABLE XIV
EVALUATION OF FOUR BASIC UMC SERVICES
BY MISSOURI NEWSPAPER EDITORS
ON EIGHT CRITERIA

	Dailies	Weeklies	Combined
Subject Matter			
Daily Releases	3.71	3.89	3.84
Missouri Farm News Service	3.77	3.87	3.84
Garden Spotlight	4.44	4.00	4.14
AVERAGE	3.97	3.92	3.94
Timeliness			
Daily Releases	3.64	3.65	3.65
Missouri Farm News Service	3.77	3.89	3.86
Garden Spotlight	3.50	3.62	4.21
Photo Releases	4.44	4.11	3.58
AVERAGE	3.84	3.82	3.83
Length			
Daily Releases	3.93	3.25	3.44
Missouri Farm News Service	3.92	3.76	3.79
Garden Spotlight	4.33	3.83	3.86
AVERAGE	4.06	3.61	3.70
Style			
Daily Releases	3.71	3.83	3.80
Missouri Farm News Service	3.85	3.75	3.77
Garden Spotlight	4.33	4.00	4.11
AVERAGE	3.96	3.86	3.89
Variety			
Daily Releases	3.43	3.77	3.67
Missouri Farm News Service	3.42	3.85	3.76
Garden Spotlight	4.22	3.84	3.96
AVERAGE	3.69	3.82	3.80
Usefulness			
Daily Releases	3.50	3.35	3.40
Missouri Farm News Service	3.50	3.41	3.43
Garden Spotlight	3.89	3.47	3.70
Photo Releases	3.54	3.61	3.49
AVERAGE	3.62	3.46	3.51
Photo Quality			
Photo Releases	4.29	4.31	4.31
Cutline Quality			
Photo Releases	3.92	4.06	4.02

5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Average 2 = Fair 1 = Poor

possibly suggesting that dailies have more room for longer stories than do weeklies. This theory may be borne out by the difference in the average ratings for usefulness--3.62 for dailies vs. 3.46 for weeklies.

One area rated exceptionally high by both dailies and weeklies was quality of photo releases, 4.29 and 4.31, respectively. This point was rated highest of all, when daily and weekly newspapers' ratings were combined into a single average. Lowest of combined scores was the 3.40 given to usefulness of daily releases.

When the criteria were averaged for each of the four services, the Garden Spotlight fared best with 4.00 over-all. Next was photo releases (3.85), followed by the Missouri Farm News Service (3.74) and daily releases (3.63). The average for these four ratings is 3.81, indicating that over-all the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office is perceived as doing a good job in providing the four basic services to editors.

Regional News Interest

To arrive at an index of interest in agricultural news for Missouri dailies and weeklies by region, possible responses to several questionnaire items were used, with each possible response assigned a different value. Items used and values assigned to responses included:

No. 4 "What percentage of your issues contain agricultural news?"
81-100% = 5 points; 61-80% = 4 points; 41-60% = 3 points; 21-40% = 2 points;
0-20% = 1 point.

No. 5 "Compare your use of agricultural news in 1973 with 1972."
Used a lot more in 1973 = 3 points; used more in 1973 = 2 points; used about the same = 1 point; used more in 1972 = minus 1 point; used a lot

more in 1972 = minus 2 points.

No. 6 "Do you think you will print more agricultural news in 1974 than you did in 1973?" Yes = 3 points; same = 2 points; no = 1 point.

No. 7 "How interested do you think your readers are, as a whole, in agricultural news today?" (Their interest is) very high = 5 points; high = 4 points; average = 3 points; low = 2 points; very low = 1 point.

No. 8 "Regarding agricultural news in general, are your readers: becoming more interested (2 points), becoming less interested (minus 2 points), not changing their interest (0 points) or no opinion (0 points)."

No. 13 "How many of the 4 or 5 agricultural stories appearing each week in the Missouri Farm News Service have you printed in your paper in the past year in whole or in part?" More than 75% = 4 points; 51-75% = 3 points; 26-50% = 2 points; 1-25% = 1 point; none = 0 points.

No. 18 "How many of the glossy photos from the UMC Editor's Office have you printed in your paper in the past year?" More than 75% = 4 points; 51-75% = 3 points; 26-50% = 2 points; 1-25% = 1 point; none = 0 points.

No. 19 "How many glossy photographs from the UMC Editor's Office would you like to be getting compared to 1973?" Many more = 3 points; more = 2 points; no more = 1 point; fewer = minus 1 point; none = minus 2 points.

In addition, two questions were used for daily newspapers:

No. 11 "How many of the daily releases from the UMC Editor's Office did you print, in whole or in part, in 1973?" More than 75% = 4 points; 51-75% = 3 points; 26-50% = 2 points; 1-25% = 1 point; none = 0 points.

No. 12 "Compared to the number of daily releases that you received

from the UMC Editor's Office in 1973, how many would you like to get in 1974?" More = 2 points; about the same = 1 point; fewer = minus 1 point; none = minus 2 points.

Since daily releases are primarily intended for daily newspapers, the latter two questions were not used in figuring agricultural news interest for weekly newspapers. Therefore, scores computed for daily and weekly editors' interest in agricultural news were not comparable and will be examined separately.

A maximum 29 points was possible for weekly editors and 35 for daily editors, using the point system described above.

Scores for daily newspapers ranged from a low of 9, for papers in Independence, a city of 112,000 just east of Kansas City, and Festus, a city of 7,500 located 37 miles south of St. Louis, to a high of 27 for Waynesville, a city of 3,375, just north of Fort Leonard Wood, a military establishment.

The relatively low scores for Independence and Festus may be related to their location in or near the two largest metropolitan areas of the state. Therefore, these papers may aim their news more at urban than farm readers.

