

A STUDY OF THE NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY GIVEN TO
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FFA ACTIVITIES IN OKLAHOMA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the efforts which vocational agriculture teachers make to promote their programs through newspaper stories and pictures. It is also concerned with the cooperation and support given to vocational agriculture and FFA programs by newspaper editors. Although it is recognized that several news media may be used to promote agriculture and FFA programs, the newspaper is the only medium taken into account in this study.

Included in the study are opinions and answers to questions received from 90 vocational agriculture teachers and 66 newspaper editors who are located over a wide geographical range and represent all types of communities in Oklahoma. Also included is a survey of 3176 newspaper stories covering a period from March 1, 1952 through May 31, 1952.

Need for the Study

Newspaper editors are always anxious to receive news of local interest, and the agriculture teacher in many communities is the source of much of that news. Agriculture teachers are not always trained in news writing, but if the teacher and editor can be brought together in the right relationship they can be an effective team in conveying local agricultural news to the public.

The public has a definite interest in the high school program of vocational agriculture and is entitled to be fully informed of the importance, objectives and activities

of the school and of the agriculture department. It invests its tax money and the time of its young people in the program. It is apt to be reluctant in making further investments if it isn't kept informed through a good public relations program.¹

In his book, Grassroots Public Relations for Agriculture, Lipscomb states:

No single element in the county or community--none at all--is therefore so essential to winning and holding public good will as the local press. No outside publication, regardless of circulation, number of pages, or beauty of appearance, can match it in thoroughness of reading or in influence concerning local problems and people. Because printed impressions are received through the eye, they are retained longer than those received through auditory media. Your message is not missed, as in the case of radio, if the prospect is not at a particular place at a particular time. Stories are not lost if interruptions occur. Each copy of the average paper is read by two to five persons.²

Perhaps many agriculture teachers do not take advantage of the local newspaper because they do not realize the importance of the press. Others may feel incapable of producing written news that will be acceptable by editors because of insufficient training in news writing. Some may have failed to achieve a good personal relationship with their editors. Whatever the cause, according to a study made by Whitfield³ in 1950, agriculture teachers have a low ranking with other agriculture

¹Oscar W. Loreen, "A Public Relations Program for Instructors of Vocational Agriculture," The Agricultural Education Magazine, XII (December, 1948), p. 123.

²Ed Lipscomb, Grassroots Public Relations for Agriculture (Little Rock, 1950), p. 67.

³Lloyd A. Whitfield, Sources and Types of Agricultural News in Selected County Seat Weekly Newspapers in Oklahoma, Masters Thesis (Oklahoma A. and M. College, 1951), p. 94.

leaders in the amount of news given to newspaper editors. Whitfield's study showed that vocational agriculture teachers ranked last out of a group of nine listed sources of agriculture news received by 72 County Seat weekly newspapers in Oklahoma.

It is believed that a study designed to discover the cause of this low ranking would be helpful to agriculture teachers in reporting news. It is also believed that it would be helpful if the desires of editors concerning the receipt of news could be obtained.

PURPOSES

1. To determine the kind and number of newspaper stories that vocational agriculture teachers use to further their programs.
2. To determine to what extent vocational agriculture teachers are making use of the newspaper publicity that is available to them.
3. To determine the type of news items dealing with vocational agriculture and FFA activities that editors prefer.
4. To determine what methods editors prefer that agriculture teachers use for presenting stories.
5. To develop recommendations and make suggestions that may be used by teachers in publicizing their vocational agriculture and FFA programs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The leaders of vocational agriculture have long recognized the need for a promotional program.

In 1938, J. B. Parry, State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture for Oklahoma wrote:

There is a growing feeling among the men in the field that vocational agriculture is suffering from the lack of a militant, functioning, promotional program. There is too much resistance to the program from school administrators; and, in some localities, from those who could be benefited most. With both groups, this resistance is largely the result of a lack of understanding of the program. It is the task of the agriculture teachers and the supervisors to break down this resistance and so to interest the public in the program that there will be more general appreciation of its value.

Vocational agriculture as a service needs and is entitled to the thorough understanding and appreciation of the general public.⁴

A study to discover the publications interested in FFA news and the types of articles most desired by editors was made by Charles E. Rogers, former head of the Department of Technical Journalism, Iowa State College, Ames.

Rogers reports in part as follows:

A few farm paper editors gave suggestions for the improvement in FFA press relations. A common criticism was that too little FFA material was received in their offices. One editor said his relations with the FFA were 'of the

⁴J. B. Parry, "A Promotional Program for Vocational Agriculture," The Agricultural Education Magazine, XI (September, 1938), p. 146.

pleasantest, but the reporters elected are often boys with no bent toward writing or publicity.' He suggested some different method of selecting reporters should be adopted. 'In high schools where there is a journalism department, its head might help.'⁵

The following table reports the findings made by Whitfield in 1950.⁶

COMPARATIVE IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS SOURCES OF AGRICULTURE NEWS
JANUARY, 1950

Sources	Total Inches	Percent	Ranking
Local Staff	2,375	23.21	1
County Correspondent	548	5.36	8
County Agent	1,422	13.90	3
Home Demonstration Agent	778	7.60	7
Vocational Agriculture Instructor	201	1.96	9
Other Government Agencies	1,554	15.19	2
College Agencies	1,363	13.32	4
Syndicate	1,183	11.61	5
Miscellaneous	804	7.86	6

⁵C. E. Rogers, Reporting FFA News (The Iowa State College Press, 1941), p. 104.

⁶Whitfield, loc. cit.

In a study made by Frazier,⁷ vocational agriculture teachers recommended that a student preparing for county agent or vocational agriculture work take more than two hours news writing training in college.

