Money at the Establishment

Wilson, C.M.
BOOKS BY
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ROOTS OF AMERICA
BACKWOODS AMERICA
RABBLE ROUSER
ETC.

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(This is a fine book)

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MONEY AT THE CROSSROADS

An Intimate Study of Radio’s Influence
Upon a Great Market of 60,000,000 People

by

CHARLES MORROW WILSON

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Foreword by NBC

Money, and lots of it, is again being spent at the crossroads store. Cash farm income in 1936 totalled $7,850,000,000 as estimated by the United States Department of Agriculture. This is the highest total for six years. It is 93 per cent of the 1930 figure, and nearly double the 1932 income. Rural business is now so strongly on the upgrade that the October dollar volume of general merchandise sales was actually 27 per cent better than the 1929-1931 level, according to the United States Department of Commerce.

This is good news for national advertisers. Thirty-five million people live on farms and another twenty-five million reside in small rural communities—a total of sixty million individuals comprising practically one-half of the Nation's consumers.

With returning prosperity, extension of power lines and development of wind-charging apparatus, there has been an upsurge in the purchase of radio sets by rural families. Last year, in fact, hundreds of thousands of sets (both house-current and battery-operated) were sold for farm and country use.

Seeking a more comprehensive picture of radio's place in the rural market, the National Broadcasting Company retained Charles Morrow Wilson to make a nationwide observational study. Mr. Wilson has demonstrated his ability to interpret the farm market to advertisers, through his many books, his magazine articles and his advertisements for Vermont daily newspapers.

For NBC Mr. Wilson visited farm families in 25 states. He lived with them, talked with them, photographed them and made copious notes of all he learned. He interviewed rural merchants and representative county agents of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. From these close human contacts he drew the conclusions which we publish.
His comments are the reactions of a man who has been trained as a student of rural life, a man with an educated marketing outlook. Mr. Wilson’s observations suggest that the rural American is not only being reached to an increasing degree by radio, but also that he is being influenced by radio to an even greater extent than the city listener.

He shows that the favorite programs of rural listeners include many of the same sponsored network programs which rank highest with the industrial and city population—evidence that the farmer does not belong to a race apart, and that his tastes are becoming increasingly similar to those of the city dweller. But in addition the farmer has an especially vital interest in radio, because it is his only means of close daily contact with authoritative national sources of agricultural information.

For this, the farmer depends particularly on NBC’s National Farm and Home Hour, which long has been an institution of national importance. Since its earliest years, NBC has worked in active cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as with other agencies of the Federal Government, State Departments of Agriculture and the Land Grant colleges. And NBC’s interest in farm youth is indicated by its sponsorship of Four-H Club awards. Because of the special attention we always have given to the rural radio audience, NBC programs have become an essential part of the farm family’s life.

There is another reason for NBC’s great strength as a means of reaching the rural market. The Federal Communications Commission’s Allocation Survey demonstrated that rural listeners show overwhelming preference for clear channel stations—undoubtedly because they hear them best—and thirty-four of the fifty-two network clear channel stations are affiliated with NBC.

NBC Networks offer national advertisers the best new approach to this vast and reinvigorated market of sixty million consumers.
What Radio Means to the Farmer

Conclusions from an approximate consensus of opinion in the 209 farm homes visited. This summary also takes account of the views of 41 representative county agricultural agents.

1. Radio is the fastest-growing medium of farm entertainment at the present time.

2. On the better type of farm, radio is building for itself a distinctive place in the routine of farm living. It has substantially moved back farm bedtime.

3. Today radio has an outstandingly significant place in the problems of farm youth.

4. The farm appetite for entertainment is pretty uniformly distributed among all age groups.

5. There is no one best type of farm radio program. Farm interests are broadened to a point where they are genuinely cosmopolitan.

6. On the other hand, a great many widely known radio programs are definitely limited of rural appeal and merchandising value.

7. Music is definitely the surest bet in valid radio entertainment for a rural audience.

8. Creation of successful farm radio entertainment is a field of outstanding challenge.

DISCUSSION

Radio is commanding an increasing portion of recreation time available to the farm family, but it does not interfere with farm time devoted to club work or community work. Radio on the farm cannot be accurately described as competitive to other activities but rather as supplementary.