The Festus Daily News-Democrat editor said, "Our service area has been changing rapidly during the past 10 years to exurban, and we do not use as much ag news nowadays." Festus is located in Jefferson County, a large source of employees for St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis. In fact, the 1970 Census showed that 55.7 per cent of the work force of Jefferson County goes outside the county to work.¹

The high index of agricultural news interest for Waynesville is more difficult to explain. It is the county seat of Pulaski County in

the heart of the Ozarks, a very hilly area covering much of southern Missouri and not very productive agriculturally.² The most logical explanation for its high interest in agricultural news is that its Daily Guide was, until two years ago, a weekly newspaper and now has more room for all types of news. Waynesville is largely a service center for nearby Fort Leonard Wood.

The average interest in agricultural news for the 16 daily newspapers replying, as gauged by the responses outlined in the preceding pages, was 18.00. Daily editors' scores are plotted in Figure 5. From this map it is difficult to see any regional variation in agricultural news interest. High and low scores are scattered. However, grouping the scores into "high," "moderate" and "low" ranges, as in Figure 6, makes it possible to see a pattern of regional variation.

"High" interest, designated as "A" in Figure 6, includes those daily editors with scores ranging from 20 to 27 (6 of the 16 daily respondents). "Moderate" interest, indicated as "B," includes the 6 scores from 15 through 19, and "low" interest, shown as "C" on the map, includes those 4 editors with scores from 9 through 13.

All the "A" respondents on the map are clustered in or near the center of the state, from Saline to Callaway counties east to west, and from Marion to Pulaski and Phelps counties north to south. The five scores in the lower portion of the map indicate a generally moderate interest in agricultural news, contrasted with the generally high interest in the center of the state. This is concomitant with geographical differences in the state's agricultural economy. The two scores closest to Missouri's largest metropolitan area of Kansas City and St. Louis are both "C." These newspapers, in Independence and Festus,

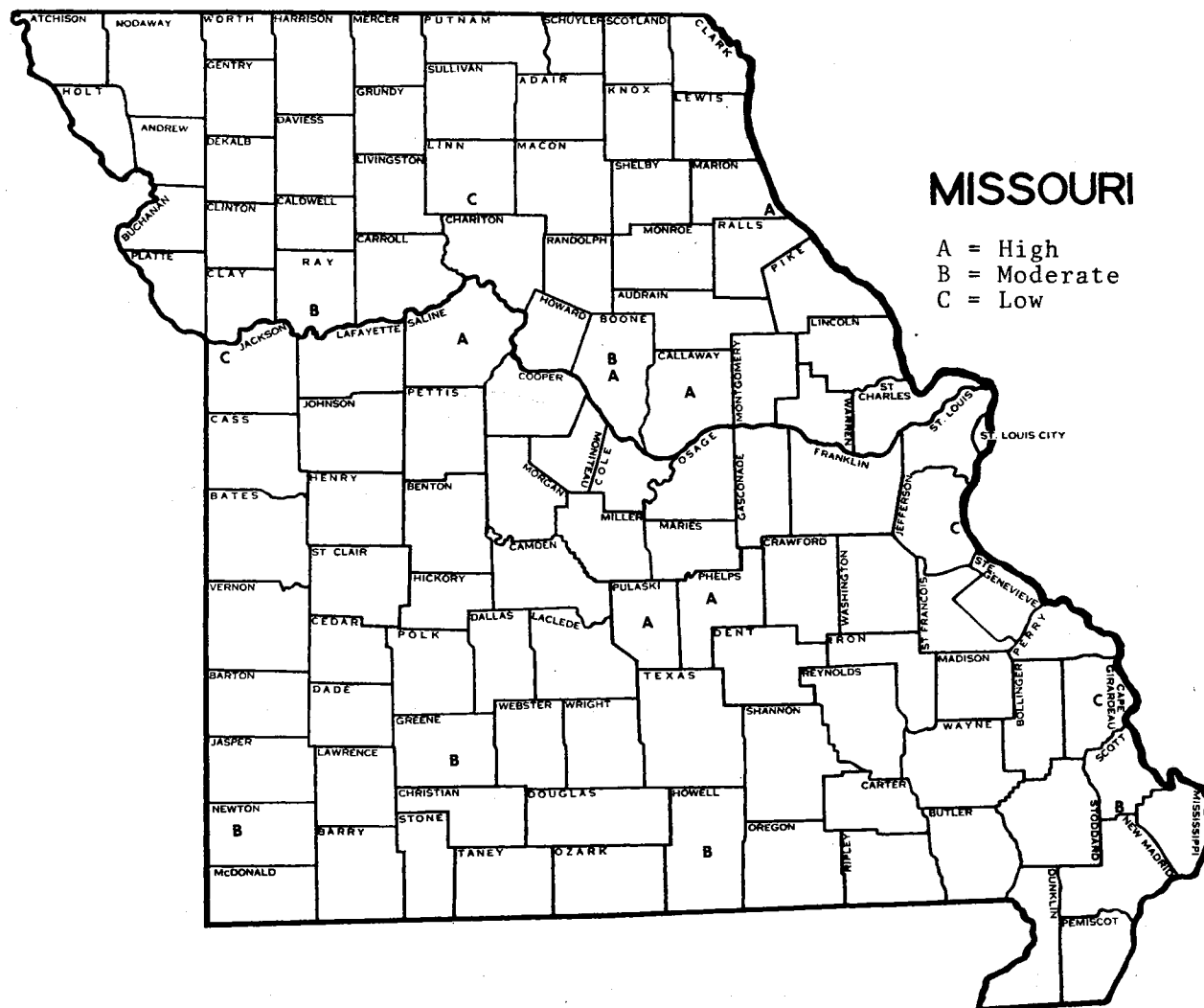


Figure 6. Relative Degree of Interest in Agricultural News Among 16 Daily Newspapers Returning Questionnaire

respectively, were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Scores for weekly newspapers, averaging 15.25 and plotted in Figure 7 range from a low of 9 in three different counties to a high of 24 in Salem, Dent County. Like Waynesville, Salem is located in an Ozark area not particularly noted for high agricultural productivity.³ Noteworthy is that the highest and lowest scores all represent weekly newspapers in the southeastern quarter of the state.

