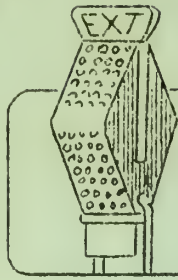


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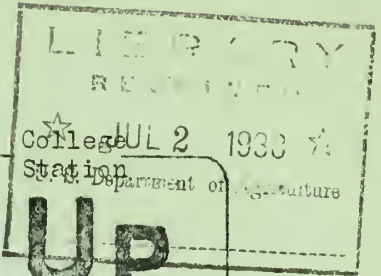
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U. S. D. A. State Ext. Service



# The Hook Up

Home Agent                      County Agent                      Extension Editor

A ROUND-ROBIN CIRCUIT LINKING FARM & HOME BROADCASTERS

Issued by the Radio Service of the Office of Information in co-operation with the Visual Instruction and Editorial Section of the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

Vol. III

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No. 1

## THE HOOK-UP BOBS UP

This is the first issue of the Hook-Up since July 1937. Many Extension editors in January of this year opined that the Hook-Up should be revived, and it began to take on signs of life. Then, in mid-January, Morse Salisbury became Acting Director of Information; I took over the duties of Chief of the Radio Service....and the Hook-Up dropped back into a coma.

Now, however, John Baker is on the job as radio extension specialist. While he is literally rolling up his sleeves in preparation for his new duties we'll resurrect the Hook-Up....devoting this issue to Gerald Ferris' digest of the discussions of the agricultural work-study group during the Ninth Annual Institute for Education by Radio at Ohio State University. Ferris is in charge of radio for OSU Agricultural Extension Service. We thought you would like to know what was said there.

Succeeding issues of the Hook-Up will get back to the former plan of carrying news and views from the scenes of action in the field of farm and home broadcasting by Extension workers. (Contributions welcomed.)

*Wallace L. Kaddery*



REPORT ON THE MEETINGS OF THE AGRICULTURAL WORK-STUDY GROUP

at the

NINTH ANNUAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION BY RADIO

Ohio State University, May 2 and 3, 1938

This year at the Ninth Annual Institute for Education by Radio there was inaugurated a section devoted to agricultural or farm and home broadcasts.

The chairman of this work-study group was Wallace L. Kadderly, Chief of the Radio Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Secretary: Gerald E. Ferris, Assistant Editor in Charge of Radio, Ohio Agricultural Extension Service.

ROSTER OF ATTENDANCE

Bear, Miss Virginia, County Home Demonstration Agent, Columbus, Ohio  
Bembower, William, Assistant County Agent, Zanesville, Ohio  
Charles, F. E., In Charge of Information, Soil Conservation Service,  
Dayton, Ohio  
Coleman, Robert J., Director, WKAR, Michigan State College, East Lansing,  
Michigan  
Diesner, Miss Mary Kay, County Home Demonstration Agent, Wellsburg,  
West Virginia  
Drips, W. E., Director Agricultural Broadcasts for NBC, Merchandise  
Mart, Chicago, Illinois,  
Ferris, G. E., Agricultural Extension Radio Editor, Ohio State University,  
Columbus, Ohio  
Frutchey, Fred, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C.  
Gist, W. C., County Agricultural Agent, Wellsburg, West Virginia  
Griffith, W. I., Director, WOI, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa  
Heflin, Miss Mary Louise, County Home Demonstration Agent, Moundsville,  
West Virginia  
Hemphill, Miss Josephine, Specialist in Information, U.S.D.A., Washington,  
D.C.  
Jones, Ewing, In Charge, Press and Radio, Soil Conservation Service,  
Dayton, Ohio  
Kadderly, Wallace L., Chief, Radio Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C.  
Kirby, E. M., Educational Director, WSM, Nashville, Tennessee  
Lang, C. C., Assistant State 4-H Club Leader, Ohio State University,  
Columbus, Ohio  
Lang, R. W., County Agricultural Agent, St. Clairsville, Ohio  
Manger, Ted, Assistant in Radio Extension, Station WILL, University  
of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois



