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Radio habits in rural Louisiana

Alvin Lee Bertrand

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RADIO HABITS IN RURAL LOUISIANA

Alvin L. Bertrand and Homer L. Hitt
Louisiana State University
and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
Agricultural Experiment Station
W. G. Taggart, Director

In Cooperation
with
Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service
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Preface

This survey, made at the request of and in cooperation with the Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service, analyzes the radio listening patterns and program preferences of farm people in Louisiana. It is an attempt to bring together, in a systematic and meaningful form, factual data which will be of use to persons interested in reaching the rural-farm groups through the medium of the radio.

It is envisioned that the information presented will prove valuable, not only to the County and Home Demonstration Agent, but to many others as well. Indeed, if agricultural program planning for radio is materially influenced by these findings, Louisiana farm people themselves stand to benefit most in the long run. If form and content of programs are adapted to their tastes and their expressed needs, farm people will not only get the type of farm and home information that they want, but they will hear it presented at a time most convenient to them and in a manner most pleasing to them.

The information gathered in this study is discussed under four broad headings or parts. The first deals with the typical radio listening patterns of Louisiana farm people. This part presents the most popular listening periods during the day and night for week-days, Saturdays, and Sundays for adult farm men and adult farm women. The second part is concerned with the radio program preferences of rural-farm people in the state. This section gives consideration to both the preferences by general categories of programs and the preferences for specific types of programs. The third part of the study is devoted to the farm audiences' preferences concerning other aspects of radio programs, and treats such subjects as preferences concerning program length, the number of people on programs, programs in French, etc. The fourth and final part centers on the subjects farmers and homemakers would like to have discussed on future broadcasts.

The data were obtained by the field survey method. Trained enumerators took 1,268 schedules in four rural areas of the state. The schedule called for a considerable range of information. In presenting the data obtained from the schedule, graphic methods have been utilized almost entirely because of the facility with which patterns and relationships can be conveyed in this manner.

Many persons have contributed to the preparation of this report. Among these, special thanks are due Director W. G. Taggart of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station and Director H. C. Sanders of the Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service, who, with keen insight into the field of radio as a means of reaching farmers, approved this study as one of the official projects of their respective divisions of the College of Agriculture. Mr. G. L. Burleson, Program Analyst, Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service, and Mr. G. J. Durbin, formerly Asso-
ciate Editor (Radio), Agricultural Extension Service, originally brought this particular subject to the attention of the rural sociology staff and made indispensable contributions throughout the course of the study. The following graduate and former graduate students in the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University assisted in the taking of schedules: Mr. W. F. Beyer, Jr., Mr. J. N. Burrus, Mr. T. R. Ford, Mr. A. S. Freedman, Mr. J. H. Jones, Jr., Mr. J. B. Mitchell, Mr. H. M. Trice, and Mr. R. O. Trout. Miss Louise Kemp, then Research Assistant in the Department of Rural Sociology, also made valuable contributions to the field investigations. In addition to patiently typing the manuscript, Mrs. Colleen Collier did much of the necessary tabulation and graphic work. Mr. John N. Burrus also helped with the graphic work and, along with Mr. Roland Pellegrin and Mr. C. W. Fogleman, contributed valuable editorial assistance. The cover was designed and executed by Miss Lorraine Boss. To these, and to all the others who have helped in any way with the report, the writers wish to express their sincere thanks.

Alvin L. Bertrand and
Homer L. Hitt
Radio Habits in Rural Louisiana

A Study of Listening Patterns and Program Preferences of the Farm Radio Audience in Selected Areas of Louisiana

Alvin L. Bertrand and Homer L. Hitt

Department of Rural Sociology
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station

I. SUMMARY

1. Although the radio listening patterns of Louisiana farm people vary somewhat among the survey areas and between the sexes, they exhibit some interesting uniformities. On week-days a greater proportion of this audience listens to the radio regularly from 12:00 noon to 12:30 P.M. than at any other time. On Saturdays the most popular listening time is from 8:00 to 9:00 P.M. Sunday listening habits are quite different from those of all other days in that the audience does not build rapidly to definite peaks. Instead, there is a gradual increase in the proportion of persons listening until 8:00 A.M., and then a leveling off with minor changes until 7:00 P.M. From the latter hour there is a slight increase in the proportion of farm people listening until 9:00 P.M., after which time the size of the audience begins to decline.

2. The farm people of Louisiana have definite radio program preferences. As a whole, their favorite general category of a daytime program is news. Ranking in second place among their preferences are musical programs. At night they prefer music and comedy and variety programs. Despite variations among areas and between sexes, by far the most popular type of music is "western" and "hillbilly." Keen interest is manifested in market and weather reports, but interest in County or Home Agents' broadcasts, though substantial, is considerably less pronounced.

3. The rural audience has definite preferences concerning other aspects of a radio program. From their responses it is evident that they favor a 15-minute program in which two or more persons take part and which originates from the farm. Considerable numbers of them who had tried to take down a recipe or formula had had difficulty in doing so, a fact which may possibly indicate a need for more effective methods of presentation. The statements of informants in French Louisiana leave no doubt but that they have a preference for programs in French. Very few farmers own FM-equipped radios but, significantly, a considerable number expressed the intention to acquire such sets.
4. Subjects classifiable under the general topic of homemaking and health were mentioned proportionately most often as desired topics for future broadcasts. There were, however, many calls for information falling under the broad heading of livestock, poultry, and dairying; farm practices and management; crops; and home gardening.

II. INTRODUCTION

Over a decade ago it was observed that the radio was becoming an important factor in banishing the physical and cultural isolation of rural people. Since that time technological improvements and mass production have made available radios in all price ranges. Long wave, short wave, and frequency modulation (FM) broadcasting have, in fact, reached practical maturity, and even television is now accessible to some rural areas.

The Broadcast Measurement Bureau has compiled statistics (the latest available) which indicate that 94.2 per cent of the families in the United States owned at least one radio in 1948. The Bureau's estimate that 88.7 per cent of the rural-farm families in the United States and 76.5 per cent of those in Louisiana now own radios is more important to this study. In comparison, of the families questioned in the present study, 90.2 per cent reported that they owned radios. This apparently high proportion can probably be accounted for on the basis of the proximity of the areas surveyed to urban centers.

The above figures indicate that the radio, at present, can be used as a communication device which will reach virtually all of the rural population. Furthermore, it is well known that radio communication lends itself to the dissemination of information and the influencing of public opinion. The importance of the radio during World War II in combating the enemy and promoting a united effort on the home front testifies to its importance in this respect.

Because of the very nature of their work, the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Agricultural Extension Service have a unique educational responsibility to farmers and homemakers. This obligation, in view of the above facts which point to the radio as an invaluable potential aid to rural education, makes it highly desirable that these agencies approach radio with the end in view of utilizing it in the most effective manner in their work with agrarian groups. The above does not imply that no such studies have been made. On the contrary, several excellent surveys have been concerned with the radio as a means of dis-

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seminating agricultural information. The number of these studies, however, has been relatively small and their scope limited. Moreover, while it may be possible to use the findings of the above mentioned reports as general reference guides, regional and even intra-state differences make it imperative to have comprehensive information for more limited areas.

The present study is an attempt to answer some of the questions which have arisen in connection with experiments in the transmission of agricultural information by radio in Louisiana. Since this is a pioneering study, it may raise as many questions as it answers. If it does, and if these additional questions lead to further investigation and research, a useful purpose will still have been served.

**Objectives**

The major objectives of this study are fourfold. In the first place, it was desired to obtain information relative to the times of day or night (evening) that farmers and rural homemakers listen to the radio with greatest regularity. In this respect, knowledge was sought concerning differentials in listening patterns in summer and winter, and on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Such information, of course, can remove one of the great unknowns in the presentation of radio programs designed for an agricultural audience. Broadcasters who possess this information will know approximately what proportion of the given population would be listening at any particular time.

The second purpose was to discover which radio program or programs that farm people like best. Any particular audience makes certain choices in its program likes and dislikes, and is, thus, selective in its listening. With a knowledge of what farmers and homemakers appreciate and prefer, the farm broadcaster will be better able to attract and to hold his audience.

Next, it was proposed to find out what other aspects of radio programs appeal to the rural audience. In this connection it was felt that reliable information regarding the prevailing preferences with respect to length of the program, the method of presenting it, etc., would provide valuable information to the broadcaster.

The fourth and final purpose of the study was to determine what subjects farmers and homemakers are most interested in hearing discussed by county agricultural agents and/or home demonstration agents. With information of this type available, it will be possible for extension workers and other agricultural specialists to prepare broadcasts dealing with items of major interest to farm groups and to plan programs that will render the greatest service to the community.

