Content of Two Upper Midwest Farm Magazines as Related to Major Types of Farming in South Dakota

Frank J. Shideler

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CONTENT OF TWO UPPER MIDWEST FARM MAGAZINES
AS RELATED TO MAJOR TYPES OF FARMING
IN SOUTH DAKOTA

BY
FRANK J. SHIDELER

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science, Major in
Journalism, South Dakota
State University
1968

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CONTENT OF TWO UPPER MIDWEST FARM MAGAZINES
AS RELATED TO MAJOR TYPES OF FARMING
IN SOUTH DAKOTA

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Adviser

Date

Head, Journalism Department

Date
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation is extended to Paul H. Jess and George H. Phillips of the Department of Journalism staff for assistance and suggestions in preparation of this thesis.

FJS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are to determine (1) differences in subject matter in two midwestern farm magazines, and (2) how these magazines conformed to reader needs, based on the assumption that these needs are a reflection of the traditional types of agriculture in the area served by the publications.

The magazines used in this study are: The Dakota Farmer, Aberdeen, South Dakota, and The Farmer, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Comparisons, when drawn, are designed to indicate a point rather than to judge or intimate that one of the magazines is better than the other. To further emphasize this point of non-endorsement, the reader's attention is called to the "disclaimer clause" which public agencies often use as a protective umbrella when it is necessary to mention trade or product names in printed matter. As an example: "To simplify terminology, trade names of products or equipment are sometimes used. No endorsement of specific products named is intended, nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned."¹

In specifying reader needs as based on traditional types of agriculture, the term "needs" is used mainly to include what the

editors apparently think a subscriber might want in the way of specific information about various aspects of his method of making a living. What he might want for entertainment or other purposes cannot be eliminated entirely, of course. It is well to keep in mind a long-standing principle in mass communication theory: that people expose themselves to communications that fit with their existing ideas and opinions.

South Dakota is predominately an agricultural state. Livestock, including cattle, swine, sheep and poultry, accounts for almost three-fourths of the agricultural income. Crops which make up most of the remaining income source include corn, wheat, oats and hay. These traditional types of agriculture--livestock and crops--in South Dakota formed the base in determining the "needs" of the people assumed to be the readers of the magazines used in the study--The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer. To determine types of agriculture, two basic references were used: sources of agricultural income and types of farms in the state.

Because both publications studied were aimed at readership of the same general type, and to a considerable degree in the same area, an examination of subject matter should offer clues to the approach taken by the two magazines--the differences, the similarities.

For instance, one of the similarities is the $2.00 subscription price, although this has little to do with content. How much the subscription price has to do with the number and "quality" of subscribers is not delved into here.
Ward\(^1\) says ". . . annual subscription prices . . . I believe they are too low . . . many of them, in fact, are ridiculously low at $1.00 per year. The publishers, in my opinion, expect advertising to carry too much of the load."

Ward also quotes Gordon Conklin, editor of *American Agriculturist* and *Rural New Yorker*: "... if our publications are as attractive to subscribers as we think they are—and as many of them indicate in their letters to us—then I think the elasticity of demand would be such that total revenues would be increased by at least doubling the subscription price."

The basic research technique used in this study was content analysis of subject matter—or what is written or said. Berelson\(^2\) explains this type of content analysis:

Subject matter: This is perhaps the most general category used in content analysis studies and it answers the most elementary question: What is the communication about? This is the basic question in analyses primarily concerned with determining the relative emphases given to different topics in a body of communication content . . .

The specific subject matter categories used in different studies vary with the nature of the material under analysis and the purpose of the investigation . . .

---

1 William B. Ward, speech before annual convention of Canadian Farm Writers Federation, November 14, 1966, at Toronto, Canada.

Berelson defines this method: "Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communications."\(^1\)

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and compare the material that two regional farm magazines offered their readers. It was not the intent of the author to get into the morass of who-read-what-and-why, or the maelstrom of what the magazines contributed toward enlightening any group, or the possible impact they might have had on social uplift and the pursuit of happiness.

**Review of Literature**

A review of literature brings forth a growing mass of research and investigation relative to content analysis and a wide variety of reasons for doing it. Nothing was encountered which attempted to relate farm magazine content to farming practices as in the investigation reported here.

Content analysis as a tool in communications research began to command notice sometime in the 1930's. Berelson\(^2\) describes some early applications in the 1930's as being mostly used by students of journalism to study content of American newspapers. Berelson's publication stands as one of the most comprehensive in-depth reviews of content analysis research as well as a reference on techniques and uses. He does not include much material from the standpoint of actual

\(^1\) Berelson, p. 19.

\(^2\) Berelson, p. 22.
investigations into content analysis of farm magazines specifically. His discussions of content analysis, however, in many instances apply to a wide range of publications and his conclusions can be expanded to include farm audiences.

Wallaces' Farmer and Iowa Homestead found when it started its poll activities among Iowa farmers in 1938 that previous research in farm paper journalism was scarce. Wallaces' wanted to discover farmer attitudes and learn what subscribers were reading and not reading in its magazine. This was done, according to Murphy, with a set of eight categories of which only one—obtaining census data on subscribers—approached the purpose of this current investigation. Murphy reports that changes were noted in reader interest during the 1938 to 1956 period but picking the right subject matter remained the most important and most difficult of editorial tasks. It was also found that a magazine must "lead" in presenting subjects which do not interest farm people but in which they should have future interest. "Revamping" last year's articles was not enough, he said.

Reading habits of subscribers can be changed by variations in content. Murphy in describing the split-run techniques in experiments at Wallaces' told how readers were dropping away as they went through an issue and the back of the book was not getting enough


attention. Later experiments proved this habit of readers had been changed by editors moving better copy and departments to the back of the book.

An "editorial mix," although related to general magazines rather than to farm magazines, is cited by Haskins. He found that in each of 47 issues of a general magazine studied, about eight items were sufficient to cover substantially all of the reading audience. He added that, if the only criterion is wide-audience coverage, an issue of eight items would be just as effective as an issue of 12 to 15 items. He suggests an analysis of "editorial mixes" rather than a preoccupation with the readership of individual items. The "editorial mix" as described by Haskins probably could be referred to as "refined selection" of a "shotgun" approach as is evident in the two farm publications studied in this current presentation.

It would appear that editors of farm publications are altruistic. This is directly expressed at various times in issues of both farm publications used in this study. Reber in a study of farm publications read in Pennsylvania states that "all the editors stressed information as the most important function of their magazines." He wrote of editors as content controllers and said they strongly influenced their readers toward more efficient farming and greater

---


enjoyment of home life in a free enterprise system. The economic welfare of their readers was the common denominator of editors' concern, Reber found.

Content analysis in this study represents only what was "offered" by the two farm publications. The only breakdown of type of "readership" is through income source or type of enterprise. No major attempt was made to relate how the readers influence the publications other than to assume that if the two magazines are in business they are operating at a profit, which would indicate subscriber satisfaction. Likewise, no major attempt was made to see if content control by the magazines might be a means of "leading" the readers into better, or at least, different, farming methods. As a serendipitous offshoot of the investigation, in some instances which are noted, it is quite possible the two magazines were attempting to "lead" their readers.

Previous research, as reviewed, in some cases remotely approached the "match" of content analysis with specific groups as designated through farm income as attempted in this study, but nothing specific was encountered.

Magazines Used in This Study

The Dakota Farmer

The Dakota Farmer, one of South Dakota's earliest agricultural magazines, was founded in Alexandria, Hanson County, Dakota Territory, in 1881 in newspaper form. It was moved to Huron in 1884 and finally to Aberdeen in 1893, where it is still published.
In a history of South Dakota periodicals, Wiseman, who was admittedly not intending any attempt at a comprehensive formal content analysis, wrote that "... a change of content is noted in the development of several of those periodicals (including the Dakota Farmer) that survive today."

Wiseman further noted:

The magazine became more departmentalized as it grew older. Each phase of farming was treated at some length. There was the stock department, which told how to build feed racks or what feed produced the most pounds on feeding animals ... the women's page continued as exchange of recipes and usually had a picture of patterns ...

... An analysis of the magazine shows that the editors, through the years, tried to reach a varied farm public. As an agricultural magazine, all its articles were directed at the farmer and his farm, a department was edited for the farm women, and 'Aunt Helen' had a page devoted to 'Dakota Farmer for Young Folks' ...

... After 4-H clubs were organized in 1914, articles on the clubs became regular copy ...

... In 1909, 1,393,000 copies of the Dakota Farmer were circulated, an average of 57,645 per issue. By 1924 the average had increased to 66,090 per issue ... according to Standard Rate and Data Service of September 27, 1958 the paid circulation of May 17, 1958 was 106,512.

