

THE HOME ECONOMICS AGENT AS A DELIVERY RELAY FOR
INCREASING PUBLICATION OF EXTENSION NEWS:
A CONTROLLED FIELD EXPERIMENT

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Cooperative Extension Service	1
Importance of the Mass Media to Extension	2
Extension Information Organization	3
Importance of County Home Economists in the Dissemination Pattern	6
This Study	7

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Gatekeepers	11
Personal Influence	12
The Sorton Study	12
The Sampson Study	14
The Ludwig, Kendall and Pierce Study	15

CHAPTER III. METHODS

Controlled Field Experiment	19
Hypothesis	19
The Groups	20
The Stories	21

CHAPTER IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Primary Findings	26
Secondary Findings	36
Recommendations	38

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
---------------------------------	----

APPENDIX A: Newspapers in the Study	42
---	----

APPENDIX B: Sample Letters to Home Economists	47
---	----

APPENDIX C: Stories in the Study	51
--	----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Model Showing Direct Mail as a Delivery Strategy
to the Gatekeeper 8
2. Model Showing a Relay as a Delivery Strategy
to the Gatekeeper 8

LIST OF TABLES

- I. Newspaper Assignment by Areas 20
- II. Story Use/Non-use by Areas 27
- III. Frequency of Story Use 28
- IV. Story Use and Rate of Story Use by Area and by Group 31
- V. Frequency of Attribution in Published Stories 37

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Cooperative Extension Service

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES or Extension) is the pragmatic arm of each land grant university. The research segment discovers knowledge in the laboratory or field; the teaching segment uncovers knowledge for students in campus classrooms; the CES reclaims that information for use by others beyond the limits of the university. As its name implies, the CES, founded by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, is a cooperative effort between Federal, state and county governments. All 50 states and Puerto Rico engage in Extension programs of agriculture production, home economics, 4H-youth and community resource development.

Extension's goal, based on a philosophy that people can help themselves if they are given practical, research-based information, is to provide a framework for meaningful choices. CES began as a uniquely American way to achieve informal education for rural Americans, but the service has grown to include the needs of a heterogeneous society.

CES disseminates information in a pattern that joins state specialists, who are cognizant of university research, with county agents (change agents), who are links from the university to communities. The mechanism generally employed to reach the public is face-to-face contact in which change agents concentrate efforts on progressive individuals who, in turn, spread knowledge of beneficial practices to others.

To reinforce and supplement the teaching done by specialists and county agents, the CES employs editors and other media specialists who prepare publications and bulletins and write news stories for newspapers and magazines. Audio-visual aids to support programs also are available.

Importance of the Mass Media to Extension

Even though personal contact remains Extension's primary way to reach audiences, the role of the mass media has increased, enabling CES to reach not only a traditional clientele, but also new rural and urban audiences. Although communicating to various audiences has been a prime objective of the CES, this goal gained renewed impetus with Affirmative Action legislation of the 1960s.

Extension efforts toward agriculture production and homemaking skills have not lessened, but these areas have been joined by a demand for current information. For example, in home economics, in addition to the basic knowledge about sewing and laundering skills, new areas of information deal with effective parenting, stress, self-help health care and more. Mass media, primarily through the channels of newspapers and radio, offer ways to reach many people with an abundant and diverse quantity of information, rapidly and economically.

The mass media also give land grant universities opportunities to report scientific findings and research-based information to state legislatures and their constituents. Terence Day argues that the news media offer the greatest opportunity to account to the public about programs originated and conducted by the CES. He found that 78 percent of the agricultural research in the State Agricultural Experiment Stations is funded by federal and state tax dollars.

Never has it been so important to account to the public for its support of these programs. While inflation has diminished the service we can provide for a dollar, it also has increased public pressure to cut government spending and to eliminate research that does not promise clearly-defined benefits.¹

Agricultural scientists also hold a healthy regard for the popular media as a means for communicating research findings. Of the 242 agricultural scientists in the 13 states that make up the Southern Experiment Station region, 46 percent rated mass media as extremely or very important as a means of reporting personal research. Sixty-two percent said they believed they were spending too little time on reporting research through the media and 81 percent saw the mass media as the single most important source of information in which the general public formed an image of agricultural scientists. Of those surveyed, two-thirds agreed that the mass media were more important now than 15 or 20 years ago.²

Jarvis Miller, president of Texas A & M, in a speech to the National Agricultural Science Information Conference, cited the mass media as the most significant source of information for all types of information needs. Miller concluded that "development groups which are concerned about providing information to client groups for the purpose of enhancing group decision-making abilities should rely much more heavily upon mass media systems to present information."³

Extension Information Organization

The U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Science and Education Administration employ media specialists who provide information nationally and render support to information departments at land grant universities. Regional information offices and international agriculture communication also are part of the organization.

Each land grant institution has an information department that employs several people who work in news, publications, visual aids, radio, television and graphic arts. The number of people who work in these areas varies. For example, Texas A & M has a department head and 32 communication specialists. At Kansas State University, a department head oversees 12 communication specialists; five responsible for news and feature writing, three for publication, two for audio-visuals, and two in graphic design.⁴

Extension information staff members (assistant editors), who are responsible for print media, write news releases about upcoming programs, provide information on subject matter or write feature stories that create interest about Extension programs. Generally, state information departments mail news and feature stories to agents and to newspaper editors. The examples following illustrate the two dissemination patterns employed by a few land grant universities.

Minnesota. The University of Minnesota's Department of Information and Agricultural Journalism sends releases and news stories to county staff. This method keeps county staff informed of current information and improves working relationships with local editors.⁵

Wisconsin. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Department of Agricultural Journalism reaches weekly newspapers by going through county agents, many of whom write columns and regular features. The practice reinforces county agents as local information sources.⁶

South Dakota. In May, 1980, South Dakota Agricultural Information Department revised its customary method of mailing news stories. Instead of sending stories to newspaper editors, as the department did in the past, the office now mails material to county staff, who use and

distribute the information as they choose. Weekly news packets to county staff may contain as many as 15 stories that focus on agriculture, home economics, 4H-youth and other information. However, fast-breaking news stories are still sent to newspaper editors.⁷

Illinois. For many years, the Department of Agricultural Communications at the University of Illinois has sent news stories to county staff to distribute to weekly newspapers. Editors of dailies receive information mailed from the university.⁸

Alaska. The Extension editor at the University of Alaska uses district home economists as relays to newspapers for all releases and stories.⁹

The Agnet System. The northwest states are served by the Agnet system, which is based in Nebraska and designed to supplement and organize information. North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Montana and Wyoming use the system. In some areas, story "budgets" or listings of available stories are provided from a computer located in county offices. In Wyoming, for example, newspaper editors are encouraged to come to county offices to review current budgets and to select stories.¹⁰

Indiana. Purdue University electronically transmits information to all 92 county offices via Fast Agricultural Computer Terminal System (FACTS). Stories are sent to agents over computer terminals located in county offices. Stories also are mailed to Indiana newspapers, to other media, and upon request, to agents and media in other states.¹¹

Kansas. At Kansas State University, Extension editors generally mail regular (weekly, semimonthly or monthly) news packets to county agents for their use in columns or other news stories. Other news and feature stories are mailed from the Extension editors to editors of daily

and weekly newspapers. The author, an assistant Extension editor for home economics, has maintained the traditional news dissemination pattern begun in 1942 when the first home economics news editor, Eula Mae Kelly, joined the staff. Kelly prepared weekly news packets for county home economists and separate packets for newspapers. County home economists currently receive semimonthly packets containing from four to six stories written about various subjects for use in columns or newsletters. Stories to newspaper editors may be releases, feature stories or in-depth news stories.

Importance of County Home Economists in the Dissemination Pattern

Several studies reveal the importance of home economists and county agents as sources of Extension information for newspaper editors. County home economists were cited as important sources of home and family information for Florida newspaper editors in a study by Ludwig, Kendall and Piece.¹² Responses from editors of weeklies indicated they preferred face-to-face contact with local sources. Two additional studies reveal the importance of county agents as sources of agriculture information for newspaper editors. Evans'¹³ study of Illinois dailies and Sampson's¹⁴ study in Washington cite county agents as influential information sources for daily and weekly newspapers.

In Kansas, most county home economists have weekly columns that are carried regularly in newspapers. Some home economists may provide columns for as many as three or four newspapers within counties. Depending upon such factors as time, writing skills and the importance home economists place on the media, agents may use packet stories sent from the Extension editor in many ways. Some agents set aside a media day, in

which they prepare advance columns, newsletters, radio talks and publicity about upcoming meetings. Home economists may combine packet stories, embellish stories with their own details, localize stories by consulting people in their communities or personalize information by writing informally in the first person.

