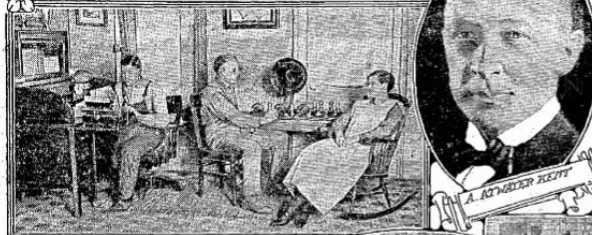


BOYDEN REPORTER

# What Radio Means to the Farmer



WALKER'S RADIO MEANS BUSINESS

By A. ATWATER KENT  
 TACKLING dollars out of the air was one trick of the old-time slight-of-hand artist that never failed to give his audience a thrill. While it was recognized as a trick, the more sagacious that dollars might, somehow, be plucked from the ether stirred the interest of the average spectator more than many other feats of legerdemain requiring much greater skill. It touched his money sense—and the "pocket nerve" has long been recognized as one of the most sensitive in the human makeup.

Today, however, government experts hold that the illusion of the magician has been changed into the fact of actual accomplishment. Dollars are being taken from the air. Official investigation, in fact, reveals the air as a potential source of wealth for the farmers of this country to an extent rivaled only by the productivity of the soil itself.

This transformation is being brought about by the development and extension of radio facilities and services to fit the special needs of agriculture. For it is in agriculture that radio seems certain to find its greatest development as a utility with a direct dollar and cents value to its users.

Secretary of Agriculture Jardine, who has given much study to the use of radio as an aid to agriculture, recently said:

"Radio is already a vital factor in the economic and intellectual life of the farmer. It is easy to foresee millions upon millions of dollars added to the value of agriculture through services provided the farmer by radio."

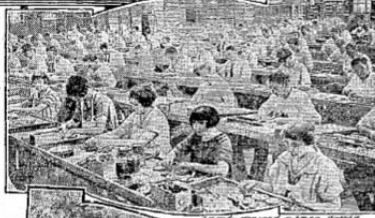
Folks on the farms and in the country towns where general prosperity depends on the prosperity of the farmer are particularly favored by radio. To the city man or woman, the use of radio is limited to recreation and the reception of general information. They enjoy the concerts, the dance programs, the lectures and other features that come to them by day and night over the air, but their pleasure and enjoyment is the principal recompense for their investment in radio equipment.

The same programs that entertain the city listener are received also by listeners-in on the farm, where they are received with equal pleasure and gratification. But in addition to the programs of entertainment and general information, of interest alike to city and country, radio is being used more and more to carry to the farmer special information of direct assistance to him in the production and marketing of his crops, the breeding and care of his live stock and the prevention of loss and damage from storms, pests and other emergency conditions.

It is this service that raises radio, for the farmer, out of the class of a mere instrumentality for pleasure and recreation alone, and makes of it a utility as helpful in the business of farming as the stock ticker and the telephone are to the broker or business man in the city.

The greater emphasis on radio as a practical dollars-and-cents investment for the farmer does not come from radio manufacturers or from any group primarily interested in the radio industry. It comes, indeed, from the United States Department of Agriculture, whose prime interest is in the progress and prosperity of the American farmer.

The department began an experimental radio market news service in December, 1920. A laboratory transmitter at the United States bureau of standards was used to broadcast, on a 400-meter wave length, by radio telegraph from Washington, a radio message and turn it over to the newspapers in their own towns, or give copies to the banks or stores to be posted on bulletin boards.



ASSOCIATED RADIO SETS



RADIO IN THE HILLS OF WEST VIRGINIA

The practical results of this first experiment, I am told, encouraged government authorities to broaden the service, and in April, 1921, through arrangements with the Post Office department, wireless market reports were broadcast several times a day from air mail radio stations in half a dozen different cities. By January, 1922, these market reports were being relayed and broadcast by radio telegraph through a chain of stations reaching from coast to coast.

Then came the era of radio telephone broadcasting and with it the government's radio service for farmers grew by leaps and bounds. Well-established schedules of weather, crop and market reports are now broadcast from more than 300 stations in all parts of the country and so agricultural community is out of reach of Uncle Sam's farm radio service.

A recent study by the department, through its 2,000 county agents, of the extent to which farmers are finding this service of direct help in their business brought what the government experts regard as convincing proof that a radio receiving set is now definitely recognized as a part of the agricultural plant of the up-to-date farmer. Typical of this view, as expressed by these farm experts, is one I have seen from Bert S. Miles, county agent for Washington county, Indiana.

"Farmers in this county," Mr. Miles reported, "now think of radio in terms of an investment that will return a profit through more intelligent selling of live stock. The most encouraging thing today is to see farmers, located 10 or 20 miles from a railroad, equipped with a radio and a truck. The radio keeps them informed as to the market, and when prices are right they can put their stock on the market within two or three hours. Before the day of farm radio they had to take chances on what the market would be when they reached the yards."

Gardner C. Norcross, county agent for Plymouth county, Mass., reported still another angle of advantage for the farmer equipped with radio. "Radio," he says, "has proved one of the most effective methods of teaching better farm practices and thereby appreciably increasing farm profits."

As a result of the thorough endorsement by county agents of the benefits being bestowed by radio and the appreciation voiced directly by the farmers themselves, four new farm fac-

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