Wiseman's theory of success and survival of The Dakota Farmer is contained in these words: "... the very fact that it caters to the agricultural interest which is paramount in this state probably accounts for its survival ... the Dakota Farmer has the best record of survival."

As of 1966, The Dakota Farmer had an average circulation of 95,130 with west-north central subscriptions distributed as follows: Minnesota 1,020, Iowa 183, Missouri 21, North Dakota 48,084, South Dakota 43,506, Nebraska 177, and Kansas 24. It is published the first and third Saturdays each month except for a single combined issue in December. Subscription price is $2.00.

The Farmer

August 1, 1967, marked the 85th birthday of The Farmer magazine, now published by the Webb Publishing Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Farmer was consolidated with Farm, Stock and Home in 1929 and with Minnesota Farmer in 1960. It is published the first and third Saturdays of every month except for a single December issue.

The late E. A. Webb started the magazine after moving from Baltimore, Maryland, to Fargo, Dakota Territory, in 1880.

Development of The Farmer was the subject of an article in the August 5, 1967, issue (Vol. 85, No. 15, North and South Dakota Edition). The article, in addition to giving a brief history of the magazine, presents an insight into the background and "feel" of the area which is still evident. The article says in part:

... And many another (besides Webb), eyes fixed on the same bright future in this newly settled area of rich farm land, arrived in Fargo about the same time. Commonly predicted by the folks who had remained in the East or by farmers in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and other 'older' farming states was that the emigrants to this great wheatland could not make a go of it. Interest rates were high (10 to 12%) so the purchase of equipment and work stock, plus manager household furnishings and 'store bought' food created a heavy debt load before the land could produce the first crop...
But even though good land near the railroad had been available at the moment, it didn't much matter because the young man from Baltimore didn't have money enough to put in a crop. What he needed more than land was a job. He found one as an employee of Major A. W. Edwards, who had just established a newspaper, the Argus, which, Mr. Webb wrote, "... was run in that free and easy manner which was his wont to do. The great "moral luminary," as the Major enjoyed calling his paper, was loved by its friends and very greatly feared by its enemies, for it had both, and it was hard to tell at times which was in the majority!"

From the time he had become interested in Red River Valley farming, Mr. Webb was concerned about there being little information about farming and farm practices best suited to the area. Here was a farmer whose crops flourished, and whose farmstead conveyed the impression that he was doing well. Here was another farmer, more recently established, whose crops indicated he still had much to learn about farming in this new area. The knowledge of one, Mr. Webb decided, could best be carried to the other by a farm magazine, and so, raising the little money he had acquired and a little more that he borrowed, Mr. Webb took over publication of the Northwest Farmer and Breeder, 'a Monthly Journal for the Farm, Orchard and Household.' The name was more of a mouthful than Mr. Webb liked so he simply referred to it as The Farmer, but it was not until September 1, 1898 that he changed the name.

Basic policy of The Farmer from the first issue under the Webb ownership was as simple yet as fundamental as the Golden Rule. To achieve its purpose of making farming more profitable and farm living more pleasant, it must be of service to readers. And this service could not be confined to its editorial columns if the paper was to accomplish its mission. Its advertising columns must also be of service. Integrity and responsibility were demanded of advertisers. Claims for wares offered that were not within the bounds of reason and honesty were not to be permitted. Over and over again, Mr. Webb restated this policy on the editorial page of his paper. And subscribers read and, in their dealings with advertisers, found that this policy was being carried out, so trust in the Northwest Farmer and Breeder was established.

Proof of trust was to be seen in the increasing circulation of the paper. In 1890, its list in this sparsely populated countryside had grown to 2,500. Three years before, in 1887, Mr. Webb, believing he saw great promise in the new publication, decided to make its management more than a part-time occupation. In February of that year he announced:
'Up to now the Northwest Farmer has been conducted in connection with other business and has therefore suffered for lack of that close and constant attention that demands of a first class farm paper require!

Shortly after his decision to devote full time to the paper, Mr. Webb found new quarters in Fargo for his publication. But these, too, were soon outgrown. Then, believing that his new enterprise could grow faster and serve a larger territory if he located it in a larger city, he moved it to St. Paul. The year was 1890 and the economic panic of 1893 was already beginning to cast its shadows before it. So what amounted to re-establishing the business in its new, costlier, larger and strange location was not easy. But because there had been built a backlog of reader confidence and trust, the paper survived.

... Under present management, as throughout the past 85 years, the policy of service has been continued and strengthened. Under constant scrutiny is the ever-changing lot of farmers and their families. Answer to the question of how best can The Farmer serve its readers is constantly sought now as in the past. When specific problems arise and solutions are found, these solutions become the subject for our magazine's editorial columns.

... Development of better markets for the produce of Upper Midwest farms was constantly sought throughout the years. Struggling young cooperative creameries, livestock shipping associations and farmers' elevators were encouraged.

Improved schools, roads and other public services were promoted.

Editors of The Farmer worked with livestock, poultry and crops associations in highly successful efforts to get needed legislation on the statute books.

The Farmer had an average paid circulation of 239,898 in 1966 including these comparative coverages: Minnesota 145,763, Iowa 3,464, North Dakota 40,162 and South Dakota 35,955. It is published the first and third Saturdays of each month. Subscription price is $2.00.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Subject matter was divided into 31 categories which were used in making measurements of editorial content. The inclination was to have more categories—in fact the 31 were selected from a longer list. Even with such a diverse list, many subjects would not "fit" and were relegated to a "miscellaneous" category.

The 31 categories used were:

1. Beautification.
2. Beef cattle.
3. (Crops) Corn.
4. (Crops) Wheat.
5. (Crops) All other than wheat and corn.
6. Dairy cattle and dairying.
7. Equipment and buildings.
8. Expositions.
9. Farm programs.
10. Fertilizers.
11. Forestry.
12. 4-H/FFA youth.
15. Insect and pest control.
16. Irrigation.
17. Management.
18. Markets.
20. Poultry.
22. Regular features or departments (see below).
23. Rural and community development.
25. Senior citizens and social security.
27. Veterinary and animal diseases.
29. Miscellaneous.
30. Soil and water conservation.
31. Sheep.

In category No. 22, "Regular features or departments," more than a dozen columns or departments appearing in each magazine on a regular basis were included. These included material which might appear in regular categories except that it was in headed departments. The following list, sometimes with generalized titles, was used to combine these departments from each magazine to classify under this No. 22 designation:

Crops and soils.
Veterinary.
Health and safety.
Engineering.
General livestock including dairy.
Farm questions.
Timely tips, handy hints.
New things and products.
Orchard-garden.
Poultry.
Sermon.
Nature, field and forest.
Legal and warning service.
Weather.
Markets.
Entomology-pests.
Miscellaneous.

Although measurements were made in each of the 31 categories, similar subjects were combined to form divisions. For example, the livestock division included the categories of beef cattle, dairy cattle and dairying, poultry, swine and sheep as well as their products; the combined "division" crops included corn, wheat and all others.

The miscellaneous category, as the word implies, included all material that did not fit into other categories which were measured. It represents everything in the magazines which was not tagged by a specific subject matter title to fit into the selected list of categories. Excluded were the women's section and other specific non-measured categories. The range of subject matter covered in Miscellaneous was wide—from a lengthy letter-to-the-editor (running in several
issues) about delivery of a surplus airplane to India, to woman-shoots-
dereer, to experiences of early pioneers, to both domestic and foreign
tavel.

Not included in the Miscellaneous category, but in the other
classification, were the women's pages, a collection of patterns,
recipes, who- and sometimes how-done-its of the homemaker's arts and
interests, plus an array of helpful hints. The women's pages, or the
material directly aimed at the housewife, were not included as a cate-
gory partly because a subject-matter breakdown would in itself be a
topic for specific, additional research. Also, it was felt that this
type of category did not apply here because this study was aimed more
at farming than at homemaking.

A statement by Ward helps explain the exclusion of women's
pages:

A major editorial dilemma of many general farm
magazine editors right now is whether they should edit
their papers for the farm family and for the farmer as a
citizen, or to go all out for technology and management
and forget about the rest .

... Your speaker is in the latter camp because I
believe that most farm editors are kidding themselves about
the value of the women's sections in their magazines. Farm
publications simply can't compete with television or with
the women's magazines .

1 Ward
In order to prevent the impression that the women's or household section of a farm magazine is considered unimportant, here is an extract from a report of a speech by Rupp,¹ a veteran editor, on the subject:

... one thing is clear from his speech which reported a survey of publishers as well as editors in regard to their evaluation of home sections in our magazines. It is that home sections enjoy high readership, that it would be very unwise to discontinue them, that they are still a very important part of farm magazine publishing operations. This despite the fact that home sections no longer generate the advertising they did years ago.