As with scores for dailies, scores for weeklies were grouped into ranges and plotted in Figure 8. "A" indicates the "high" range from 19 to 24, while "B" shows those scores of 16, 17 and 18, or "moderate to high."

Scores of 13, 14 and 15, considered by the author to indicate "low to moderate" interest in agricultural news, are represented by "C" on the map, and scores from 9 through 12, designating "low" interest, are shown as "D" in the figure.

Although more difficult to pinpoint than relative interest among dailies, the interest of weekly editors seems highest in the northern quarter of the state and in an area slightly south and east of the center of the state.

Low interest--as with dailies--still shows up near the two metropolitan areas and in the lower quarter of the state. The Bootheel (the six-county area in extreme southeastern Missouri) shows slightly more interest than the rest of far-southern Missouri. This is also concomitant with agricultural productivity in those areas.

A slight difference in average scores for weeklies in northwestern and northeastern Missouri was noted. Scores for papers in northwestern Missouri averaged 16.43, while those in northeastern Missouri averaged

14.83. Average scores in southeastern and southwestern Missouri, 15.06 and 15.08, respectively, were closer to the state-wide average of 15.25. A t-test was run on the difference in mean scores for northwestern and northeastern Missouri, but the difference was not significant.

Therefore, while certain small areas in the state seem to show a somewhat greater interest in agricultural news than others, it cannot be shown statistically that any one quarter of the state shows a greater interest than another in this kind of news.

This may mean that the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office should aim its informational output to all parts of the state and should expect variation in interest among editors in each quarter.

How the data related to the four stated objectives of this study is discussed in Chapter V.

FOOTNOTES

¹U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of the Population, Summary of Economic Characteristics by Counties, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Vol. 27, Missouri.

²Missouri Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Missouri Farm Facts--1973 (Columbia, Mo., 1973).

³Ibid.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of Missouri newspaper editors' attitudes toward agricultural news had four basic objectives: to determine (1) what Missouri newspaper editors foresee as their needs for agricultural information in the near future, (2) how agricultural information competes for space with other types of news in Missouri newspapers, (3) what sources of agricultural information are most important to Missouri newspaper editors and (4) the usefulness of the information presently disseminated by the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, as perceived by Missouri newspaper editors.

A 30-item questionnaire, designed to elicit responses related to study objectives, was mailed in early 1974 to 20 daily and 70 weekly newspaper publishers, randomly selected from the current Missouri Newspaper Directory, published annually by the Missouri Press Service, Inc., Columbia. Eighty per cent of the sampled dailies and 73 per cent of the weeklies returned the questionnaire.

Objectives: Relevant Findings

Regarding the first objective on perceived needs for agricultural information in the near future, nearly half the respondents (48.5 per cent) said they planned to use more agricultural news in 1974 than they did in 1973. This contrasts with M. W. Sampson's 1971 survey (see

Chapter II) in which only one-fourth of Washington state editors said they expected to use more agricultural news in the coming year.¹

Nearly a third of Missouri editors used more agricultural news in 1973 than they did in 1972, and 49.2 per cent thought their readers were becoming more interested in agricultural news in general. These findings plus the fact that nearly half expected to use more agricultural news in 1974 would indicate strongly that most editors did not feel particularly threatened by the reported newsprint shortage. These findings also suggest that agricultural news sources should provide at least the same amount of--if not more--such news.

Concerning the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office, the study revealed mixed feelings among editors about an increase in the press services the office provides. Nearly three-quarters said they did not want the number of daily releases increased in 1974. Fifteen per cent said they wanted more. Perhaps editors intended to use more daily releases they were presently receiving from the UMC Editor's Office, rather than ask for more. At any rate, the mandate was clear at the time of this study. The office should not have reduced its output of daily releases and should have felt free to increase this output if and when news situations dictated.

As for the Missouri Farm News Service, most editors used only one-fourth the material each week, but 48.2 per cent said they wanted "more" or "much more" camera-ready copy. Currently, the Missouri Farm News Service was the only source of camera-ready copy from the UMC Editor's Office.

Editors were split almost 50-50 on the question of wanting more photo releases from the UMC Editor's Office. While 50.9 per cent said

they wanted "no more," 49.1 per cent said they would like "more" or "many more." None said he wanted fewer than he got in 1973.

The second study objective--to determine how agricultural information competed for space with other types of content in Missouri newspapers--was fulfilled by asking editors where agriculture news was placed and how they would cut back on news if faced with a reduced newshole. In addition to being scattered throughout most newspapers, agricultural news often was found in special farm sections or farm pages, and sometimes even on page one. More than half the respondents said their newspapers contained a special farm section, or farm page, one or more times per year, many on a weekly basis.

The real question at hand--how agricultural news competed with other kinds of content--can be answered by noting it ranked third of ten categories for weeklies and seventh of the same ten categories for dailies. Only local news and advertising, in that order, outranked agricultural news in weekly newspapers. This spoke well for agricultural news since most weeklies had a limited newshole.

Local news and advertising also ranked first and second, respectively, with dailies, according to this study. Other content ranking higher than agricultural news included editorials, sports and society or women's news (tied for fourth) and state news, in that order.

The third objective sought agricultural information sources most important to Missouri newspaper editors. County or area extension specialists were named by both daily and weekly editors as most important. This paralleled other studies in Washington, California and Georgia.

Area farmers were ranked second most important as an agricultural

news source for both dailies and weeklies. The Missouri Farm News Service ranked third for dailies, but sixth for weeklies. Daily releases from the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office ranked fourth with dailies and last (ninth) with weeklies.

Related to this objective was an examination of relative value editors placed on eight factors in agricultural news selection. Subject matter, timeliness, reader interest and local adaptability were the four top choices for both dailies and weeklies, but in different orders. Daily editors ranked subject matter first, timeliness and reader interest second (tie) and local adaptability fourth. Local adaptability was first with weekly editors, followed by subject matter, reader interest and timeliness. Other values judged included style of writing, available space, editor's background and trust in the source. The latter was fifth with both daily and weekly editors. Editors ranked their backgrounds as being least important of the eight different selection factors.