Other personal contacts that home economists have with editors may occur when agents publicize special programs or notify editors of programs that contain information of consumer interest. At times, reporters are invited to cover meetings.

Home economists often schedule a weekly stop at local newspapers to supply editors with Extension information. In other cases, as part of a "courthouse beat," reporters stop at Extension offices, which often are located in county courthouses.

Because the CES at Kansas State University realizes the importance of agents in the communication process with local editors, Extension editors conduct a three-day communications' training workshop for new agents. The sessions include techniques for working with local editors, writing news stories, columns and newsletters and preparing audio-visual materials. Agents also may request a three-day photography course or media seminars. Further evidence of the importance of communication/journalism training for home economists can be noted from the results of Bjorklund's¹⁵ study in which members of the American Home Economics Association cited this educational area as the most recommended study area for students and professionals in home economics.

This Study

As noted above, land grant universities use two communications strategies to convey information to newspapers. In the first strategy,

releases and news stories are mailed to editors. In the second, releases and news stories are mailed to home economists, who relay the information to newspapers. It is understood that these strategies are intended to effect the widest dissemination through the newspaper medium.

The two strategies are shown in the models below. In the first strategy, used by the Extension Information Department at Kansas State University, stories are mailed to editors of daily and weekly newspapers (Fig. 1).

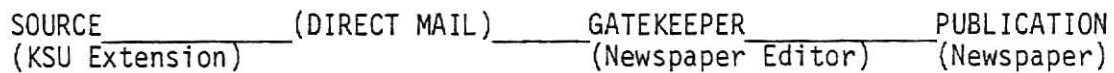


Fig. 1

In the second model (Fig. 2), a relay functions in the channel between the source and the gatekeeper. The relay is the county home economist.

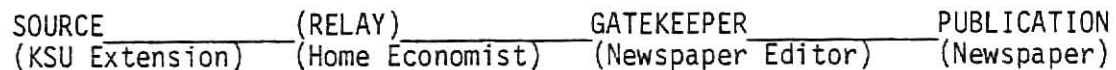


Fig. 2

In the relay model, the home economist does not function in the same manner as the opinion leader in the two-step flow model, in which information flows from the mass media through an opinion leader to the public. Instead of linking mass media to the public, as in the two-step flow, the relay in this study functions between the source and the gatekeeper.

This study, a field experiment, will attempt to discover whether or not the county Extension home economist is a more effective channel than direct mail for publication of Extension news stories to weekly

newspapers. In addition, the study will look at the editors' general treatment of stories; particularly the byline and the use of art when provided with stories.

Specifically, this field experiment will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Is the use of the county Extension home economist as a relay more effective than direct mail in the publication of news and features to weekly newspapers? This study seeks to discover if the home economist, when used as a relay for Extension information, will increase publication of stories that customarily are mailed to editors from the Extension Information Department.

2. To what extent is source attribution retained? The study will observe published stories for use of the author's byline, Extension title and story dateline (Manhattan).

3. To what extent is accompanying art retained? The study will observe published stories for use of art that accompanies stories.

This introduction is intended to provide a background for the study by describing CES and its strategies for disseminating information through the print media. In following chapters, this report will discuss a search of the literature (Chapter II), the methodology used in formulating the study (Chapter III), and an analysis of the findings with additional comments and recommendations (Chapter IV).

FOOTNOTES

¹Terence L. Day, "Working With the Metropolitan Media," ACE Quarterly, 59 (July-September 1976): 21.

²Jarvis Miller, "Dealing With the Media," ACE Quarterly, 62 (October-December 1979): 8.

³Ibid.

⁴Agricultural Communicators in Land-Grant Universities and USDA Agencies, 1980. United States Department of Agriculture.

⁵Harold Swanson, Professor, Department of Information and Agricultural Journalism, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn., interview by telephone, Sept. 15, 1980.

⁶Lloyd R. Bostian, Professor, Department of Agriculture Journalism, University of Wisconsin-Madison, information in a letter, Oct. 1, 1980.

⁷John Pates, Editor, Agricultural Information, University of South Dakota, Brookings, South Dakota, interview by telephone, Oct. 23, 1980.

⁸John Evans, Professor, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill., interview by telephone, Oct. 23, 1980.

⁹Ellen Ayote, District Home Economist, Fairbanks, Alaska, information in a letter, Sept. 23, 1980.

¹⁰George Brandsberg, Editor, interview held at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan., Oct. 19, 1980.

¹¹Judith Sorton, Information Specialist, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind., interview by telephone, Aug. 19, 1980.

¹²Terence L. Day, "Use of Family Living News: Three Studies," ACE Quarterly, 62 (July-September, 1979): 3-26.

¹³James F. Evans, "Agricultural News in Illinois Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 43 (Spring, 1966): 124-6.

¹⁴M.W. Sampson, How Do Washington's Newspaper Editors Evaluate Their Sources of Agriculture News? (Washington State University:ERIC Document Reproductions Service, ED 065 784, 1972).

¹⁵L.S. Bjorklund, "How Do Professional Home Economists View the Need for Communication Training?" (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1978).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

After searching the literature, which included book and journal publications, available Extension research reports, master's theses, dissertations and ERIC, the author found no studies directly parallel this study. However, the Sorton study, the Sampson study and the study by Ludwig, Kendall and Pierce, discussed below, underline the importance of the linkage of the county agent and the newspapers in news release dissemination.

The landmark studies in gatekeeping and personal influence (two-step flow), marginally relevant, will be discussed briefly. Other Extension studies, relevant to this study, focus on how Extension editors in some land grant universities disseminate information to newspapers and how editors evaluate their sources of Extension information. These studies are cited along with comments on how they relate to this study.

Gatekeepers

David Manning White's¹ classic study of gatekeeping sought to determine why the wire editor on a large metropolitan newspaper selected or rejected news stories. White found that "Mr. Gates" rejected stories primarily because the paper lacked space or because stories contained an overworked theme or were written in a dull, vague or ponderous style. Stories he did choose generally were shorter, "meatier," and better written.

Personal Influence

The Decatur study by Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld² investigated the two-step flow theory that grew out of the research on voting in the 1940 presidential elections. The study looked at how opinion leaders affected decision-making in the areas of movie attendance, fashions, marketing choices and public affairs. Media awareness, social status, life cycle and gregariousness were relevant characteristics of opinion leaders. The hypothesis for the study grew from the theory that ideas flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from them to less active sections of society. However, other researchers, including Wilbur Schramm and Donald Roberts³ found the two-step flow theory too simplistic. They suggested that instead of two steps there should be n-step flow, because opinion leaders have their own influentials to whom they go for information.

The Sorton Study

In a master's thesis, Judith A. Sorton⁴ tested the use of family living news releases by Indiana newspapers. A survey conducted by Sorton at Purdue University measured the use of releases distributed over three months. The study also tested the potential for reducing delivery costs by sending news releases from the Extension Information Department to newspapers through county agents, who received them electronically by Fast Agricultural Computer Terminal System (FACTS), located at the university.

When comparing delivery systems (news releases supplied by agents or supplied by agriculture information), Sorton found differences in use were significant. Of the 44 dailies and 58 weeklies using family living news, 61 percent used releases from the information officer and 34 percent

used releases supplied by agents. Among dailies that were supplied releases by agents, eight newspapers used at least one release while one did not. Weeklies indicated a similar pattern. Among weeklies supplied by the information office 43 used releases and 41 did not. Among weeklies supplied by agents, 15 used releases and 11 did not.

News releases mailed to editors from agriculture information included names of state specialists. However, news releases sent to agents for their use and distribution were used as written, with specialists' names, with agent changes or in agent columns. In the case of agent use, 26 percent of the newspapers used releases in columns, 12 percent used releases with changes made by agents, and 12 percent used releases as they were originally written.

In total usage, daily newspapers used releases more often than weeklies. Nearly 77 percent of the weeklies failed to use any release, citing a lack of localization as the reason. Forty percent of the dailies used at least one release, whether supplied by agriculture information or agents.

The study noted that the cost of producing and distributing releases had more than doubled in the past five years. During 1977, the information department paid \$3,500 for mailing releases to editors. For this reason, the study sought to discover if relaying releases by FACTS and using agents in the delivery process would reduce mailing costs yet still have high usage of releases among newspapers.

It is important to note that in both dailies and weeklies, releases were more often used if they were mailed in the customary fashion from agriculture information. The fact that agents could omit names of specialists and replace them with their own names did not significantly

increase usage, despite the fact that this action would tend to localize releases. When agents chose to use releases in columns, however, usage did increase. Agents' columns, usually regular features of newspapers, are not subject to the same gatekeeping treatment as releases.