It boils down to this: we cannot be a farm family magazine without talking to our farm women; they are a fundamental part of a family farm operation and farm magazines must continue to recognize this. Only a few of the editors queried ... felt that they could do without a home section in their magazines ... 

Rupp could hardly be expected to say otherwise under the circumstances, for he, as president of AAEA, was talking at a meeting of the National Farm Home Editors in New York City.

Although much of the material in the other classification appearing in the breakdown of measurements is from the parts of the magazine aimed at the distaff side, also included were such items as reports of missing persons, editorials, personal-opinion columns, the editorial page, fiction, children's activities, and others.

The categories included in regular features or departments were further broken down into subcategories or sections. Some of these had appeared for years prior to the earliest period of this study and

¹ Robert Rupp, speech to American Agricultural Editors’ Association, from Association Newsletter October 31, 1967.
continue to the present. Some happened to be launched with considerable fanfare and continued for a short time, only to disappear. A farm aviation column, "Farm Wings," is a good example. These were duly noted and because of their demise they were included in a "miscellaneous" section of regular features.

The regular features or departments category breakdown also included items such as livestock or crops, which, in turn, were included in the overall livestock or crops division for purposes of analysis. Livestock, crops, poultry and some other of the regular subcategories in regular features many times were answers to reader questions on these subjects. Questions from readers to a certain extent reflect what they need or are seeking. Publications frequently use a reader question—or several questions—to get a trend on their wants and then propel it into a feature.

An additional view on how readers may influence mass communications is expressed by Tichenor who says:

Mass media educational content is read, viewed and listened to most by persons who already have above average education ... This doesn't mean starting a simple two-step flow, but rather stimulating certain individuals to introduce information into the social system at a variety of points. If the influential members of a community are better informed, their informational levels are likely to become more apparent in, say, local RAD meetings. What these more informed people say at meetings may be reflected in what the local newspapers and radio stations report on the meetings. This is a different twist on the two-step, or multiple-step flow process. It means that ideas may flow from opinion leaders to the mass media to the rest of the community.

Advertising, both display and classified, was measured not from the standpoint of subject matter but to give an indication and comparison of volume.

By separating the advertising and editorial matter, it is possible to obtain a better perspective of how much space was devoted to a specific subject. This became apparent in the changing advertising percentages issue by issue.

Advertising percentage figures, although consistent in measurement in this study, actually may be somewhat low if certain technicalities—not appropriate here—such as "what is advertising," are considered. Space devoted to a "what's new" treatment with manufacturer's name and claim probably commands more interest from the business side of the magazine than from the editorial side. Such items were included in subject-matter measurements in this study. They were considered as "helpful hints" rather than as advertising. Display advertising in the women's section was included.

The column inch, measured to the nearest half-inch, was the study's basic space unit. Both magazines had generally similar formats in that they used a page measuring about 10½x14½ inches, and most pages were four columns. One column in each magazine measured and was tabulated as 13½ inches. Two columns measured 27 inches, three columns 40½ inches and four columns, or a full page, was tabulated as 54 inches. Fold-out, booklet and insert advertising on page sizes other than the regular size was measured for actual space used on the basis of page size—which accounts for any variations from a 4-page or 8-page folio total in grand total number of pages. Type sizes had
little variation and in the measured categories, which, of course, didn't include editorials on wider columns, column widths were wider for only some leads, market reports and some tabular material. For instance, material set on 18-pica measure if multiplied by a factor of 1.345 (the difference between 18- and 13-pica measures) would give a page with 54.4725 inches of space. This small difference in area, coupled with the small usage of 18-pica columns, was not considered significant.

Heads, illustrations and tabular matter were included in the measurements, as was the white space around and definitely a part of the heads. It was felt that white space, ornamental devices or other integral parts of the heads were part of the whole presentation.

The time periods selected were for issues of the magazines from July 1, 1947, through June 30, 1948, and from July 1, 1965, through June 30, 1966. Although it is possible that a magazine could be redesigned and reoriented from one issue to the next, such changes are normally more gradual. More subtle changes would probably be of even more long-term nature. However, it was felt that over a period of 18 years (between 1947-48 and 1965-66) the subtle as well as planned changes in approach or emphasis would be evident.

The 1947-48 period was close on the heels of a war which had influences on both agriculture and magazine publication—shortages of materials and staff on publications, shortages of production items and workers in agriculture. Wartime restrictions on magazine production and wartime requirements for food and fiber production had been or
were being lifted at this time. The early period was also a time when agricultural surpluses were not a major problem.

The 1965-66 period reflected the close of an era in which agricultural surpluses had become less of a problem. The later period represents a recent point in time. This difference in the two time periods is described by Anderson.1

... Others think of it as converting agriculture from a wartime to a peacetime basis ... but whatever the words, they express a common idea—the goal of security ... (grass) ... is a source of strength as we face that time when we shall give less emphasis to commodities likely to produce surpluses and instead direct more attention to practices designed to sustain the productivity of our soils ...

South Dakota farm population and operators have been decreasing for years. Riley2 comments about the changes in South Dakota farm population:

Trend in number of farm operators. Under the impact of an improved agricultural technology, the size of South Dakota farms has been increasing. This change has resulted in a steady decline in the number of farms and farm operators from the all time high of more than 83,000 in 1935.

Figure 1 illustrates the trend.

Riley continues:

Between the years 1954-59 South Dakota lost nearly 7,000 farm operators; the decline between 1959 and 1964 was slightly less than 6,000. Since 1954 one of every five farm operators has changed occupations or retired without being replaced.

---


FIGURE 1

Number of South Dakota Farm Operators 1935-64.
Increasing age of farm operators. The average age of South Dakota farm operators has been gradually increasing in recent years. The average age of South Dakota farmers was 46.6 in 1940 as compared to 48.6 in 1964. During the five years between the Censuses of 1959 and 1964 the average age of farm operators increased 1.1 years.

Fewer young men in farming. A shortage of young adults, due to low birth rates in the 1930's and age-selective net out-migration, was characteristic of South Dakota's population in the early 1960's. What had been true of the State as a whole was even more pronounced in rural areas and was reflected in the age distribution of farm operators. In 1954 nearly 20% of South Dakota's farm operators were between the ages of 25 and 34; by 1964 only 13% of the farm operators were aged 25-34 [see Figure 2]. As long as the initial capital investment needed to enter farming remains high in relation to profits, proportionately fewer young men will be encouraged to enter farming and the average age will continue to increase . . .

Average size and value continues upward. The average size South Dakota farm in 1964 was 916.8 acres. This represented a substantial increase in size (almost 14%) since 1959. The average farm value in 1964 was $61.60 per acre and $56,615 total value in land and buildings. This compares to an average per-acre value of $50.76 and a total value of $40,852 in 1959. The average total farm value in land and buildings increased 39% from 1959 to 1964.

Farm operators over 45 years of age, who make up 60% of the total, probably have different reading interests and habits than those under 45. To serve such an older audience, it is entirely possible that the type of material their reader potential "population" would have. It is entirely possible that having this perpetual "older generation," with its conservative, rural traditions, is the reason some departments and columns in the magazines have continued for years. Some of these departments were "four-square" years ago, although currently they could be classified as only
FIGURE 2

Farm Operators by Age Groups, 1964.
"square"—but evidently still widely read if continued publication of the two magazines is a measure of how well editors "read" their readership.

A publication by the United States Department of Agriculture\(^1\) gives further insight into the people and conditions on the "receiving" end of these two magazines. Under this title the USDA says:

South Dakota had 54,000 farms in 1963, of which about 89% were commercial. Average farm size was 833 acres. The State had a total of 45 million farmland acres, or about 92% of total land area. Average value of farm land and buildings was $53,200. Farm marketings in 1963 were $658 million; $489 million from livestock, $169 million from crops. Average gross income per farm was $13,665, net income per farm was $3,709. Total cash receipts from farming were $718 million. Leading farm commodities in 1963 were: Cattle, $284 million; hogs, $108 million; and wheat, $57 million.

\(^1\) Fact Book of U. S. Agriculture, (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, Revised January 1965), p. 120.
CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

While it appears that both The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer have continued their early goals to serve the farmer, they have not remained unchanged in general appearance and in content. In several instances, the similarity of these changes is of more probable significance than the differences. Some of these changes undoubtedly were the results of necessity stemming from the business side, general conditions in the Dakotas and the United States, changes necessary or advisable by the mechanics of publishing and different methods used by new staff members. Cover format underwent changes in both publications, ranging from photos and story to full-color photos.