⁷Chester J. Frazier, The Value of News Writing Techniques of Oklahoma County Agents and Vocational Agriculture Teachers, Masters Thesis (Oklahoma A. and M. College, 1950), p. 27.

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The initial step in the preparation of this study was securing the name and address of instructors in vocational agriculture departments of Oklahoma from the office of the State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture for Oklahoma located at Stillwater, Oklahoma. A questionnaire was prepared and mailed to 125 vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma. The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter of explanation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

An attempt was made in the letter to explain that all information gathered from the questionnaire would be held confidential. It was feared that some teachers might not be completely unbiased on some of the questions if they thought the material might eventually reach their employers. It is well to point out that only an overall analysis appears in this study. No individual information is discussed.

After the questionnaire had been prepared it was checked by members of the Oklahoma A. & M. College agricultural education department; members of the Oklahoma A. & M. College journalism department; Mr. George Church of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station publications staff; and Mr. Jack Putman, State Executive Secretary of the IFA. Numerous suggestions were given and notable changes were made. After revisions were made the questionnaire was tested on three Oklahoma A. & M. College students and three vocational agriculture teachers for effectiveness.

A second questionnaire was prepared in much the same manner as the first. After securing the name and address of all the newspapers published in Oklahoma from the Oklahoma A. & M. College journalism department, the questionnaire was mailed to 125 arbitrarily selected newspaper editors.

The next step in conducting this study was to make a detailed survey of all the newspaper articles published in Oklahoma during March, April, and May, 1952, which contained either the words, "Future Farmers of America", or the letters, "FFA." The newspaper articles were obtained from the Oklahoma Press Clipping Bureau, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, through the office of the State Executive Secretary of the FFA.

The final step was to tabulate and analyze the information received from the three sources and develop recommendations which vocational agriculture teachers may use when reporting news to newspaper editors.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

The following material was compiled from questionnaires received from vocational agriculture teachers and newspaper editors.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVED FROM TEACHERS

Ninety, or 72 percent, of the 125 questionnaires sent to vocational agriculture teachers were returned. From the data received through these questionnaires, an attempt is made to find out how much effort teachers make to promote their programs through newspapers. An attempt is also made to determine the methods used by teachers in presenting news, the number of pictures given to editors, and the effect of the number of years of experience on the amount of news teachers submit to editors.

Teachers with one to five years of experience reported that they submit 9 percent more written than verbal news. Teachers with more than five years of experience reported that they submit about an equal amount of each.

In a similar study, Franier² reported the same findings for those teachers with one to five years experience, but reported that teachers

²Ibid., p. 23.

with more than five years experience slackened on the number of written stories, but released more verbal news.

TABLE I

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE AS INDICATED BY THE TEACHERS SURVEYED

Range in Years	Number of Teachers with Experience in Range	Percent of Teachers with Experience in Range
1 to 5	48	53
6 to 10	19	21
11 to 15	10	11
16 to 20	6	7
21 to 25	4	5
26 to 30	3	3
Total	90	100
Average years of teaching experience 7.8 years		

It is significant that many vocational agriculture departments do not have the service of a local newspaper. It might be recognized that teachers in these communities are apt to find it somewhat more difficult to inform the people of their programs.

Thirteen of the 90 teachers reported two local newspapers. Two reported three and one reported four newspapers.

TABLE II

TYPES OF NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN TOWNS WHERE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENTS ARE LOCATED*

Type of Newspaper	Number Newspapers Indicated
Daily	22
Semi-weekly	4
Weekly	61
No paper published	23

*Ninety teachers reporting.

TABLE III

ACQUAINTANCE WITH OUT-OF-TOWN EDITORS BY AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Number of Out-of-Town Editors	Number Teachers Indicating Acquaintance	Percent Teachers Indicating Acquaintance
None	31	34
One	27	30
Two	25	28
Three	6	7
Four	1	1
Total	90	100

As indicated in Table III, teachers are not generally well acquainted with editors outside of their local communities. This indication is significant because of the high percentage of teachers who said that they did

not have a local newspaper, and because some teachers who have local newspapers will also need to make use of newspapers in nearby communities.

All of the teachers reporting a local newspaper also reported acquaintance with the local editor. Of the teachers who reported more than one newspaper, all except one reported acquaintance with the editor of each paper.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH WRITTEN NEWS IS SUBMITTED TO THE LOCAL EDITOR

Frequency of Submitting News	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Daily	1	2
Semi-weekly	1	2
Weekly	25	43
Occasionally	29	50
Never	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	58	100

Many teachers apparently submit written news only when something special happens. It may be that the two who answered "never" are supplying verbal instead of written news at the editor's request.

It is significant that teachers apparently fail to give verbal news to local editors as often as is indicated in Table V. When Tables IV and V are compared we find indications that the majority of teachers in either case give news only occasionally.

TABLE V

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH VERBAL NEWS IS GIVEN TO THE LOCAL EDITOR

Frequency of Submitting News	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Daily	1	1
Semi-weekly	1	1
Weekly	17	19
Occasionally	56	64
Never	13	15
Total	88	100

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH AGRICULTURE TEACHERS GIVE WRITTEN NEWS TO EDITORS IN OTHER TOWNS

Frequency of Submitting News	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Daily	0	0
Semi-weekly	0	0
Weekly	5	6
Occasionally	72	80
Never	13	14
Total	90	100

TABLE VII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH AGRICULTURE TEACHERS GIVE VERBAL NEWS TO EDITORS
IN OTHER TOWNS

Frequency of Submitting News	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Daily	0	0
Semi-weekly	0	0
Weekly	2	2.3
Occasionally	44	49.4
Never	43	48.3
Total	89	100.0

It seems evident that teachers make little effort to supply out-of-town editors with news. It may not be very important for some teachers to give news to out-of-town editors, but for others, especially those who do not have local newspapers, it seems very desirable.

