Radio Used to Tell Story of Their Advancement

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I'M A FARMER, still living on the farm where I was born quite a few years back. As a matter of fact, it's the same farm my father settled on and cleared for tillage nearly 90 years ago. I believe I think like a farmer, act like a farmer and I wouldn't be surprised if folks thought I looked like a farmer.

I've been a member of the Michigan Milk Producers Assn. since its inception over 25 years ago. I've been on its board of directors for several years, president for the past five years and manager for most of the last year. I know the farmers' problems today and feel qualified to speak about them.

An Obvious Answer

In my capacity as president of the largest farmer-organized cooperative in Michigan, I have been asked many questions regarding these farm problems. Not all of these questions are asked by farmers, in fact most of them are from the city people with whom our job puts us in contact. And that brings us to the question so often asked and which is the central reason for this discussion here's what is asked: "Why should an all-farmer association, which does no direct consumer selling, sponsor a commercial radio program?"

To the average layman that question might be a poseur but to us who see it through a farmer's eyes, the answer is obvious. However, before we come to that answer, let's review, for a moment, just how farmers have been thought of in the past. Farming is the oldest and by far the greatest of all world industries, yet the farmer has been the most exploited group in the world. Politicians have ridden into office on the downtrodden farmer and vaudeville comedians have rocketed to fame by ridiculing the farmer. Until recently, we've been looked upon by city folks as slow, deaf, red-headed, misfits, the proper victims of gold brick and lightning rod salesmen.

But times have changed and the farmers have changed with these times. Good roads, fast cars, the telephone and radio have brought the city to the country and vice versa. Improved farm machinery and modern science have played important parts in this progress. Farmers avail themselves of college education to be sure that their children get the benefits of college. We oldsters never paid much attention to public opinion but the younger, college-educated farmers today show us that people realize that farmers were business men with a definite investment, an ever present overhead and a constant gamble on returns.

I was inclined to go along with these younger farmers and when it was proposed that we undertake a program of enlightenment, I heartily endorsed it. We decided that radio offered us the best opportunity to reach a large audience regularly and cast about for the proper type of program. We felt that this program should serve one purpose — to change the mind of the general public about farmers.

Milk and Cream

In looking over availabilities, we were impressed by an unusual circumstance. We were one of the first really active cooperative groups and as such had been a leader in farm programs. WWJ was not only the pioneer radio station in our territory but had as one of its attractions one of the pioneer newscasters — the late C. C. Bradner. Then why not three firsts together?

Thus, on April 10, 1939, the Cream of the News was born, the program combining the story of the milk farmer with the latest happenings of the day and making a program of unusual interest. As previously stated, it was our intention to paint an honest picture of the dairy farmer, his life and what he means to the public. At that time, no thought was given to the possibility of an increase in milk consumption.

We were only aiming at a public relations job. However, as is often the case, we failed at first to really appreciate the potency of radio. We apparently had chosen our station, talent and program well, because it was an immediate success. Subsequent happenings in various metropolitan areas of the state have proven that Michigan city folks do think differently of the dairy farmer than in the days of yore. And whether the program had anything to do with it or not, milk consumption took a noticeable up-turn shortly after the inauguration of Cream of the News.

Now at the third anniversary of this radio program, we of the Michigan Milk Producers Assn. feel that it is an institution and hope to celebrate many more. Michigan Milk Producers Assn. account is handled by the C. H. Chapman Adv. Agency.

FARMERS no longer are victims for 'Gold Brick' selling, says Mr. Meyer. To acquaint city cousins with their advancement, dairy farmers of the Michigan Milk Producers Assn., of which Mr. Meyer is president, set out to tell about their daily lives through the 'Cream of the News', on WWJ, Detroit.

No attempt was made at selling, Mr. Meyer, says, but adds that "we failed at first to really appreciate the potency of radio". He reports that Michigan milk consumption took a "noticeable upturn" after the program got under way.

WBNX to Rebroadcast Network War Programs

WBNX, New York, has adopted a plan to rebroadcast MBS programs relating to the war effort, and is in cooperation with other stations with other major networks. Under the plan with Mutual, the station assumes responsibility for selecting shows and speeches for rebroadcast by monitoring WOR, New York, and by following advances news of broadcasts in releases and newspapers. Programs ordered by the station, are recorded by Mutual giveaways that many a quarter-hour and $5 per half-hour show, with the network receiving due credit.

The plan grew out of a suggestion which appeared in a bulletin issued by the Broadcasters Victory Committee. The station, together with other network public service programs were worth repeating, and that was the plan. Ed Ervin, station production manager, initiated the plan at WBNX.

Camel Summer Sub

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO., Winston-Salem, (Canad., Ferguson Albert), on June 29 starts Vaughn Monroe's orchestra as a 13-week replacement for the weekly half-hour Blondie program on CBS stations, Monday, 7:30-8 p.m. (EWT), with West Coast repeat, 7:30-8 p.m. (PWT). Comedy segment started three years ago as a summer replacement and will have a common destination. When the weekly show goes off the air for vacation. Farm on July 2 also continues the weekly half-hour AI Pearce & His Gang, on NBC stations, Thursday, 7:30-8 p.m. (EWT), with West Coast repeat, 7-7:30 p.m. (PWT). Whether that program returns to the network in fall is uncertain. Pearce, it is understood, will make a new one-hour program for that firm to originate from New York on NBC. Details of the plan to be announced.

Shortwaves of Axis Followed by Few

Fly Claims Library Requests

Show Audience is Small

THE EXTENT of American listening to Axis broadcasts and the amount of credence placed in the broadcasts may be judged by the results of a recent unique test made by the FCC, following a report on a German broadcast by its Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service.

FCC Chairman James Lawrence Fly has reported that a few weeks ago a German propaganda speaker urged American listeners to go to the public libraries to read certain books in order to contain anti-British material.

Libraries Checked

"To learn just how much stock American radio listeners (if there are any listeners outside official Government monitors and others, for that purpose), the FCC asked the American Library Assn. to circulate member libraries for a check on public requests for the volume, the FCC report states.

"Complete lack from the Association show but a solitary request which occurred at the San Francisco library, and that was from a person having an unrelated purpose in mind.

"This indicates fairly well," the FCC concluded, "that few listen to Axis propaganda outside persons in the crowded coterie, for example, those studying the material such as the Government's own listening services, which make prompt use of such material to propagate Germany and Italy in return.

"These latter operations by our own country and our Allies sometimes provoke trouble in the occupied countries. For example, we lost this last week the German controlled Netherlands radio broadcast a threat against 460 prominent Dutchmen in Nazi hands as hostages.

"The German-controlled station declared that something dire would happen to these hostages unless the Dutch Government Radio, operated by the Dutch Government-in-Exile, was silenced. This obviously was because the London station was 'infiltrating the Netherlands people against the Germans'"

Offers Censor Bill

ACTING to amend the first War Powers Act of last year giving the President power, Rep. Sumners (D-Tex.), has proposed that censorship of communications be extended to include exchange between the United States and any territory or possession or between the territories or possessions alone.

The War Industries Board has asked that censorship of communications between this country and any foreign country be referred to the House Judiciary Committee.