The Sampson Study

A 1971 survey by the CES of Washington State University of the state's newspaper editors was designed to evaluate sources of agriculture news. M. W. Sampson⁵ sought to answer how and why editors use agriculture news and photos, their sources for information and how they evaluate news they receive from Extension sources. About two-thirds of the editors of dailies responded that they published agriculture news each day and slightly more than half of the weeklies indicated use of agricultural news each week.

The county Extension agents were editors' first and second choices as sources for agricultural news. For example, 60 percent of the editors of weeklies chose agents as their first choice, while 28 percent chose the county agent as a second choice. Most editors indicated they received news material from agents at least weekly. However, editors of dailies indicated they had personal contacts with agents more often than editors of weeklies.

Factors determining editors' news selection were subject matter, timeliness, adaptability to local situations and dependability of sources. On the average, editors of dailies listed timeliness as the most important element, while editors of weeklies felt subject matter was a priority. About four-fifths of all editors said they would like to receive more agriculture photos.

The survey was mailed to 21 editors of dailies and to 140 editors of weeklies. Over three-fourths (16 or 76.2%) of the editors of dailies responded while less than half (63 or 45%) of the editors of weeklies responded.

Although Sampson did not draw a correlation between the low response rate of editors of weeklies and their lack of personal contact with county agents, it would appear that such a relationship may have existed. The high response rate by editors of dailies possibly may have resulted because these editors associated the survey with their local source of agriculture information--the county agents. On the other hand, the lower rate may have been a function of the lack of staff and time to answer another questionnaire.

A conclusion drawn by both Sampson and Sorton was that county agents could be relied on to serve as links between the CES and state newspaper editors, particularly editors of weeklies.

The Ludwig, Kendall and Pierce Study

This 1978 survey, designed by the Editorial Department of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, measured Florida newspaper editors' preferences for home and family news. Extension agents' evaluation of a monthly home and family news packet also was evaluated.

Cynthia J. Ludwig, Robert Kendall and JoAnn B. Pierce⁶ found that editors of weeklies listed county home economists as more important providers of home and family information than editors of dailies. Nearly three-fourths of the editors of weeklies indicated agents were one of the top three providers of this specialized information. One-third of the

editors of dailies ranked agents as one of three important sources. Furthermore, editors of weeklies indicated they preferred face-to-face contact with sources of family news, while editors of dailies preferred telephone contacts.

Of the 49 editors of dailies and 173 editors of weeklies in the survey, more than 60 percent responded. However, the response rate among editors of weeklies (71 percent) was considerably greater than the response rate (29 percent) from editors of dailies.

Although the researchers did not offer an explanation for the high rate of response from editors of weeklies, the editors' favorable comments toward agents as information sources may be accounted for by the fact that agents reported that they localized information. Of the 82 percent of agents who returned surveys, 94 percent said they localized packet material and nearly three-fourths either partially rewrote or completely rewrote articles to insert local information. The fact that editors of weeklies indicated they preferred face-to-face contact with sources may have been an additional reason for the high response rate among these editors. Face-to-face contact between agents and these editors may have resulted in closer ties.

Agents also said most of the news stories they submitted were published. They indicated they used the newspapers extensively for reaching their clientele with home and family information. More than one of every five agents sent an average of two stories a week to local newspapers. Thirty-six percent of the agents sent an average of one story a week and seven out of eight agents supplemented packet stories by other articles they originated. Packet material also was used in regular

newspaper columns, newsletters, radio programs, television and special interest programs.

As was the case with the previously discussed studies, this study seems to reveal a strong tie between the contacts of agents with editors and the responsiveness of those editors. Here, editors of weeklies, who may have had more personal contact with agents, had a high response rate, while in the previous studies, a lack of agent contact with editors seemed to result in a low response rate from editors of weeklies.

FOOTNOTES

¹David Manning White, "The Gatekeeper: A Case Study in Selection of News," Journalism Quarterly, 27 (Fall 1950): 383-90.

²Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1955), pp. 309-34.

³Wilbur Schramm and Donald F. Roberts, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 402-10.

⁴Day, *ibid.*

⁵Sampson, *ibid.*

⁶Day, *ibid.*

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Controlled Field Experiment

In this study, the controlled field experiment was selected as the best research method to measure the effectiveness of two delivery modes for the publication of Extension news releases: (1) the county Extension home economist as a relay to the newspaper and (2) direct mail to the newspaper.

This research method has several advantages that make it appropriate. Babbie¹ has stated that field research is unobtrusive because the research can be conducted in a natural setting. This field experiment was designed so that news stories were sent to county home economists to deliver to one group of editors of weeklies (experimental group). In the traditional mode, the same stories were mailed to another group of editors of weeklies (control group). Effects were measured by monitoring usage of the stories in the newspapers in the two groups.

Hypothesis

The major hypothesis of this study is that news stories delivered to newspaper editors by county home economists will have a higher frequency of publication than stories mailed from the Extension Information Department. Because county home economists have regular columns in newspapers and frequently contact editors about other publicity, agents

often are viewed by editors as being reliable sources of information with local ties. Using home economists as relays for Extension information also may single out stories from the many which editors receive by mail.

In addition to the use of news stories by the two delivery systems, the study also will look at the published stories for source attribution and the use of accompanying art.

The Groups

Newspapers selected for this study were limited to the 100 leading circulation weeklies in Kansas.* Assignment to either the experimental or the control group was made by alternate selection within each of the five geographical areas that comprise the CES. Assignment of newspapers by area is noted in Table I.

TABLE I
NEWSPAPER ASSIGNMENT BY AREAS

Area	Experimental	Control
Northwest	10	9
Southwest	5	6
South Central	12	12
Northeast	12	12
Southeast	11	11
Total	50	50

The southwest area has fewer weekly newspapers in the study than other areas; because there are fewer total newspapers in this area with a

*A list of the newspapers by area and a map showing their distribution are included in Appendix A.

circulation size to be included in the study. Other areas are generally equal in the number of newspapers in the study.

The Stories

One feature story and three news stories, written by the author, were used in this study. The stories are included in Appendix B. Stories were selected on the basis of timeliness, current news value and content variety. However, each is typical of stories mailed by the author to editors. The four stories are described below.

Story 1. "Success in Bread Making--It Depends on the Knead" (800 words). This story, mailed August 4, suggested in the lead that hot weather made bread raise quickly and called attention to the unseasonable warm weather which Kansas experienced during the summer. The feature story detailed some of the experiences of a retiring Extension specialist and her advice on successfully making bread. The story, which concluded with her recipe for whole wheat bread, may be considered more traditional content for women's pages.

Story 2. "Finding Good Day Care For Children As Big A Task As Finding Your Job" (740 words and art). This story, mailed August 11, was considered timely because summer often is considered a peak season to look at day care options. News value of this story also was increased by an announcement of a new state law that gave some child care providers the choice of registering instead of licensing with the state. The story, which outlined the differences between registered family day care and licensed day care centers or homes, concluded with suggestions for parents considering these facilities. Information for the story came from an Extension specialist in human development, the coordinator of children's

services for the Department of Health and Environment and additional research.

Story 3. "As School Year Begins, Schedule Time For Family Too" (520 words). This story, mailed August 18, suggested ways to curb individual activities, leaving time for families to spend together. The story, which arrived at newspaper offices as schools began, was suitable copy during late summer or early fall. Information for the study came from the Extension specialist in household equipment and management and additional research.

Story 4. "Parents Are Partners in Children's Learning" (560 words and art). The final story, mailed August 25, suggested that a child's grades in school do not adequately convey emotional development. The story content was keyed to the opening of school and before students received initial grades. Information for the story came from an Extension specialist in human development, the assistant commissioner of educational services for the Kansas Department of Education and additional research.

Art, when it appropriately highlights content or explains details, is often included with stories mailed to editors. In this study, line art was included with two stories. Art for the second story in the series was selected to attract readers' attention to the story itself, which detailed new day care rulings. Art in the fourth story focused on school grades and highlighted the story theme. Clip art from Harry Volk Jr., Art Studio was printed separately on coated offset paper and included with stories in both the experimental and control groups.

Newspapers in the control group received four stories (one each week during August, 1980) mailed from the Extension Information Department

and addressed to appropriate editors. Newspapers in the experimental group received the same four stories during the same time period delivered personally by the county home economists to appropriate editors.

One week before the mailing date of the first story, the author wrote to home economists in the counties of the newspapers in the experimental group to request their assistance and to notify them of the mailing dates of each story.* To this extent, it was necessary to involve the home economists in the study because otherwise they would have used the stories in their columns as they customarily did with material supplied by the Extension Information Department.