It is significant that more news is supplied in written form than is given verbally.

The information contained in Table VIII seems to indicate that editors are anxious to obtain more news than teachers voluntarily give them.

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE LOCAL EDITOR OR REPORTER SEEKS ITEMS
FROM THE AGRICULTURE TEACHER

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Frequently	35	39
Occasionally	41	46
Never	13	15
Total	89	100

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH AGRICULTURE TEACHERS SUBMIT PICTURES
ALONG WITH NEWS STORIES

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Frequently	16	18
Occasionally	61	69
Never	12	13
Total	89	100

It is significant that many teachers use pictures along with news stories to help promote their programs; however, it should be pointed out that editors indicated that they would like to receive more pictures than they now receive.

TABLE X

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE FFA CHAPTER REPORTER SUBMITS NEWS
TO THE LOCAL EDITOR

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Frequently	34	38
Occasionally	51	57
Never	5	5
Total	90	100

TABLE XI

OPINION OF TEACHERS REGARDING THE FFA CHAPTER REPORTER'S COMPETENCE
TO REPORT NEWS

Teacher's Opinion of Reporter's Competence	Teachers Indicating		Teachers Indicating	
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
1. Do you feel that the FFA chapter reporter is competent to report news.	15	17	75	83
2. Do you prefer to work with the FFA chapter reporter.	77	88	10	12

It is evident that teachers depend heavily upon the chapter reporter to get news published. It could not be determined how much of the time the reporter is aided by the teacher, but Table XI indicates that most teachers prefer to work with the reporter. It is surprising that 12 percent of the teachers prefer to let the reporter submit news unassisted.

TABLE XII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH AGRICULTURE TEACHERS SUBMIT STORIES TO NEWSPAPERS
WITH STATE-WIDE CIRCULATION

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Daily	1	1
Semi-weekly	0	0
Weekly	0	0
Occasionally	70	80
Never	16	19
Total	87	100

Evidently, teachers make little effort to give stories to papers with state-wide circulation. The need for having news go to papers with state-wide circulation is probably minor, but it should not be overlooked when the right situation presents itself. It is recognized that much of the news worthy of state-wide circulation is released through the State Department of Vocational Agriculture.

It is interesting to note that written news is reported to be used more frequently than verbal news (Tables XIII and XIV). It is also significant that 9 percent of the verbal stories are never used, and 17 percent are used only occasionally.

TABLE XIII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE AGRICULTURE TEACHER'S VERBAL NEWS IS USED

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Always	42	47
Frequently	24	27
Occasionally	16	17
Never	8	9
Total	90	100

TABLE XIV

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE AGRICULTURE TEACHER'S WRITTEN NEWS IS USED

Frequency	Number Teachers Indicating	Percent Teachers Indicating
Always	53	60
Frequently	25	28
Occasionally	10	11
Never	1	1
Total	89	100

The indication that teachers submit stories about PFA activities more frequently than any other type has added significance when Table XV is compared to the answers given by editors in Table XXX.

Editors report that stories about FFA activities and individual student achievements are about equally preferred. This would indicate that teachers probably need to know more about the types of stories that editors prefer.

TABLE XV

PHASES OF WORK COVERED MOST FREQUENTLY IN STORIES SUBMITTED TO EDITORS
BY AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Stories Concerning	Number Teachers Indicating
FFA Activities	83
Individual Student Achievements	49
Farming Practices	17
Other	6

TABLE XVI

OPINIONS OF TEACHERS REGARDING THE VALUE OF NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY
IN PROMOTING THEIR PROGRAMS

Opinion	Teachers Indicating		Teachers Indicating	
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
Do you feel that more newspaper publicity would help promote your program?	72	80	18	20

It is very significant that 80 percent of the teachers believe that more newspaper publicity would help promote their programs. See Table XVI. It should be pointed out that many of those answering "no" made a special notation on the questionnaire, saying that they definitely did not want less publicity. Some said they believe that they are getting about the right amount.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVED FROM EDITORS

Sixty-eight, or 54 percent, of the 125 questionnaires sent to editors were returned. Two of the returned questionnaires were not used because it was believed that they lacked sufficient information to warrant inclusion in the study. From the data received through the 66 remaining questionnaires, an attempt is made to gather the following information:

- (1) The frequency with which editors use news received from vocational agriculture teachers.
- (2) The type of news preferred by editors.
- (3) The methods editors prefer that teachers use when presenting news.
- (4) The amount of news which editors receive from local agriculture teachers, and agriculture teachers outside of their own town or city.
- (5) The number of pictures editors receive from agriculture teachers.
- (6) The number of pictures editors would like to receive.

TABLE XVII
RURAL CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS AS REPORTED BY EDITORS

Type Newspaper	Number Editors Reporting	Percent Rural Circulation Indicated
Daily	27	43.11
Weekly	39	60.41

TABLE XVIII
EDITORS INDICATING THAT AN FFA CHAPTER IS LOCATED IN THEIR CITY

FFA Chapter Present	Daily Newspaper Editors Indicating		Weekly Newspaper Editors Indicating	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	22	81	37	95
No	5	19	2	5
Total	27	100	39	100

It is significant that the newspapers surveyed have such a high percentage of rural subscribers, and that most serve an area that is also served by a vocational agriculture department (Tables XVII and XVIII). This seems to indicate that editors generally are serving readers who are interested in FFA and agriculture news.