Markham, G. Emerson, Agricultural Broadcasting, WGY, General Electric Company, Schenectady, New York

Marsh, Miss Dorcas, County Home Demonstration Agent, Cadiz, Ohio

McClain, Miss Louise, County Home Demonstration Agent, Steubenville, Ohio

McClintock, J. E., Agricultural Extension Editor, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Moreland, Wallace S., Agricultural Extension Editor, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

Parsons, J. D., Soil Conservation Service, Dayton, Ohio

Phillips, Elmer S., Agricultural Extension Service, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Roller, Larry, Director Public Events and Special Features, WHK-WCLE, Cleveland, Ohio

Rowell, E. J., Radio Information Service, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C.

Sanders, F. P., Recreation Director, Oglebay Park, Wheeling, West Virginia, in charge of daily Tri-State Farm and Home Hour over WWVA

Schnopp, Walter C., Agricultural Extension Editor, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia

Strecklin, Mrs. Margaret, County Home Demonstration Agent, Wheeling, West Virginia

Van Deman, Miss Ruth, Information Service, Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C.

Virtue, R. S., County Agricultural Agent, Moundsville, West Virginia

Whitney, Miss Eleanor, County Home Demonstration Agent, St. Clairsville, Ohio

Whonsetler, J. E., County Agricultural Agent, Columbus, Ohio

Wilson, A. F., Assistant County Agent, Moundsville, West Virginia

#### WHAT WAS SAID

With Wallace L. Kadderly, Chief of the Radio Service of the United States Department of Agriculture presiding, the meeting of the section on farm and home broadcasting started with a discussion of enlarging the circle of contributors to programs dealing with agriculture and home economics.

WHO SHOULD TAKE PART?

Mr. Roller reviewed how WHK in Cleveland has built up its farm and home audience by presenting programs including 4-H Clubs, Future Farmer groups, vocational Home Economics members and high school students.

Mr. Sanders credited participating groups with much of the success and widespread interest in WWVA's Tri-State Farm and Home Hour.

Mr. Moreland attributed much of the success of the Garden Club broadcasts over WOR to the inclusion of non-commercial contributing organizations.





Mr. Markham said that the more contributors WGY has on its farm program the better it is pleased.

Mr. Drips expressed the same feeling regarding the National Farm and Home Hour.

"What about a kick-back from talks by people not connected with the college of agriculture or some other official agency?" Mr. Kadderly wanted to know. This was answered by a general discussion which indicated that an unfavorable reaction is not likely to result when consideration is given to all sides of a controversial matter, or when speakers make no effort to commercialize their broadcasts.

"Poor bait" is the reason if a broadcaster does not get a good response, was the verdict of Mr. Drips, on the subject of listener response. Miss Van Deman verified this with reports of requests for 10,000 copies of a bulletin on apple recipes; 8,700 for onion recipes; and 5,500 for a leaflet on ways of using nuts; these were offered on the National Farm and Home Hour, presented over 73 to 93 stations of NBC.

Dialogue, skits, straight talks came into the discussion of techniques. Mr. Kadderly raised the point that a well written, well presented straight talk may be more effective than a poorly done dialogue.

Mr. Jones suggested that very often an interview or dialogue can be improved by having someone with a good radio voice and delivery take the place of an "authority" whose radio personality and manner create a negative listener reaction.

Mr. Sanders suggested, and it was undisputed, that with many informational programs, especially dialogues and skits, too little time is spent on rehearsal. At Cornell, recordings are used to guide broadcasters in improving their techniques. But playing back a recorded rehearsal just before a program does more harm than good. It was generally agreed that a production man is needed to handle each program, and tactfully but firmly direct the participants in their presentation.

Mr. Jones indicated that experience on WWVA indicated that farmers would like to hear more talks by other farmers.