The two magazines can be compared favorably with a brief description of farm publications by Tindall:¹

... I firmly believe we are producing a quality product. Greatest improvement in recent years has been in physical production. Early day farm magazines were printed on poor quality paper with indistinct reproduction of illustrations. For some reason, the concept that farm families either did not know better or desire better was held far too long. Beautiful four-color printing now is commonplace, and advertisers are making more and more use of this medium. Layouts, typography, photography—all have improved rapidly in the last ten years.

¹ Cordell Tindall, speech at World Congress of Farm Writers, reported in American Agricultural Editors' Association Newsletter, July 28, 1967.
Comparing the two periods covered in this study, both The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer showed the same changes or differences from the early period, in two major ways:

(1) Apparently larger staffs covering more territory and more subjects on the personal-experience-success formula during the 1965-66 period, and

(2) More space was devoted, as a percentage, to a combination of measured categories which covered four divisions including all livestock, all crops, pests (weeds, insects, animal diseases), and a final one, listed as "build up," which included regular categories of irrigation, soil and water conservation, and fertilizers.

In regard to (1) above, the Farm Journal has revealed an interesting finding, reported by Dieken:¹ "... of 5,000 livestock stories we've printed over 10 or 12 years, our records show that 52% are from farmer/rancher experience; 36% from public research ...; 12% from industry ..."

The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer have relatively concentrated audiences with major circulation area being South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota as compared to the much larger farm magazines. Regional editions of the larger magazines undoubtedly will offer even stiffer competition in the future, especially as production techniques are improved. But the smaller magazines should be better able to "take the pulse" of their readership—they should be better able to pinpoint

audience needs—wants on more specific subjects such as in (2) above, and give more comprehensive and "localized" coverage. Ward\(^1\) has this to say in this regard:

\[\ldots\] Our state and regional farm magazines operate in a different league but there is no question about the competition between them. Paul Johnson, editorial director of *Prairie Farmer*, says that this competition has assumed a more or less life-and-death proportion as a result of the local editions that are made available by the nationals. These editions are very pleasing to the advertiser but they are largely phony as far as the reader is concerned. Paul Johnson continues: 'Again we have the question arising whether we should edit for the advertiser or for the reader. I am not a bit concerned about serving the reader well enough so that I can keep a state magazine out in front with the reader. However, our advertising people find the nationals under-bidding us drastically with a lower milline rate which becomes even more competitive as they break down into local editions.'

South Dakota cash farm income is mostly from livestock and livestock products, according to figures from the South Dakota State-Federal Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.\(^2\) This is shown in Figure 3. In the arrangement of pie charts in Figure 3, the "horizontal" differences between 1947 and 1948 and those between 1965 and 1966 are comparatively small. The "vertical" differences, between 1947 and 1965 and between 1948 and 1966, are quite different, however. Two great differences, as indicated by the charts, are the large increases in government payments and the growth of cash farm income from livestock. Government payments in 1947-48 amounted to less than 1% of the total cash farm income—they grew to about 9% by 1965-66. Livestock

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1. Ward.

FIGURE 3


1947
Total $692,177,000
Government Payments
$5,996,000
0.86%

Crops
$288,451,000
41.67%
Livestock
$397,730,000
57.46%

1948
Total $649,659,000
Government Payments
$4,419,000
0.68%

Crops
$242,782,000
37.37%
Livestock
$402,458,000
61.94%

1965
Total $835,157,000
Government Payments
$78,068,000
9.34%

Crops
$158,775,000
19.01%
Livestock
$598,314,000
71.64%

1966
Total $950,000,000
(Estimated)
Government Payments
$78,000,000
8.21%

Crops
$195,000,000
20.52%
Livestock
$677,000,000
71.26%
accounted for just under 60% of income in 1947-48 but increased to better than 71% in 1965-66. Crops, which accounted for about 40% of cash farm income in 1947-48, decreased to about 20% in 1965-66. Part of this decrease undoubtedly was caused by increased feeding of crops to livestock. Government payments also probably had something to do with the decrease as shown in these charts.

Riley's breakdown of South Dakota farms by type of enterprise for 1964 (Figure 4) comes close to matching the cash farm income percentages, especially for the 1947-48 period. This breakdown provides a view without government payments as a separate item.

Taking into consideration Figures 2, 3 and 4, several assumptions may be considered in matching how the two farm magazines, by content, matched the farming interests and how they compared in coverage:

(1) Livestock, being the dominant income source, should rate considerably more comparative space than crops in both periods and even increase between 1947-48 and 1965-66.

(2) Crops should rate less space than livestock, although this designation should make up nearly a third of the total.

(3) Government payments. The large increase in government payments as a "source" of income between 1947-48 and 1965-66 would indicate comparatively frequent mention and editorial treatment.

1 Riley.
FIGURE 4

South Dakota Farms by Type of Enterprise, 1964

Field crop, other than vegetable, fruit and nut
16.2%

Livestock, other than poultry and dairy
56%

General
9.8%

Miscellaneous and unclassified, including vegetable, fruit and nut
9.5%

Dairy
7.6%

Poultry
0.9%
Editorial material of interest to older persons or specifically aimed at the so-called "golden years" should have a fair amount of space.

**Livestock and Crops Categories**

In comparing only the livestock and crops categories, *The Dakota Farmer* in 1947-48 devoted 1,797 column inches to livestock and 352 inches to crops as the two categories are classified here (Figure 5). This livestock-crops ratio of about 84% to 16% is considerably different from the approximate 60% to 40% ratio of cash farm income.

By 1965-66, *The Dakota Farmer*s livestock-crops ratio had changed drastically, to 63% to 37% or 2,441 inches and 1,400 inches, respectively. In that period the ratio was below the income percentage for livestock (71%) and considerably above the income percentage for crops (20%)—even if all government payments were added to crops income.

*The Dakota Farmer*, however, in 1965-66 did approach quite closely the type-of-enterprise breakdown of South Dakota farms (see Figure 4) with livestock (56%), poultry (0.9%) and dairy (7.6%) accounting for 64.5% of the total. This despite the fact that 280 inches were devoted to the dairy category in 1947-48 and only 221 inches in 1965-66, while poultry space in 1947-48 was 804 inches which dwindled to only 5 inches in 1965-66.
The Farmer

In 1947-48, The Farmer had 2,132 column inches on livestock and 345 inches on crops (Figure 5). This was a livestock-crops ratio of 86% to 14%, considerably different from the approximate 60% to 40% ratio of cash farm income.

The Farmer by 1965-66 had changed this ratio to 68% to 32% (4,088 inches livestock and 1,891 inches crops); below the income percentage for livestock (71%) and considerably above the income percentage for crops (20%)—again even if all government payments were added to crops income. These figures do come closer to the type-of-enterprise breakdown of South Dakota farms (see Figure 4). The shift in emphasis was partly because of the additional coverage of crops by 1,546 inches or almost five times more than during the previous period; of dairy by 440 inches or about 2½ times more; of poultry by 229 inches or about 3 times more; and of beef-swine-sheep by 700 inches or about 2½ times more.

Comparison of the Two Magazines

The Farmer devoted more total inches of space to livestock and crops than The Dakota Farmer, partly because it was a larger magazine. But as a percentage, The Farmer covered crops less and livestock more than did The Dakota Farmer. The trend, or change, between 1947-48 and 1965-66 of the two magazines, however, is similar (Figure 5). In 1947-48 there were only two percentage points difference between the coverage of livestock and crops by the two magazines and in 1965-66 the difference was only five percentage points. Contrasting the two
FIGURE 5

Total Space Devoted to Crops and Livestock in The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer for Periods 1947-48 and 1965-66

The Dakota Farmer

Crops
352"
16%

Livestock
1,797"
84%

Total 2,149"
1947-48

Crops
1,400"
37%

Livestock
2,441"
63%

Total 3,841"
1965-66

The Farmer

Crops
345"
14%

Livestock
2,132"
86%

Total 2,149"
1947-48

Crops
1,891"
32%

Livestock
4,088"
68%

Total 3,841"
1965-66
magazines, The Farmer was closer to both livestock and crops on the basis of cash farm income. On the types of farms by enterprise (as of 1964), The Dakota Farmer more nearly matched the percentages.

**Government Payments Category**

The Dakota Farmer

Greatly increased income to farmers under "government payments" (Figure 3) would lead one to expect more treatment--pro or con--in a farm magazine. This was not the case. Under the category of "Farm Programs" The Dakota Farmer had 402 inches in 1947-48 but this declined to 266 inches in 1965-66.