TABLE XIX

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH EDITORS RECEIVE WRITTEN NEWS STORIES
FROM LOCAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Frequency	Daily Newspaper Editors Reporting	Weekly Newspaper Editors Reporting
Daily	0	0
Semi-weekly	2	1
Weekly	2	11
Occasionally	8	20
Never	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	20	39

TABLE XX

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH WRITTEN STORIES ARE RECEIVED FROM OTHER TEACHERS
IN THE CIRCULATION AREA

Frequency	Daily Newspaper Editors Reporting	Weekly Newspaper Editors Reporting
Daily	0	0
Semi-weekly	1	0
Weekly	2	4
Occasionally	17	24
Never	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	26	39

Table XX indicates that some teachers make an effort to bring news of their agriculture programs to people over a wide area. It could not be determined how many of these teachers have local newspapers because there is no way of knowing which teachers reported news to the editors, but judging from Table II it is probable that many of them do not have local papers and therefore must depend upon papers in other communities.

TABLE XXI

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH EDITORS RECEIVE PICTURES FROM AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Frequency	<u>Daily Newspaper</u> <u>Editors Reporting</u>		<u>Weekly Newspaper</u> <u>Editors Reporting</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Frequently	4	15	6	16
Occasionally	17	63	16	42
Never	6	22	16	42
Total	27	100	38	100

TABLE XXII

OPINIONS OF EDITORS CONCERNING THE EFFORT OF A GREATER NUMBER PICTURES THAN THEY NOW RECEIVE

Opinion	<u>Daily Newspaper</u> <u>Editors Reporting</u>		<u>Weekly Newspaper</u> <u>Editors Reporting</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	16	59	21	58
No	5	19	6	22
No Preference	6	22	7	20
Total	27	100	36	100

In answering the questionnaire, some of the editors indicated that they did not have facilities for printing pictures and therefore did not care to receive them. Others said that they would prefer to take pictures themselves if teachers would notify them. However, it is believed that most editors would like to receive more pictures.

TABLE XXIII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH STORIES ARE RECEIVED FROM THE FFA CHAPTER REPORTER

Frequency	Daily Newspaper Editors Reporting		Weekly Newspaper Editors Reporting	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Frequently	7	26	8	21
Occasionally	16	59	25	66
Never	4	15	5	13
Total	27	100	38	100

The information contained in Table XXIII substantiates the report given by teachers concerning the frequency with which the FFA chapter reporter submits news. It is significant since Table XXVI indicates that editors tend to prefer that the teacher submit news.

The margin by which editors say that they prefer written news is significant. It should be pointed out, however, that some editors prefer verbal news and it seems advisable for each editor to be consulted as to his preference before news is submitted. It is also significant that more daily newspaper editors reported preference for verbal news than did editors of weekly newspapers.

TABLE XXIV

METHOD OF PRESENTATION OF STORIES PREFERRED BY EDITORS

Method	Daily Newspaper		Weekly Newspaper	
	Editors Preferring Number	Percent	Editors Preferring Number	Percent
Verbal	8	29	3	8
Written	11	42	22	56
Either	8	29	14	36
Total	27	100	39	100

TABLE XXV

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH REPORTERS ARE ASSIGNED TO OBTAIN
NEWS FROM AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Frequency	Daily Newspaper		Weekly Newspaper	
	Editors Reporting		Editors Reporting	
Daily	3		0	
Semi-weekly	3		2	
Weekly	3		16	
Occasionally	15		10	
Never	2		11	
Total	26		39	

In Table XXV, editors report a ratio similar to the one reported by teachers concerning the frequency with which teachers are contacted for news. See Table VIII.

TABLE XXVI
INDIVIDUAL FROM WHOM RECEIPT OF NEWS IS PREFERRED

Individual	Daily Newspaper Editors Reporting		Weekly Newspaper Editors Reporting	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Teacher	13	48	16	41
FFA Chapter Reporter	0	0	4	10
Either	14	52	19	49
Total	27	100	39	100

According to the information contained in Table XXVI, it may be wise for teachers to consult editors about the matter of who should submit news. Although a little more than half of the editors said they had no preference, it is significant that only four said they prefer the chapter reporter.

TABLE XXVII
FREQUENCY WITH WHICH EDITORS USE UNSOLICITED VERBAL STORIES
RECEIVED FROM AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Frequency	Daily Newspaper Editors Indicating		Weekly Newspaper Editors Indicating	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Always	12	44	17	44
Frequently	12	44	17	44
Occasionally	2	8	4	10
Never	1	4	1	2
Total	27	100	39	100

TABLE XXVIII

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH EDITORS USE WRITTEN STORIES
RECEIVED FROM AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Frequency	Daily Newspaper		Weekly Newspaper	
	Editors Indicating Number	Percent	Editors Indicating Number	Percent
Always	13	52	18	50
Frequently	8	32	14	39
Occasionally	4	16	3	8
Never	0	0	1	3
Total	25	100	36	100

From the information contained in Tables XXVII and XXVIII, it is evident that editors regard agricultural and FFA news as being valuable. Some possible reasons why more written stories are not used are given in Table XXIX.

Table XXIX is important because it points out the apparent weaknesses which most teachers have in submitting written news to editors. It is not surprising that low news value leads the list of reasons given. It should be remembered that editors are anxious to get news that will appeal to the most readers.

Editors also indicate that timeliness is an important factor. The older a news story is the less value it has; therefore, if editors are expected to print news they must have it at the earliest possible moment.