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5 A farm wife or an adult woman of a farm household.
Methodology

A number of factors contributed to the final decision concerning the procedures to be followed in this study. In the first place, the wish of the Agricultural Extension Service to employ this study as a means of checking and evaluating the results of their past endeavors in radio broadcasting, limited the farm areas to be enumerated to sections within range of certain low-power local stations which had been used. Furthermore, it was deemed feasible to sample to some extent every major type-of-farming and cultural area within the state. To satisfy these requirements, it was decided to survey areas within a 35-mile radius of certain strategically located (with respect to type-of-farming and culture areas) cities. Four such circular areas were selected, one centering in each of the following cities: Baton Rouge, Ruston, Alexandria, and Crowley. See Figure 1.

Next, the problem of obtaining the desired information on radio listening from farm women as well as from men, and from Negroes as

Figure 1.—Map of Louisiana Showing the Location of the Four Farm Survey Areas, 1948.
well as from whites, from the several tenure groups, and for farms of various sizes had to be reckoned with. The aim here was primarily to obtain a representative sample rather than to assemble sufficient information for a detailed comparative analysis of the multifarious component elements. Furthermore, the survey had to be accomplished with limited funds. In view of these considerations and realities, it was decided to have a controlled sample within each area. Accordingly, each area was divided into quarters, and these quarters were subdivided into blocks three miles square. The blocks within each quarter were then numbered consecutively. Tippett’s random sampling numbers were used to select certain blocks (six in each quarter) for complete enumeration. It was felt that the sample thus obtained would be satisfactory for the purposes of this study. As can be seen in Table I, a total of 1,268 schedules was obtained. Of these, 976 were taken among whites (including 450 men and 526 women), and 292 were taken among Negroes (including 145 men and 147 women). It may be noted that while 1,268 schedules were completed, only 1,069 homes were represented. This discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that the farmer and his wife were both interviewed whenever possible.

The information recorded on the schedules was sorted and tabulated in the conventional manner. The analysis is simple and straightforward, with comparisons by sex and area emphasized. Because it has been found that tabular data when converted into graphs and charts tell a story more quickly and more effectively, and because such illustrations facilitate the presentation of facts for comparative purposes, most of the findings are presented in graphic form.

III. TYPICAL RADIO LISTENING PATTERNS

Radio station operators and radio advertisers have long been aware that there are certain peak listening periods each day. This is evidenced by the fact that certain “spots” sell at premium prices and are much sought after by radio performers as well as sponsors. The farm radio audience also is characterized by listening habits that favor specific times and programs. During certain periods of every day, farm people find it more convenient and more desirable to listen to the radio. It follows, therefore, that the farm broadcaster will be able to do a more effective job with such information at his disposal. Provided optional opportunities are available, he will be in a better position to accomplish his purposes even though he is obliged to depend upon time donated by the radio stations to “public service.”

The reader is probably aware of the fact that a “typical radio day” is, strictly speaking, a fictional representation. Each day, each week, and each season have individual variations such as weather conditions, special

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>135</td>
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<td>148</td>
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<td>229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crowley</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>33.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,268</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>450</td>
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**Table 1. Persons Interviewed in the Four Sample Areas, by Sex and Race, Louisiana, 1948**
events, and competing attractions which modify listening patterns. However, the slight variations in program schedules which occur from time to time as a result of changes to daylight saving time or the superimposing of sports presentations and special events programs on the normal schedules do not have any appreciable effect on the long-time listening patterns of the people. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that valid and reliable conclusions can be drawn from the responses of the hundreds of farm people interviewed concerning the time of day or evening they regularly listen to their radios.

The information pertaining to the above facts is presented by individual areas. This will make it possible for persons from the various sections of the state not only to appraise their local situation in regard to radio listening patterns, but also to compare it with that of the farm population in other parts of the state. The data for men and women are presented separately because of significant differences in their listening habits.

Each rural-farm man or woman interviewed whose home was equipped with a radio was asked to report the times at which he or she listened to the radio regularly during the week, on Saturday, and on Sunday. Their responses were recorded by quarter-hour periods (to coincide with customary program schedules) and graphed. Percentages were computed only on the basis of the total number of farmers or farm wives owning radio sets in each area, and comparisons and analyses were made accordingly. On the charts each quarter-hour period is connected to the one following it by a continuous line to form a listening curve.

**Week-day Listening Habits**

The fact is well known that the farmer and his wife are busy people. Consequently, the time when they can and do listen to the radio is rather limited. Just how limited it is may be seen in Figures 2 and 3, which indicate week-day listening patterns as determined from interviewee responses to questions regarding regular listening habits.

The *Week-day Listening Patterns of Farmers*. Taken as a whole, greater proportions of farmers listen to the radio from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. and from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. than at any other times. It may come as a surprise to some persons that the period from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. ranks a relatively poor third among farmers' listening preferences. Such is the case, however, and despite some variations among the four areas studied, the above patterns are clearly evident in every instance. The programs scheduled between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., and 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. reach approximately one-third of the adult male farm audience. The programs during these listening periods attract approximately the same proportions of listeners and are tied for fourth place among farmers' preferences.

The farmers' listening curve also definitely shows what times they are less apt to be listening to the radio. Among the programs least likely
to be heard are those broadcast during the periods from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon, from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m., and from 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.

Several area differences in the week-day listening curves of farmers may be observed in Figure 2. Greater percentages of the Ruston area group listen to their radios in the very early morning (from 5:00 to 5:45 A.M.) and during the noon hour (from 12:00 to 12:45 p.m.) than of the other groups. Proportionately more farmers of the Alexandria area, in contrast, seem to devote time to radio listening during the morning, afternoon, and evening hours. In the Baton Rouge area only one period stands out in comparison with the other areas—the period from 4:15 to 4:45 p.m. This peak listening period is probably accounted for by the fact that the part-time farmers working in local industries change shifts about this time.

The Week-day Listening Patterns of Farm Wives. The old saying that “the woman’s place is in the home” would lead one to believe that women have more opportunity to listen to the radio than men have. That rural women actually do spend more time than rural men listening to the radio is attested to by the data presented in Figure 3. Home de-
Figure 3.—Proportions of Farm Women Interviewed Who Reported Listening Regularly to Their Radios at Specified Times on Week-days, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.

The peak audiences, as in the case of farmers, exist during the periods from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. and from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. It should be pointed out, however, that the latter time will reach a somewhat greater proportion of the farm women. Of great significance is the fact that almost any hour of the morning after 6:00 A.M. will find over one-third of the farm wives with their radios turned on. It is also important that on week-day afternoons from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. approximately one-fourth of the rural adult females are listening to their radios. In fact, except for during the comparatively short periods from 5:00 to 6:00 A.M. and from 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight, a substantial proportion of the farm women are giving some attention to their radios.

According to these data, it would seem that the rural homemakers in the Ruston area arise earlier than the farm women in the other areas. At any rate, more of them report that they listen to their radios in the very early morning (from 5:00 to 6:00 A.M.). It is also obvious that this group of women makes a special effort to hear a program broadcast from 11:15 to 11:30 A.M. Over two-thirds of those in possession of radios report that they regularly listen to their sets at this time.
Another differential among the areas is noted with respect to the farm women residing in the vicinity of Baton Rouge. The comparative listening curves show that those homemakers who own radios in this area do not listen to them as much during the morning and afternoon hours as do the women in the other three areas. The listening curve for the women of the Crowley area is marked by the high proportion of homemakers who give attention to their radios during the period from 2:00 to 3:45 p.m. The Alexandria area women, on the other hand, listen regularly to their radios in greater relative numbers in the evening from 7:00 to 8:45 p.m.

**Saturday Listening Habits**

Saturday, among rural people, is a day which stands out. Not only is it the last week day before the "Day of Rest," but it is also the day of "going to town," of shopping, and of recreation. Such activities necessitate a shift from the week-day routine and could conceivably change radio listening patterns. For this reason all informants were asked at what time or times they listened to the radio regularly on Saturday. The responses given by farmers and their wives are shown, in graphic form, in Figures 4 and 5.

*The Saturday Listening Patterns of Farmers.* In general, farmers listen to the radio more on Saturday than on week-days. Saturday evening, as might be expected, is a very popular listening time. Considered as a group, at least 70 per cent of the interviewed males are listening to the radio from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. the listening curve for Saturday reaches its peak, with almost 80 per cent of the farmers listening regularly at this time. The curves in Figure 4 also show that proportionately more of this group listen to the radio during the late hours of the night on Saturday than on week-days. Interestingly enough, approximately one-tenth of all farmers with radios are listening to them at midnight on Saturday.

Similar to week-days, on Saturday the noon hour is a popular listening time for farmers. However, smaller proportions of them listen at this time than during the week. The fact that many farmers are already in town and others are in the process of preparing to go there probably accounts for this phenomenon. The third largest Saturday radio audience among farmers is in the early morning from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. An interesting observation is that greater proportions of farmers listen regularly to the radio during all hours of the morning and afternoon on this day than on week-days.