The Farmer

Farm programs measured as a category in 1947-48 in The Farmer accounted for 160 inches which increased to 312 inches by 1965-66. This increase followed the trend of increased government payments, but the almost-doubled space was far from approaching the 9% of income from "government payments."

**Comparison of the Two Magazines**

The totals for the two periods reveal that The Dakota Farmer devoted 668 inches to farm programs compared to only 472 inches for The Farmer.

Some coverage of farm programs was presented--but not measured--in editorial opinion. Apparently as a source of information reflecting the importance of government payments, The Dakota Farmer did not follow the trend, whereas The Farmer did, although at a pace hardly akin to
moneys received by farmers as income from the government. It could be possible, however, that once launched, "farm programs" built upon themselves and farmers used sources other than farm magazines for information. It is also possible that during the time between the two measured periods the subject had been covered more.

Senior Citizens-Social Security Category

The Dakota Farmer

As indicated by Riley, there are fewer young farm families in South Dakota (see Figures 2 and 6). He says: 1

Fewer young farm families. The age-sex pyramid [Figure 6] illustrates the relatively small number of adults in the age categories under 34. The decrease in the proportion of persons under 5 reflects the currently declining birth rate and the proportionately fewer young adults in the reproductive ages. The profile of the age-sex pyramid will be of interest to anyone planning programs dealing with the farm population.

Senior citizens, care of retired persons, people about to retire, even young people planning for their later life, in fairly recent years have commanded more attention—-from politicians who see a voting block, sociologists who sense a problem, planners trying to fit income earners in tax patterns, and others interested in social problems.

The attitude of older citizens may also have a bearing on the readership of farm publications. Schultz 2 in a study of problem

1 Riley.

Figure 6
Age-Sex Pyramid of the Population in Farm Operator Households, South Dakota, 1964
recognition says: "... older farm operators ... tend not to see their county agent for help, or read farm magazines for help, or analyze information themselves with the goal of increasing their incomes ..."

"Senior Citizens" and "social security" (in its broad sense as a category) had 16 inches devoted to it in 1965-66 by The Dakota Farmer—a huge increase in percentage but not in space when compared with no inches in 1947-48.

The Farmer

The Farmer in the April-May-June quarter of 1948—the final quarter of the 1947-48 period—carried 11 inches of material included in the "Senior citizens-social security" category. In the first half of 1966 (the final two quarters of the 1965-66 period), The Farmer devoted 85 inches to this category—again a high increase in percentage but comparatively low in amount of space when considering South Dakota's position regarding age of population.

Total Editorial Space

The above comparisons are between only the two special divisions, crops and livestock, plus trends of two others dealing with two South Dakota situations—amount of income from government payments and comparatively large numbers of older citizens.

Although the preceding discussion concerning comparison of only crops and livestock reveals a fairly close relationship to farm income by type and coverage by The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer, when TOTAL editorial space available is considered, the picture is different.
Percentages are considerably lower and coverage is scattered over a panorama of subject matter, although crops and livestock account for relatively high percentages of the total. In fact it will here be termed a "shotgun" approach—covering as many different subjects for as many people as possible. This is what Wiseman\(^1\) said also, as noted previously, "... an analysis ... shows that the editors of The Dakota Farmer through the years, tried to reach a varied farm public ..." It becomes apparent that the "other" and "miscellaneous" categories as devised here may have at least as much and perhaps more appeal to a reader than what was assigned to the subject matter categories and departments. Consider that perhaps a reader doesn't want to always read about his work, maybe he reads for relaxation or to enjoy or learn about something different and unexpected.

The Dakota Farmer in both periods studied seems to take the more personal approach of the two publications, but the trend was away from this type of presentation. This personal angle is the basis of a statement by Tichenor\(^2\) who said, "... A curious but socially significant fact about mass communication is that one of the most likely readers of a news article is the fellow mentioned in that article." Before, during and after Tichenor's discovery of this fact, editors had applied it almost as a cardinal rule. They termed it "local angle."

\(^1\) Wiseman.

\(^2\) Tichenor.
Read\(^1\) in discussing what farmers read and what they want says:

Studies of farm information channels generally agree on these points: (1) Farmers consistently seem to rate farm magazines as the top channel for farm information. (2) They listen to farm radio for weather, markets, and farm news, and their listening patterns vary with the season of the year and with the availability of farm programs. (3) Farmers watch television primarily for entertainment. (4) They read farm news in newspapers if the newspapers they read carry farm news.

Those determining content in a farm magazine could well study from another finding by Read:\(^2\)

Eleven farmers may not be a very large sample, but you can learn quite a bit from 11 men if you listen carefully \(\text{plus the fact of Read's experience of many years in listening, evaluating, investigating and studying communications and communications procedures}^7\). Here are the highlights of what they said: 1. Farmers are spending more time reading and seeking new information than ever before. 2. They don't care where the information comes from so long as it is accurate, honest, and helpful. 3. They speak loyally of the long-established farm magazines, and they read them. But they also speak highly of the new vertical publications that are concerned with their specific major enterprises. 4. A number of these farmers, at least, wanted longer and more complete magazine articles that treated subjects in depth. 5. Farmers are growing a little skeptical of the glowing success story. They consider themselves successful, but they know that few efforts are ever completely successful. They would feel more comfortable if the article presented a more balanced picture--the things that didn't work so well along with the things that did. 6. In the same vein, these men had a certain skeptical attitude toward testimonial advertising, an approach dear to the hearts of some advertising men. 7. Farmers have no quarrel with advertising in general, and I think they regard it as a valuable service to them. But I also believe that they would prefer companies to advertise less and to advise more . . .
9. The man at the marketplace--the dealer or the sales representative--is a much more important person in the

\(\text{1 Hadley Read, "Communicating with Farmers," }\textit{ACE, Vol. 49, No. 3 (November-December 1966)}, p. 2.\)

\(\text{2 Read. pp. 2, 3.}\)
communication picture than the director of advertising or the
director of public relations. 10. There are two sides to the
communication process--sending and receiving. Top commercial
farmers are getting a little restless about being on the
receiving end all the time. They would like to do a little
sending. They wonder why more of you aren't out in the field
more often asking their advice.

This brings up a point that attempting to compare livestock and
crops categories with income from those two enterprises on a matching
or equal basis is not valid. For instance, on a "crop" farm, how many
of the other categories are involved because it is a crop farm? How
much went into buildings and equipment from a "crop" standpoint? How
much of the "horticulture, garden and flowers" category (planting
flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.) resulted from a crops-oriented, green-
thumb farm family? This intertwining and interplay between categories
would be virtually impossible to determine from methods used in this
study. It may point to, however, the place of a farm magazine with
general coverage being one thing while the specially oriented farm
magazine, the "vertical" (for livestock, cattle breeds, irrigation,
fertilizers) is another. This may be one of the factors--specific
information available in specific publications--for growth of these
specialized magazines. There is little doubt that farm magazines are
important sources of information and entertainment. They are changing
to meet new demands, new methods. However, in the various aspects of
the "adoption-cycle" of mass communications theory, Lionberger1 is
undoubtedly still correct when he says:

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1 Herbert F. Lionberger, Adoption of New Ideas and Practices.
Sources of information vary in relation to both the stage of adoption the farm is in and to his relative position in the adoption cycle. At the awareness stage, mass media--newspapers, magazines, radio, television--are the most frequent source of information about new ideas and practices... At the interest stage, the mass media and other farmers again rate high as information sources... 

Lionberger continues, saying:

"Use Information Sources Selectively. Unless farmers' usual habits change considerably, mass media can be relied on as quick and efficient means of notifying farmers of new developments. This is particularly true of local newspapers and magazines. Success stories and stories featuring pertinent details about the new practice will create interest and move people toward favorable decisions..."

The Dakota Farmer

Of the total editorial space (22,263 inches) for The Dakota Farmer in 1947-48, 7,886 inches (35.4%) were measured categories, 1,332 inches (6.0%) departments, 2,752 inches (12.4%) miscellaneous, and 10,293 inches (46.2%) "other" or non-measured (see Figure 7).

In 1965-66 The Dakota Farmer total available editorial space amounted to 20,894 inches—a decrease of 1,369 inches from the 1947-48 total. Of this total, 8,936 inches (42.8%) were measured categories, 3,339 inches (16.0%) departments, 2,074 inches (9.9%) miscellaneous, and 6,545 inches (31.3%) other.