TABLE XXIX

REASONS GIVEN BY EDITORS FOR NOT USING SOME OF THE WRITTEN STORIES
WHICH THEY RECEIVE

Reason	Daily Newspaper		Weekly Newspaper	
	Editors Indicating Number	Percent	Editors Indicating Number	Percent
Not timely	3	13	7	20
Not in news form	5	22	2	6
Poorly written	1	5	4	12
Incomplete	7	30	4	12
Low news value	7	30	15	44
Other	0	0	2	6
Total	23	100	34	100

For reasons of expediency, newspapers use a certain news form. As could be expected, editors of daily papers listed this reason more frequently than did weekly editors.

The indication that editors rarely refuse stories because they are poorly written has special significance. If the information contained in a story is worthy of publication the editor usually is glad to re-write it to fit newspaper style.

TABLE XXX

TYPES OF STORIES MOST LIKELY TO BE PUBLISHED AS INDICATED BY EDITORS

Type of Story	Daily Newspaper Editors Reporting	Weekly Newspaper Editors Reporting
PTA Activities	25	33
Individual Student Achievements	24	35
Farming Practices	18	24
Other	3	5

Many editors indicated equal preference for two or more of the types of stories listed in Table XXX. Therefore, when the columns are totaled a larger figure than 66 (the number of editors surveyed) is obtained.

COMPARISON OF DATA RECEIVED FROM AGRICULTURE TEACHERS AND THAT RECEIVED
FROM NEWSPAPER EDITORS

Many of the questions answered by agriculture teachers and those answered by editors were similar. Therefore, it was felt that comparisons should be made between these questions in order to show differences between editors' desires concerning the receipt of agricultural news, and the practices which teachers follow in submitting news.

A comparison between Tables IV and XIX reveals that 25.4 percent of the editors reporting say that they never receive written news from the agriculture teacher while 3.4 percent of the teachers reporting say that they never submit written news. Although the teachers and editors were not from the same cities, a difference of 22 percent is significant.

No significant difference is indicated between Tables VI and XX concerning the amount of news given to out-of-town editors by teachers, and the amount received from out-of-town teachers by editors.

No significant difference is indicated between Tables VIII and XXV which deal with the number of contacts editors make with teachers for news.

The only significant difference between Tables IX and XXI is the indication by 13 percent of the teachers that they never submit pictures and the indication by 36 percent of the editors that they never receive pictures from agriculture teachers.

Tables X and XXIII, concerning the frequency with which the chapter reporter submits news, indicate a difference of 8.3 percent in the opinions given by editors and teachers.

Tables XIII and XXVII, concerning the frequency with which the agriculture teacher's verbal news is used, indicate a difference of 5.8 percent in the opinions given by editors and teachers.

No significant difference was reported in Tables XIV and XXVIII concerning the frequency with which written news is used.

The most significant difference between Tables XV and XXX is the number of stories concerning individual student achievements and farming practices which teachers say that they submit and the number of those stories which the editors say that they would like to receive. Teachers report that they submit almost twice as many stories about FFA activities as they submit about individual student achievements. Editors indicated that stories concerning FFA activities and student achievements are about equally preferred.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

The questionnaires upon which this study is based provided a space at the end for comments by editors and teachers. It is felt that many of the comments are worthy of mention and pertinent to this study. Only a small portion of the comments are included.

Remarks by Teachers

"All chapters need more publicity. It is one of the cheapest and most important things for a chapter."

"I know the editors personally and have constant contact and they call me if they need something or I call them if I have something. I usually give them the facts and they write the news. The weekly carries a regular column."

"I believe the publicity in newspapers is inadequate due to my failing to get the articles to the publishers."

"I would feel lost in trying to teach vocational agriculture in a community that did not have a newspaper. The teacher or reporter should have an article in each issue of the paper."

"The local editor has given excellent help and cooperation in publicizing our local chapter. In return we have tried to have a story in each publication."

"I think that a chapter that is really doing something will make its own publicity. We try to have something that will make the front

page of our local paper each month and more often if possible. However, publicity is not the answer to a good vocational agriculture program."

"The right kind of publicity is good but it can be overdone. I try to get as many of my FFA boys in the news as possible so more families will be interested."

"It is always well, we think, to let the people know what is taking place."

"It is very hard to get stories written and sent in when you do not have a local newspaper."

"We have a local newspaper published weekly and my reporter gets the best of cooperation from the local editor. He has never failed in printing anything my reporter asks."

"I believe we should make special effort to get more news in the paper. Often we get busy and neglect or overlook many good articles."

"The press of other activities prevent writing more news stories such as about individual farming programs."

"I think that newspapers should be used by FFA chapters to tell chapter accomplishments and to inform the public of the FFA program but not to try to ring your 'bell' too loudly."

"Our editor (locally) has never failed to print any news article submitted to him."

"I believe that we now have sufficient publicity but definitely would not want less."

"I would like to compare publicity and results (achievements) with the egg and hen. I don't know which came first, but I could use heaps more of both."

"I believe that reporting just for the sake of having the FFA in publicity weakly cheapens the value when you do not have a good story to report."

"More stories other than shows and contests. Such as: Field trips, good improvement projects, project programs of boys who had agriculture years ago."

"Too many of us overdo our publicity."

Remarks by Editors

"There are several FFA chapters in our circulation area and we could definitely use more news of their activities. We prefer items concerning FFA youth themselves, what they are doing and how; not so much on FFA and leaders."

"Would appreciate having all FFA advisers keep in closer touch on news developments."

"We are very anxious to use FFA publicity locally if we can get it. Photos, too."

"We would like to see some FFA student in each chapter designated as a photographer to take pictures of the actual projects. Too often the chapter waits until the year is about over and then decides to promote a student for special honors, and make a big splurge. Constant publicity throughout the year is much more desirable."