Area differences in listening are not as pronounced on Saturday as they are during the week for farm men. One fact stands out, however: the farmers in the Alexandria area with few exceptions listen to the radio regularly in greater numbers on Saturday than do farmers from the other three areas.
The Saturday Listening Patterns of Farm Wives. Like their husbands, farm women listen to the radio more on Saturday than during the week. Also, as is the case with their husbands, their principal listening time is in the evening. Programs scheduled between 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. usually have an audience of at least three-fifths of these women, and those broadcasts from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. may reach three-fourths of them. It is interesting to note that proportionately fewer women listen to the radio on Saturday morning than on week-day mornings. There are, however, very few periods after 6:00 a.m. on Saturday morning when less than one-third of the potential rural homemaker audience is tuned to some station. With the exception of the evening hours, a slightly greater proportion listens between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. and between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. than at other times. Relatively fewer farm women listen to the radio on Saturday afternoon than during the week-day afternoons. This may be accounted for by the previously mentioned Saturday habits of rural dwellers. In this connection it is interesting to note that proportionately more farm women seem to stay up late on Saturdays to listen to the radio than do rural men.

Area differentials in listening patterns of rural homemakers are not great. One apparent fact, however, is that proportionately more of the women in the Ruston area both turn on their radios earlier and listen
to them later than do the women in the other areas. Relatively fewer women in the Alexandria area, on the other hand, listen to their radios during the mid-morning hours on Saturday. In the Crowley area, proportionately more women listen regularly during the afternoon hours than do the women from the Baton Rouge, Ruston, and Alexandria survey areas.

**Sunday Listening Habits**

One might suppose that rural people listen to the radio more on Sundays than on week-days or Saturdays. In order to test the validity of this hypothesis, all informants who owned radios were asked to list the hours during which they regularly listen on Sunday. The responses given by the farmers are shown in Figure 6, and those given by farm women appear in Figure 7. A glance at these figures makes it clear that the Sunday listening habits of rural people are quite different from their week-day and Saturday listening patterns.

*The Sunday Listening Patterns of Farmers.* The data suggest several conclusions with respect to the typical Sunday listening patterns of farmers. In the first place, the number of men listening to their radios on Sunday morning is small, much smaller than during the same period on week-days and on Saturday. This is, no doubt, due to the fact that
rural people, like urban people, do not arise as early on Sunday. Second, unlike on other days, the respective listening curves do not build up to a definite peak around 8:00 A.M. and at noon; rather, there is a gradual increase in the proportion of farm men listening until 8:00 A.M., followed by a leveling off with only minor changes in the morning. The afternoon listening curve drops slightly from the morning level until 7:00 P.M. After this time it indicates an increase in the proportion listening, but the curve never rises as high or shows as distinct a listening peak as on week-days or Saturday. In fact, just over half of the men are listening during what are generally conceded to be the most popular Sunday evening hours—from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. Relatively few farm men report the habit of listening to their radios after 10:00 P.M. on Sunday.

Area differentials in the Sunday morning listening habits of farmers apparently stem for the most part from differences in church affiliations and attendance. In the Crowley area, which is characterized by a large proportion of Catholics, the listening curves are relatively low until 10:00 A.M., but show a large audience after this time. On the other hand, the Ruston and Baton Rouge areas, with larger proportions of Protestants, have small radio audiences from 10:30 A.M. to 12:45 P.M. The listening curve of the Alexandria area occupies an intermediate position, one which falls between those of the areas described above,
The Sunday Listening Patterns of Farm Wives. The farm women show more decided preferences for particular listening hours than do the farm men. Note that the listening curves shown in Figure 7, in contrast to those in Figure 6, exhibit fairly well defined listening peaks. During the period from 8:00 to 10:00 A.M. (except for the Crowley area) and from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M., a greater proportion of the women give attention to their radios. On the other hand, the time from 12:00 noon to 1:00 P.M., with the exception of the Crowley area, is, unlike week-days and Saturdays, one of the least popular Sunday listening hours for the wife. The differences in religious affiliation again presumably account for the particular pattern of the Crowley area. Like their husbands, farm women do not listen to the radio as early in the morning or as late in the evening on Sundays as they do on Saturdays.

Area differentials, except for the ones noted above, are not very pronounced. It seems likely, however, that programs heard between 1:00 and 2:30 P.M. in the Ruston area have great appeal to the farm women. Also apparent is the fact that proportionately more of the Alexandria area farm wives listen to their radio on Sunday afternoon and evening.
Time Preferences for Winter and Summer Farm Broadcasts

Winter farm activities differ in degree and kind from summer farm activities. Therefore, the time preferences of rural-farm people for farm radio programs may be expected to differ between these two seasons. In order to determine if this is the case, all interviewees were asked what quarter-hour intervals of day or night would be most convenient for them to listen to a farm and/or homemaker program during each of the two seasons. Their answers were recorded and tabulated, and appear in Figure 8.

Summer and Winter Time Preferences of Farmers. Farmers who specify summer time preferences for farm radio programs mention the quarter-hour period from 12 noon to 12:15 p.m. more often than any other time. See Figure 8. The period from 7:00 to 7:15 p.m., on the other hand, is the second most popular summer broadcast time among farmers, and the period from 8:00 to 8:15 p.m. is the third most popular. The reader will note that the farmer's winter time preferences follow the same pattern. There is, however, one important difference. The period from 8:00 to 8:15 p.m., although still ranking in third place, is not nearly as popular during the winter as it is during the summer. This suggests that farmers tend to stay up later during the latter season. Significantly, the first and second choices in time preferences do not show pronounced

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**Figure 8.**—Number of Persons Expressing Preferences for Specific Times for Summer and Winter Farm Broadcasts, by Sex, Total Sample of Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.
seasonal differences. Approximately the same number of farmers mentions them for both periods.

**Summer and Winter Time Preferences of Farm Wives.** Farm women differ in two respects from farm men in regard to expressed seasonal time preferences for agricultural broadcasts. In the first place, larger numbers of the women specify a greater variety of periods when they would prefer to hear such broadcasts. In the second place, they differ from the men concerning times most preferred for hearing farm broadcasts. Greater numbers of the female informants specify 7:00 to 7:15 P.M. for both summer and winter listening. Twelve noon is their second choice, and 8:00 P.M. their third for both seasons. Little difference appears in the number who mention each of the above times in summer or winter.

The above findings suggest both that certain hours fall at "slack" work times during the two seasons, and that these times are so arranged that influence of the seasonal pattern of work on preferred listening times is not pronounced.

**IV. RADIO PROGRAM PREFERENCES**

It is important for the broadcaster to know what the program preferences of the farmer and homemaker are. The significance of such knowledge is readily apparent. Only after the type of program preferred by farm people is ascertained and implemented will the agricultural radio presentation be assured of audience appeal. These presentations can include or leave out various specific types of programs such as news, market reports, and weather reports according to the amount of interest manifested in them. As was previously mentioned, the classification of program preferences was the second purpose of the present study.

The discussion which follows is divided into two major parts. The first deals with the preferences of farm people for broad categories of programs. It is designed to determine what the farmer or homemaker considers to be the best general type of program. The second part is concerned with the relative interest of farm groups in various specific types of programs. All analyses include sex and area breakdowns.

**General Categories of Programs**

Each person interviewed was asked to name the four day and the four night radio programs that he liked best in order of preference. Of course, some people could not, offhand, name this many programs that they liked. The names of all the programs given, however, were duly recorded and later classified (after consultations with radio program directors) according to type. As far as could be determined, the breakdown of preferences by day and night periods is a unique procedure in the study of radio program preferences. It was felt, however, that there was enough evidence to indicate that preferences differed sufficiently
between these two times to warrant getting the additional information. The results obtained justified the time and effort expended.

Because up to four choices of programs were recorded, two types of statistical analyses were possible. The simplest procedure would have been the computation of the percentage distribution of the first choices listed. It was felt, however, that a more accurate portrayal of program preferences could be obtained by a weighted index of all choices named. This index or composite score was arrived at by assigning a weight of 4 points to first choices, a weight of 3 to second choices, a weight of 2 to third choices, and a weight of 1 to fourth choices. In instances where less than four choices were reported, all preferences given were scored. The results of these scores appear in Figures 9 and 10.