"How formal should we be in radio interviews and dialogues?" This question was answered to the evident satisfaction of all by Mr. Mangner, who reported that on WILL, heads of departments are addressed by their appropriate titles, while others are addressed by their first names or nick-names.



Enthusiastic testimony regarding the value of training schools was given by Mr. Markham, who reported that training schools for county agents, home demonstration agents, and college speakers who participate in WGY programs have helped contributors to do a better job of broadcasting. At these training schools, each person brings an original manuscript, which is edited for broadcasting, and later presented over a loudspeaker, with the rest of the group making constructive criticisms.

Mr. Sanders also spoke of improvements after training schools for those participating in WWVA's Tri-State Farm and Home Hour.

Sound effects, it was generally agreed, should be left to the radio station's sound technician, after he has been given an opportunity to study the script.

"How long should a straight talk be?"

"Ten minutes," said Mr. Markham.

"A speaker who can hold a radio audience for 20 minutes or longer is an exception," opined Mr. Rowell.

"What about a talk that is too long?"

"Cut out some of the points discussed, rather than trying to shrink all of them," was the suggestion of Mr. Kadderly. Mr. Markham made the observation that listeners get more from talks which thoroughly cover two or three points, than from those which try to cover too much territory. Hurrying a long talk is no solution to the problem.

On the matter of time of day, it was generally agreed that noon is probably the most desirable time of day for a farm program, with early morning and early evening also excellent. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon are good times to reach housewives. There seems to be an increasing appreciation of the value of early morning hours for broadcasts to farmers.

Chairman Kadderly raised the question of attempting to give so many suggestions to inexperienced speakers that they tend to become confused. Mr. Griffith favored making helpful suggestions long enough before the broadcast so that the speaker will not show too much concern in his actual broadcast. Mr. Ferris reported that speakers in Ohio have been given help by a booklet he has compiled, containing practical suggestions on preparation and presentation of radio manuscripts.

"Most speakers do not need rules," Mr. Markham said. "If they do need help, give them two or three points to remember. Just be sincere, friendly, pleasant, and natural with them so they will be the same with their listeners."



County agricultural and home demonstration agents are broadcasting in increasing numbers. Some find radio writing pleasant and others find it a chore; some do it effectively, some do not. This brought up the matter of exchanging scripts among county agents. Mr. Markham said that, as director of agricultural programs of WGY, he would have no objection to county agents using script or portions of scripts which had been used elsewhere by other county agents. Mr. Phillips reported the same willingness on the part of a station he contacted.

Recordings were frowned upon for informational talks, in part, because of the possibility of their being closely associated with commercial announcements. On the other hand, recorded or transcribed discussions are giving satisfaction in the agricultural radio programs in North and South Dakota. Mr. Kadderly offered the opinion that transcriptions might be used to best advantage when they constitute part but not all of a farm program.

In editing radio talks, Miss Van Deman and Mr. Phillips emphasized that the power of censorship should not be abused. Keeping the confidence of the original author of the manuscript, they pointed out, is highly important. Sometimes it may be necessary to discuss proposed changes with the author and prospective broadcaster, rather than making the changes arbitrarily.

Mr. Moreland opined that manuscripts for broadcast often are over-edited. He advocated attempting to see the author's point of view and permitting him to express himself in his own style as much as possible.

The group unanimously agreed that farm and home programs should be presented at a regular time from day to day and week to week.

Mr. Sanders told briefly of the progress that has been made in the two years of the WWVA Farm and Home Hour. The program started as a straight talk program, and later was changed to dialogue, with the setting of a cross-roads country store. Some 15 agencies in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia contribute to the program. In a recent popularity contest, WWVA listeners ranked the program seventh among 35 programs presented by the station.