"FFA and vocational agriculture work is always news in a farm community such as ours, and it is our opinion that value of such news is not stressed in training of vo-ag instructors, and that it could stand much improvement. "

"The FFA chapter is very active here and we use reports, pictures and news stories whenever available. When we do not receive reports, which is seldom, a reporter contacts the local instructor or reporter."

"We like and use all local news we can get. However, canned information that cannot be localized is worthless to us. Local events, achievements, practices, pictures are always welcomed."

"If the FFA chapter could realize that stories need not be written out in a finished, completed form, we believe they would submit more stories. We would be happy to just get rough notes, as long as they are complete and contain all the facts. We'll write the story."

"Our instructor is young and does not seem to get around to the importance of his home-town paper in exploiting activities of his department."

"Timeliness is greatest need. When meetings are held Thursday or Friday and reports aren't brought in to a daily paper until Monday or Tuesday of the following week, their news value is markedly diminished."

"Our vocational agriculture instructor is difficult to reach by phone during the day and as a result some FFA news goes unwritten and unnoticed. The instructor does not keep the paper informed, to the proper degree, of his activities and those of his students."

"We run a regular farm page every Saturday in addition to other stories on other days if they are timely. The more pictures and FFA news we can have, the better, although a lack of time by reporters prevents us from being as aggressive about getting them as we'd like. Several FFA advisers are extremely helpful and we feel others would be if we once got them started sending anything."

"Our agriculture teacher keeps us well informed on real news stories concerning FFA. It might save our time somewhat if facts were written out and given to us, but there has been no trouble along this line."

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF FFA NEWS ANALYSIS DATA

The following material was compiled from news stories pertaining to FFA and vocational agriculture which were published in Oklahoma during March, April, and May, 1952.

A total of 3176 newspaper articles were analyzed. The articles, representing 50 daily and 201 weekly and semi-weekly newspapers, were analyzed as to type, number within each type, and number of pictures. The term type, as used in this study, means the subject matter about which a story is written.

The stories used in this study were broken down into 11 types as follows:

- (1) FFA Activities -- those stories dealing with FFA chapter meetings, election of officers, FFA participation in community programs, summer trips by members of the FFA, and similar activities.
- (2) Individual Student Achievements -- student successes which were a result of FFA training.
- (3) Shows, Fairs, and Contests -- stories concerning individual and FFA chapter participation in community, county, district, and state shows and contests.
- (4) Regular Column News -- news which appeared to come from a column published at regular intervals. This news usually

was headed with the FFA emblem and contained a summary of current activities or proposed activities.

- (5) Other News — stories which carried a reference to FFA but were directly concerned with other matters. This category contained such articles as editorials, advertisements, reference to a political candidate's speech in which FFA was mentioned, wedding announcements where the groom was mentioned as an FFA member, etc. In general, stories in this group were not, in the writer's opinion, originated solely by agriculture teachers.
- (6) FFA Queen — news concerning an FFA queen contest, the election of an FFA queen, an FFA queen's activities, or similar news where the FFA queen was mentioned.
- (7) Junior Master Farmer — stories concerning the election of FFA members to the Junior Master Farmer Degree, the election of Honorary Junior Master Farmers, a Junior Master Farmer's program of activities, or related news.
- (8) Governor's Award Winner — news concerning the Governor's Award winner of 1952.
- (9) FFA Chapter Banquets and Barbeques — stories which had as their principal content news of banquets and barbeques.
- (10) State FFA Convention — news concerning the State FFA Convention of 1952.
- (11) FFA Pickup Trucks — news announcing the acquisition of a pickup truck by the FFA.

TABLE XXXI

STORIES CONCERNING FFA ACTIVITIES DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	14	70	62	146
Weekly	18	107	139	264
Total	32	177	201	410

TABLE XXXII

STORIES CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT BY FFA MEMBERS
DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	3	23	15	41
Weekly	4	13	39	56
Total	7	36	54	97

TABLE XXXIII

STORIES CONCERNING SHOWS, FAIRS, AND CONTESTS
DURING MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	110	260	107	477
Weekly	180	277	129	586
Total	290	537	236	1063

TABLE XXXIV

STORIES CONTAINED IN REGULAR FFA WEEKLY OR MONTHLY COLUMNS
MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	3	4	4	11
Weekly	14	30	27	71
Total	17	34	31	82

TABLE XXXV

STORIES DIRECTLY CONCERNING OTHER THINGS BUT CARRYING A REFERENCE TO FFA
DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	26	145	97	268
Weekly	34	148	194	376
Total	60	293	291	644

TABLE XXXVI

STORIES CONCERNING FFA QUEENES DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	0	16	9	25
Weekly	5	14	11	30
Total	5	30	20	55

TABLE XXXVII

STORIES CONCERNING JUNIOR MASTER PATROLES DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	0	50	11	61
Weekly	0	42	53	95
Total	0	92	64	156

TABLE XXXVIII

STORIES CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S AWARD WINNER OF 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	0	29	3	32
Weekly	0	14	27	41
Total	0	43	30	73

TABLE XXXIX

STORIES CONCERNING PFA BANQUETS AND BANQUETS
DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	17	112	51	180
Weekly	14	149	83	246
Total	31	261	134	426

TABLE XL

STORIES CONCERNING THE STATE FFA CONVENTION IN 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	0	63	6	74
Weekly	0	73	23	96
Total	0	141	29	170

TABLE XLI

PICTURES CONCERNING FFA ACTIVITIES DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	33	102	71	206
Weekly	48	98	166	312
Total	81	200	237	518

TABLE XLII

STORIES CONCERNING FFA CHAPTER PICKUPS DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	0	2	3	5
Weekly	0	2	5	7
Total	0	4	8	12

It could not be determined how many of the 3176 stories were originated by vocational agriculture teachers. However, an attempt was made to make some division between those stories which may have been originated by teachers, and those which were apparently originated by other persons.