The fourth objective attempted to determine editors' perceived usefulness of information sent by the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office.

Editors judged the office's four press services on subject matter, timeliness, length, style, variety and usefulness, in addition to photo and cutline quality for photo releases only. Of these eight criteria, usefulness received the lowest rating, 3.51 on a scale of 1 to 5 ("poor" to "excellent"). Editors on the whole found usefulness of the four basic services between "average" and "good." Other criteria were each rated closer to 4.00, or "good."

In his 1966-67 study, David J. Miller found only one-fourth the daily releases and the Missouri Farm News Service was used.² The

current study showed a slightly higher usage of daily releases. For those editors receiving as many as 10 such releases in 1973, one-third used up to 25 per cent, another third used up to 50 per cent, and nearly 28 per cent used more than half. However, use of the Missouri Farm News Service--about one-fourth of the material per week--had remained about the same since Miller's study. It is desirable to point out that about 38 per cent of the editors said they were using more than one-fourth the material. In line with Miller's findings, the Missouri Farm News Service, according to clippings and newspapers coming into the Editor's Office, mostly was used as filler, especially by offset newspapers.

Miller said in 1967 that the horticulture column, then known as "This Week's Yard 'n' Garden," was the most popular service provided by the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office.³ In this study, the Garden Spotlight seemed to hold this distinction. It received the highest over-all rating of the basic services, although all ratings were very close, ranging from 4.00 to 3.63. The fact the Garden Spotlight only went to a small number of newspapers requesting the service might have contributed to its higher rating.

Usefulness of photo releases seemed to hinge on their local angle. While Missouri editors were split down the middle on whether they wished to receive more photo releases from the UMC Editor's Office in 1974 than in 1973, many editors commented it depended on local adaptability. They made it clear that photos of local people, events or situations would stand a much better chance of being used than non-local photos.

Study Limitations

A number of limitations are unavoidable in a study of this type.

The best way to find out what all Missouri newspaper editors think is to interview them all. This would be very expensive and time-consuming. Therefore, the author sent mail questionnaires to a random sample, with hope that results could be applied to all editors with the smallest possible margin of error. The return rate was high, though not perfect. It is possible that findings would have been somewhat different if all editors in the sample had returned questionnaires.

Too, there was no practical way to verify responses. It was hoped each editor would answer each item accurately, but admittedly it is difficult to remember how many of the incoming releases, for example, he used in 1973.

Further, this study did not attempt to measure effectiveness or impact on readers. It confined its outlook only to editors and their attitudes. Another study should be devised to test agricultural news effectiveness or impact on readers.

This study's results relate only to Missouri editors' attitudes toward agricultural news. They cannot be generalized necessarily to editors in other states, although many of the findings of this study closely paralleled studies in other states.

Factors discussed in this study were only those that can be measured or described by the briefest of responses. Many subtleties, difficult to pinpoint, no doubt, influence an editor's choice of input.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A few definite conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the study findings.

Since local county or area extension specialists constitute the

top agricultural news source, and since local adaptability was the No. 1 factor influencing use of agricultural news, improvement of these specialists' skills warrants high priority.

The UMC Agricultural Editor's Office is responsible for providing communications training to new extension field staff each year during a three-day intensive clinic on the Columbia campus. Perhaps an expansion of this training during the first year of employment, or refresher courses for more experienced extension field staff, would be in order.

Above all, field staff members should be reminded continually of their potential to influence the choice of agricultural news in their local newspapers. Training in, and encouragement of, frequent face-to-face contact with local editors as early as possible could be a decided advantage.

The fact that editors seemed to prefer stories and photos of local interest should suggest to extension field staff that they have an excellent chance of getting their programs publicized locally by providing frequent localized releases and photos of the highest possible quality.

How to do this without a costly increase in time and staff has been a concern of extension personnel for many years. Some states, such as Texas, have area information specialists who work with their colleagues in preparing materials for the mass media and assist extension efforts with such aids as slide-tape shows and visuals for overhead projectors.

Occasionally, the UMC Agricultural Editor's Office sends fill-in news releases to field staff, with the suggestion that they localize and retype them before submitting them to local editors. Perhaps a more

intensive effort in this area would improve localization of extension news.

From time to time Columbia-based information specialists should meet with field staff members off campus to discuss ways to assist with mass media efforts. This type of face-to-face exchange could be quite helpful, especially in training field staff in how to use cameras and how to arrange acceptable group photographs.

The UMC office should inquire further into the degree of demand from editors for camera-ready copy and preferred column widths and type styles. Since editors seemed to be divided on the question of Missouri Farm News Service copy width, a study of whether editors with wider columns would use camera-ready copy set one-half to one pica narrower is in order. If the likelihood of use were high, the service could be used by a greater number of editors.

Many editors--especially weekly editors--have indicated that length of stories is sometimes a problem. Story length should be maintained at a level competitive with other agricultural information and types of news coming across editors' desks.

Additionally, stories must be localized, or at least regionalized, whenever possible. If any point came through clearly from participant editors, it was the fact they wanted, and probably would have used, most local-angle news stories and photographs sent them by agricultural news sources.

State office personnel in Columbia also should be sensitive to what editors want and will use and especially should be alert to current trends and problems editors face. For example, the author's findings might have been different a year ago, when the newsprint shortage was

only a rumor and some of the events of 1973 had not yet occurred. Perhaps the findings will be outdated in a year or less, as other situations and trends affect attitudes of Missouri newspaper editors toward agricultural news. Therefore, continuing efforts in some aspects of this research should be made.

FOOTNOTES

¹Sampson, p. 20.

²Miller, p. 90.