*Day Program Preferences.* When rural-farm people are considered as a group, there is no doubt as to the type of day program that they prefer. News programs stand out as their favorite. In fact, almost one-third of the total composite score of all day program preferences is for news programs. This discovery speaks well of the farm people's interest in local, national, and even international affairs. The second choice of the ruralites in general categories of day programs is music. As can be seen in Figure 9, over one-fourth of the composite score of program preferences is for this type of program. Drama ranks third among the preferences of the rural-farm population, accounting for almost one-fifth of the total composite score. This fact may surprise some readers until they discover that the farm women are avid listeners to daytime serials. Fourth among the choices of the farm people are comedy and variety programs. To this category is allotted one-eighth of the total score of day program preferences. Informational and educational programs rank fifth. Such programs, however, account for only a small proportion of the total score, a fact which seems worthy of the consideration of radio program planners. The sixth preference is for religious programs, and the seventh for sports.

While the overall picture of farm people's day program preferences is of much general interest, it is more practical to know what differences exist between the sexes and among the areas. Figure 9 shows these preferences for men and women by study areas.

An examination of Figure 9 shows that farm men have a decided preference for news as a daytime program. Of the total composite score of farmers' radio program preferences, well over two-fifths is for news presentations. Music is also in demand by the men as a day program. It ranks second in their choices and accounts for about one-fourth of the weighted score of the first four preferences listed. In third place, but accounting for only one-tenth of the total score, are comedy and variety presentations. In fourth place and almost as popular as comedy and variety are informational and educational programs. Drama programs

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7 It may be noted that a comparison of the rankings of program preferences according to first choices and composite score shows very little variation.

TOTAL SAMPLE

PER CENT

MEN
WOMEN

BARTON ROUGE AREA

MEN
WOMEN

RUSTON AREA

MEN
WOMEN

ALEXANDRIA AREA

MEN
WOMEN

CROWLEY AREA

MEN
WOMEN

Figure 9.—Proportions of the Farm Radio Audience Expressing Preferences for General Categories of Day Programs, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.

rank fifth, but account for only a small proportion of the composite score. Religious and sports presentations are relatively insignificant among the choices of farmers. The former rank sixth and the latter rank seventh.

Area differences in the program preferences of men are worthy of note. On the basis of comparative composite scores, the first choice of the farmers of the Baton Rouge, Crowley, and Alexandria areas is news programs, whereas the first choice of those from the Ruston area is music. Isolation of the precise cultural factors which cause this differential requires more investigation. Another interesting fact is that music programs do not seem to be as popular in the Baton Rouge area as in the other areas. Informational and educational programs, in contrast, enjoy their greatest popularity in the Baton Rouge area. The men from the Crowley area show almost no interest in informational and educational and drama programs, while those from the other areas exhibit but little more interest in these programs. Comedy and variety programs are not as popular in the Baton Rouge and Crowley areas as they are in the Ruston and Alexandria areas.
It is of significance to make comparisons between farmers and their wives with respect to program preferences during the day. An analysis of the program preferences of farm wives reveals at once that while the women do not exhibit as much interest in the news as a day program as do their husbands, it is important that they do exhibit enough interest to rank such programs as their third choice. Almost one-fourth of the composite score of their day preferences is for news programs. Their first choice, however, is music. Drama programs are a close second among their preferences, and comedy and variety programs are fourth. Informational and educational, and religious programs are fifth and sixth, respectively, but are relatively insignificant. Sports programs apparently could be left off the air almost completely as far as the farm ladies are concerned.

Like their husbands, farm women express definite patterns of day radio program preferences by area. Examination of Figure 9 shows that the women in the Crowley area are much more interested in news than are the women in the other areas. This may be because news programs are often offered in French, the only language which many understand and which even more prefer to hear. In contrast, the women in the Ruston area show least interest in the news. They show considerably more interest, however, in music as a day program than do the corresponding group of listeners from the other areas. Comedy and variety programs appeal more to the wives from the Alexandria area than to those from the Baton Rouge, Ruston, and Crowley areas. At the same time, the females in the Alexandria area are less favorably disposed toward drama programs than are their counterparts in the three remaining areas. Although not much interest is shown in informational and educational, and religious programs as a whole, the farm wives in the Crowley area express less interest in these two general categories of programs than do those in the other areas.

Night Program Preferences. This section is devoted to an analysis of programs preferred for night listening. It considers both men and women, and all discussion pertains to the time between 6:00 P. M. and midnight. With the coming of evening, when persons have more leisure time and want to relax after a day’s labor, it seems only natural for them to desire a radio program that is of a recreational nature. That farm listeners follow this pattern is demonstrated in Figure 10. Their overwhelming first choice (almost two-fifths of the total composite score) for evening listening is music.

Ranking second (and further lending credence to the hypothesis stated above) are comedy and variety programs. There is, however, quite a gap between first and second choices, as is testified to by the percentage of the total score of listening preferences allotted to each (see Figure 10). News programs rank third in the preferences of the farm audience, although they are far from attaining the popularity they achieve as a day program. Drama ranks as fourth choice, accounting for slightly over
one-eighth of the total score. The percentages of the composite program preference score ascribed to religious, informational and educational, and sports programs are almost negligible. When only men are considered, it is found that relatively more of them prefer musical programs than any other type for night listening. Just less than two-fifths of the men's total composite score is in this category. News, however, is also a popular night program with the men. Such programs rank second in their preferences and account for one-fifth of their composite score. A good deal of interest is also shown in comedy and variety programs, as is witnessed by the fact that this type ranks third with the men and claims almost as high a percentage of the total score as does news. It is interesting to note that drama programs rank fourth. Sports and religious programs are not much in demand and rank fifth and sixth, respectively, as choices for night listening.

Area differences among night program preferences of the men are as significant as those for day preferences. In comparison with men from the other three areas, Crowley farmers are much more interested in news programs. The Ruston area farmers have least interest of all

Figure 10.—Proportions of the Farm Radio Audience Expressing Preferences for General Categories of Night Programs, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.
in news as a night program. Drama programs appeal more to the farm men of the Baton Rouge and Alexandria areas than to those of the Ruston and Crowley areas. Comedy and variety programs are most popular in the Baton Rouge area and least popular in the Crowley area. Music programs are much more popular in the Ruston area among the men than in any of the remaining three areas. The farmers in the Ruston area appear also to be the most interested in religious programs, while the Crowley men are the least interested in these presentations. Informational and educational programs attract the largest audience among the men of the Alexandria area, although even here such broadcasts do not rate particularly high among night program preferences. Again, in conclusion, one may observe that area differences in program preferences seem to reflect prevailing differences in culture patterns.

At night, farm wives like musical programs best. Unlike their husbands, however, they rank comedy and variety programs as their second choice. News and drama rank third and fourth, respectively, followed by religious programs. While informational and educational programs are of more interest to the women than are sports programs, neither type enjoys any considerable attention from this group of radio listeners.

Similar, if not as pronounced, patterns of area differences are evident in the data showing night program preferences of farm women. While the women from all areas indicate that music is their first choice for evening listening, proportionately more women from the Crowley and Ruston areas share this preference. News programs hold very little interest for any but the rural wives of the Crowley area. Although the Baton Rouge area women show the most interest in drama programs, considerable numbers from the other areas also report liking this category of programs. Comedy and variety programs enjoy some popularity in all areas, but proportionately more of it in the Ruston and Alexandria areas than in the other two. The women in the Crowley area show least interest in religious programs for night presentations, whereas those in the Ruston area exhibit the most. Only in the Baton Rouge and Alexandria areas is there any appreciable interest manifested in informational and educational programs.

Specific Types of Programs

Although the agricultural broadcaster possesses valuable information when he knows the preferences of farm audiences for general types of programs, he can use more detailed and specific facts to good advantage. In order to clarify further the whole matter of program preferences, the interviewees were asked to express their likes and dislikes of programs falling under specific headings. The resultant findings are presented below.

Types or Kinds of Music. In the preceding section it was determined that farm people place music programs among their top preferences. It now becomes important to know what particular kind of music they want to hear. In order to determine specific preferences, each in-
formant was asked to list the three types of music he liked best in order of preference. The responses received were worked up into a composite score in the same manner as were the general program preferences. Figure 11 was prepared from the data to indicate these specific preferences. It might be mentioned that the percentage distribution of the first choices listed gives approximately the same rankings as that of the composite scores.

A comparison of the scores shows that by far the most popular type of music is "western" and "hillbilly," often referred to as folk and folk-type music. More than two-fifths of the composite score is accounted for by this category. In view of the relatively deep religious attitudes held and preserved by farm people, it is not surprising to find that religious music ranks as the second choice among music programs of all kinds and includes over one-fifth of the total score. Not far behind in popularity is so-called "popular" music. Just under one-fifth of the composite score falls in this category. Band and "other" types of music are far down the list of preferences, and classical and semi-classical types are rarely mentioned.
Proportionately more of the men interviewed show a preference for "western" and "hillbilly" music than any other. In second place among the farmers' preferences is religious music. This bears out the hypothesis that agrarian groups are partial to religious presentations. "Popular" music ranks only a poor third among the preferences of farmers. Some interest in band music and classical or semi-classical music is evinced, but it is safe to say that, as far as men are concerned, there is very little demand for these types.