Table XLIII lists those stories going to state-wide circulation, and Table XLIV lists those which apparently originated in the community where they were published.

TABLE XLIII

STORIES WHICH MADE STATE-WIDE CIRCULATION
DURING MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	48	77	50	175
Weekly	39	6	73	118
Total	87	83	123	293

TABLE XLIV

STORIES WHICH WERE ORIGINATED AND PUBLISHED AS LOCAL COMMUNITY STORIES
DURING MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1952

Type Newspaper	Number of Stories			Total
	March	April	May	
Daily	125	700	315	1140
Weekly	230	861	652	1748
Total	355	1561	967	2883

The stories contained in Table XLIII were carried by the Associated Press or some other news service and, therefore, are believed to have been originated by persons other than vocational agriculture teachers. Also, one other group (those in Table XXXV, listed as other news) is believed to have been originated by persons other than agriculture teachers. These two groups (Tables XXXV and XLIII) add up to 937, or 29 percent, of the 3176 (total of Tables XLIII and XLIV) stories surveyed. This leaves 2239, or 71 percent, of the stories which agriculture teachers may have originated. However, it must be assumed that many of these were originated by local editors and their staffs.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The 90 teachers included in this study almost unanimously expressed the feeling of a need for newspaper publicity in promoting their programs. Eighty percent said that they would like to receive more publicity than they are now receiving. Many teachers expressed the belief that their publicity programs are handicapped by the lack of a local newspaper. Others said that they did not give news to editors as often as they would like to because of other duties which are more pressing.

The newspaper editors surveyed reported large rural circulations, which indicates that they are, in general, serving people who are interested in news pertaining to farming and farm organizations.

Most editors indicated a desire for news pertaining to vocational agriculture and FFA activities. Weekly newspaper editors reported an average rural circulation of 60 percent. Editors of daily papers reported a rural circulation of 43 percent.

Thirty-nine percent of the teachers reported that editors contact them frequently for news. Forty-six percent reported that they are contacted occasionally by editors.

Twenty-three of the 90 teachers reported that no newspapers are published in the town where their departments are located. All teachers

surveyed indicated acquaintance with local editors, but 34 percent reported that they are not acquainted with editors in other towns.

All but 12 teachers reported that they submit pictures for newspaper publication. A majority of the editors surveyed said that they would like to receive more pictures.

Most of the teachers surveyed reported that they allow the chapter reporter to submit much of the FFA chapter news. Editors, however, indicated that they favor receiving news from the teacher.

Forty-two of the 90 teachers surveyed reported that the news which they submit verbally is always used. Fifty-three teachers said that the news submitted in written form is always used.

Teachers indicated that FFA activities are reported more frequently than any other type of news story. Stories about individual student achievements were second and farming practices third.

Editors indicated that they prefer that stories be submitted in written form.

Editors listed low news value as the number one reason that some written stories are not used. Other reasons given were that stories are not timely or lack complete information.

Editors indicated about equal preference for stories concerning FFA activities and individual student achievements.

A survey showed that 3176 newspaper stories concerning FFA and vocational agriculture were published in Oklahoma during March, April, and May, 1952. Out of this group, one-third (1063) pertained to shows, fairs,

and contests. The next largest group was put under a category called "other news." The term "other news" was selected because these stories were directly concerned with other things and only mentioned PTA or vocational agriculture indirectly. This group totaled 644.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results of this study, it seems advisable first of all for a teacher to be well acquainted with the editors of his town and nearby towns if he expects to get a maximum amount of news published.

By being acquainted with editors and their desires, teachers are able to submit the types of stories that are desired and in the manner in which they are preferred. For instance, editors listed low news value as the primary reason for not publishing some of the written news which they receive. It is recognized that teachers are not expected to have a thorough knowledge of news writing, but by having a knowledge of editors' wishes much of that sort of thing could be corrected.

The editor's working situation is not a great deal different from the one in which the teacher works. In both cases, certain general principles are applicable under any circumstance, but there are variable factors in each community to which both editors and teachers must adapt themselves.

The size of the town, percentage of papers going to rural circulation, importance of agriculture in the community, and various other things will have an influence on the type and amount of agricultural news that a particular newspaper editor will publish.

By being personally acquainted with editors and knowing the conditions under which they work, teachers can more intelligently submit news.

No attempt is made to imply that it is impossible for teachers to secure publicity for their programs without being acquainted with editors. In fact, certain happenings and events are news and will be published regardless of the teacher's efforts. But almost without exception there will be news events and success stories which will escape editors unless teachers are quick to seize the opportunity and report them.

The timeliness of news is an important factor which teachers should take cognizance of when submitting news. Nothing ages faster than news. In fact, it is common knowledge that certain stories may be given a big play on the front page of a newspaper one day, only to be left out of the next day's paper completely.

In order for stories to be printed when they are timely they must be given to the newspaper staff as far in advance of press time as possible. Many editors are willing to pay telephone or telegraph fees for stories of events, such as judging contests, which take place outside of the community.

Care should be exercised to insure completeness of the news being submitted. Editors cannot be expected to publish stories which lack complete information. Teachers could probably avoid some of this difficulty by making a careful check of all news submitted by the chapter reporter.

No claim is made that newspaper publicity, or any form of public relations, can substitute for an active, functioning vocational agriculture program. But it is believed that newspaper stories could be used to a greater advantage for informing the people of the community and thereby enlisting their support.

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APPENDIX

A mimeographed copy of the following letter and questionnaire was mailed to 125 vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma.

March 6, 1953

Fellow Agriculturist:

I am making a study of the newspaper publicity given to vocational agriculture and Future Farmers of America activities in Oklahoma.