³Ibid., p. 91

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF THE FOUR BASIC SERVICES TO THE
PRESS FROM THE UMC AGRICULTURAL
EDITOR'S OFFICE

University of Missouri - Columbia Extension Division

Cooperative Extension Service

NEWS from

Extension Information
University of Missouri Columbia
1-98 Agriculture Building
Columbia, Missouri 65201
Ph. (314) 882-8237

Dave McAllister
Information Specialist

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
Mailed May 3

YEARBOOK STAFF NAMED IN UMC COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

COLUMBIA, MO -- Jim Allen, Jenkins, has been named editor-in-chief of the 1974-75 Aggregate, College of Agriculture yearbook at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

A 1971 graduate of Cassville High School, Allen is an agricultural journalism student at UMC and was associate editor of the 1973-74 Aggregate. He will be a senior at UMC next fall.

Assistant editors named to the staff include Jim Goodrich, 801 N. Ann St., Columbia, a graduate of Hallsville High School, and John Wallace, Fillmore, who graduated from Rosendale High School.

Goodrich will be a senior and Wallace a sophomore at UMC next fall. Both are agricultural journalism majors.

The Aggregate, a 24-page yearbook and placement manual for UMC College of Agriculture seniors, was first named last fall in a student contest, although two earlier editions were published without a name, Allen said.

The 1974-75 edition is the fourth volume and will be ready for distribution by January, 1975. It is funded by the College of Agriculture divisional student council.

#

74/126

University of Missouri, U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating
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MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE

For Missouri Newspapers

Vol. 63, No. 36

College of Agriculture and Extension Division—University of Missouri-Columbia

May 1, 1974

COMING UP

At the University
of Missouri-Columbia

MAY

- 3-4—1st annual convention of Missouri Council on Family Relations, Tiger Hotel.
- 11—Graduation Convocation for College of Agriculture seniors, 9:30 a.m., UMC Livestock Center.
- 11—UMC Commencement, 3 p.m., Hearnes Multipurpose Bldg.
- 14—8th annual Missouri Water Resources Research Conference, 9:30 a.m., Ramada Inn.
- 24-25—Horseshoeing Clinic, 10 a.m., UMC Livestock Center (limited to 20 paid preregistrations, c/o Melvin Bradley, 125 Mumford Hall, UMC).

JUNE

- 4-7—State 4-H Week.

Litton to Address Graduation Convo For UMC Ag Seniors

U.S. Congressman Jerry Litton will address the second annual graduation convocation of the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Agriculture May 11. Nearly 300 agriculture seniors have invited their families and friends to attend the special ceremony, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the UMC Livestock Center.

Later the same day they will join seniors from other colleges for the UMC spring commencement at 3 p.m. in the Hearnes Multipurpose Bldg., where diplomas will be awarded.

Members of the UMC College of Agriculture faculty will be present at the morning convocation to meet family and friends of agriculture seniors at a special reception immediately following the ceremonies. Department chairmen will serve as ushers.

Elmer R. Kiehl, dean of the College, will present certificates to each graduating senior, following Litton's remarks. Special P.H.T. (Putting Hubby Through) certificates will be presented to wives of seniors attending the convocation.

This clipping, published weekly, is a press service of the College of Agriculture and Extension Division—University of Missouri-Columbia. Mats or sticks of pictures in this clipping are available single or on standing order. Send requests to Agricultural Editors Office, 1-85 Agriculture, Columbia, Mo. Second class postage paid at Columbia, Missouri 65201.

Missouri Council On Family Relations To Meet May 3-4

"Family Styles: Freedom and Responsibility" is the theme of the first annual convention of the Missouri Council on Family Relations (MCFR) to be held May 3-4 in the Tiger Hotel in Columbia.

About 200 persons are expected to attend the convention from the ranks of educators, clergymen, marriage and family counselors, social workers, attorneys, community health workers, sociologists, psychologists, home economists and students.

Ron Cromwell, director of the Family Study Center, University of Missouri-Kansas City, will head a list of 35 resource persons who will hold discussion sections in four areas of family living.

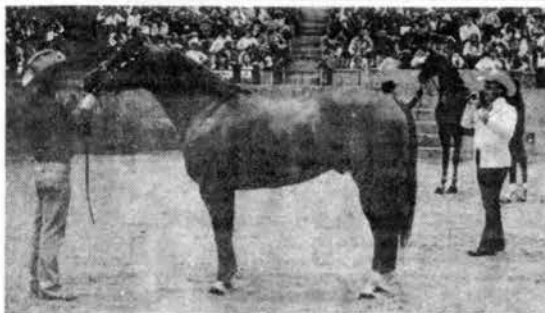
They include "The Child, the Family and the School," led by Dr. Ray Klauber, St. Louis psychologist; "Ethics, Values and the Family," led by the Rev. Ed Fritze, St. Louis clergyman and marriage counselor; "Family Alternatives, Sex Role and Identity Options," led by Bill Erickson, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis; and "Research on the Family in Missouri," led by C. Edwin Vaughan, associate professor of sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Bruce Houdek, attorney in the office of the Missouri Attorney General, will deliver a banquet address on legal aspects of current legislation affecting the family in Missouri.

Other topics to be examined include marriage in the mid-years, some ways to implement family life programs in community settings, premarital counseling, education for more appropriate patterns of mate selection, and the role of the church in sex education.

The MCFR, a branch of the National Council on Family Relations, is an interprofessional organization of Missourians interested in the quality of living of Missouri families, according to Ms. Carolynne Kieffer, president of MCFR and area child and family development specialist with the University of Missouri Extension Center in Hillsboro.

Anyone interested in attending, she said, should contact William Hoff, Director, Conferences and Short Courses, UMC, Columbia, MO 65201.



"IMPRESSIVE," a Quarter Horse stallion worth half a million dollars, was a star attraction April 13 at the University of Missouri-Columbia's 2nd annual All-State Youth Horsemanship Clinic, attended by about 1,200 persons. Owned by Brown Quarries, Washington, Mo., "Impressive" participated with "City Lights" (background), an American Saddle horse owned by Stephens College, in a program on conformation, led by Tommy Manion (right), Quarter Horse showman from Springfield, Ill., and Jimmy Simmons (not pictured), saddle horse trainer from Mexico, Mo.