Area differences in program preferences among rural men are just as pronounced as differences of opinion on programs themselves. More of the men show a preference for religious music in the Ruston area than in the other areas. In contrast, the men in the Crowley area exhibit hardly any interest at all in this type of music. Relatively more of the farmers in the latter area report an interest in "western" and "hillbilly" music. Nearly all the men interviewed, however, regardless of area, show marked enthusiasm for this type. Band music is least popular in the Ruston area and most popular in the Baton Rouge area. "Popular" music attracts a considerably greater following among the farmers of the Baton Rouge and Alexandria areas than among those of the other two areas. Although they enjoy but little popularity anywhere, the classical and semi-classical types of music have a higher score rating in the Baton Rouge area than elsewhere.

The reader may inquire as to the reasons why so large a percentage of the Crowley area total score falls in the category of "other" types of music. This is readily explained by the fact that many of the interviewees there listed "French music" as their first choice. Since this is a distinctive kind of music which includes a varied combination of folk-type and plain "hillbilly" songs in the French language, this classification was included among "other" types in the analysis.

Adult rural women tend to have the same preferences as the rural men, but express somewhat less favor for "western" and "hillbilly" music. This type, however, ranks first among their choices. The women also place religious music as their second choice. Here, though, as might be expected, they show relatively more interest than their husbands. "Popular" music follows religious music very closely among their choices. "Other" types of music, classical music, and band music are the least popular among the rural women who expressed an opinion.

Area differences in music preferences among the women are similar to those observed among the farm men. The women from the Crowley area have very little interest in religious music, while those from the Ruston area classify this type of music as their first choice. On the other hand, "western" and "hillbilly" music is accorded a much better reception in the Crowley area than anywhere else. Women in the Alexandria area show the least interest in this type, to which is allotted almost three-tenths of their composite score. "Popular" music enjoys its greatest relative popularity in the Baton Rouge and Alexandria areas, as does classical music. The latter type, however, does not have an appreciable fol-
lowing in any of the four areas. Again, a considerable proportion of the total score of the Crowley area is accounted for by the "other" category. This can be explained, as before, in terms of an expressed preference for the local types of French folk music.

**Interest in Radio Market Reports.** News, as was brought out in the first part of this section, ranks very high among the preferences of the farm audience. There has, however, always been some doubt as to the demand for particular types of news in rural areas. One of the controversial subjects in relation to news broadcasting is the extent of farm people's interest in market reports. This question in its entirety, of course, involves not only the matter of whether or not to have market reports at all, but also a consideration of what should be included in these reports. In this particular survey, all informants were asked to state their interest in such reports, and their responses were classified into the three following categories: those showing definite interest, those showing some interest, and those manifesting no interest. The results of the tabulation of these responses appear in Figure 12.

From a study of this chart it can be concluded that substantial proportions of farm people are keenly interested in market news. Almost two-thirds of the informants responding to this question express a def-
inite interest in such programs. One-fourth of the respondents voice mild interest in such reports, and only one-tenth indicate no interest in such presentations.

Sex breakdowns give more insight into this area of radio reporting. When the responses of the men interviewed are considered separately, it becomes evident that decidedly more of them have an interest in market reports. For example, over three-fourths of the farmers express very definite interest, as compared with only slightly over half of the farm women. Only a little over one out of twenty of the men have no interest in market news, while almost one out of six of the women express a complete lack of interest. The causes of these differences seem fairly obvious. The men, as a rule, have more responsibility for marketing, and thus more interest in the market news. That a few men do not indicate interest in such news is probably explained by the fact that some of them produce little more than they consume at home, while others, too, are perhaps characterized by a general lack of interest in such matters.

Although area differences appear in respect to interest expressed in market reports, they are not pronounced. All areas consistently show that men have more concern for such reports than women. Both the men and the women of the Baton Rouge area display less interest than corresponding groups in the other areas. It may be observed, however, that there are greater area differences in interest among the women than among the men.

*Interest in Radio Weather Reports.* Very few occupational groups are as critically concerned with the weather as are farmers. Although from a long-time standpoint farm people may have some tendency to be philosophical about the weather, a keen and growing regard for day by day forecasts is both natural and expected. In this respect the question is whether or not farmers have enough interest in or enough confidence in the radio weather reports to want such a broadcast. For this reason a question designed to ascertain such information was inserted in the schedule. The answers were tabulated and appear in Figure 13.

Five out of six of the adult farm people interviewed have a definite interest in radio weather reports. This proportion indicates a widespread interest among farmers in this type of radio offering. Another one-tenth have some interest in weather reports, and only a very few display no interest whatever in such presentations. These findings should be sufficient to remove any doubt but that farm people want weather information.

It is apparent that radio weather forecasts are more in demand by men than by women. Of the men, who do most of the outdoor work, less than one out of fifty has no interest in weather reports. Furthermore, over nine out of ten of them have definite interest in this type of broadcast. The fact that this is the case for only four-fifths of the women
is understandable in view of their less active participation in outdoor farm activities.

In regard to area differences, it appears that the farm people from the Baton Rouge and Ruston areas display slightly less interest in radio weather reports than those from the Alexandria and Crowley areas. When the men are considered separately, however, these differences tend to disappear. On the other hand, when the women are analyzed as a group it is found that these differentials are exaggerated.

**Interest in the County or Home Agent's Broadcasts.** Informational and educational programs do not rank very high among the listening preferences of farm men and women. This makes it important to study the rural audience's interest in county or home agent's broadcasts. In order not to bias the reply of informants, this point was approached in an indirect manner. The interviewees were simply asked how often they listened to the county agent's or home agent's broadcasts. Their answers were classified in three categories: regularly, sometimes, and never. The data appear in Figure 14. Those informants who indicated that they listen to such broadcasts sometimes or never were asked to indicate their reasons for so doing. These responses are presented in Figure 15.

It will be gratifying to county and home demonstration agents to
find that about one-fourth of the adult farm audience listens to them with regularity, and that an additional one-half listens to them part of the time. It will be valuable even if not encouraging for them to learn that over one-fifth of this audience never listens to them. The responses concerning time preferences discussed in Section III indicate that a program from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. would have a maximum number of regular listeners. But these overall figures for this type of broadcast are not as important for analytical purposes as are those between sexes and among areas.

County agents have a regular audience of one-fourth of the farm men interviewed in all areas. In addition to these, well over half of the males listen to them sometimes, while just less than one-fifth never hear such programs. Area analyses show that a greater proportion of the farmers in the Baton Rouge area are regular listeners. The Crowley area, on the other hand, has proportionately fewer regular listeners than the other three. While the Crowley area has more men who never listen to such broadcasts, the Baton Rouge area ranks next to it in this respect.

The remarks of interviewees in this area suggest that extension broadcasts in French would be accorded a much better reception. In fact, the writers are convinced that any program in this language would have a considerable audience.

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**Figure 14.**—Proportions of the Farm Radio Audience Reporting Specified Patterns of Listening Regularity to County and Home Demonstration Agents' Broadcasts, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.
The home demonstration agents who broadcast have a regular audience of just more than one out of five of the rural women in the areas studied. Almost one out of four, however, never listen to their home agents' broadcasts. Proportionately the largest group of regular listeners is in the Baton Rouge area. The women from the Ruston area, however, are also relatively consistent listeners. In contrast, less than one-tenth of the women of the Crowley area listen to their home agents regularly. The Crowley area also leads in the proportion of farm women who never listen to the home agents' broadcasts. As is the case with the men, the Baton Rouge area is second in this respect, although, as before, it has the highest proportion of regular listeners.

REPORTED REASONS OF THE FARM RADIO AUDIENCE FOR NOT LISTENING TO THE COUNTY OR HOME AGENT'S BROADCASTS

<table>
<thead>
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<td>TOTAL SAMPLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
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| MEN |
| BAYTON ROUGE AREA |
| RUSTON AREA |
| ALEXANDRIA AREA |
| CROWLEY AREA |

| WOMEN |
| BAYTON ROUGE AREA |
| RUSTON AREA |
| ALEXANDRIA AREA |
| CROWLEY AREA |

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FIGURE 15.—Proportions of Farm Radio Audience Reporting Specified Reasons for not Listening to Broadcasts by County and Home Demonstration Agents, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.

As has been mentioned, an attempt was made to ascertain why the rural men and women who never listen to broadcasts do not do so. Although the number responding to this query was small and hardly sufficient to serve as a basis for reliable conclusions, the reasons cited nevertheless indicate why some farm people do not take advantage of the opportunity of listening to county or home agent broadcasts.