The author also wrote letters to the five area home economists, who serve in a supervisory capacity, to inform them of the requests made to county home economists.

The county home economist was asked to personally deliver stories to the editor of the designated newspaper unless that newspaper was published in a town other than that which the home economist worked. In this case, the home economist could mail the story to the editor, which would have been a typical procedure. Stories were mailed to 12 newspapers.

Each story mailed to agents was accompanied by a cover letter that repeated the name of the designated newspaper, asked how the story was delivered (either by hand or by mail) and asked for comments from editors or agents.

* Correspondence from the author to county home economists is included in Appendix C.

Frequency of story use was monitored by the Kansas Clipping Service. In addition, the author clipped stories from the stack of selected weeklies carried in the Department of Journalism Library, Kansas State University. In a few cases, home economists mailed some clippings to the author. Because the stories were timely, clipping was done in August and September, with October 1 as the cutoff date.

FOOTNOTES

¹Earl R. Babbie, The Practice of Social Research (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 205-229.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Primary Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not using county home economists as relays is more effective than direct mail for the publication of Extension information stories in weekly newspapers.

In this study, 100 Kansas weeklies, ranked by circulation, were alternately assigned to an experimental and a control group. In the experimental group, 200 stories (four stories to each of the 50 newspapers) were sent to the local home economists with a request for them to deliver the stories personally to the designated papers. Two hundred stories (four stories to each of the 50 newspapers) were sent at the same time by direct mail or the usual delivery mode.

In the experimental group, 140 stories were delivered to 40 weekly newspaper editors by county home economists in the five Extension areas in Kansas. The results showed that of these 140 stories delivered to the experimental group of weeklies, 34 stories were used. In the control group, 200 stories were sent by the usual delivery mode of direct mail to 50 other weekly newspapers in the same five areas. Of the 200 stories mailed to the control group of weeklies 23 were used.*

*The difference in the number of stories delivered to newspapers in the two groups was due to the non-delivery of 60 stories by some home economists. Even though the author would have preferred full cooperation from agents, the study, conducted in a natural setting, resulted in

Table II shows the use/non-use results by area. Statistical analysis show these results significant near the .001 level. (Chi square = 9.649, 1 df.)

TABLE II
STORY USE/NON-USE BY AREAS

Area	Experimental Group n = 140		Control Group n = 200	
	Stories Used	Stories Not Used	Stories Used	Stories Not Used
Northwest	1	16	1	35
Southwest	7	9	7	17
South Central	1	34	6	42
Northeast	8	31	2	46
Southeast	17	16	7	37
Total	34	106	23	177

The use difference between relay (experimental group) and direct mail (control group) is based on use by the 90 weeklies that actually received stories. Ten designated weeklies in the experimental group

a realistic picture of what, in fact, would possibly occur. Of the 50 agents involved in the study, 31 delivered all four stories, nine delivered at least one story and 10 delivered no stories. Home economists in the study who did not delivery stories offered various reasons. Some agents chose to submit stories to local newspapers they thought would use the stories instead of the designated papers. The author discovered 13 stories were used by newspapers not included in the study. Some agents used the stories in their local columns or in newsletters. Some agents said the stories arrived during a particularly busy schedule, such as county fair time, and they were unable to deliver the stories. One agent said the designated newspaper had a new editor and she didn't think the editor would be interested in the stories. In another case, the home economist submitted only the first story and when the editor said he wasn't interested in using the stories, she did not deliver the remaining ones.

received no stories. Of the 90 weeklies receiving stories, 30 weeklies used at least one story. Seventeen of the 40 weeklies in the experimental group used at least one story. Thirteen weeklies of the 50 in the control group used at least one story.

Table III shows the use of the four stories by the two groups.

TABLE III
FREQUENCY OF STORY USE

	Experimental Group			Control Group		Total	
	Frequency of Use	Non-use	Not Delivered	Frequency of Use	Non-use	Use	Non-use
Story 1	8	30	12	4	46	12	76
Story 2	8	26	16	3	47	11	73
Story 3	11	23	16	8	42	19	65
Story 4	7	26	16	8	42	15	68
Total	34	106	60	23	177	57	283

Story 1. "Success In Bread Making: It Depends on the Knead."

In the experimental group, the first story, delivered to 38 weeklies by home economists, was used by eight weeklies. In 12 cases, agents did not deliver Story 1 to local newspapers.

In the control group, the story was used by 4 of the 50 weeklies that received the story through the traditional mode of direct mail. Forty-six stories were not used in this group.

Story 2. "Finding Good Day Care For Children As Difficult As Finding Your Job." In the experimental group, the second story, delivered to 34 weeklies by county home economists, was used by eight

weeklies. In 16 cases, the home economists did not deliver Story 2 to local newspapers.

In the control group, the story was used by three of the 50 weeklies that received the story through the traditional mode of direct mail. Forty-seven stories were not used in the control group.

Story 3. "As School Year Begins, Schedule Time For Family Too." In the experimental group, the third story, delivered to 34 weeklies by home economists, was used by 11 newspapers. In 16 cases, the agents did not deliver Story 3 to local newspapers.

In the control group, the story was used by eight of the 50 weeklies that received the story through the traditional mode of direct mail. In 42 cases, this story was not used in this group.

Story 4. "Parents Are Partners in Children's Learning." In the experimental group, the fourth story, delivered to 33 weeklies by county home economists, was used by seven weeklies. In 16 cases, the home economists did not deliver Story 4 to local newspapers.

In the control group, the story was used by eight of the 50 weeklies that received the story through the traditional mode of direct mail. In 42 cases, the story was not used by this group.

The overall use of stories by the experimental and control groups indicates that editors did not prefer one type of story over another. In the case of the first three stories, use by weeklies in the experimental group was greater than by weeklies in the control group. Story 3 in the experimental group was used the most often (11 times). Story 1 and Story 2 were used eight times each and the last story was used seven times.

In the control group, Story 3 and Story 4 also were used eight times. Story 1 was used four times and Story 2 was used three times in this group.

The first story, a feature and one which might be considered typical for women's pages did not receive any greater use than the other three stories, which might be considered stories of general news interest.

In some cases, county home economists delivered only one or two stories instead of the four stories included in the study. When this happened, they generally delivered the first story which resulted in fewer opportunities for weeklies in the experimental group to use the other three stories.

Despite the fact that 16 designated weeklies in the experimental group did not receive the third story, this story was the one most often used (11 times). One explanation may be that this story was the shortest in length--an important consideration for many weeklies that have space problems. In addition, the story arrived as schools opened, which made it particularly timely. Many weeklies were running school editions and editors probably found this story, which related to school activities, a logical story to include in special editions. In one case the story appeared on the front page of The Hoisington Dispatch.

In the control group, in which weeklies received all stories by direct mail, the third and fourth stories were used more often (eight times each). Here again, these stories may have been considered by editors to be timely; or editors may simply have had the available space when they received the stories. The second story was used the least by the control group (three times). Editors may have discarded it because it was the longest story in the study. Table IV summarizes the frequency

TABLE IV

STORY USE AND RATE OF STORY USE BY AREA AND BY GROUP

		Stories Delivered	Stories Used	Group Use Rate	Area Use Rate
Southeast Area	Experimental Group	33	17	51.52%	24/77=31.17%
	Control Group	44	7	15.9%	
Northeast Area	Experimental Group	39	8	20.51%	10/87=11.49%
	Control Group	48	2	4.17%	
Southwest Area	Experimental Group	16	7	43.75%	14/40=35.0%
	Control Group	24	7	29.17%	
South Central Area	Experimental Group	35	1	2.86%	7/83=8.43%
	Control Group	48	6	12.50%	
Northwest Area	Experimental Group	17	1	5.8%	2/53=3.77%
	Control Group	36	1	2.78%	

and rate of story use in the five Extension areas. Frequency of story use varied considerably, ranging from a total of two in the northwest area for a rate of 3.77 percent, to a total of 24 in the southeast area for a rate of 31.17 percent. However, the southwest area, which had fewer newspapers and consequently fewer stories delivered, had the highest overall use rate of 35.0 percent. In the experimental group, overall use rate of stories by newspapers was 24.3 percent. One of every four

stories delivered by home economists were used in this group. In the control group, the overall use rate of stories by newspapers was 8.7 percent. One of every 10 stories received by mail was used by newspapers in this group.