Water Resources Research Reports To Be Made May 14

Progress in water resources research will be reported and discussed May 14 at the 8th annual conference of the Missouri Water Resources Research Center, to be held in the Columbia Ramada Inn.

A joint meeting of the state-wide and faculty advisory committees will begin at 10 a.m., and public participation is invited, according to George E. Smith, director of the center.

Coy McNabb, University of Missouri-Columbia professor of agricultural economics, will address a noon luncheon on "Re-assessing Water Problems in View of the Energy Shortage."

The faculty advisory committee is made up of chemistry, geology, biology, agricultural economics, physics, civil engineering, and geophysics professors from all four University of Missouri campuses—Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis.

William Bell, UMKC professor of biology, and Charles Jennett, UMR professor of civil engineering, will moderate concurrent sessions of reports of research results in the afternoon.

The state-wide advisory committee is made up of representatives of 18 agencies, departments and organizations throughout the state interested in water resources research.

UMC Careers Fair Draws Ag Students, FFA Members

An annual careers fair in the University of Missouri-Columbia Agriculture Bldg. April 25 and 26 attracted UMC students and visiting Future Farmers of America (FFA) members to information booths sponsored by 15 participating companies.

Sponsored by the UMC College of Agriculture, the fair provided an opportunity for agriculture students and others to visit with industry representatives about career opportunities.

It was organized by the tours and career information committee of the College and the Agricultural Placement Office. Harold Walton, professor of agricultural engineering, and Randall Johnson, placement director, were in charge.

The two-day fair drew representatives from Anchor Serum Co., Cargill Nutrena Feed, Doane Agricultural Service, DuPont, Farmland Industries, Federal Lank Bank, Kansas City Life, Mid-America Dairymen Inc., Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Farm Bureau Federation, Missouri Farmers Assn., Monsanto Co., Production Credit Assn., Ralston Purina and Stark Brothers Nurseries.

FFA members who visited the fair were on the UMC campus for two days attending the 46th annual convention of the Missouri Association of FFA. About 1,900 FFA members and advisers were present.



MAKING PLANS TO COMPLETE a series of regional profiles at the University of Missouri-Columbia are, from left, Hugh Denney, professor and chairman of regional and community affairs at UMC; Bryan Phifer, extension program leader for the department; John Remmert, research analyst; and Miss Vicki Behm, extension information specialist.

PHOTOGRAPH from

Extension Information
University of Missouri-Columbia
1-98 Agriculture Building
Columbia, Missouri 65201
Ph. (314) 882-8237

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University of Missouri - Columbia Extension Division

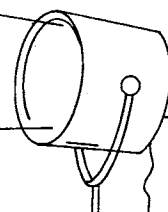
Cooperative Extension Service

EDITORS' OFFICE, 1-98 AGRICULTURE, COLUMBIA, MO. 65201



Ray Rothenberger
Extension Horticulturist

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT



For Use Week of June 3, 1974

NEW BOOK SOLVES GARDENING PROBLEMS

Gardeners are often faced with problems and pests. Where can they turn for solutions? There is no family plant doctor or veterinarian to turn to in time of plant crisis. Some turn to the local nursery, but one may not be convenient, and many nurseries are not staffed to answer a multitude of gardening questions.

Extension centers are also popular sources of plant information, but since the staff travels, the proper person to supply an answer may not be immediately available.

Surveys show that most people first turn to their neighbors, gardening friends and relatives for answers to their gardening questions. This is due primarily to the closeness and convenience of these people. However, one cannot always be sure of the accuracy of their answers.

Gardening publications and books are another source of answers to questions. Promptness is often important in solving a plant problem, and since books are available at any hour of the day, or on weekends, a source of answers is always at hand. However, many people find that a library of gardening books is too expensive for the limited amount of gardening that they do. They prefer a single book to answer their many diverse questions but have not been able to find a single book suited to their conditions.

-more-

University of Missouri, U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating
The University of Missouri-Columbia is an equal educational opportunity institution.

NEW BOOK SOLVES GARDENING PROBLEMS
Add 1

To help home gardeners answer their many questions, University of Missouri Extension horticulturists have assembled a book which has just become available. The book is called "Grounds for Gardening - a Horticultural Guide." It contains a complete collection of horticultural guides in a three-ring binder, so that new or revised sheets can later be added. The book is divided into eight major horticultural sections which are tabbed for easy location. Sections include fruits, vegetables, indoor gardening, flowers, lawn and turf, woody ornamentals, landscape design, and a miscellaneous section for topics not limited to one category.

One problem with a library of gardening books is that over a period of years some of the information becomes out-of-date. A special feature of the new "Grounds for Gardening" book is that it can be kept current with yearly additions. Each book contains a set of coupons. The appropriate one can be clipped out and sent in after the first of each year along with a small handling charge. In this way the owner of the book will receive all revised pages as well as sheets containing information on other subjects to help build the book into a more complete reference source. In the event the owner of the book would forget to send in the coupon, single copies of any Guide Sheet could be picked up at a University of Missouri Extension center.

As more and more people turn to gardening for pleasure, or to ease the food budget, such a book adapted to local climatic conditions can be very helpful.

The book is available by sending \$5 by check or money order to Extension Publications, 205 Whitten Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65201.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVER LETTERS

AND LIST OF PARTICIPATING

MISSOURI NEWSPAPERS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MISSOURI NEWSPAPER EDITORS

Thank you for taking time to give us your answers to the questions below. Your responses will be valuable to us!

SECTION I.

1. Location and name of newspaper _____

2. Your title _____

How much responsibility do you personally have for deciding how much agricultural news is printed in your newspaper?

Complete _____ Most _____ Some _____ Little _____ None _____

3. What is your predominant background?

_____ a) a farm

_____ b) a rural non-farm area or town of less than 2,500

_____ c) a town or city of more than 2,500

SECTION II.