It seems significant that exactly one-third of the reasons given attributed not listening to county or home agent broadcasts to the lack of information as to the times such programs are scheduled. This is
something which could be remedied without undue difficulty on the part of the agents.

"Other" reasons rank second in importance as causes for not listening to farm programs. This category, however, is unduly influenced by the proportion of persons from the Crowley area, over four-fifths of whom reported their reason for not listening was the fact that they could understand little or no English. The agents in that vicinity should take cognizance of this situation. In this respect it was indicated that those who could understand English would still prefer a program in French. Other factors named which appear important in this connection are that such programs are not interesting, that the interviewees are too busy, or that they are just not interested.

V. PREFERENCES CONCERNING OTHER ASPECTS OF RADIO PROGRAMS

Even after learning what types of programs farm people like, the broadcaster still does not have a complete picture of their program preferences. In addition, it is important for him to know something of the likes and dislikes of this audience with respect to other aspects of programs. With the aim of securing reliable information in this relatively unexplored field of rural radio listening research, several pertinent questions were included in the schedule. The responses of the interviewees to these queries have been tabulated and expressed in graphic form and are discussed in the following pages.

Length of Farm Programs

Among the more vital factors which go into the makeup of a radio program is its length. It should be long enough to make a satisfactory presentation possible, yet not so long as to lose the listeners' interest or take up too much radio time. In order that the farm broadcaster might have some guide on this point, all informants were asked to state their preferences regarding the length of farm program they would like to hear. Their answers are portrayed in Figure 16 and are discussed below.

As a group, the farm radio audience is overwhelmingly in favor of the 15-minute program. Over three-fourths of the respondents state that they prefer a program of this length. Preferences for 10-minute programs are expressed by less than one out of ten of the interviewees, and preferences for 5-minute programs by only about one out of every twelve interviewees. Slightly over one-tenth of them say that they prefer to listen to a program longer than 15 minutes.

Interestingly enough, identical percentages of men and women informants indicate a preference for 15-minute programs. What seems unusual, since the time element is supposedly more important for men, is the fact that proportionately more of them than women voice a desire for programs longer than 15 minutes. Very few informants of either sex
are in favor of 5-minute programs. Proportionately more women, however, express a preference for 10-minute programs.

There are few significant differences among the areas concerning the most desirable length of farm programs. The majority from all areas express a preference for 15-minute programs. However, relatively more persons in the Baton Rouge and Ruston areas manifest a preference for programs both of longer and shorter duration.

**Number of Persons on Farm Broadcasts**

The number of participants on a program is likely to have much to do with its reception. Of course, it is readily acknowledged that some programs better lend themselves to either single or multiple participation. In the main, however, there is a considerable leeway in this respect. Farm programs usually may be varied from the reading of a manuscript on the one hand to a question and answer type of program or a panel discussion group on the other. To determine which of these two general types (one utilizing one person and the other utilizing two or more persons) that the rural audience favored, all informants were asked to indicate the number of persons they prefer on farm broadcasts. These responses are charted in Figure 17.

Over three-fourths of all the interviewees express a preference for
two or more persons on broadcasts. Slightly less than one-fifth feel that one person does a better job. Sex differences in preferences regarding the number of persons on farm broadcasts are not pronounced. In this respect, women seem to be slightly more in favor of only one person than are men, although a majority of both sexes indicate a preference for two or more participants.

Area differences are not great. It is interesting, however, to note that proportionately more men from the Crowley area believe that one person succeeds in making programs more interesting than two or more persons, while just the opposite is true for the women of that area.

**Broadcasts from the Farm**

In their efforts to appeal to the farm audience, farm broadcasters have tried many different approaches. One of the most recent of these is the broadcast directly from the farm, in which farm people participate. In planning this study it was considered important to know the farm population's reception of this type of presentation as contrasted with the traditional studio farm program. Accordingly, the informants were asked to state their preferences for one of two kinds of programs: (1) a broadcast from the farm, with farmers participating; (2) a broadcast from a studio, with an Agricultural Extension specialist doing all the
talking (and presumably reading from a prepared script). Not all interviewees responded to this question, but the answers of those who did provide ample basis for drawing tentative conclusions. See Figure 18.

Two-thirds of all the interviewees express themselves in favor of programs emanating from the farm. In contrast, less than one-tenth of the informants indicate that they would rather hear an Extension expert do all the talking. The remaining one-fifth do not have any particular preference on this score.

It is noteworthy that little difference appears in the proportions of men and women expressing preferences for programs from the farm or from the studio. As can be seen in Figure 18, about two-thirds of both men and women are in favor of programs from the farm. Only one out of every ten of each group has a preference for the type of program in which the Extension worker does all the talking. Proportionately fewer women than men do not have a definite preference for either of these particular ways of presenting programs.

Area comparisons bring out some interesting facts. Proportionately more of the farm people from the Baton Rouge area are in favor of broadcasts from the farm, and those from the Ruston area are second in this respect. A larger proportion of the interviewees from the Crowley area than from the other three areas prefers for Extension workers to do
all the talking on a farm broadcast. The people from the Crowley area also stand out along with those from the Alexandria area as not having any particular preference in this regard.

Experiences in Taking Down Recipes and Formulas

The broadcasts of county and home demonstration agents, and other agricultural experts, often include some sort of a recipe or formula. In this respect it is important that the broadcaster regulate his rate of speaking so that listeners will have ample, but not superfluous, time to write down the given information. In order to determine how well such programs are received, all interviewees were asked if they had had any difficulty in taking down recipes and/or formulas. Their answers were recorded categorically into three groups: those who had trouble, those who had no trouble, and those who had never tried to write down either a recipe or formula.

Of all the interviewees answering this question, more than three-fifths had made an attempt to copy a recipe and/or formula from a radio reading. The remaining persons state that they either never had the opportunity or never tried to take down such information. Among those who tried to take down recipes and/or formulas, as many as one-fourth report having experienced some difficulty doing so. See Figure 19. This proportion is perhaps large enough to warrant a deliberate effort on the part of those responsible for such broadcasts to avoid this pitfall.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FARM RADIO AUDIENCE IN TAKING DOWN RECIPES AND FORMULAS

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Figure 19.—Proportions of Farm Radio Audience Reporting Difficulty in Recording Recipes and Formulas, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.
When the data for those who attempted to copy a formula or recipe are analyzed separately, it is found that proportionately more women experienced difficulty in writing down recipes than the men had taking down formulas.

Noteworthy differences exist among areas in the proportions of informants whose efforts at recording recipes or formulas met with difficulty. Neither the men nor the women in the Baton Rouge and Alexandria areas report as much difficulty in taking down such information as the men and the women in the Ruston and Crowley areas. The Baton Rouge area makes the most favorable showing in this respect.

**Programs in the French Language**

A considerable proportion of Louisiana's population speaks and understands French. Also present are smaller groups which are proficient in other foreign languages. For this reason it was deemed wise to include a question in the schedule concerning preferences for programs in a language other than English. As it turned out, except for one or two isolated cases, French was the only such language named.

Studies in the French sections of the state have indicated that the population is more receptive to information presented in that language.

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**PREFERENCES OF THE FARM RADIO AUDIENCE FOR PROGRAMS IN FRENCH**

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**Figure 20.**—Proportions of the Farm Radio Audience Expressing Preferences for French and English Broadcasts, by Sex, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.
In fact, some casual observers have gone so far as to say that any radio program in French, regardless of its nature, would be well received. This conjecture seems to be borne out by the findings of the present study, which are charted in Figure 20.

Almost one-fifth of the total number of interviewees state a preference for programs in French. This is a highly significant figure and one worthy of the attention of radio program planners. The findings are more useful, however, when considered from an area standpoint.

Although proportionately more men than women express a preference for programs in French, the difference is not significant. Area breakdowns show the picture more clearly. Relatively larger numbers of the men and the women in the Crowley area are in favor of such programs than is the case for the men and women in the other areas. In fact, well over one-half of all respondents in this area express a preference for programs in the French language. Such a preference is understandable, of course, in view of the fact that this area almost in its entirety is in the French section of South Louisiana. The county and home agents in these areas would further their work by an occasional broadcast in the French language. The Baton Rouge area ranks second and the Alexandria area third in the proportionate numbers of men and women expressing a preference for French broadcasts. The percentages of each, however, are nowhere near those in the Crowley area.

Ownership of and Intentions to Acquire FM-Equipped Radios

Frequency modulation is relatively new in commercial radio. Yet, almost every station has already entered or plans to enter this special field of broadcasting. This fact makes it important that the farmers be polled both as to the present ownership of FM sets and, if they do not already own one, their intentions as to acquiring such a set.

There is no doubt that FM broadcasting would have many advantages for rural groups. Not only would it overcome the problem of static in reception, but FM broadcasting conceivably could be used as a medium for beaming more programs directly to the rural audience. The regular broadcast bands could at the same time be kept free for programs of more widespread interest.