As a typical instance let us notice the place of radio at the Mathews farm of Colfax, Wisconsin, a good medium farm and farm home. The brothers, Lyle and Loyd Mathews are the active operators of the farm. Both are interested in noonday radio broadcasts, particularly of news and market quotations. The fact that the farm is stocked with some 300 hogs, 60 cattle, and laying flock of about 200 leghorn hens directs that close and regular attention to prices of meats, dairy products and eggs is a necessary part of farm routine.

Loyd is especially interested in music and as a rule listens to a musical broadcast during the noon recess, which usually lasts from 11:30 to about 1:15. Lyle is particularly interested in sports, and therefore listens to a dinner-time sports broadcast.
Of the daughters, Lulu is homekeeper and Madelyn is a rural school teacher. Lulu regularly listens to morning broadcasts, preferring those which pertain to homekeeping. When her work allows Madelyn is particularly interested in the National Farm and Home Hour, since its material helps her with her teaching. The daughters also enjoy noonday musical features. Evening listening time for the entire family is divided among outstanding network programs—Amos 'n' Andy, Lum 'n' Abner, invariably Bing Crosby, the Cities Service and General Motors programs, the Ford Symphony Hour, Major Bowes, and the Lucky Strike Hit Parade. The family bedtime has become from 11:00 to 11:30 p.m., rather than around 9:30. The motivating cause—Radio.

Late afternoon features for the children, particularly serials, are rapidly gaining in farm popularity. Daytime serials with family background, or with other strong human-interest attachments are among features most acceptable to farm wives. Established noontime features such as weather reports, live stock and produce market quotations, serve to accentuate the importance of farm radio reception at noontime.

Noon recess on a farm is usually more than one hour. Probabilities are the menfolks close their morning work between 11:15 and 11:45, rather than at exactly 12 noon. Except during rush seasons, afternoon's work on a farm is more likely to begin at 1:30 to 1:45 than at 1:00 promptly.

However, as a general proposition, farm radio listening hours and habits are rather more variable than those of a majority of town and city listeners. Due to proprietorship and individual routine of work, farm working schedules are definitely less rigid than those of most town or city establishments. This means that regardless of its hour, an outstandingly good program
stands an excellent chance of building satisfactory farm reception.

A good instance of this truth is given by the Horlick "Lum 'n' Abner" sequence, which is now tremendously popular with farm listeners, despite the fact that in many parts of the country its broadcast hour is not in complete keeping with farm convenience.

Perhaps the greatest farm problem of the day is that of keeping farm youth on the farm. This is the point of maximum interest to the generality of farm parents. It is probably radio's greatest farm selling point. When a radio broadcast is so attractive that it can help keep the young folks at home, it most assuredly endears itself, and its product, to farm parents.

Due to comparative remoteness and necessary concentration upon tangibles and nondispensables, farm needs for entertainment are particularly strong. The average American farm family spends at least 51 weeks a year at home on the farm. The average farm budget allows extremely little for entertainment.

Farm appetite for entertainment is outstandingly strong. Delivery of competent entertainment—direct to the farm living room—is an outstanding service, appreciated by the great majority of farm people.

Farm interests are broadened to a point where they are genuinely cosmopolitan. With a few basic reservations, there is every reason to believe that a national network program, or a sustained local broadcast,
But smart patter and quick-fire wisecracks are not reliable entertainment to the majority of farm listeners. Colonel Stoopnagle and Budd retain considerable farm popularity. The farm radio listener is badly overfed upon city ballroom dance music. He can enjoy a limited amount of this entertainment but proportions of jazz broadcasts are entirely out of keeping with his interests and listening time.

Chances are a hundred to one that the adult farm listener desires relaxed entertainment; that in news as in general features he appreciates an informal “your-world-and-mine” attitude. In many instances this attitude is more a matter of the tone and spirit of presentation than of the actual program features involved.

From the standpoint of the farm radio listener, possible range of successful musical entertainment is broad—from hillbilly ditties and cowboy songs to the Henry Ford symphony hour, and the General Motors hour, which rate high in the farm homes of this nation.

Square-dance music has strong attraction to rural audiences but apparently this form has been considerably overworked during recent years. As for interest in concert orchestra work, rural tastes vary extensively.

As before pointed out the farm public has been vastly oversupplied with modern dance music. However a few of the popular dance features, such as Bing Crosby and the Lucky Strike Hit Parade meet with notable farm popularity.

Farm testimony expresses comparatively few absolute or final rules regarding program selection. It would seem that great variety is definitely in order, and that in terms of farm entertainment and appeal the restful and easily absorbable program is always at a premium.
How Radio Affects Rural Merchandising

Summary of voluntary and verbal testimony offered by 151 farm-catering storekeepers or store managers in 25 states.