What happened between 1947-48 and 1965-66 was a considerable shift to more space in departments (by 2,007 inches) and more in measured categories (by 1,050 inches). This was done at the expense of miscellaneous, which dropped by 678 inches, and especially of the

1 Lionberger, p. 6.
FIGURE 7

Measured Categories, Regular Departments, and Miscellaneous and Non-measured Other for The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer for Periods 1947-48 and 1965-66

The Dakota Farmer

- Total 22,263"
  - Other 10,293"
    46.2%
  - Cats. 7,885"
    35.4%
  - Misc. 2,752"
    12.4%
  - Depts. 1,332"
    6.0%

- Total 20,894"
  - Other 6,545"
    31.3%
  - Cats. 8,936"
    42.8%
  - Misc. 3,073"
    14.7%
  - Depts. 3,339"
    16.0%

The Farmer

- Total 25,981"
  - Other 12,806"
    49.3%
  - Cats. 4,444"
    17.1%
  - Misc. 2,284"
    8.8%
  - Depts. 6,447"
    24.8%

- Total 34,926"
  - Other 10,339"
    29.6%
  - Cats. 9,951"
    28.5%
  - Misc. 4,191"
    12.0%
  - Depts. 10,445"
    29.9%
"other" category, which was 3,748 inches less. Miscellaneous and other, because of their obvious make-up, apparently were the logical places to cut space when more treatment was given to specific subject matter and departments.

The Farmer

The Farmer in 1947-48 had 25,981 inches in total available editorial space. This was divided (Figure 7): categories 4,444 inches (17.1%), departments 6,448 inches (24.8%), miscellaneous 2,284 inches (8.8%), and other 12,806 inches (49.3%). By 1965-66, total space was 34,926 inches, divided: categories 9,951 inches (28.5%), departments 10,445 inches (29.9%), miscellaneous 4,191 inches (12.0%), and other 10,339 inches (29.6%).

The Farmer in 1965-66 was 8,945 inches larger in editorial space than in the previous period. Space devoted to categories had more than doubled (increased by 5,507 inches), departments went up considerably (by 3,997 inches) and miscellaneous increased by 1,907 inches. "Other" dropped by 2,467 inches. Categories, departments and miscellaneous all increased at the expense of "other."

One of the main differences between The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer was in the amount of space devoted to the departments-miscellaneous-other classification. In both study periods, The Dakota Farmer used a considerably larger percentage of its available editorial space for category subjects used in this study. Conversely, The Farmer used considerably more for departments. Taken together (categories and departments), however, the two publications were remarkably
similar. In 1947-48 the measured categories and departments made up 41.4\% of space in The Dakota Farmer and 41.9\% of space in The Farmer. In 1965-66 these two divisions made up 58.8\% of space in The Dakota Farmer and 58.4\% in The Farmer. Amount of space for other in 1947-48 for The Dakota Farmer was 46.2\% and for The Farmer 49.3\%--the difference in 1965-66 was 31.3\% and 29.6\%, respectively.

Change is necessary to keep pace. Ward\(^1\) asked some of the top farm editors in the country why they thought so many deaths and mergers of farm magazines have occurred. Reasons given were many, but the major ones the editors mentioned were:

(1) Shrinkage in the economic pie available to them. (More competition among media for advertising and circulation, fewer but larger farms, fewer but larger firms selling to farmers.) (2) Lack of competent management. (Both on the business and editorial sides.) (3) Failure to recognize the changes taking place in their audience. (Or if they did recognize the changes, they were too slow to adapt to them.)

Ward\(^2\) also asked "... what about the causes of death of another major farm magazine—Capper's Farmer?"

And he answers: "It had been living in the past for years ... for many years ... ignored the fact that it was published for the readers—it was published to suit and satisfy certain other people and this is a poor formula ... "

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1 Ward.

2 Ward.
The Shotgun Approach

When considering this total editorial space and the percentage of various categories and departments, the "shotgun" approach becomes more evident. (Again, this is not in condemnation, it shows that content did not closely match farm income type for these two magazines, which have at least been successful enough to have survived.)

This approach is justified under the circumstances because today's "Farmer Wears Many Hats" as noted in the Fact Book of Agriculture:¹ "... The farmer is a buyer, a seller, a taxpayer, a consumer, a manufacturer, a businessman, and a worker. He is never any of these alone..." The publication continues:

Farmers Differ From Each Other. Statisticians may measure them, economists may gauge their prospects, and books may be written about them, but farmers are just people. The 'statistical' farm doesn't really exist, national averages do not tell the whole story... many... still recall their youth when farming meant a few cows, a few chickens, a pig or two, a garden, and a small cash crop. Although hundreds of thousands of these farms still exist, they contribute little to total agricultural production. On the other hand only a relative handful of farms are the factory type. Most farms lie somewhere in between these two extremes.

Percentages of farm income for South Dakota for the 1958-62 average are used to illustrate. During this five-year average these are the percentages of South Dakota cash farm income from selected products compared with inches and percentage of coverage in The Dakota Farmer:

### TABLE 1

SELECTED PRODUCTS AND CASH INCOME FOR SOUTH DAKOTA, 1958-62 AVERAGE, AND COVERAGE IN THE DAKOTA FARMER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1958-62 product</th>
<th>% cash farm income</th>
<th>Col. inches Dakota Farmer 1947-48</th>
<th>% of total editorial space 1947-48</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>% of total editorial space 1965-66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROPS TOTAL</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle and calves</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep, lambs, wool</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickens, eggs, and turkeys</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVESTOCK TOTAL</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>1,797</td>
<td>2,441</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates a wide variance between percentages of cash farm income source and amount of total space in The Dakota Farmer. This is especially so when comparing total crops and total livestock, although editorial space for both increased between 1947-48 and 1965-66. The Farmer, like The Dakota Farmer, although with somewhat different emphasis, lacked considerably in meeting income percentages compared with space in the magazine (Table 2).
TABLE 2

SELECTED PRODUCTS AND CASH INCOME FOR SOUTH DAKOTA, 1958-62 AVERAGE, AND COVERAGE IN THE FARMER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1958-62 product</th>
<th>% cash farm income</th>
<th>Col. inches</th>
<th>% of total editorial space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROPS TOTAL</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>1,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle and calves</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep, lambs, wool</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickens, eggs and turkeys</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVESTOCK TOTAL</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>2,132</td>
<td>4,088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two magazines, however, were amazingly alike in the percentages of space devoted to total crops and total livestock coverage, although from Tables 1 and 2 it can be seen that emphasis on individual crops was different. In 1947-48 The Dakota Farmer had 1.5% of its total possible editorial space on crops. During the same period The Farmer devoted 1.3% of its space to crops. For the 1965-66 period the comparison for crops was 6.7% for The Dakota Farmer and 5.4% for The Farmer. For total livestock in 1947-48, The Dakota Farmer devoted 8.0% of its space, The Farmer 8.2%. In 1965-66, The Dakota Farmer devoted 11.6% of its space for livestock, The Farmer 11.7%.
The similarity of the two magazines in respect to crops and livestock can be taken to indicate a similar estimate of the readership situation by two professional, experienced, working editorial staffs. In general, both offered about the same menu in subject-matter coverage according to categories considered here. The two magazines are competitors. The arena of competition appears in subject-matter coverage. In view of the similarity, the possibility exists that unless the magazines used a "shot gun" approach to cover as much of the subject-matter field as possible they might lose readership.

All Categories Vs. Specials

The Dakota Farmer

In taking all of the measured categories and comparing only those falling into the four special divisions, The Dakota Farmer did not come close to matching percentages of cash farm income either in 1947-48 or in 1965-66. Compare Figures 8 (percentages of four divisions), 3 (income percentage) and 4 (type of enterprise). Considerably less space, as a percentage, was devoted to livestock and crops when compared with per cent of cash income of these two subjects. The coverage of both livestock and crops did change (space for livestock dropped from 1,719 inches and 21.8% in 1947-48 to 1,317 inches and 14.7% in 1965-66, and crops increased from 352 inches and 4.5% in 1947-48 to 1,018 inches and 11.4% in 1965-66) during the two periods. But the total percentage of space for both livestock and crops was virtually the same for both years--2,071 inches and 26.1% in 1947-48 compared to 2,335 inches and 26.3% in 1965-66.
FIGURE 8

Four Main, Selected Categories Out of Total for The Dakota Farmer and The Farmer for Periods 1947-48 and 1965-66

The Dakota Farmer

Remaining Categories

Livestock 1,719" 21.8%

Crops 352" 4.5%
Pests & Dis. 1,146" 14.5%

Bld-up 887" 11.2%

Total 7,886"

1947-48

The Farmer

Remaining Categories

Livestock 1,317" 14.7%

Crops 1,018" 11.4%
Pests & Dis. 1,521" 17.0%

Bld-up 1,350" 15.1%

Total 8,936"

1965-66
The fact that special divisions concerning pests-diseases and build-up of soil were given comparatively heavy treatment in The Dakota Farmer perhaps signifies another approach which would tend to mask a measurement of strictly livestock and crops. Controlling pests (weeds, insects) and diseases (crop and animal) to a large extent is preventative or it might be termed defensive. It just may be that during a year's time (of the measured studies here), it is impossible to present material of interest, or appropriate, or of value, to match the cash income percentages. When combining crops with categories involving weeds, insects and plant diseases, the totals go from 908 inches and 11.5% in 1947-48 to 1,281 inches and 14.3% in 1965-66. This more nearly approaches, but still lags behind, cash-income percentages. For livestock the combination of veterinary topics and animal diseases gives a drop from 1947-48 to 1965-66 (1,960 inches and 24.85% to 1,822 inches and 20.39%) and lacks by far of reaching the cash income percentage. It is quite probable the pest-disease category is of far more value and impact than percentages show.