As can be seen in Figure 21, not many farmers now own FM sets. Of the interviewees, less than one in twenty say they possess a radio equipped for this type of reception. Area comparisons show that proportionately more of the farm people in the Baton Rouge area own FM-equipped radios than do those in the other three areas. No doubt the fact that WLSU (the Louisiana State University station) and other local stations have been so active in the FM field accounts at least in part for this relatively high degree of ownership. The persons in the Alexandria area have the second highest proportionate ownership of such sets, the Crowley area the third, and the Ruston area the lowest.

If we turn for the moment to the proportion of persons not owning such a set, but who indicate that they intend to acquire one, there seems
to be more promise for FM farm broadcasting in the future. Over one-third of the group not owning such sets, as is shown in Figure 22, say they expect to get one. However, it is just as significant that an even larger group, almost two-fifths of all persons not owning sets, definitely have no intentions, at least for the time being, of spending extra money for FM equipped sets. What the remaining one-fourth will do, who are undecided about buying such a set, is problematical.

Apparently the men are more interested in FM programs. At any rate a considerably higher proportion of them state positively that they plan to acquire an FM set. The farmers in the Baton Rouge area lead all others in plans to buy such radios. The proportions planning to buy FM sets in the Ruston area (which ranked second) and the Alexandria area (which ranked third), however, are significant. The informants in the Crowley area not only own comparatively few such sets, but show relatively less interest in acquiring them.

**Source of Local News**

It was pointed out in Section II that one-third of the farm group who do not listen to broadcasts by their county and home agents claim that they do not do so because they have no way of knowing at what time the broadcast is scheduled. In anticipation of such a response, a question concerning sources of local news was included in the schedule.
If the broadcaster familiarizes himself with the sources of local news among his audience, he can inform them as to the time of his broadcasts. The answers to this question were tabulated and appear in Figure 23.

Almost half of the interviewees depend solely on the radio for their local news. This is surprising information, and leaves little excuse for not informing them as to the time of farm broadcasts. Another one-sixteenth depend only upon their newspapers for news of local interest. Two-fifths of the informants rely on the newspaper and radio combined, while one-tenth receive local news only through conversations with their neighbors. Strange as it may seem, a few persons claim that they do not have any source of local news. From the above facts one conclusion of definite interest to the farm broadcaster stands out. If he will advertise his program schedule over the radio and in the local newspapers, the farm people will know when to tune him in. Figure 23, as would be expected, shows that the farm men and women have much the same sources of local news. Area differences in this respect are not pronounced. It does seem, however, that the farm people from the Alexandria area depend less on the radio alone and more on the radio and newspaper combined than do those from the other areas. Also, proportionately more Baton Rouge area interviewees rely solely on newspapers for local news than
do interviewees in the other three areas. Proportionately more farmers in the Crowley area do not report any source of local news.

VI. SUBJECTS FARMERS AND RURAL HOMEMAKERS WANT DISCUSSED ON FUTURE BROADCASTS

The agricultural broadcaster, unless he conducts a survey, has little way of knowing what his audience wants to hear in the way of specific information. Although he may have wide contacts and feel that consequently he can surmise the needs of this group accurately, the fact remains that without objective criteria he has no positive proof that his conjecture is correct. In order that the Extension worker might have some concrete basis for selecting his presentations, all interviewees were asked to list four subjects which they would like to hear the county or home demonstration agent discuss on a future broadcast. Although all did not list this many, almost all specified at least one topic. The topics named were tabulated and classified (with the help of Agricultural Extension specialists) under broad headings. See Table II and Figure 24. It was not deemed important to make sex breakdowns because county and home agents can readily determine in which of their broad fields of concentration a particular subject best fits. Area differences, however, are important, and these distinctions are maintained in the following analysis.
SUBJECTS FARMERS AND HOMEMAKERS WANT TO HEAR DISCUSSED ON FUTURE BROADCASTS

![Chart showing percentages of total sample and various geographic areas](chart.png)

**Figure 24.—Proportions of Farm Radio Audience Expressing Preferences for Specified Subjects on Future Farm Broadcasts, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948.**

**Homemaking and Health**

Subjects classifiable under the general category of homemaking and health are mentioned proportionately more often than are any other topics desired for future broadcasts. Included are requests for specific information on sanitation, canning and preserving, sewing, landscaping, general household hints, frozen foods, curing of meats, child care, and recipes and cooking. The reason, of course, for the popularity of this category of subjects is its appeal and interest to most of the women.

Close scrutiny of Table II shows that the specific subject under homemaking and health for which there are most requests is canning and preserving. This topic accounts for almost one-tenth of all requests. Recipes and cooking rank second within this general topic, followed closely by requests for programs on general household hints and sewing information, respectively. The other specific requests in order of their importance are as follows: child care, frozen foods, landscaping, sanitation, and curing of meats.

Area differences, while apparent for specific items, are not pronounced for this general category. It can be seen in Figure 24 that the interviewees from the Alexandria and Crowley areas proportionately more often request health and homemaking information. Proportionately fewest such requests are made in the Baton Rouge area.
| TABLE II. Proportions of Farm Radio Audience Expressing Preferences for Specified Subjects on Future Farm Broadcasts, Four Farm Survey Areas, Louisiana, 1948 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subject | Baton Rouge Area | Ruston Area | Alexandria Area | Crowley Area | Total |
| | Number | Per Cent | Number | Per Cent | Number | Per Cent | Number | Per Cent | Number | Per Cent |
| I. LIVESTOCK, POULTRY AND DAIRYING | 147 | 22.3 | 182 | 24.5 | 128 | 21.8 | 124 | 18.5 | 581 | 21.8 |
| General livestock | 33 | 5.0 | 27 | 3.6 | 21 | 3.6 | 13 | 1.9 | 94 | 3.5 |
| Veterinary advice | 13 | 2.0 | 8 | 1.1 | 5 | 0.9 | 5 | 0.8 | 31 | 1.2 |
| Breeding advice | 2 | .3 | 4 | .5 | 4 | .7 | 5 | .8 | 15 | .5 |
| Cattle | 15 | 2.3 | 25 | 3.4 | 33 | 5.6 | 39 | 5.8 | 112 | 4.2 |
| Hogs | 18 | 2.7 | 21 | 2.8 | 9 | 1.5 | 7 | 1.0 | 55 | 2.1 |
| Poultry | 61 | 9.3 | 79 | 10.6 | 47 | 8.0 | 52 | 7.7 | 239 | 9.0 |
| Dairying | 5 | .8 | 18 | 2.4 | 9 | 1.5 | 3 | .5 | 35 | 1.3 |
| II. CROPS | 95 | 14.4 | 71 | 9.5 | 73 | 12.3 | 177 | 26.2 | 416 | 15.7 |
| Cotton | 20 | 3.0 | 15 | 2.0 | 29 | 4.9 | 45 | 6.7 | 109 | 4.1 |
| Can. | 7 | 1.1 | 1 | .1 | 0 | .0 | 2 | .3 | 3 | .1 |
| Potatoes | 16 | 2.4 | 3 | .4 | 2 | .3 | 21 | 3.1 | 42 | 1.6 |
| Corn | 14 | 2.1 | 9 | 1.2 | 15 | 2.6 | 25 | 3.7 | 63 | 2.4 |
| Rice | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 71 | 10.5 | 71 | 2.7 |
| Cover crops | 0 | 0 | 7 | .9 | 0 | .0 | 0 | .0 | 7 | .3 |
| Feed crops | 6 | 4.9 | 6 | 8.9 | 1 | 1.5 | 3 | .4 | 24 | .9 |
| Horticulture | 24 | 3.6 | 17 | 2.3 | 12 | 2.0 | 9 | 1.4 | 62 | 2.3 |
| Orchards | 12 | 1.8 | 13 | 1.8 | 6 | 1.0 | 1 | .1 | 28 | 1.0 |
| III. FARM PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT | 155 | 23.6 | 167 | 22.5 | 150 | 25.7 | 94 | 13.9 | 566 | 21.3 |
| General | 35 | 5.3 | 15 | 2.0 | 28 | 4.8 | 12 | 1.8 | 90 | 3.4 |
| Pasture | 13 | 2.0 | 14 | 1.9 | 25 | 4.3 | 8 | 1.2 | 60 | 2.3 |
| Fertilizer | 29 | 4.4 | 16 | 2.2 | 20 | 3.4 | 9 | 1.3 | 74 | 2.8 |
| Ground preparation | 6 | .9 | 0 | .0 | 0 | .0 | 6 | .9 | 6 | .2 |
| Planting | 32 | 4.8 | 21 | 2.8 | 26 | 4.4 | 12 | 1.8 | 91 | 3.4 |
| Conservation | 3 | 1.5 | 20 | 2.7 | 14 | 2.4 | 1 | .1 | 34 | 1.4 |
| Weed control | 1 | 1.2 | 2 | 3.3 | 8 | 1.4 | 4 | .6 | 20 | .8 |
| Irrigation | 0 | 1.2 | 12 | 1.6 | 2 | .3 | 6 | .9 | 20 | .8 |
| Drainage | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 0.8 | 4 | .7 | 1 | .1 | 11 | .4 |
| Insect and disease | 33 | 5.0 | 57 | 7.7 | 22 | 3.8 | 3 | 7.5 | 149 | 5.6 |
| Gov't policies and outlook | 3 | .5 | 4 | .5 | 5 | .4 | 2 | .4 | 12 | .4 |
| IV. HOMEMAKING AND HEALTH | 167 | 25.3 | 213 | 28.7 | 183 | 31.3 | 215 | 31.8 | 778 | 29.1 |
| Sanitation | 1 | .2 | 2 | .3 | 8 | 1.4 | 6 | .9 | 17 | .6 |
| Canning and preserving | 66 | 10.0 | 68 | 9.2 | 55 | 9.4 | 73 | 10.8 | 262 | 9.8 |
| Sewing | 17 | 2.5 | 27 | 3.6 | 27 | 4.6 | 34 | 5.0 | 105 | 3.9 |
| Landscaping | 6 | .9 | 8 | 1.1 | 4 | .7 | 4 | .6 | 22 | .8 |
| Household(general) | 35 | 5.3 | 48 | 6.5 | 30 | 5.1 | 35 | 5.2 | 148 | 5.6 |
| Frozen foods | 4 | .6 | 3 | .4 | 11 | 1.9 | 7 | 1.0 | 25 | .9 |
| Curing of meats | 2 | .3 | 6 | .8 | 0 | .0 | 0 | .0 | 8 | .3 |
| Child care | 5 | .8 | 12 | 1.6 | 4 | .7 | 15 | 2.2 | 36 | 1.4 |
| Recipes and cooking | 31 | 4.7 | 39 | 5.3 | 44 | 7.5 | 41 | 6.1 | 155 | 5.8 |
| V. HOME GARDENING | 59 | 8.9 | 63 | 8.5 | 39 | 6.7 | 38 | 5.6 | 199 | 7.5 |
| VI. MISCELLANEOUS INFO | 36 | 5.5 | 47 | 6.3 | 13 | 2.2 | 27 | 4.0 | 123 | 4.6 |
| Use and care of machinery | 10 | 1.5 | 4 | .5 | 2 | .3 | 5 | .7 | 21 | .8 |
| Rodent control | 2 | .3 | 7 | .9 | 0 | .0 | 1 | .1 | 10 | .4 |
| Forestry mgnt | 1 | .2 | 5 | .7 | 0 | .0 | 0 | .0 | 6 | .2 |
| Local weather and market reports | 23 | 3.5 | 31 | 4.2 | 11 | 1.9 | 21 | 3.2 | 86 | 3.2 |
| VII. TOTAL | 659 | 100.0 | 743 | 100.0 | 586 | 100.0 | 675 | 100.0 | 2,663 | 100.0 |
As far as individual items are concerned, the interviewees from all areas cite canning and preserving more often than any other. Recipes and cooking and household hints also hold positions of prominence in all areas, ranking no lower than third in any one. Sewing is fourth in all areas. The other items differ considerably in rank order from area to area. Further details regarding the degree of interest displayed in the several specific topics may be gleaned from Table II.

