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Realizing Your Potential as an Agricultural Economist in Extension

Proceedings of the

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Ithaca, New York

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NEBRASKA EXPERIENCE WITH TELEVISION AS AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIUM

by

Kenneth R. Bolen*

INTRODUCTION

The Farm and Ranch Report is a 30-minute program broadcast weekly during the crop production season over the Nebraska Educational Television Network (NETV). This network is available to more than 90 percent of the farms and ranches in Nebraska. The Farm and Ranch Report is produced by the Cooperative Extension Service and the Department of Agricultural Communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The target audience is farmers and ranchers.

The Farm and Ranch Report began in April, 1982 and has continued for about 26 weeks each year during the crop production season. The program will continue through September, 1984.

APPROACH

The Farm and Ranch Report treats agriculture as a business. Each program is designed to analyze current topics including marketing and management decisions associated with production agriculture. Farmers and ranchers viewing this program have the opportunity to participate in a continuous marketing educational program. A five-minute marketing segment is included on each program. The marketing segment focuses on market analysis rather than reporting marketing data. For example, as a result of market movement, what management or marketing decisions should a producer be considering?

The weekly television program includes current topics of interest to Nebraska farmers and ranchers. This includes a lot of reporting from the field. As insect and disease outbreaks occur, video footage offers an excellent opportunity for specialists to point out current problems and provide recommendations for control.

PROGRAM CONTENT

The Farm and Ranch Report capitalizes on the expertise of University of Nebraska Extension specialists and research scientists. These specialists discuss strategies and make recommendations each week to improve the profitability of agriculture. Current topics on animal and crop production as well as marketing and management are addressed each week to provide input for timely and informed decisionmaking.

* Kenneth R. Bolen, Assistant Director, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service; Presentation at American Agricultural Economics Association Extension Workshop, Ithaca, New York, August 3-4, 1984.

Transparency Presentation Guidelines

The program utilizes a magazine format and includes the following sections each week:

- * Focus
- * Marketing
- * Weather Impact
- * Current Topics
- * Mailbox

Viewers are provided the opportunity to call a toll-free number and leave questions on a taperecording to be answered later on the Farm and Ranch Report. A TV Program Content Committee comprised of Extension specialists and Extension agents meets on a monthly basis to suggest program topics. In order to capture the viewers, it is critical that the program topics be timely with production agriculture.

FINANCING

A two-year pilot program was generated by grant support from the following organizations:

- * Nebraska Corn Development, Utilization and Marketing Board
- * Nebraska Grain Sorghum Development, Utilization and Marketing Board
- * Nebraska Soybean Development, Utilization and Marketing Board
- * Nebraska Pork Producers Association
- * Wallace Genetic Foundation

VIEWERSHIP

The number of regular viewers of the Farm and Ranch Report doubled from 1982 to 1983 (5.5% to 11.1%). Regular viewers were defined in the survey as those viewers that watched the program on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Occasional viewers increased from 12% in 1982 to 16.2% of the target population in 1983. These are viewers that have seen the program but with less frequency than a bi-weekly viewing. Of the 53,000 farmers and ranchers in Nebraska, approximately 14,470 watched the program during the 1983 season. The regular viewers totaled approximately 5,880 and the occasional viewers totaled approximately 8,590. The goal of the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service is to reach about 25% of the farmers and ranchers with this program on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The Farm and Ranch Report is aired each Thursday at 12:30 PM on educational television with a repeat at 9:30 PM Thursday evening and an additional repeat at 7:30 AM Saturday morning. In addition to the three broadcasts on the Nebraska ETV network, selected segments from the program are mailed to all commercial television stations in the state. A majority of these cuts are used on commercial television which extends the program impact to different viewing times and different days.

EXAMPLES OF 1984 TOPICS AND SPECIALISTS

- March 1 Management of Wet Grain in Storage--Rich Pierce, Extension Ag Engineer
Farm Programs--Roy Frederick, Extension Farm Policy Specialist; Lynn Lutgen, Extension Marketing Specialist; Jim Robb, Extension Ag Economist
Cattle Markets--Al Wellman, Extension Marketing Specialist
Mastitis--Phil Cole, Extension Dairyman
Downer Cattle--Duane Rice, Extension Veterinarian
- April 5 Planters for Conservation Tillage--Elbert Dickey, Extension Ag Engineer
Calibrating a Sprayer--Rollie Schnieder, Extension Safety Specialist; Leonard Bashford, Professor of Ag Engineering
Grain Marketing Strategies--Roy Frederick, Extension Economist
Prostaglandin--Dwane Zimmerman, Professor of Animal Science
Controlling Insects on PIK Acres--Dave Keith, Extension Entomologist
- May 24 Seed Feeding Insects--Fred Baxendale, Extension Entomologist
Chemigation--DeLynn Hay, Extension Ag Engineer; Roger Gold, Extension Environmental Program Specialist; John Witkowski Extension Entomologist
Cattle Markets--Al Wellman, Extension Marketing Specialist
Futures Markets--Lynn Lutgen, Extension Marketing Specialist
Spring Weed Control--Alex Martin, Extension Weeds Specialist
- June 14. . . . Preparing Grain Bins--Leroy Peters, Extension Entomologist
Weed Control Rescue Treatment--John Furrer, Extension Weeds Specialist; Alex Martin, Extension Weeds Specialist
Grain Markets--Lynn Lutgen, Extension Marketing Specialist
First Generation Corn Borer--Dave Keith, Extension Entomologist
Crop Water Use--Don Hanway, Extension Crops Specialist
- July 12. . . . Western Bean Cutworm Control--Keith Jarvi, Extension Pest Management Assistant
Grasshopper Control--Fred Baxendale, Extension Entomologist
Hog Markets--Al Wellman, Extension Marketing Specialist
Hail Damage Crops--Todd Peterson, Agronomy Technologist; Tom Drudik, Extension Agent; Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist; Dick Hartman, Hall County farmer
Stored Grain Insect Management--Lloyd Andersen, Extension Entomologist

For additional information on the Farm and Ranch Report contact James K. Randall, Extension Communication Specialist--Broadcast Media, 209 Ag Communications, East Campus, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 68583-0918. An example program can be obtained by sending a 30-minute video cassette tape (Betamax, VHS or 3/4 inch) to James Randall requesting a duplicate copy of the Farm and Ranch Report.