For whom should farm programs be planned? Mr. Markham offered the opinion that the main effort should be made to reach the people to whom the broadcast will be of the most service, instead of trying to interest all listeners. In other words, a farm program should be intended for farmers and farm families. Experience with the farm program on WWVA indicates that something distinctive helps to get a bigger audience. Appropriate poetry is used for this purpose on WGY's farm program.



Mr. Markham presented a discussion of the question, IS A FARM PROGRAM A DAY A FULL TIME JOB FOR A SPECIALIST? A synopsis of his remarks follows:

Several times recently, some elderly friends of mine who have a perfect right to be interested in the personal affairs of my family, have asked me this question: "Who is your family doctor?" When I was a boy, the answer would have been easy. His name was Doctor Shaw, and he was called in to look after my Aunt Hattie when she had cancer, my grandmother when she was suffering from the shingles, my father when he had pleurisy, and myself when I had the whooping cough.

Today, I have difficulty in answering that simple query. I do not know who is the "family" doctor. Either we have none or we have several. Dr. McMullen removed one son's appendix. Dr. Dunn removed another's tonsils. Dr. Mallia ushered all three of them into the world. Dr. Reynolds has seen them through the various children's diseases. It hasn't cost us much more to have a specialist on the job when medical attention was needed and, whether it has or not, we have all felt much more comfortable to know that someone interested in each particular ailment, and competent to deal with it, has been on the job.

This same preference for someone interested -- someone competent -- seems to carry over into our radio listening. If we listen to opera, no one explains it quite so well as Milt Cross. We like Clem McCarthy's description of a prize fight. For a World's Series broadcast, no one is quite so satisfying as Ted Husing. To us, Graham McNamee is never so much at home presenting a studio program as he is at a football game. In this respect, I surmise that we are not much different from other radio listeners.

And so, while there are many jacks-of-all-trades in radio as elsewhere -- many pleasing voices and personalities which can be heard to advantage in a variety of roles, I should like to begin by making the point that there is always some one person at each radio station who, better than anyone else, can handle agricultural broadcasts. He may not be the most prepossessing individuality or have the best voice, but if he is interested in farming and if he is competent at broadcasting, he will strengthen the station's farm radio service as no constantly changing parade of announcers is capable of doing.

Back in the early days of our broadcasting at WGY, we used to attach great importance to the preparation of subject matter for agricultural broadcasts. We still do. As the years have passed, however, we have changed the emphasis from preparation to presentation. We have seen too many skillfully prepared talks ruined in front of the microphone, and we have seen too much mediocre material produce splendid results when presented by capable radio performers. This is another story, and has no place in this discussion except that we have learned from those broadcasters who put their messages across, a number of things about the kind of people farmers like to hear.





To begin with, glibness or the professional type of radio smoothness is a secondary consideration. It may help, but a none too eloquent speaker armed with an appreciable quantity of friendliness in his makeup, a well developed sense of humor in his system, and a note of sincerity in his voice will out-distance the strictly professional type of performer when it comes to mail response by 10 to 1. And so when it comes to picking a man to present farm programs, or when the man assigned to the job tries to improve his technique, these are the qualities to which attention should be paid -- friendliness, a cheery manner, and sincerity. Many an announcer is friendly and jovial, but sincerity stems from a deep interest in the program and its subject matter. You will find that successful farm broadcasters have all three characteristics.

And so, you see, we have sufficient evidence to justify the position that presenting farm programs is a specialized undertaking if top-notch results are desired.

So much for the man before the microphone. To be a successful farm broadcaster, we think he should be something of a specialist. But that is only one aspect of the question -- "A Farm Program a Day-- Is It a Full-Time Job for a Specialist?" There is more to agricultural broadcasting than simply announcing the program, important as that task is.

Bluntly, the answer to the question is "Yes." The reason I say so with such certainty is that, at WGY, where we produce seven half-hour farm programs each week, we employ two men full time and could use another. In fact, the amount of work we do is limited only by the capacity of these two individuals, and there is such vast room for improvement in our farm programs at present that it would be a source of embarrassment were it not for the fact that our efforts still seem to be appreciated and produce results of a sort.