1. Radio is the fastest-growing farm advertising medium. Its scope of farm penetration is definitely on the upgrade.

2. Radio advertising now provides the most rapid introduction of new products to a farm buying public.

3. The prize or premium contests, as broadcast by radio and other advertising, now have tremendous rural appeal.

4. Radio is proving increasing power to sell merchandise through the agency of farm children and farm wives.

5. Many more products could be advertised to farmers over the radio.

6. You can sell more to farmers through persuasion than through high-pressure sales talks.

DISCUSSION

The recent and continuing rapid expansion of power facilities to rural areas is a foremost practical factor in the current rural growth of the radio.

Farm purchase of receiving sets follows closely in the wake of rural power-line extensions. The fact that as recently as 1930 only a little more than one-third of the active farms of the United States were serviced by electricity represented the greatest barrier to rural radio consumption.

However, it is to be noted that current sales of battery sets (now of almost exclusive rural consumption) are definitely increasing in many parts of the United States where rural power extension is not yet under headway. It is also to be noted that rural sale of radio apparently keeps closely apace with the prevalent volume of farm income. In this connection it may be repeated that despite widespread drought the total of United States farm income for 1936 is easily the highest farm income since 1930.

The radio is now becoming an orthodox fixture in a great number of farm-catering stores, primarily because it is now necessary for the alert country storekeeper to be informed on products and brands newly introduced by radio advertising.

Added to this need, presence of a receiving set in a country store definitely attracts patronage, taking the place of the cracker barrel! A great many customers appreciate opportunity to listen to a favorite program or to follow an important news or sports broadcast while shopping or loafing at the crossroads store.

Speaking generally, the American farmer is very decidedly "contest-minded." This has been well-proven by the tremendous rural trade response of the recent Colgate-Palmolive-Peet prize awards campaign.

As a matter of fact the radio apparently serves to revive and intensify the long-proven popularity of the premium in rural trade.
Women’s daytime programs which advertise such products as toilet soap, washing powders, floor polishes, linoleums, and household utensils are scoring a marked response in the daily trade of farm-catering stores.

Late afternoon programs for children, sponsoring sale of various breakfast foods and "health" foods such as Wheaties, Grapenuts, Corn Flakes, Ovaltine, etc., very definitely build for increased sales of these products at farm-catering stores. The steady increase of cereal consumption in farm homes and the continued improvement of farm fare throughout the nation is a most significant trend in farm merchandising at the present time. On the farm, as elsewhere, child interest is a tremendous selling force.

Foods and drugstore merchandise are best represented by radio advertising. Hardware and clothing lines are most inadequately represented. Some nine out of ten farm-catering merchants who deal in these latter lines express the wish that more hardware and clothing items might have the advantages and sales pull derivable from effective radio advertising.

Farm buying habits are prone to be meditative and comparatively slow-motioned. In their workaday lives the great generality of farmers do not form the habit of making quick-fire decisions. In buying they are definitely more inclined to respond to the modest and persuasive than to tense, exhortative or commanding sales argument.

As far as the farmer is concerned the fact of buying or selling is definitely a personal relation, as well as an exchange of goods or credit. His tendency toward a meditative and personal viewpoint in trading does not respond agree-
ably to the staccato “you’ve-got-to-buy” sales spiel. If the technique of “high-pressure” salesmanship is appropriate anywhere, it assuredly is not appropriate in selling to farmers.

**SUMMARY**

In this brief report I have given attention to the storekeeper’s estimate of the place of radio in contemporary farm life and merchandising. It is my conviction that the rural destinies of any product depend very largely upon the man behind the counter; the caterer who makes the sale, wraps the merchandise, and punches the cash register.

Furthermore, the merchant who sells to farmers year in and year out is a bona fide part of the prevailing farm picture, an invaluable ally to advertiser and producer.

During the past ten years, farm merchandising establishments have been rigidly culled by depression. Few if any farm caterers have survived without good reasons.

Chances are that the farmer’s store of today is a more competent establishment than it was ten years ago; that the number of items included in its routine stock has approximately doubled. Today the successful crossroads merchandising establishment has become a miniature department store.

True, the flow of farm trade is increasingly toward the town. Yet where its location is good and its management superior, the crossroads store remains a solvent institution, a worthwhile key to farm trade possibilities.

