

Research in Brief



MASON E. MILLER, *editor*

Farmer Use of an English Advisory Bulletin

Since 1941 some 4500 Hampshire County, England, farmers have received a monthly publication from the local National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) staff of the Ministry of Agriculture. A sample of 100 farmers was drawn from selected sample areas in the county for interview to see how they felt about the publication. Seventy-four were actually interviewed.

The publication, currently called *Progress*, usually consists of eight pages. The whole farming spectrum in both management and technical information is covered. Issues often cover many topics, but lately several issues have each been devoted to a particular topic. Meeting and demonstration notices are carried regularly, as are reports from work in progress at a NAAS experimental farm in the county.

Most of the farmers regularly received one or more farming journals. Generally the larger the farm, the more journals received. These farmers considered mass media useful channels for agricultural information—particularly for gaining first knowledge of new technical developments. They rated *Progress* second in importance only to the weekly farm journals as an overall source.

Over two-thirds claimed to have taken some action as a result of reading the publication. Again the trend was for more of the farmers with larger farms to make this claim. The most important actions taken were attendance at group meetings or demonstrations, or consulting an adviser or commercial representative, or avoiding the need to consult with an adviser because the publication provided the needed information.

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Most farmers were relatively satisfied with the present form of the publication. Nearly two-thirds either kept all or some of their copies for further reference, or passed some or all of them on to members of their family or farm staff. Those who discarded their copies tended to be mainly smaller farmers and younger farmers. The "discarders" also tended to have taken the fewest actions because of the publication. Middle-aged farmers tended to value the publication most.

Gwyn E. Jones and Kay Hodge, *A County Advisory Bulletin for Farmers: An Assessment of a Communication Medium*, Agricultural Extension Centre, University of Reading, England, August, 1968.

Telelecture—As Good as Being There in Person?

Telelecture is one potential aid to cutting down the travel time of Extension workers. A Missouri study pitted this method against "a traditional lecture." The control group received a traditional classroom lecture during each class session during the semester. There were two experimental groups. One experimental group received "a live lecture" that was simultaneously transmitted via telelecture to a second experimental group located in another community. Thus three groups were involved.

The telelecture apparatus consists of two remote blackboards, two standard classroom projector screens, and a two-way audio telelecture unit. Schematics are written on a special device by the lecturer and transmitted via special telephone wires to a receiver device that reproduces the image and projects it on a screen for the remote audience. Voice is transmitted over regular telephone lines at the same time.

Pre- and post-tests were given during the semester to all groups. Some behavioral observations were recorded in each classroom and a teacher/class evaluation form was completed at the end of the course.

There were no significant differences in content knowledge among the groups, either pre- or post-test. Thus, the groups were similar in this regard to begin with and wound up at approximately the same place. Nor did the behavioral observations show significantly different behaviors among the three classes. Finally, the teacher evaluation form indicated no difference in student attitude toward the teacher or the format of the course.

Donald W. Mocker, "A Study to Determine How Telelecture and Remote Blackboard Equipment Affects the Teaching-Learning Situation," Special Report No. 3, Extension Education Department, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, January, 1967. From author abstract.

Rural Viewers of a Metropolitan Agricultural TV Program

What are the viewing preferences of that part of a metropolitan population that is made up of rural people viewing agricultural extension telecasts? This study in Portland, Oregon, asked such rural people, and also

Extension agents, for their ideas. Recommendations for program material included: greater attention to the needs and interests of viewers over 40; more programs on home grounds, horticultural, and conservation subjects; consideration of evening telecasting aimed at a wider potential audience; and greater efforts to publicize the telecasts.

Lloyd C. Baron, "An Evaluation of Local Educational Extension Television Programs by Rural People and Agricultural Extension Agents in the Metropolitan Area of Portland, Oregon," M.S. thesis, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, April, 1965. From Abstract AC 001 874, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education, 107 Roney Lane, Syracuse, New York 13210.

County Director Functions

Kansas has been moving to a system of establishing a county Extension director position, particularly in counties with large Extension staffs. The purpose of this study was to clarify the administrative functions of this position. Respondents included all county Extension directors, professional co-workers, county agricultural Extension council executive board members in the selected counties, and selected state Extension administrators. Data were gathered via personal interview questionnaires.

Analysis showed high agreement among respondents as to the rank order in importance of five administrative functions: (1) organizing, (2) planning, (3) assembling resources, (4) directing, and (5) controlling. The county Extension directors themselves favored the trend toward establishing more of their position. They suggested that consideration be given to a subject-matter area of responsibilities in connection with administrative duties.

Earl LeRoy VanMeter, "The Administrative Functions of the County Extension Director in Kansas," unpublished Master's thesis, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 1968. From author abstract.

Communication Concepts

Effective communication is seen in this study as greatly assisting adult educators in implementing educational innovations in their own programs and recommending economically and socially sound changes for their clientele. Purpose of the study was "to identify, define and operationalize the communication concepts required by adult educators in agriculture to fulfill their role as educational change agents." An overall purpose was to begin the development of a comprehensive training program for professional workers.

An extensive review of the literature, related research, and the opinions of specialists in the field of communication, Cooperative Extension, and vocational agriculture constitutes the basis for the findings. The final listing from the study consists of 27 concepts identified as the "antici-

pated intellectual behavioral requirements for future competence in social change."

Douglas H. Pletsch, Robert W. McCormick, and Clarence J. Cunningham, "Communication Concepts Used by Adult Educators in Agriculture to Implement Educational Change in Ohio," a research report of a graduate study, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, June, 1968.

Eating After Age 60

Dietary surveys generally show that older homemakers don't have an adequate diet. This study of 40 homemakers 60 years of age or older adds some specifics to this general statement. These were homemakers who maintained their own households, were in good health, and had annual incomes of \$4000 or less. They lived in northern Idaho and northeastern Washington.

Each subject kept a four-day dietary record as a basis for the study. Some findings:

1. Aging homemakers don't change their food patterns much as they grow older, even though their needs change. To cut calories, they eat the same foods but eat less. This means inadequate intake of some nutrients.
2. They drink little milk—not enough to provide adequate calcium. Nor do they eat enough breads and cereals.
3. They regularly eat fruits and vegetables, and eat them in nearly adequate amounts. But they don't select fruits and vegetables rich in ascorbic acid and vitamin A.
4. Protein intake is adequate—via meats, fish, poultry, or eggs.

For this audience the author recommends nutrition education which emphasizes increased consumption and more variety of familiar foods in a familiar eating pattern. "Every attempt should be made to make meal preparation, meal time, and shopping for food an enjoyable experience." More education is needed on how to cut down calories and yet follow a nutritionally sound diet.

Elderly homemakers have been a difficult audience to contact with educational programs, the author notes. She suggests TV and home reading courses as possible methods of reaching this audience.

Eunice A. Meakin, "Food Patterns and Dietary Levels of Aging Homemakers in Relation to Extension Home Economics Programs," M.S. thesis, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, 1968. From abstract by author and E. J. Kreizinger.