Southeast Area. The number of stories used in the experimental group of the southeast area was highest among the five areas. Seventeen of the 33 stories delivered to nine weeklies by county home economists in the area were used for a use rate of 51.5 percent. This was the only area group in which more stories were used than were not used (17/16). Two weeklies used all four stories and two others used three. Also in this area, there was a greater degree of difference in story use between the two groups than in the other four areas. Of the 11 weeklies receiving stories by direct mail, three printed stories for a total of seven with a group rate of 15.9 percent.

Northeast Area. The northeast area had 24 newspapers in the two groups, which, along with the south central area, was the greatest number of newspapers among the five areas. Of the 12 weeklies designated in the experimental group, 11 received 42 stories from home economists. Eight stories were used for a group use rate of 20.51 percent. In the control group, two of 48 stories were used for a group use rate of 4.17 percent.

Southwest Area. In the southwest area, county home economists were asked to deliver the four stories to five designated newspapers. Agents delivered 16 stories to five newspapers. Seven stories were used for a group use rate of 43.75 percent. Six newspapers in the control group received 24 stories. This group equaled the experimental group story use of seven. The control group use rate of 29.17 percent was the highest among the five areas.

South Central Area. In the experimental group in the south central area, county home economists delivered 35 stories to 10 weeklies. One story was used for a group use rate of 2.86 percent. In the control group, six of 48 stories were used for a group use rate of 12.50 percent.

Northwest Area. The northwest area showed the least use of news stories among the five areas. One story was used by one of the five weeklies to which home economists delivered the four stories. The group use rate was 5.87 percent. One story also was used in the control group for a group use rate of 2.78 percent. Nine weeklies received 36 stories by direct mail.

Use rate by area for both groups was highest in the southwest area at 35.0 percent. Fourteen stories in the experimental and control groups were used and 40 were not used. The southeast area with a use rate of 31.17 percent had 24 stories used and 77 not used in the two groups. The northeast area, with a use rate of 11.49 percent, had 10 stories used and 87 not used. The south central area, with a use rate of 8.43 percent, had 7 stories used and 83 not used. The northwest area, with a use rate of 3.77 percent, had two stories used and 53 not used.

Difference in frequency of story delivery and of story use among the five experimental groups suggests that county home economists relate to local weekly newspapers in individual ways. This factor of individual and professional differences is evident in the home economics staffs in the five areas. For example, county home economists in the southeast area have served in this capacity for many years and may have had the time to develop a favorable working relationship with local editors. Of the 11 county home economists in the study all but one have regular columns, but those columns may be in other newspapers than those

designated for this study. The Wilson County home economist, who had no regular column in any newspaper, reported that her designated newspaper, The Fredonia Citizen, asked her to start a column after the newspaper used three of the four stories in the series. For the above mentioned reasons, home economists in this area may be more aware of the importance of using their local media to reach people with timely information. They may have spent time getting to know local editors and what those editors prefer in the way of news as well as the deadlines of local newspapers. In addition, the area home economist may have emphasized using local media in meetings she has given for county home economists. Finally, the secretarial assistance rendered to these home economists may play a role in preparing copy and delivering it on time to local newspapers.

Surveying the results in another context, the southeast area has several well-established community newspapers with no large dominant regional press, such as The Salina Journal located in the south central area. Even though large state-wide newspapers such as The Kansas City Star/Times, The Wichita Eagle Beacon and The Topeka Daily Capital are circulated in this area, the strong weekly newspapers such as The Louisburg Herald, The Miami County Republican, The Garnett Review and The Osawatomic Graphic are able to attract sufficient advertising to produce multi-section newspapers. Six of the 11 weeklies in the southeast area experimental group have circulations of 2,000 or more. Larger community newspapers mean more advertising and more space available for home economists' columns and for other Extension stories.

In contrast, weeklies in the south central area compete with the largest state daily, The Wichita Eagle Beacon, and two other large

dailies that serve as regional newspapers; The Salina Journal and The Hutchinson News. Circulation of these three is over 250,000. This factor may tend to diminish the size and scope of community newspapers which, in turn, may limit the effectiveness of county home economists to serve as relays.

Two county home economists in this area said they delivered the stories to papers they felt would use the information instead of to the weeklies designated for this study. These stories were then used by the newspapers to which the agents delivered the stories. Unfortunately, this story use could not be included in the results of this study.*

In the northeast area, county home economists served effectively as relays. More stories were delivered to designated newspapers (39) than in the other four areas. Eight stories were used.

This area contains The Topeka Daily Capital and several other large dailies. In addition, weeklies in two counties (Washington and Marshall) in which home economists served as relays, practice a general policy of printing only local news. Home economists in these counties have weekly columns and the information they provide through columns, which usually comes to them from the Extension Information Department, is considered local because of their position in the community. However, in one case, The Washington County News included parts of the first story in a staff-written feature story.

County home economists in the southwest area who delivered 16 stories to the five newspapers designated in the study also served as

*The Independence Daily Reporter used Stories 2 and 4. The Cherryvale Citizen, a weekly, used Story 2 and The St. Johns News used Stories 1 and 2. In addition, eight other stories were used by five other newspapers in the other four areas, which were not included in the study.

effective relays. An equal number of stories (7) was used by both groups in this area. This result indicates that editors in this area are receptive to material from Extension information, regardless of the delivery mode.

In the northwest area, it is difficult to explain the almost total lack of story use in either group. Even though no large regional press exists in this area, the editors there did not have the need, space or inclination to use the stories in the study.

County home economists in this area were the least responsive to participation in the study. Agents in five of the 10 counties in the area delivered stories to designated weeklies; five agents did not deliver stories. Several agents in this area are relatively new, and they may be experiencing the pressures that accompany any new job, particularly one as demanding as that of a county home economist, who frequently is expected to balance a hectic schedule that often includes work in 4H as well as in home economics.

Secondary Findings

Attribution. All stories carried the Kansas State University Extension editor's byline and title and the Manhattan dateline. This study also observed the attribution carried with stories used by newspapers in both groups.

Table V shows the frequency of attribution in published stories in the following categories: byline, title, dateline, byline and title, byline alone, byline and dateline, dateline alone, title alone and no attribution. Since the factor of the home economist as a relay is not considered important with regard to editorial treatment, the difference between the two groups was not analyzed.

TABLE V

FREQUENCY OF ATTRIBUTION IN PUBLISHED STORIES

	Frequency of Use	Byline, Title, Date- line	Byline Title	Byline	Byline Date- line	Date- line	Title	No Attri- bution	Total
Story 1	12	2	4	1	0	3	0	2	12
Story 2	11	1	5	0	0	1	0	4	11
Story 3	19	4	4	1	1	2	1	6	19
Story 4	15	2	4	0	0	3	0	6	15
Total	57	9	17	2	1	9	1	18	57

Stories published with both the editor's byline and title were used nearly as often as were stories with no attribution (17/18). Thirty-nine of 57 stories that included some form of identification with Kansas State University Extension service were used by newspapers in both groups. Nine newspapers used the dateline alone and nine others used the editor's name and title as well as the dateline.

The results indicate that newspaper editors seem to prefer stories that tell readers the source of a story and the writer of the story. However, results also indicate that editors have varied and individual preferences in the attribution they chose to use.

Art. The use of accompanying art was another secondary research interest in this field experiment. Line drawing art (see Appendix C) accompanied Story 2 and Story 4.

Art to accompany Story 2 pictured a boy and girl playing together with a toy. It was meant to picture one activity that youngsters do at day care centers and to highlight the story which focused on preschool

options. Art with the fourth story pictured children leaning against the first three letters in the alphabet. The story focused on the importance of students' individual differences in place of letter grades.

Art was used eight out of a possible 27 times the two stories were published. Each story was used four times. Art generally was used by newspapers of large circulation, which indicates that space may pose a problem for newspapers with small circulation. When art was used with the story, editors placed the story in a prominent location in the paper (for example, at the top of the page) and provided a headline that was appropriate to the story's length. This factor indicates that art can play an important role in securing preferential treatment of stories.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the author has developed three major recommendations.

1. Extension information should consider using the county home economists as relays in the delivery of news stories and features to local weekly newspapers.

Because county home economists often are considered as local sources of information, many editors have come to rely on them to provide consumer-related information through their columns. Using agents as relays for additional stories written by Extension information may result in higher publication of stories than if they were mailed to editors.

2. Extension information should consider more communications training for both new and established agents.

Updating communications training should be considered for agents who may benefit from a refresher course in various communications areas. Courses should include not only beginning communications training, but also other courses dealing with intermediate and advanced subject matter.

New agents, who customarily attend a three-day communications training workshop, should have these sessions as early as possible after they begin work to acquaint them with ways of working with editors and to assist them as they begin writing columns.