The Farmer

When taken in relation to all categories (Figure 8), the difference in per cent comparisons of space in The Farmer and income for livestock and crops are quite far apart. Figure 8 reveals what happened between 1947-48 and 1965-66 in The Farmer. Both crops and livestock increased, although crops more so. Pests and diseases changed very little. But apparently, if The Farmer considered itself a "leader" rather than a "follower" in agricultural progress, one key
can be found in the build-up category. This coverage increased by 652 inches and 3.8 percentage points. Build-up, consisting of irrigation, soil and water conservation and fertilizers, represents an effort to improve the basics upon which crops and livestock depend. Commercial fertilizer sales have increased greatly in South Dakota: 1950—6,658 tons; 1959—36,724 tons on 781,515 acres; 1964—107,350 tons on 1,716,633 acres; and in 1966—174,876 tons. Both magazines followed the increasing trend in use of fertilizers by increased percentages of space devoted to them. Additional space was included in that devoted to reporting new research on fertilizer use. Here, again, it may be that the "leadership" qualities of the two magazines may be saying, "The livestock-crops ratio, even if it does reflect sources of income, should be changed so that more farmers go into a cropping economy."

The increase in space for the four main divisions was made at the expense of the remaining categories. Categories which may have suffered by this expansion will be discussed below and are shown in Figures 10 and 11. When considering Figure 7, it is readily evident that the "other" editorial material was lessened considerably to provide more space for the measured-category material.

Comparison of Total Space, Various Categories

When total editorial space is considered, the category-income ratios or percentages are far apart. Figures 7, 8 and 9 show this for editorial material alone, by categories, and by total space in the magazine.
FIGURE 9a

Comparison of Advertising and Editorial Matter, with Breakdown of Four Main Selected Categories for *The Dakota Farmer* and *The Farmer* for Periods 1947-48 and 1965-66

### The Dakota Farmer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Build-up</th>
<th>Pests-Dis.</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Livestock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1947-48</strong></td>
<td>887&quot;</td>
<td>1,146&quot;</td>
<td>352&quot;</td>
<td>1,797&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Editorial**: 22,262" (38.7%)
- **Classified**: 2,063" (5.86%)
- **Total Advertising**: 35,193" (61.3%)

**Total**: 57,455"

### The Farmer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Build-up</th>
<th>Pests-Dis.</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Livestock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1965-66</strong></td>
<td>1,350&quot;</td>
<td>1,555&quot;</td>
<td>1,400&quot;</td>
<td>2,141&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Editorial**: 20,894" (44.4%)
- **Classified**: 1,742" (6.65%)
- **Total Advertising**: 26,194" (55.6%)

**Total**: 47,088"

---

The Dakota Farmer

- Build-up: 224" (0.8%)
- Pests-Dis.: 607" (2.3%)
- Crops: 345" (1.3%)
- Livestock: 2,132" (8.2%)

Total 63,612"
1947-48

- Editorial: 25,981" (40.8%)
- Total Advertising: 37,631" (59.2%)
- Classified: 3,952" (10.5%)

The Farmer

- Build-up: 876" (2.5%)
- Pests-Dis.: 1,343" (3.8%)
- Crops: 1,891" (5.4%)
- Livestock: 4,088" (11.7%)

Total 83,700"
1965-66

- Editorial: 34,926" (41.7%)
- Total Advertising: 48,774" (58.3%)
- Classified: 2,825" (5.8%)
From percentages of various categories in Figure 10, the following categories had less percentage of editorial coverage in 1965-66 than in 1947-48 in The Dakota Farmer: poultry, insects and pests, soil and water conservation, 4-H and FFA, horticulture-flowers, forestry, expositions and fairs, farm management and safety and health.

The category of 4-H/FFA, at 4.51% of the total, was the largest covered in 1947-48 (as might be expected according to the assumptions by Wiseman quoted earlier), followed by poultry (3.61%) and soil-water conservation (3.01%).

By 1965-66, 4-H/FFA had dropped to 2.3%, poultry to 0.02% and soil-water conservation to 1.43%. The highest percentages of coverage in 1965-66 were: weeds (3.59%); building, equipment and construction (3.75%); research and new developments (3.08%), and in the regular features general livestock including dairy (5.38%) and markets (3.58%).

Out of the total categories, The Farmer decreased coverage in 1965-66 as compared with 18 years earlier on the following: sheep, wheat, insects and pests, horticulture-garden flowers, beautification, recreation and wildlife, expositions and fairs, and management. In regular features, drops are noted in: general livestock including dairy, farm questions, timely tips/handy hints, new things and products, religious-sermon and markets.

The highest of the categories in 1947-48 were weeds (1.29%), beautification (1.49%) and expositions and fairs (2.53%). In regular
FIGURE 10

Percent of Total Editorial Content, All Categories, The Dakota Farmer, 1947-48 Top Bar, 1965-66 Bottom Bar

- Beef: 1.32 (1947-48) / 2.98 (1965-66)
- Dairy: 1.25 (1947-48) / 1.05 (1965-66)
- Poultry: 0.02 (1947-48) / 3.61 (1965-66)
- Swine: 0.74 (1947-48) / 0.93 (1965-66)
- Sheep: 0.79 (1947-48) / 1.29 (1965-66)
- Corn: 0.17 (1947-48) / 0.21 (1965-66)
- Wheat: 0.19 (1947-48) / 0.75 (1965-66)
- Other crops: 1.21 (1947-48) / 2.34 (1965-66)
- Hay, silage: 0.00 (1947-48) / 1.56 (1965-66)
- Insects-pests: 2.49 (1947-48) / 1.25 (1965-66)
- Vet-An dis: 1.08 (1947-48) / 2.42 (1965-66)
- Sr cits/soc sec: 0.00
  - Farm mangt: 0.49
    - Research-new devs: 1.36
      - Safety-health: 1.39
        - Crops & soils: 0.00
        - Veterinary: 0.00
          - Health-safety: 0.56
          - Engineering: 0.00
          - Gen lvk incl dairy: 0.10
            - Farm questions: 0.00
            - Timely tips/handy hints: 0.00
features, the highest were: general livestock including dairy (4.14%),
timely tips/handy hints (2.58%) and markets (3.71%). Miscellaneous
amounted to 6.15%.

Comparing the Two Magazines

From Figures 10 and 11 here is the way The Dakota Farmer and
The Farmer compared in space treatment category by category in 1947-48
and 1965-66:

Beef--The Dakota Farmer much higher both periods. Both maga-
zines increased from 1947-48 to 1965-66.

Dairy--While The Dakota Farmer was slightly higher in the first
period, it dropped and The Farmer increased.

Poultry--The Dakota Farmer much higher in 1947-48, dropping to
virtually nothing while The Farmer increased coverage.

Swine--Both increased but more coverage and per cent of
increase higher for The Farmer.

Sheep--Both about the same in the earlier period, but The Dakota
Farmer increased and The Farmer dropped.

Corn--The Farmer was higher both years, both magazines increased.

Wheat--The Farmer higher in 1947-48 but dropped in 1965-66
while The Dakota Farmer increased.

Other crops--The Dakota Farmer was higher both years, both
magazines increased.

Hay, silage and pasture--The Dakota Farmer had zero coverage in
1947-48, both magazines increased to almost the same percentage by
1965-66.
FIGURE 11

Percent of Total Editorial Content, All Categories, The Farmer,
1947-48 Top Bar, 1965-66 Bottom Bar

- Beef: 0.25, 1.20
- Dairy: 0.98
- Poultry: 0.35, 0.91
- Swine: 0.72, 1.64
- Sheep: 0.30, 0.79
- Corn: 0.35, 0.79
- Wheat: 0.41, 0.19
- Other crops: 0.25, 1.60
- Hay-silage: 0.32, 1.59
- Insects-pests: 0.91, 0.75
- Weeds: 1.29, 1.40
- Vet-An dis: 0.12, 1.39
0.47  New things and products
0.00

Orchard-garden  1.22
1.63

Poultry  0.53
1.50

Sermon  1.28
0.84

Nature  2.02
2.20

Legal service  0.91
0.97

Weather  1.11
1.42

Markets  5.08
3.71

Miscellaneous  1.82
6.15

Farm mangt  0.00
0.75

Entomology  0.00
0.29
Insects and pests—The Dakota Farmer higher coverage both years, both magazines decreased coverage.