It is, however, extremely difficult to project any final or permanent boundary line between farm trade and town trade. Tangible boundaries are growing dimmer. Farmers of today, certainly those of noteworthy buying power, are contemporary Americans.

*Today's agriculture—airplane “dusting” potato fields—Photo by Iris Woolcock*
Most farmers of buying-power status now own autos. They are accessible to roads, which can be travelled economically during at least ten months of the twelve. Chances are at least three to one that they own some type of radio, and about fifty-fifty that they have a telephone. Therefore they are definitely in touch with their town, or towns, state and nation.

The top third of the farm population now earns very nearly three-fourths of the total farm income of the United States. It is upon the buying power of the "Grade A" farmer that country merchandising survives. Upon the buying power of this top third of the farm population rests the real merchandising importance of radio as a farm merchandising institution.

Since no large farming area of the nation is inhabited exclusively by good farmers, nor any large area inhabited exclusively by poor farmers, the nationwide scope and penetration of radio constitutes another basic farm merchandising asset. It is enhanced by the fact that a great many farming communities do not have any other reliable medium of advertising circulation except national or regional farm magazines. This truth definitely underscores the farm merchandising importance of national or sectional advertising mediums. In fact it makes the crossroads store more and more dependent on the national advertiser, and on the national advertising mediums with effective farm circulation. The evidence of the storekeepers themselves shows that the fastest-growing medium of all is radio.
What Rural Merchants Say About Radio

Typical Extracts from Farm Merchandising Testimony Regarding Radio as a Farm Advertising Medium.

1. H. G. Nash, proprietor hardware and electrical service business, Marshall, Illinois:

“As a radio dealer and servicer I find that farm sales now constitute about 75 percent of my radio business. My farm clients are now buying better sets than they have ever bought before. Roughly 50 per cent of my farm sales remain battery sets, but the efficiency standards of the battery radio is lots higher today than it was five years ago.

“In this trade area the WLS National Barn Dance seems to be the most popular farm radio feature on the air. Major Bowes is extremely popular and the amateur hour idea strikes home with farm people because they don’t care so much about big names as they do about good talent. I also notice that farm people are fond of church music, male quartette numbers. They like news broadcasts and market quotations. They don’t care much about jazz and aren’t much interested in sports.

“Around here farm families are up and about by 5 A.M. That means early morning programs have a good chance. The noon hour is another good listening period. Most farmers eat their noon meal in 15 or 20 minutes, which gives them quite a lot of time for the radio at midday. But my experience is that the evening hours between 7:00 and 9:00 are the best listening hours for the generality of farm homes.”

2. F. A. Meador, proprietor Cassville Hardware Company, Cassville, Missouri. Business preponderantly with farmers. Established in 1915, has sold radios since 1926:

“My experience with farm radio leads me to believe that the farmer is interested in market reports and weather reports and that the farm wife is interested in daytime lectures, housekeeping notes, and music. I believe farm music tastes tend toward string music, male quartette, hymns, native ballads and old favorite songs.

“I think there are real farm possibilities for more and better noontime programs. Farmers like to rest at noon and this hour gives the men-folks a good chance to listen to the radio. The morning hours are best for farm women and judging from my sales here I gather that goods advertised on morning programs go well with farm wives. Lots of my farm customers come by the store to check up on radio market reports.

“My radio sales to farmers are doing fine. The greatest sales appeal is that radio helps tie the boys and girls to home and this phase is the best sales line to farm parents.

“I don’t feel that the hardware business benefits as much as it should from radio advertising. In this store I’ve noted marked increases in sales of Sherwin Williams Paints, electric refrigerators, O’Cedar mops and floor polish spe-
I personally wish that the farm implement people would go in more for radio advertising.

"Merchandising advantages are all with farm radio sales nowadays. I can merchandise a good radio at around $32.50, and in view of rising crop prices, this is a good selling price. The new battery sets are going a great deal better because they have a great deal lower drain upon the storage batteries."

3. E. A. Weatherby, General Merchandise, Lincoln, Maine. In business for 30 years. Trades principally with farmers:

"My observation is that farm merchandising, at least in this area, is improving in quality. In grocery and hardware lines I have very few calls for cheap goods which used to be in common farm use ten to twenty years ago. Everything is high medium now—nationally advertised brands of tobaccos, candies, canned goods, packaged bakery goods, shoes, hardware, and ready-to-wear clothing. Style and presentation of goods are a lot more important than they used to be. Women seem to be buying a higher percentage of goods sold than was the case some years ago.