Communications training for both new and established agents also would make home economists more aware of the importance of their roles as communicators.

A further recommendation relating to communications training is that students in the College of Home Economics, who plan an Extension career, consider several courses in journalism/mass communications. Prospective county home economists should view themselves not only as teachers, but also as communicators who will be called upon to publicize Extension programs, write material for columns and newsletters and prepare radio and television talks.

3. Further study in this area would help to determine many questions which this study was unable to cover.

Replication of this study is needed to confirm the significant findings of this study. For example, a longer time period could be monitored or the reaction of daily newspapers to the use of the home economist as a relay could be studied. Editors of daily newspapers may prefer Extension stories mailed instead of delivered by county agents, because of the timeliness of stories. Using a relay mode may create delay between the story source and the gatekeeper.

Another relevant study area could focus on the characteristics of the home economist and how she relates to the local media. More study is needed to determine if those agents with columns serve as more effective relays than those without columns. In addition, this study could look

at the communications training that agents receive to determine if this training helped to make them more media aware.

A study might also survey the opinions of home economists about serving as relays for Extension information stories, which this study did not determine. Home economists may view delivery of stories, which could be sent direct to newspapers, as an additional burden to an already full daily schedule. The study might seek to determine if weekly, semi-monthly or monthly stories should be sent to home economists for delivery.

In conclusion, CES should view the media as a relatively low cost mechanism to reach more people beyond "traditional clientele" with information covering a broad range of topics. As time and money increasingly become factors for conducting traditional Extension programs, the print media, particularly, becomes an attractive and logical mode to convey information.

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APPENDIX A: Newspapers in the Study

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NEWSPAPERS IN THE STUDY

Northwest Area

Experimental Group

St. Francis Herald - Cheyenne County
Oberlin Herald - Decatur County
Smith Center Pioneer - Smith County
Hoxie Sentinel - Sheridan County
Stockton Rooks County Record - Rooks County
Osborne County Farmer - Osborne County
WaKeeney Western Kansas World - Trego County
Russell Record - Russell County
LaCrosse Rush County News - Rush County
Ellinwood Leader - Barton County

Control Group

Atwood Citizen - Rawlins County
Phillipsburg Review - Phillips County
Goodland Sherman County Herald - Sherman County
Hill City Times - Graham County
Plainville Times - Rooks County
Oakley Graphic - Logan County
Hays Ellis County Star - Ellis County
Ness City-County News - Ness County
Hoisington Dispatch - Barton County

Southwest Area

Experimental Group

Leoti Standard - Wichita County
Dighton Herald - Lane County
Lakin Independent - Kearney County
Elkhart Tri-State News - Morton County
Greensburg Kiowa County Signal - Kiowa County

Control Group

Tribune Greeley County Republican - Greeley County
Scott City News - Scott County
Syracuse Journal - Hamilton County
Ulysses News - Grant County
Hugoton Hermes - Stevens County
Kinsley Mercury - Edwards County

South Central Area

Experimental Group

Stafford Courier - Stafford County
 Kiowa News - Barber County
 Ellsworth Reporter - Ellsworth County
 Kingman Journal and Leader - Kingman County
 Anthony Republican Bulletin - Harper County
 Lindsborg News - McPherson County
 Cheney Sentinel - Sedgwick County
 Valley Center Ark Valley News - Sedgwick County
 Belle Plaine - Sumner County
 Conway Springs Star - Sumner County
 Herington Times - Dickinson County
 Marion Record - Marion County

Control Group

St. Johns News - Stafford County
 Medicine Lodge Barber County Index - Barber County
 Lincoln Sentinel-Republican - Lincoln County
 Sterling Bulletin - Rice County
 Harper Advocate - Harper County
 Minneapolis Messenger - Ottawa County
 Harvey Independent - Harvey County
 Goddard News - Sedgwick County
 Caldwell News - Sumner County
 Mulvane News - Sumner County
 Hillsboro Star - Marion County
 ElDorado News - Butler County

Northeast Area

Experimental Group

Mankato Record - Jewell County
 Beloit Solomon Valley Post - Mitchell County
 Concordian Kansan - Cloud County
 Marysville Advocate - Marshall County
 Seneca Courier - Nemaha County
 Wamego Times - Pottawatomie County
 Horton Headlight - Brown County
 Wathena Times - Doniphan County
 Valley Falls Vindicator - Jefferson County
 Baldwin Telenews - Douglas County
 Lansing Leader - Leavenworth County
 Kansas City Wyandotte West - Wyandotte County

Northeast Area (cont.)

Control Group

Cawker City Ledger - Mitchell County
 Belleville Telescope - Republic County
 Washington County News - Washington County
 Sabetha Herald - Nemaha County
 Westmoreland Record - Pottawatomie County
 St. Marys Star - Pottawatomie County
 Troy Kansas Chief - Doniphan County
 Holton Record - Jackson County
 Oskaloosa Independent - Jefferson County
 Tonganoxie Mirror - Leavenworth County
 Bonner Springs Chieftan - Wyandotte County
 Gardner News - Johnson County

Southeast Area

Experimental Group

Cottonwood Falls Leader - Chase County
 Sedan Times - Chautauqua County
 Louisburg Herald - Miami County
 Lyndon News - Osage County
 Fredonia Wilson County Citizen - Wilson County
 Caney Chronical - Montgomery County
 Garnett Anderson Countian and Review - Anderson County
 Erie Record - Neosho County
 Parsons News - Labette County
 Osawatomie Graphic - Miami County
 Baxter Springs Citizen - Cherokee County

Control Group

Eureka Herald - Greenwood County
 Burlingame Enterprise - Osage County
 Osage City Free Press - Osage County
 Yates Center News - Woodson County
 Neodesha Register and Sun - Wilson County
 Ottawa Times - Franklin County
 Pleasanton-Linn County News - Linn County
 Humboldt Union - Allen County
 Oswego Independent-Observer - Labette County
 Paola Miami County Republican & Western Spirit - Miami County
 Girard Press - Crawford County

KSU EXTENSION ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Northwest Area

Northeast Area

Cheyenne	E	Rawlins	C	Decatur	E	Norton		Phillips	C	Smith	E	Jewell	E	Republic	C	Washington	C	Marshall	E	Nemaha	CE	Brown	E	DO	CE	Atchison		Jefferson	EC	LV	CE	WEC		Douglas	E	Franklin	C	Miami	EEC	Linn	C	Bourbon		Crawford	C	Cherokee	E
Sherman	C	Thomas	★	Sheridan	E	Graham	C	Rooks	EC	Osborne	E	Mitchell	CE	Cloud	E	Clay		Riley	CCE	Pottawatomie	C	Shawnee		Shawnee		Wabauunsee		Osage	ECC	Colley	E	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E			
Wallace		Logan	C	Gove		Trego	E	Ellis	C	Russell	E	Lincoln	C	Ottawa	C	Dickinson	E	Geary		Morris		Lyon		Osage		Franklin	C	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E							
Greeley	C	Wichita	E	Scott	C	Lane	E	Ness	C	Rush	E	Ellsworth	E	Saline		Marion	CE	Chase	E	Morris		Lyon		Osage		Franklin	C	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E							
Hamilton	C	Kearny	E	Finney	★	Gray		Hodgeman		Pawnee		Reno	★	Harvey	C	Butler	C	Greenwood	C	Elk		Chautauqua	E	Osage		Franklin	C	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E							
Stanton		Grant	C	Haskell		Ford		Edwards	C	Kiowa	E	Kingman	E	Sedgwick	EEC	Sumner	CCEE	Cowley		Elk		Chautauqua	E	Osage		Franklin	C	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E							
Morton	E	Stevens	C	Seward		Clark		Comanche		Barber	EC	Harper	EC	Sumner	CCEE	Cowley		Elk		Chautauqua	E	Osage		Franklin	C	Anderson	E	Allen	C	Neosho	★	E	Labelle	EC	Montgomery	E	Chautauqua	E									

Southwest Area

South Central Area

Southeast Area

DIVISION OF KANSAS FOR STUDY PURPOSES

★ = Area Offices

C = Control Group
E = Experimental Group

APPENDIX B: Sample Letters to Home Economists



48
Cooperative Extension Service

Extension Information
Umberger Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
913-532-5804

File For Future Reference

July 30, 1980

Dear Home Economists,

I'm on the downhill side of completing my master's degree and now, I'm coming to you for HELP.

In the 2 1/2 years I have worked as an extension editor, I have realized that county home economists, through their weekly newspaper columns, have developed a commendable working relationship with local editors.

Could that established rapport between editors and home economists be used as a channel to place other stories that I write and customarily send directly to editors?