4. What percentage of your issues contain agricultural news?

81-100% _____ 61-80% _____ 41-60% _____ 21-40% _____ 0-20% _____

5. Compare your use of agricultural news in 1973 with 1972:

_____ a) used a lot more in 1973

_____ d) used more in 1972

_____ b) used more in 1973

_____ e) used a lot more

_____ c) used about the same

in 1972

6. Do you think you will print more agricultural news in 1974 than you did in 1973? Yes _____ No _____

7. How interested do you think your readers are, as a whole, in agricultural news today? Their interest is: Very high _____

High _____ Average _____ Low _____ Very low _____

8. Regarding agricultural news in general, are your readers:

_____ a) becoming more interested than they used to be?

_____ b) becoming less interested than they used to be?

_____ c) not changing their interest?

_____ d) no opinion

9. Please check any of the situations below which you think have affected the interest of your readers in agricultural news in 1973:

_____ a) Rising food prices

_____ c) Flooding in Missouri

_____ b) Grain sales to Russia and China

_____ d) Other (specify) _____

PLEASE TURN THIS SHEET OVER FOR MORE QUESTIONS.

10. How great is your interest in running a news story on each of the topics listed below?

	Very high	High	Mod- erate	Low	Very low
Grain and forage crops:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hogs and feeder pigs:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Beef cattle:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Dairy cattle:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poultry and eggs:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Retail food prices:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nutrition for consumers:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
World food supplies:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Processing of food:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Food safety and storage:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11. If you have received as many as ten typed and duplicated news releases from the UMC Editor's Office (on the blue letterhead) in the past year (1973), how many of them did you print in whole or in part?

- _____ a) more than 75% _____ d) 1-25%
 _____ b) 51 to 75% _____ e) none
 _____ c) 26 to 50% _____ f) received fewer than 10

12. Compared to the number of typed news releases (on the blue letterhead) that you received from the UMC Editor's Office in 1973, how many would you like to get in 1974?

- _____ a) more _____ c) fewer _____ e) other _____
 _____ b) about the same _____ d) none

13. The MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE, a four-column printed clipsheet mailed to you weekly, contains about 4 or 5 agricultural stories per week. How many of them have you printed in your paper in the past year, in whole or in part?

- _____ a) more than 75% _____ d) 1-25%
 _____ b) 51 to 75% _____ e) none
 _____ c) 26 to 50% _____ f) don't receive this service

14. How many of the stories you've used from the MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE in the past year (1973) have you clipped and pasted without resetting in your own type?

- _____ a) all _____ e) none (because it's set too wide)
 _____ b) many _____ f) none (because it's set too narrow)
 _____ c) some _____ g) none (because the type is unacceptable)
 _____ d) few _____ h) none (because you're letterpress)

15. Compared with the amount of material in the MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE presently, how much camera-ready copy (stories and halftones) would you like to be getting?

- _____ a) much more _____ c) no more
 _____ b) more _____ d) have no need for camera-ready copy

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT SHEET FOR MORE QUESTIONS.

16. The camera-ready copy in the MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE is now set in 8-pt. type on a 9-pt. slug. How would you prefer to have it set?

- _____ a) 8 on 8 _____ d) 9 on 10
 _____ b) 8 on 9 _____ e) other (specify) _____
 _____ c) 9 on 9 _____ f) have no need for camera-ready copy

17. MISSOURI FARM NEWS STORIES are now set 11 picas wide.
How wide would you like for them to be set?

- ☐ a) 9 picas
☐ b) 9½ picas
☐ c) 10 picas
☐ d) 10½ picas
- ☐ e) 11 picas
☐ f) other (specify) _____
☐ g) have no need for camera-ready copy

18. How many of the glossy photos from the UMC Editor's Office have you printed in your paper in the past year (1973)?

- a) more than 75% d) 1 to 25%
- b) 51 to 75% e) none
- c) 26 to 50% f) didn't receive any in 1973

19. How many glossy photographs from the UMC Editor's Office would you like to be getting compared to 1973?

- a) many more d) fewer
 b) more e) none
c) no more

20. A weekly typed and duplicated column on home horticulture known as the "Garden Spotlight" is sent out from the UMC Editor's Office. How often do you print it in your paper?

- _____ a) every week _____ e) don't receive it
_____ b) every two weeks _____ f) would like to be added to
_____ c) once a month mailing list
_____ d) other (specify)

SECTION III.

21. Where in your paper does agricultural news generally go?

- ☐ a) in a special farm section or farm page
☐ b) on page one
☐ c) scattered throughout
☐ d) other (specify)

22. How often do you run a special farm section or farm page?

- _____ a) every issue _____ d) never
_____ b) every other issue _____ e) other (specify) _____
_____ c) monthly

23. How have you been affected by the newsprint shortage?

- _____ a) not affected _____ c) anticipate reducing num-
 _____ b) have had to reduce _____ ber of pages soon
 _____ number of pages d) other (specify)

PLEASE TURN THIS SHEET OVER FOR MORE QUESTIONS.

24. Faced with a newsprint shortage and the need to reduce your news hole, how likely would you be to cut back on each type of general news category listed below?

	Very likely	Likely	Don't use	Not likely	Would NOT cut
Local news:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
State news:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
National news:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
International news:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sports:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Agricultural news:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Society or women's:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Syndicated features:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Editorials:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Advertising:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

SECTION IV.

25. How often do you use each of the following sources of agricultural news for your paper?

	Very much	Often	Some- times	Little	Never
Area farmers:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extension specialists in county or area:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
U.S. Dept. of Agric.:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missouri ASCS Office:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Soil Conservation Service Office:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missouri Farm Bureau:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mid-Continent Farmers Association (MFA):	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missouri Farm News Service (UMC):	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Typed releases from UMC Editor's Off.:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

26. How much do each of the following considerations contribute to your decision to use or reject an agricultural story?

	Very much	A lot	Some- what	Little	Not at all
Subject matter:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Timeliness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Style of writing:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reader interest:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Local adaptability:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Available space:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Your background:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Trust in the source:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT SHEET FOR MORE QUESTIONS.