Weeds—The Dakota Farmer highest both years, much more so in 1965-66.

Veterinary and animal diseases—The Dakota Farmer highest both years, both magazines increased coverage.

Irrigation—The Dakota Farmer was highest both years, considerably so in 1965-66 although both magazines increased percentages.

Soil-water conservation—The Dakota Farmer was highest both years and even with a decrease was higher in 1965-66. The Farmer increased percentage in 1965-66.

Fertilizers—The Dakota Farmer was highest both years, both magazines increased percentages.

4-H/FFA—The Dakota Farmer much more coverage in 1947-48 and, dropping in 1965-66, was higher. The Farmer increased percentage in 1965-66.


Beautification—The Farmer about two times as much in 1947-48 but dropped to zero while The Dakota Farmer increased.

Recreation and wildlife—The Dakota Farmer more both years and an increase in 1965-66 while The Farmer decreased.

Rural and community development—Neither magazine covered this category in 1947-48 and The Farmer only slightly in 1965-66.
Forestry--The Dakota Farmer more in 1947-48 but dropped while The Farmer increased and had more in 1965-66.

Buildings, equipment and construction--The Dakota Farmer had more both years, both magazines increased percentages.

Expositions and fairs--Both magazines covered fairly extensively, with The Dakota Farmer more percentagewise. Both decreased in 1965-66.

Farm programs--The Dakota Farmer had more both years although decreasing in 1965-66 while The Farmer increased.


Management--The Farmer ahead both years, both decreased in 1965-66.

Research and new developments--The Dakota Farmer more both years, both magazines increased coverage.

Safety and health--The Dakota Farmer had more in 1947-48, then dropped and The Farmer had more in 1965-66.

Regular features:
Crops and soils--Neither magazines had any in 1947-48 and The Dakota Farmer higher percentage in 1965-66.


Health and safety--The Farmer did not cover in 1947-48 but did in 1965-66 while reverse was true for The Dakota Farmer.

Engineering--Only The Farmer had coverage in 1965-66.
General livestock including dairy--The Farmer by great margin was ahead in 1947-48 and then decreased while The Dakota Farmer increased greatly and had more percentage in 1965-66.


Timely Tips/Handy Hints--Only The Farmer covered both years, although less in 1965-66.


Orchard and garden--Only The Farmer covered, increasing in 1965-66.


Sermon--Only The Farmer covered, decreasing in 1965-66.

Nature, field and forest--Only The Farmer covered, increasing slightly in 1965-66.

Legal and warning service--Only The Farmer covered, increasing slightly in 1965-66.

Weather--The Farmer more in 1947-48, both magazines increasing percentages in 1965-66 with The Dakota Farmer ahead.

Markets--Comparatively heavy coverage by both magazines. The Farmer had more both years. The Dakota Farmer increased, The Farmer decreased.

Miscellaneous--The Farmer more both years, both increased.

Farm management--Only The Farmer covered in 1965-66.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

South Dakota's agricultural income is well delineated between those enterprises in which livestock forms the base and those in which crops form the base. In general, about 70% of South Dakota farm income is from livestock and about 25% from crops with the remaining 5% being from other sources. On this basis, this study attempted to determine how closely two regional farm magazines which center much of their subject-matter coverage in the state follow these percentages.

Neither of the two magazines followed these percentages in subject matter although more livestock subjects were covered than were subjects on crops.

Since it is assumed that in order to stay in business the two magazines must meet with favor the desires of their subscribers, it is apparent that the readers prefer a more general content. Furthermore, since almost three-fourths of South Dakota agricultural income is from livestock, if a magazine did pattern its coverage so that about this amount was devoted to this subject, it would no longer be a general magazine but a special or "vertical" livestock publication. These special or vertical magazines are available on a localized, South Dakota basis as well as on a national basis. In the case of crops, it is somewhat doubtful if a magazine devoting most of its material to this phase of agricultural production could survive.
Rather than assume magazine content under these circumstances should follow or be matched to income percentages, a somewhat more simplified solution which the editors apparently use is: one or two treatments each issue of either livestock or crops—even including the treatment given in markets—is sufficient to hold reader interest to the point of subscribing year after year. Thus any given reader would not be expected to faithfully read 70% of the magazine if he produced livestock and 25% of the magazine if crops were his main interest. Any given issue would provide a given reader with a different amount of satisfaction.

Haskins\(^1\) found that eight items of interest in general magazines held readership or covered substantially the reading audience as well as 12 to 15 items. This, according to indications of this research, is the same for farm magazines dealing with farm subjects. In other words, it was not a specific item or a specific subject but an "editorial mix" or combination which carried reader interest in Haskins' studies. In this current study this is called a "shot gun" approach in which many subjects were covered with various amounts of space. Both magazines used this shot gun approach (or less refined "editorial mix") and evidently this is what the readership wanted ("needed").

While the two magazines had differences in emphasis and in amount of coverage of the wide range of shot gun subjects, those differences were comparatively small. Both magazines were different in 1965-66 as compared with 1947-48. The amazing thing, however, were.

\(^1\) Haskins.
the similarities. Both changed in appearance and make up in about the same ways between the two periods. The difference in total coverage of livestock and crops for both periods was no more than 1.3 percentage points of total coverage in any case.

This would indicate a vast area of subjects which should be touched at least once a year.

What did not show up in the quantitative content analysis was the personal, localized material and its treatment. Both magazines used this angle extensively although the trend was somewhat softened during the 1965-66 period. It is assumed that this type of treatment is favored, at least to the extent provided by these two magazines. It should not be assumed, however, that this is the only reason these two magazines continue to be successful. For one thing, they are the major source of farm news about the area included in this study.

A brief look at advertising is taken here (Figure 12), although it was not considered in this study except as a measurement to give an overall space picture of amount of editorial coverage.

The **Dakota Farmer** had less advertising in 1965-66 (55.6%) than in 1947-48 (61.3%) as well as less space. Classified advertising changed slightly, increasing from 5.86% in 1947-48 to 6.65% in 1965-66.

The **Farmer's** advertising percentage for 1947-48 and 1965-66 was almost identical at 59.2% and 58.3%, respectively (see Figure 9). Classified advertising fell off to only 5.79% in the later period after taking 10.5% of the space in 1947-48.
FIGURE 12

For both years the two magazines had almost identical averages: 58.75% for The Farmer and 58.45% for The Dakota Farmer.

Summary

A study attempted to evaluate and relate subject matter content of two farm magazines--The Dakota Farmer of Aberdeen, South Dakota, and The Farmer of St. Paul, Minnesota--with farm income sources in South Dakota and content differences in the two magazines during 1947-48 and 1965-66 periods.

In coverage of livestock and crops, in relation to the importance of income figures of these two types of farming in South Dakota, the trend of the two magazines was about the same. Both increased coverage during the later period although neither came near to "matching" the South Dakota percentages of income from livestock and from crops. The research indicated that for this type of farm magazine major sources of income of readers had little effect on content.

Coverage of a large number of specific subjects as well as considerable general, or miscellaneous, material points to a "shot gun" approach used by both of the magazines. This approach of at least pleasing some of the people some of the time appears to be sufficient to keep the publications in business.

More photography was used in the later period, including full color covers.
Larger staffs, covering more subjects afield, were noted in the later period.

More space was devoted to livestock, crops, pests and build-up (through soil-water conservation and fertilizing) in the later period.

Recommendations for Additional Research

The women's sections of these two magazines should make an excellent source for study of content in view of the somewhat stereotyped image of north-central or, more specifically, South Dakota agriculture. The material used in the women's sections might also be studied from the standpoint of source, how presented, or difference from one period of time to another.

Advertising perhaps would present a view as to content vs. "need" as determined by income source. The advertising approach, presentation, volume and "seasonableness" might also form bases of investigations.

A study of what is used when in farm magazines might be useful, especially for college and university information departments with regular mailings aimed at this section of the population. But by using content and volume, keyed into seasons and lead time for publication, a reliable rule of thumb for subject matter distribution of news releases might be determined. This is done by most information departments now. It could undoubtedly be improved by a detailed study involving both editorial and advertising content.
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