Livestock, Poultry, and Dairying

Ranking in second place and accounting for over one-fifth of the total number of subjects requested are topics dealing with livestock, poultry, and dairying. Specific sub-topics included under this general heading are: general livestock, veterinary advice, breeding advice, cattle, hogs, and poultry. The specific item which farmers name most often is poultry. Next in importance are cattle, following by livestock, hogs, and dairying, in that order. Veterinary advice is sixth and breeding advice last among the several choices specified.

More requests for information dealing with livestock, poultry, and dairying are received in the Ruston area than anywhere else. The fewest calls for this type of information come from the Crowley area. There are, however, no great differentials from one area to the next in this respect.

Farm Practices and Management

Not far behind livestock, poultry, and dairying as a general subject among the requests of the informants are farm practices and management. This broad heading also includes over one-fifth of all the requests named. Eleven sub-classifications are included under this title as follows: general, pasture, fertilizer, ground preparation, planting, conservation, weed control, irrigation, drainage, insect and disease control, and government policies and farm outlook.

More area differences appear with respect to this general subject than with the previous ones. The largest proportionate number of such requests are voiced by farmers in the Alexandria area. Considerable numbers of the interviewees in the Baton Rouge and Ruston areas, however, display interest in this category of programs. By way of contrast, the farmers in the Crowley area proportionately make barely half as many such requests as do the farmers from any one of the other areas.

Under the farm practices and management category, general information is the specific topic most sought after in the Baton Rouge area. Insect and disease information is second in this area, with planting and fertilizer third and fourth, respectively. In the Ruston area, discussions regarding insect and disease control are requested most often. Planting information is second in popularity as a broadcast topic in this area and conservation third. Fourth among preferences is information regarding fertilizer. The farm people in the Alexandria area want to hear general farming information more than any other specific topic in this category.
They, however, are also interested in planting information and pasture improvement information, as is indicated by the fact that they rank these items second and third, respectively, as subjects for broadcasts. Fourth among their requests is insect control and disease information, and fifth is ground preparation. In the Crowley area more informants are interested in insects and plant diseases than in any other topic under farm practices and management. General and planting information (with the same number of requests for each) follow, and are trailed by fertilizer and pasture information in that order.

Crops

Louisiana is a state of diversified crops. It is not unusual, therefore, that information on a large number of individual crops should be requested as specific broadcast subjects. The fact is that crops as a general category rank fourth among the subjects named by the interviewees. Among the individual crops concerning which information is desired are cotton, corn, potatoes, cane, rice, cover crops, feed crops, horticultural crops, and orchards.

It is interesting to note that proportionately more farm people desire crop information in the Crowley area than in any other. Proportionately the least interest in crop broadcasts is shown in the Ruston area. The breakdown by individual areas provides a more comprehensive picture of differences in requests for specific information on particular crops.

In the Baton Rouge area relatively more farmers request farm broadcasts concerning horticultural crops. The second largest proportionate number of requests in this area is for cotton information, the third for potatoes, and the fourth for corn. The crops most often mentioned in the Ruston area, as in the Baton Rouge area, are those which are classifiable under the general category of horticultural crops. Cotton is also second in this area. Orchards, however, are third. In fourth place is corn, and this is followed by cover crops, feed crops, potatoes, and sugar cane. The farmers in the Alexandria area express proportionately most interest in getting information regarding the growing of cotton. Their second choice is for programs dealing with corn. Horticultural crops rank next, followed by feed crops, orchards, and potatoes, in that order. In the Crowley area the crop by far most often mentioned as a program subject is rice. Cotton is next in importance, and is followed by corn. Ranking fourth in number of times specified is potatoes, and fifth, horticultural crops. Hardly mentioned are sugar cane, feed crops, and orchards.

Home Gardening

Generally recognized is the fact that gardening is a vital activity of the farm family. It yields a ready supply of fresh vegetables both for immediate consumption and for canning. That a considerable number of interviewees request that information on home gardens be broadcast
is therefore not surprising. Area differences with respect to the number of requests for information on home gardens are not great. Proportionately more of the farm people in the Baton Rouge and Ruston areas, however, seem to want such information.

**Miscellaneous Information**

Some of the subjects asked for by the interviewees cannot be classified readily under any of the above general topics. These are grouped under the general title of "miscellaneous information." Included among these are requests for broadcasts on the use and care of machinery, rodent control, forestry management, and local weather reports.

The fact that more persons voluntarily ask for local market and weather reports than any of the other items is not surprising in view of the facts revealed in Section IV. It is interesting to note, however, that proportionately more of these requests come from the Ruston area. The fewest, on the other hand, are received in the Alexandria area. As can be seen in Table II, a considerable number of farmers are interested in the use and care of farm machinery. The Baton Rouge area leads the list in such interests and is followed by the Crowley area.

Rodent control is always a problem on farms. Perhaps the farmers in the Ruston area are more at a loss as to how to cope with rodents than are the farmers from the other three areas, or they have more of a problem in this respect than do those from the other areas. At any rate more requests for broadcasts dealing with this subject are made in that area.

Forestry management also seems to be of somewhat more interest to farm people in the Ruston than in the other areas. In fact, the farm people in the Baton Rouge area are the only other ones to manifest any interest at all in this subject.