Smart management where agricultural broadcasting is concerned begins, I think, in giving your farm radio specialist enough rope to hang himself. His enthusiasm and interest, you will find, are in direct proportion to the opportunity he has to exercise his judgment. Not empowered with sufficient authority, he will muddle along. Find a man to fit the pants and let him wear them.

This point is sufficiently important to deserve amplification. Too often the powers-that-be fail to define clearly the responsibilities of the man who looks after the farm programs. Either that, or they try to divide the responsibilities among a number of persons. This results in confusion, alibis whenever something goes wrong, and middling measures all around. Believe me when I say that shoddy farm broadcasts today are inexcusable. We have had as much opportunity to make educational broadcasts of high quality as the advertisers have had to produce entertainment of high quality. The easiest way to get farm broadcasts of high quality is to put one man in charge, and



to make it clear to him that his reputation and even his position depend on maintaining programs of the right standard. Besides, it is hard enough to build a large farm radio audience; do not let anyone or any number of incompetents dissipate your farm following.

So much for the theory of farm program administration. There is a lot more to it, but it is not my story to tell. We were talking about the need for specialists before the microphone and specialists in farm programming. I hope I have made a case for the specialist, but I have certainly failed to point out why his should be a full-time job. That is best done by mentioning some of the ways a man can spend his time to good advantage in making farm broadcasting resultful.

At WGY, our farm broadcasting work has, like Topsy, "just growed". I find that, aside from the actual broadcasting, it can be broken down, for analytical purposes, into eight parts.

First, there is program planning.

Second, there is publicity. For the most part, this consists of a continuing drive to persuade farm papers to carry farm radio schedules.

Third, there is program preparation. This is a never-ending grind of reviewing manuscripts and turning out continuity for each broadcast. The papers are read not so much with the view to checking on facts as to catch minor errors in grammar, non-conformity to the program policy, and so that we may make suggestions for the improvement of the speaker's technique. Microphone presentation makes or breaks a radio talk. We feel we owe it to our speakers to get them off to a good start.

Fourth, there is routine correspondence. This involves the invitation of some of the speakers, getting publicity material from them, and reminding them that their manuscript is due or that it is time to broadcast.

Fifth, there is attention to speakers. This may impress you at first as non-essential, but it isn't. Sometime ago a visiting speaker told me that she hated to broadcast at a certain nearby station. She said the announcer on duty hardly spoke to her before the program, the only interest he took apparently being to speed her departure. The morale of your speakers has something to do with the atmosphere surrounding your programs. The time taken to sit down and chat with speakers, both before and after the broadcast, is time well spent.

Sixth, there is the job of keeping track of farm events and opinions. You cannot intelligently conduct a farm radio service without spending some time in keeping abreast of the shifting agricultural scene. The timeliness of your broadcasts depends upon it.



Seventh, there is the never-ending task of improving techniques. The chaps who handle farm programs, like other human beings, fall into ruts. They have to jog themselves, and they have to jog their speakers.

Eighth and last, there is the job of keeping the farm broadcasting sold. This is no trivial part of the work. You not only have to keep the station management sold on the program, but you also have to keep your cooperating agencies believing that the broadcasting work and expense are justified. It takes time to sort out listener comments; it takes time to compile mail records; it takes time to build scrapbooks of press clippings. If you want a farm program to amount to something at a commercial station, you will take whatever time is necessary to do these things and do them well.

Now, I appreciate that farm broadcasting is organized along different lines at different stations. I cannot imagine a set-up, however, where you can produce farm programs that click, day after day, and neglect program planning or program publicity or program preparation or the necessary business correspondence. And you will find, I feel sure, that the degree of success you achieve is definitely associated with the attention you give your speakers, your ability to keep track of farm events and opinions, your efforts to improve techniques, and the lengths to which you go to keep the farm broadcasting sold.

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