"Nowadays virtually all important merchandise in a country store is nationally advertised. Except in cases of emergency I have stopped stocking offbrand goods.

"I'm not a radio fan and I don't sell radios. I do keep a radio in the store for the convenience and amusement of my customers. I'm pretty confident that radio advertising helps sell goods to farmers.

"Also I think radio advertisers, like country merchants, should bear in mind that it takes a lot of time to penetrate a rural market. As a rule it's hard to build up big farm sales overnight. It's best to do it gradually over months.

*It takes the whole family to run a farm—Photo by Iris Woolcock*
and years and to support advertising with unquestionable value in merchandise.

4. W. W. Jansen, drugstore proprietor, Chestertown, New York. In business 30 years. Principal trade with farm and village residents:

"I believe in radio advertising, because I have found in merchandising that if you select a sound product, give it a good song and dance, it will usually take.

"In my line I notice that as radio advertising the National Barn Dance has changed Alka-Seltzer from next to nothing at all, to one of the fastest-selling items in this store. That's a good answer to the whole question.

"Amos 'n' Andy built up Pepsodent sales to a point where there have repeatedly been times when I simply couldn't get the merchandise through my jobbers. The radio pull of soaps, lotion and cosmetic lines is less spectacular but probably just as real. Prize and premium contests almost invariably score a home run with the farm trade.

"My own personal conviction is that radio's greatest appeal is to the woman buyer and I think the morning hours are extremely effective for the housewife. You've got to remember that most men are too busy at their jobs to do much of anything but routine work.

"As a point of merchandising I believe that most radio advertisers would get a lot further if they would cut down sales talks to one-third or one-half of present length. In final analysis it's the program first and the sales talk second that really sells the merchandise."

5. T. J. Fish & Son, confectioner and general caterers, Chestertown, New York:

"We carried radios for the past ten years and do most of our selling to farmers and summer people.

"What the radio dealer pines for today is a good test program within daytime hours, something he can recommend with moderate assurance of the prospect's approval. There's entirely too much ballyhoo and rank advertising on the air. I believe radio still has this lesson to learn."

6. Thomas Bailey, proprietor Bailey Hardware Store, Big Timber, Mont.:

"Virtually all farmers and ranchers in this area have radios. Here in the range country, the evening program is definitely at a premium, so far as the men are concerned, but the morning hours seem to be favored by the womenfolks. I personally very much regret that hardware lines do not take better advantage of opportunities in radio advertising."

7. W. Mohler, General Merchandise, Fruitland, Idaho:

"Since this area has gone in for irrigation, farming has been reasonably profitable on the whole and I believe it safe to say that 90 per cent of the farm homes of this county have radios.

"Judging from calls for new products and items, I am pretty sure that radio is the strongest farm advertising medium in this area. I have stocked new breakfast foods, canned goods, and toilet items as a result of radio announcement."
8. Oscar F. Goranson, General Merchandise, Meats and Groceries, Pelican Lake, Wisconsin:

"Most of my trade is with farmers, and I am convinced that radio has great farm merchandising possibilities. I think the Jello program, featuring Jack Benny, is one of the most effective selling programs on the air. Major Bowes has put Chase and Sanborn coffee across with my trade. But I particularly like the Jello program because I think it is the best job of salesmanship on the air.

"About 95 per cent of the farms in this area have radios. Judging from trade comment I gather that Lowell Thomas is their favorite news announcer.

"I don't think time of broadcast is nearly so important as quality of program. Farmers seem to like plain entertainment that's easy to follow. They don't like smart alec stuff. I believe they would enjoy more good talks, if the talks could be made short and interesting."

9. T. J. Nutt, manager, Jones Brothers, The Rexall Store, Chariton, Iowa:

"On the whole the farm trade is rapidly gaining importance in drug store merchandising. That's the case in this business and from what I gather at our conferences it is the general situation throughout the Midwest.

"I believe myself that radio advertising is the greatest ally to drugstore merchandise today. I am particularly impressed by the Fitch Sunday program dedicated to the profession of pharmacy. It attracts me as a pharmacist and it sells the goods to the general trade.

"I'm giving quite a lot of attention to results from the youngster programs that go on in late afternoon. I think the Ovaltine selling job is one of the best of this group. Getting a child interested in a healthfood is the surest road to sales that I know of."