That's my question.

Here's how you can help me answer it.

During the month of August, you'll receive a story each week, mailed on Aug. 4, 11, 18 and 25. Two stories will include clip art. The stories will carry my byline and will be written from material supplied by extension specialists and other reliable sources. They are NOT to be confused with "Patchwork Pieces," which you will receive as usual on Aug. 1 and 15.

What I'm asking you to do

- Deliver each story, with its art if applicable, to the newspaper. If the newspaper is close enough for you to deliver it in person, I would like for you to do so. If the newspaper is in another town and it would create an inconvenience for you to hand carry it, please mail it to the editor. Simply tell the editor that you received the story from an extension editor at Kansas State University and that he might include it in his next issue. I'm not asking you to sell him on the idea of using the story. Each story is timely enough so that editors should want to use them soon.

- Each week the story will come with a cover letter and heading: "Attention. A Story A Week." This flag will identify it quickly from your other mail.

- If you see the stories used in either Aug. or Sept., please clip and send them to me. A clipping service will be watching papers for me, but they have been known to overlook some items. Your additional clips would be a reliable back-up service for me.

- Finally, please note how you delivered each story (personally or by mail) and any comments you received from editors. You might also log your own impressions about this system. This information will be helpful if I call you following the completion of the project.

I realize your busy schedule is not conducive to additional legwork, but I appreciate your help and thank you in advance for your assistance. I will be happy to share with you the entire scheme of the project and its results when I have the data compiled.

Sincerely,

Dolores T. McGlashon
Assistant Extension Editor
Quality of Living



49
Cooperative Extension Service

Extension Information
Umberger Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
913-532-5804

August 6, 1980

TO: Area Home Economists

FROM: De McGlashon *De*

This letter will bring you up-to-date on a project I am working on with the assistance of county home economists. The data supplied from this project will aid me as I complete my master's degree.

In the 2 1/2 years I have worked as an extension editor, I have realized that county home economists, through their weekly newspaper columns, have developed a commendable working relationship with local editors.

Could that established rapport between editors and home economists be used as a channel to place other stories that I write and customarily send directly to editors?

During August, the 100 largest circulation, weekly state newspapers will receive a story each week, which I have written with extension specialists. In 50 cases, the stories will be sent to home economists asking them to deliver the stories to local editors. In the remaining 50 cases, the stories will be sent directly to editors.

A clipping service will follow up on the placement of stories in newspapers during Aug. and Sept. However, I have asked home economists to clip those they see as a back-up service. (Any stories you see and send to me, will be a welcome addition also.)

Home economists also have been asked to note if they delivered each story personally or sent it by mail, any comments they received from editors, and their own comments.

At the completion of the project I will be happy to share with you the entire scheme of the project; its results and data.

"A Story A Week"⁵⁰

for Extension Home Economists

File For Future Reference

Please deliver the enclosed story, and art if applicable, to:

If the newspaper is close enough for you to deliver it in person, I would like for you to do so. If the newspaper is in another town and it would create an inconvenience for you to hand carry it, please mail it to the editor. Simply tell the editor that you received the story from an extension editor at Kansas State University and that he might include it in his next issue. I'm not asking you to sell him on the idea of using the story. Each story is timely enough so that editors should want to use them soon.

- If you see the stories used in either Aug. or Sept., please clip and send them to me. A clipping service will be watching papers for me, but they have been known to overlook some items. Your additional clips would be a reliable back-up service for me.

- Finally, please note how you delivered each story (personally or by mail) and any comments you received from editors. You might also log your own impressions about this system. This information will be helpful if I call you following the completion of the project.

-----FOR YOUR USE-----

Story number 1 2 3 4 (Circle one)

It was hand delivered by me or mailed (Circle one)

Editor's comments:

My comments:

APPENDIX C: Stories in the Study

STORY 1

Success in Bread Making--
It Depends on the Knead

by De McGlashon
Assistant Extension Editor
Quality of Living

MANHATTAN--When life hands you days of hot weather--make bread. Heat gets the rest of us down, but it puts bread dough to rise in little time.

That advice comes from an experienced bread maker who recently retired as the extension specialist in the limited resources program at Kansas State University. Her extension career began 27 years ago as a county home economist.

Bread making has been a staff of life for Ruth Wells since she was 7 and began baking with her mother. Later, bread figured largely when she joined the Marine Corps during World War II, attended bakers' school and was in charge of pulling from ovens the aromatic trays of pan rolls that made service life a little more like home life for recruits.

And it was a story about bread that remained as a vivid recollection from her days when she was an extension home economist working in Jefferson County.

"I was doing programs about making bread in various communities," she said. "On one particular morning around 4 o'clock, I made four different bread sponges and set off for Perry with the sponges rising in covered bowls in the back seat of the car."

A sponge, Wells explained, is about the consistency of heavy pancake dough and contains all the ingredients for bread with the exception of half the flour and all the fat. These ingredients are added after the sponge rises the first time.

"When I got to Perry, I unloaded the sponges, set up my equipment and waited. I thought it was unusual that no one was waiting for me, because usually a few women came early," Miss Wells said.

Finally, she telephoned her secretary and asked, "Where am I supposed to be today?"

"You're in Valley Falls," her secretary responded.

"Valley Falls was 30 miles away," Miss Wells laughed as she recounted the story. "I always had a fear of getting dates and places mixed up." Her experience is one many county home economists can relate to easily, because they frequently travel from one community to another giving educational programs, which fall occasionally on consecutive days. Confusion is not only possible, but also probable.

Back into the car went the four bread sponges, Miss Wells said as she recalled the story, only now the sponges were slowly bubbling to the edges of bowl rims.

"The women in Valley Falls waited until I got there--and so did the dough. I was afraid the time involved would over-proof the dough, which would have caused the bread to fall in the oven and taste like glue."

Over-proofing, Miss Wells explained, is letting dough rise too long before baking. Many novice bakers, who feel higher dough means lighter bread, encounter this problem especially with whole wheat flour. Because whole wheat flour uses the entire wheat kernel, it can diminish dough's elasticity, causing it to fall instead of to stretch during the rising process.

"You can't treat whole wheat dough as you do white," Miss Wells said. "Wheat dough looks tough, but you should knead it gently to develop gluten and to preserve elasticity. You can pound and pound on white dough and for that reason I suppose it may be more theapeutic to make white bread than whole wheat bread."

A white flour milled especially for bread making is now sold in supermarkets. It contains more gluten, the protein of wheat, Miss Wells said. Therefore, the dough will produce a finer-textured bread. This flour also can be combined with whole wheat flour for a bread that is less course than if whole wheat were used alone.

Whole wheat flour, often called graham, should be used shortly after it is purchased or stored in air-tight containers in either the refrigerator or freezer. Because the wheat germ contains fat, the flour is susceptible to rancidity.

"Temperature is the most important factor in making bread," Miss Wells added. At each rising, the dough's temperature should be slightly warmer to assure a uniform loaf.

Miss Wells' recipe for whole wheat bread starts with a sponge, which adds time to the finished product. "Without it, your bread won't be like your grandmother's," she commented. "A sponge allows yeast time to develop and it gives bran time to absorb moisture. Yeast is a plant that grows and reacts with the starch to produce alcohol. And that's what we smell when bread is baking."

In answer to the question about the comparative nutritional value of whole wheat and white bread, she replied, "Whole wheat bread has more trace elements and fiber from bran, which aren't in white bread. But if I had a large family and a limited budget, I'd chose white bread if I didn't bake my own. The food value for the money spent is better with white."

Miss Wells, who earned a bachelor's degree from the former Central Missouri State Teachers College, Warrensburg, Mo., and a master's from the College of Home Economics at K-State, bakes whole wheat bread in much the same way she did when she traveled from county to county teaching bread making. Her home in Manhattan overlooks Tuttle Creek and she shares it with Meg, a buff poodle about the size of a bread pan, who also prefers whole wheat bread.

Ruth Wells' Whole Wheat Bread
(makes four loaves)

5 cups lukewarm water
4 tablespoons sorghum or molasses
1 package yeast
1 tablespoon salt
6 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup wheat germ

Mix ingredients and let stand at a temperature of 72 degrees until bubbles rise and break. (From 2 to 4 hours)

Then add:

1 to 2 cups dry milk solids
2 to 8 tablespoons oil or soft fat
5 cups whole wheat flour

Mix and let stand at an 80 degree temperature for about an hour. Knead gently until smooth. Add flour as necessary. Cover with clear wrap and a towel and allow to double in size. Temperature remains at 80 degrees. Divide dough into four portions. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes. Shape into loaves. Place in oiled pans. Let dough double in size at 90 degree temperature. Use your finger to test. Dough has risen sufficiently if imprint of your finger remains. Bake at 400 degrees for about 40 minutes.

file: people feature

When Parents Work--

Finding Good Day Care for Children
As Big A Task As Finding Your Job

by De McGlashon
Assistant Extension Editor,
Quality of Living

MANHATTAN --- A family moves to a new community where both parents have jobs. In another case, parents decide one paycheck won't stretch around family needs anymore and it's time for the wife to look for work. Or a single parent goes back to school or enters the labor force.