SECTION V.

27. How would you rate the typed and duplicated news releases you received in 1973 from the UMC Editor's Office (on the blue letterhead)?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
a) subject matter:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b) timeliness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c) story length:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d) style:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e) variety:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f) usefulness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

28. How would you rate the material you have seen in the MISSOURI FARM NEWS SERVICE in 1973?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
a) subject matter:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b) timeliness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c) story length:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d) style:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e) variety:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f) usefulness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

29. How would you rate the photo releases you received in 1973 from the UMC Editor's Office?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
a) photo quality:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b) cutline quality:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c) usefulness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d) timeliness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

30. How would you rate the "Garden Spotlight" columns you received in 1973 (if on the mailing list)?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
a) subject matter:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b) timeliness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c) length:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d) style:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e) variety:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f) usefulness:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

THE END! Thank you very much for taking time to give us your responses to these questions. Please feel free to make additional comments on the back of this sheet or on a separate sheet.

The results of this study should be available in a few weeks. If you would like a copy of them, please check here: _____

University of Missouri - Columbia



1-98 Agriculture Building
Columbia, Mo. 65201

AGRICULTURAL EDITOR'S OFFICE

Telephone
314-882-8237

January 8, 1974

Mrs. Annette Henry
Publisher
AVALANCHE
Tarkio, MO 64491

Dear Mrs. Henry:

Happy New Year! We in the Agricultural Editor's Office at UMC have enjoyed working with the Missouri press in the past and look forward to another pleasant working relationship in 1974.

We always appreciate feedback from you so that our service to you can be improved and updated from time to time. Would you or your editor take a few minutes of your time this week to respond to the enclosed questionnaire? Your newspaper is part of a random sample of Missouri newspapers in this study, and a high return will help the results be meaningful to all the state's newspapers.

Our objectives are fourfold:

1. To determine what Missouri newspaper editors foresee as their needs for agricultural information in 1974.
2. To determine how agricultural news competes for space with other types of news in Missouri newspapers.
3. To determine what sources of agricultural information are most important to Missouri newspaper editors.
4. To evaluate the usefulness of the information sent out in 1973 to Missouri newspapers from this office.

If you are not the primary person responsible for deciding how much agricultural news goes into your newspaper, would you please give this questionnaire to the member of your staff who has this responsibility?

A stamped self-addressed envelope is provided for your convenience in returning the questionnaire to us. Please note that there are questions on both the front and the back of each sheet (to save our trees!).

Would you please return the questionnaire by Jan. 18? Thank you very much for your help--it is extremely valuable to us!

Sincerely,
Dave McAllister
Dave McAllister
Information Specialist

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enc.

University of Missouri - Columbia



1-98 Agriculture Building
Columbia, Mo. 65201

AGRICULTURAL EDITOR'S OFFICE

Telephone
314-882-8237

January 21, 1974

Mr. Norman Carlton
Publisher
JOURNAL
Appleton City, MO 64724

Dear Mr. Carlton,

We have received a very good return so far on the questionnaire we mailed to 90 Missouri newspapers Jan. 8 asking for responses to questions concerning the kind and amount of agricultural news Missouri newspaper publishers and editors are interested in receiving in 1974.

We have not yet, however, received back the questionnaire we mailed to your newspaper (unless it has crossed in the mails with this letter). We are most eager to hear from your newspaper so that our study can be as meaningful as possible.

We pulled a random sample of Missouri newspapers to receive this questionnaire. If we are fortunate enough to receive them all back, it will make it possible for us to generalize the results to all newspapers in Missouri, with very little chance for error.

Would you, therefore, please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire? Another copy is enclosed in case you can't put your hands on the one we originally sent. We would be very appreciative if we could hear from you by Feb. 1.

Thank you very much for your time!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave McAllister".

Dave McAllister
Information Specialist

enc.

MISSOURI NEWSPAPERS PARTICIPATING IN STUDY

DAILIES

Brookfield News-Bulletin
Cape Girardeau
Southeast Missourian
Columbia Missourian
Columbia Tribune
Festus News-Democrat
Fulton Kingdom News
Hannibal Courier-Post
Independence Examiner
Marshall Democrat-News
Neosho News
Richmond News
Rolla News
Sikeston Standard
Springfield Leader-Press
Waynesville Guide
West Plains Quill

WEEKLIES

Appleton City Journal
Ava Douglas County Herald
Bourbon Beacon
Branson Beacon
California Democrat
Canton Press-News Journal
Caruthersville
Pemiscot Journal
Cassville Democrat
Centralia Fireside Guard
Charleston
Enterprise-Courier
Clarence Courier
Cuba Free Press
DeSoto Jefferson Republic
Edina Sentinel
Gallatin North Missourian
Hillsboro Jefferson County
Record
Houston Herald
Jackson Post & Cash Book
Jamesport Tri-County Weekly
Kinnett Missouri Weekly
LaPlata Home Press
Lebanon Rustic-Republican
Linn Unterrified Democrat
Malden Press-Merit
Milan Standard
Montgomery City Standard

WEEKLIES (Cont.)

Mount Vernon Lawrence County Record
Odessa Odessan
O'Fallon-St. Peters Times
Osceola St. Clair County Courier
Owensville Gasconade County
Republican
Paris Monroe County Appeal
Piedmont Journal-Banner
Plattsburg Leader
Richland Mirror
Richmond Ray County Herald
Salem Dent County Times
Shelbina Democrat
Shelbyville Shelby County Herald
Slater News-Rustler
Steelville Crawford Mirror
Tarkio Avalanche
Union Franklin County Tribune
Unionville Republican
Versailles Leader-Statesman
Warrenton Banner
Washington Citizen
Wellsville Optic-News
Windsor Review

VITA 2

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