10. Bob Murray, president the Murray Company, farm-catering Hardware Department Store, Honesdale, Penn:

(Note: This is one of the outstanding farm catering establishments of the United States. Founded in 1828 by the grandfather of the present president, this business operates a jobbing and storage establishment in connection with the base store at Honesdale. Current volume is about $750,000 a year.)

"I am a devoted believer in radio advertising of the right sort. Acting in capacity of a retail store, we have conducted our own advertising campaigns by local broadcast and with marked success. I am keenly aware of the tremendous importance of network radio advertising in selling and introducing goods to farmers. In this county (Wayne) about 75 per cent of all farm homes have radios, which is probably somewhere near the average for this section of the United States.

"Here is something for network radio to think over: Farm trade doesn't just happen to attach itself to a given store. It is a resource which the merchant earns by years of service and acquaintance. However effective the program may be, the merchant remains the pract-
tical mediator between buyer and advertiser. The man who wraps the package must be part of any successful broadcast.

"Through effective program advertising, the radio campaign undeniably can force the farm-catering merchant to add items to his stock. But the merchant still has the job of selling the item, and coordinating new goods with lines already established. While it can add new lines and institute profitable turnover for them, national broadcasting can't force a merchant to toss over established lines in which he has heavy investments.

"In buying, the farmer has learned to depend upon the counsel and discretion of his merchant. Therefore it seems to me that successful farm radio advertising must appreciate the merchant's problems, must cooperate intelligently rather than hi-jack or high-pressure, must present accurately and fairly the probable qualities of the goods being introduced, and must refrain from knocking competitive lines with which the generality of country merchants is already stocked.

"The best farm radio entertainment is that with lots of pep, lots of action, with clean comedy that anybody can understand, with known music that any ear can appreciate. The farm is absolutely no place for the high-brow, the smart alec, or the semi-dirty. It is and should be a genuine family circle wherein humanity, brotherhood and generous good will come first and merchandising comes second.

"If radio can remember this, it will find that the farm audience and the farm market are tremendously worth while."

*Country Store, Howesville, Ind.—Photo by J. C. Allen & Son*
Method of Work

Investigation comprising this report was made during the period from May 24 through September 12, 1936.

During this time I visited and made interviews in the following states:

Sources of opinion are as follows: farmers; county agricultural agents; country storekeepers or town merchants who cater principally, or in substantial part, to farm trade. In interviewing 209 farm homes, I have chosen typical farm families in various and representative farm areas, given close attention to comments from various members of the family.

Finally, in each one of the 25 states, I talked radio with proprietors or managers of 151 stores catering principally or exclusively to farm trade.

These stores cover a broad range of merchandising establishments. They include 92 general stores, 14 implement and hardware stores, 7 restaurants, 5 bakeries, 2 confectioneries, and 19 drug stores, 9 groceries and 3 dry goods stores.

All general stores are located in villages of less than 1,000 people, or at country crossroads. In the 151 establishments, trade volumes range from about $7,500 to about $750,000 a year. Each one of the establishments may be characterized as generally sound and well managed. In my opinion each one demonstrates at least one point of superiority in merchandising. The average period of establishment is about 16 years.

Charles Morrow Wilson
The County Agricultural Agent

The County Agricultural Agent has now become the outstanding source of personal and technical advice pertaining to agriculture. His services are free to the farmer, and in addition to his advisory capacity the agricultural agent has now become the propelling force of club work and community activities for farmers and farmwives, and as a staff member of the General Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture he is chief counsel in club work for farm boys and girls.

The county agent is likewise administrative officer and co-ordinator for Federal farm regulation within his county.

He is truly the agrarian jack-of-all-trades and his qualification standards are extremely high. A Federal employee of career status, he is likewise associated with the agricultural extension service of his state, and is jointly employed by the government of his county. As working associates, he has one or more. In approximately 2,100 counties the agricultural agent is assisted by a home demonstration agent (female) and the office usually involves from one to twenty-five assistants, depending upon the size of the county and the type of farms involved.

These workers are in daily and intimate contact with the farming life of their counties, and their opinions tend to epitomize a large share of farm opinion within their area.

In the course of this study I have interviewed 41 county agricultural agents, situated in as many important farming counties—from Maine to Washington.

It is my belief that the county agents of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, now serving about 2,800 of the 3,060 counties of this nation, constitute one of the most competent and best qualified corps of workers now in public service.