The primary purpose of this study is to secure information that will be of value in making recommendations that vocational agriculture teachers may use to secure better and wider newspaper publicity for their programs.

Your cooperation in filling out the enclosed questionnaire will be greatly appreciated. Please mark all questions correctly for none of the answers will lead to your embarrassment, since no names will appear in the final analysis.

I urge you to return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible, since the study will be incomplete without your answers.

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Voyles
Graduate Student
Department of Agriculture Education
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Stillwater, Oklahoma

The data obtained from the following questionnaire will be used to analyze problems that vocational agriculture teachers have in securing newspaper publicity for their programs. Recommendations will be developed from the information secured.

1. Name _____
2. School _____
3. Years of experience _____
4. How many newspapers are printed in the town where your department is located?
 A. Dailies () B. Semi-weeklies () C. Weeklies ()
 D. None published ()
5. How many of the newspaper editors in the town where your department is located do you know personally? _____
6. How many editors of other newspapers circulated in your community do you know personally? _____
7. Do you submit written news stories to your local newspapers?
 A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
 D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
8. Do you give verbal stories to your local editor or reporter?
 A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
 D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
9. Do you submit written news stories to newspapers other than your most local newspaper?
 A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
 D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()

10. Do you give verbal news stories to newspapers other than your most local newspaper?
- A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
11. Does your local editor or reporter seek news stories from you:
- A. Frequently () B. Occasionally () C. Never ()
12. Do you submit pictures along with news stories?
- A. Frequently () B. Occasionally () C. Never ()
13. Does the FFA Chapter reporter submit articles to local newspapers?
- A. Frequently () B. Occasionally () C. Never ()
14. Do you feel that the FFA Chapter reporter is competent to handle news stories alone?
- A. Yes () B. No ()
- Or do you prefer to:
- C. Work with the FFA reporter ()
D. Submit stories personally ()
15. Do you submit news stories to newspapers with state-wide circulation?
- A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
16. What phase or phases of work are covered most by the stories you submit?
- A. FFA Chapter activities ()
B. Individual student achievements ()
C. Farming practices ()
D. Other ()

17. Are the news stories that you submit in written form used?
- A. Always () B. Frequently () C. Occasionally ()
D. Never ()
18. Are the news stories that you present verbally used?
- A. Always () B. Frequently () C. Occasionally ()
D. Never ()
19. Do you feel that more newspaper publicity would help promote your program?
- A. Yes () B. No ()

Any comments would be appreciated.

A mimeographed copy of the following letter and questionnaire was mailed to 125 newspaper editors in Oklahoma.

March 6, 1953

Dear Editor:

I am making a study of the newspaper publicity given to vocational agriculture and the Future Farmers of America activities in Oklahoma.

My purpose is to obtain information that can be used to develop recommendations that will help vocational agriculture teachers to meet the needs and desires of newspaper editors when submitting news stories to be published.

Your cooperation in filling out the enclosed questionnaire will be greatly appreciated.

I urge you to return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible, since the study will be incomplete without your answers.

Sincerely yours,

Charles R. Vaylos
Graduate Student
Department of Agriculture Education
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Stillwater, Oklahoma

The data obtained from the following questionnaire will be used to develop recommendations for vocational agriculture teachers on how to submit news stories that are news worthy and acceptable to editors.

1. Name of newspaper _____
2. City or town where published _____
3. How many copies are circulated per issue? _____
4. How many copies per issue go to rural subscribers? _____
5. Is there a vocational agriculture department or a Future Farmers of America chapter in the school of your city?
A. Yes () B. No () C. Do not know ()
6. Do you receive written news stories from the vocational agriculture teacher in your city?
A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
7. Do you receive written news stories from other vocational agriculture teachers within the paper's circulation area?
A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()
8. Do you assign reporters to obtain news stories from vocational agriculture teachers?
A. Daily () B. Semi-weekly () C. Weekly ()
D. Occasionally as important events occur () E. Never ()

9. Would you prefer that the vocational agriculture teacher present stories?
- A. Verbally () B. In written form () C. Either ()
10. Do you use written news stories given by vocational agriculture teachers?
- A. Always () B. Frequently () C. Occasionally ()
D. Never ()
11. Do you use unsolicited verbal news stories given by vocational agriculture teachers?
- A. Always () B. Frequently () C. Occasionally ()
D. Never ()
12. When written news stories from vocational agriculture teachers are not used, which of the following is most frequently the reason?
- A. Not timely () B. Not in news form ()
C. Poorly written () D. Incomplete ()
E. Low news value () F. Other ()
13. Do you get news stories from the FFA chapter reporter?
- A. Frequently () B. Occasionally () C. Never ()
14. Would you prefer that the news stories be given by?
- A. The vocational agriculture teacher ()
B. The FFA chapter reporter (highschool boy) ()
C. Either ()
15. Do you get pictures along with news stories from vocational agriculture teachers?
- A. Frequently () B. Occasionally () C. Never ()

16. Would you like for vocational agriculture teachers to submit more pictures for you to print?
- A. Yes () B. No () C. Does not matter ()
17. Which of the following types of stories related to vocational agriculture are you most likely to publish?
- A. FFA chapter activities ()
- B. Individual student achievements ()
- C. Farming practices ()
- D. Other ()

Any comments will be appreciated.

VITA

Charles M. Voyles
candidate for the degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY GIVEN TO VOCATIONAL
AGRICULTURE AND FFA ACTIVITIES IN OKLAHOMA

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Date of Final Examination: December 30, 1953

THESIS TITLE: A STUDY OF THE NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY GIVEN TO VOCATIONAL
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