These parents may be surprised to discover they share a common problem that may disrupt their plans even before they get them rolling--finding good day care for their youngsters. Because many families move to new communities during the summer or mothers consider first-time jobs "after the kids get in school," many day care administrators say late summer is a peak season.

THERE'S AN ACUTE SHORTAGE

But finding good day care can be an uncertain situation where success often hinges on luck.

"There just aren't enough licensed day care centers to meet present demands," says Michael Martin, extension human development specialist at Kansas State University. Conveniently located care for children who need supervision before or after school is particularly lacking, he notes. Nationally, less than 10 percent of all children who are in some form of care are in licensed day care centers.

Jay G. Wiedenkiller, coordinator of children's services for the Department of Health and Environment, says the state has 880 licensed centers and 2,900 licensed day care homes. Although the state has a good regulatory system with more homes per capita than many other states, he agrees that parents in many communities often wait months before a center has an opening.

The vast majority of children needing day care find it in other family homes that may be regulated by the state, but most such homes are neither licensed nor registered.

NEW LAW PROVIDES FOR REGISTRATION

Registering family day care (FDC) homes is a new wrinkle in the state's challenge to reach more providers with such support services as educational materials, newsletters and training, Wiedenkiller says. On July 1 a new law gave home providers who care for six children or less under age 16, including their own, the option of registering with the state instead of being licensed.

"Through registration we're hoping to offer more options to home care providers and at the same time reach both parents and providers with informational material," he comments. "We're also hoping that those centers and homes that are presently licensed will remain so."

A registered FDC home as distinguished from a licensed center or home will not have periodic unannounced inspections by local health officials unless complaints are lodged against the operation. In addition, the provider, who must complete a home safety evaluation form, also must certify that she and members of her family are free from contagious and infectious diseases and have not been convicted of a crime. Also, immunizations for children in her family must be current.

Current immunizations for children to be cared for are also necessary, Wiedenkiller says. These health forms, as well as other information about child care services, are available from local health departments.

Wiedenkeller cautioned parents also to leave an authorization form with care providers in case emergency medical treatment is needed. Check with local hospitals or health departments about such special criteria as notarization and updating of authorization forms.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Because day care facilities and services vary greatly, Martin says parents sometimes have problems making selections. The quality of care can run the gamut from excellent to negligent. He advises parents to start by making certain centers are licensed and FDC homes are either licensed or registered.

Center-based child care usually has a trained staff equipped to carry on many educational programs. The number of children cared for at a center usually determines the number of trained staff members and the available resources. In some cases, parents may be actively involved in a center's planning.

On the other hand, an FDC provider may be the best choice for youngsters who need part time care or children whose parents work irregular hours.

BEFORE CHOOSING

Once a family decides on the day care service that suits its needs, Martin suggests paying a visit to the home or center. Note the atmosphere and how the staff or FDC provider works and plays with the children. Keep in mind that children are learning as they play. Therefore, activities both inside and outside the facility should be safe and creative.

Ask the adults what procedures are followed for basic first aid or emergencies, such as fires or tornadoes. Check with the FDC provider about insurance coverage. Ask where household cleaners, poisons and firearms are kept. Discuss such child rearing policies as discipline, meals, naps and television watching. Fees, vacations and sick days are other points to cover in a discussion.

"Parents, as consumers purchasing a service, have a right to expect the type of care best suited for their children," Wiedenkeller says. "The best way to achieve this is for parents and care providers to agree on expectations before child care services begin."

In many cases, children in an FDC home become part of a family-like atmosphere that provides them with experiences resembling what happens in their own families. On the other hand, center-based child care may offer more variety and bigger and better selection of equipment.

But quality care, whether it is center-based or in another family situation, can offer children an opportunity to learn about others, the world around them and how adults other than their parents can show them love and attention.

Human Development



Art To Accompany Story 2

STORY 3

As School Year Begins,
Schedule Time For Family Too

by De McGlashon
Assistant Extension Editor
Quality of Living

MANHATTAN--It's back to the books, the kids say. But that's not all. That single-minded expression covers a multi-faceted season. Suddenly it's time for late night football practices, music lessons, science club meetings and impromptu meals.

Add to this panorama, the outside activities offered in communities and you have family calendars filling up like the kids' toy chests--a little bit of everything without anyone understanding how it all got there.

Many families have been saying they'd like to slow down--take the hectic out of a hectic schedule. If that's your feeling, a Kansas State University extension specialist in household equipment and management says now, before commitments sprout like mushrooms, may be the best time to look at what activities have occupied family members in the past and which ones are important in the future. "Just because certain activities have always held center stage doesn't mean things have to continue that way," Jean Carlson says. "Sometimes the family often takes second or third billing behind work, school and community activities."

But how to put on the brakes? The solution is not easy, Carlson admits, but if a family seriously wants to limit what it does outside the home to allow

more time at home, you can work together toward this goal.

Turn the kitchen table into a bargaining table, she suggests. Have each family member list outside activities they were a part of last school year. Then select those activities that will continue to be important in the future.

Be prepared to give and take in order to achieve a solution that will ultimately benefit the whole family. If a child carried the lead in last year's school play, can he allot that time this year to homebound pursuits instead? If Mom plans to take a class on Wednesday nights, can she temporarily drop her bowling league?

It won't be easy for some to give up certain activities, but maybe curtailing them is all that's necessary. Instead of taking over as president of a club, how about heading a committee instead?

"Sometimes when families list all their activities, they're surprised at how much they're doing. Some of us are good at addition, but subtraction is more difficult," Carlson comments. Active children and adults are particularly inclined to join, do, promise and volunteer without thinking of family, homework, household chores or the time and money involved.

But activity levels vary. Some family members may welcome fewer outside pursuits and more opportunity to follow personal interests at home. "Just because a boy is extremely tall and the last of several brothers who enjoyed basketball, doesn't mean he should play too. Maybe coming home after school to work on his car is his thing," Carlson points out.

In some communities, schools, with encouragement from parents, have cooperated by linking activities in a single night so that school doors can be closed on another night. For example, art class and science club exhibits can be held the same night the band and chorus perform. However, Carlson says that when it comes to attending school functions, there may be little relief for parents who

have children at various grade levels in more than one school.

Besides saving a night for the family, there are other bonuses which may result from limiting outside activities. Children will have more time to spend on homework or simply to read a book for pleasure. Keeping up with household chores may be easier too. Instead of Mom doing everything, the family can join in preparing supper and in cleaning up afterwards so that the evening is free for family fun or even such projects as painting the family room.

Finally, Carlson says a night at home will mean the car is parked at home also. The savings on gasoline, especially in rural areas where distance is greater, will probably be enough to take a family out to dinner occasionally.

Household Management

STORY 4

Parents Are Partners In Children's Learning

by De McGlashon
Assistant Extension Editor
Quality of Living

MANHATTAN--Nobody has explained what happened to E, but those letters A, B, C, D and F take on a meaning of their own when school begins.

Parents call them grades. Teachers call them an evaluation. But kids have other names for them depending on where they stand as students in the alphabetical scheme of things.

Charles Smith, extension human development specialist at Kansas State University, has some ideas on the subject of grades and helping students in school that should take some of the apprehension from A's and the fear from F's.

"Grades just don't tell the whole story about the whole child," he remarks. "Grades are only one form of evaluation which a teacher makes about a child at a particular time. Another teacher at another time might make a different evaluation."

More importantly, grades never really tell us how children develop personally or how much they learn outside of classrooms. Learning to listen, to cooperate with others or to make logical decisions are all traits that may contribute to good grades, but beyond that, they represent pertinent human qualities difficult to evaluate.

Even so, L. C. Crouch, assistant commissioner of educational services for the Kansas Department of Education, says most teachers and local school districts

are looking for parents to join them as partners in the educational process of their children. Dividends for students are returned not only in the form of better grades, but also in more all-round participation in school activities.

"Education is a team effort between home, school and outside activities that join in contributing to the overall education of children," he comments.

Smith agrees that grades are a fact of life that take on special meaning for those students aiming for college scholarships or entrance in many Eastern universities. But ideally, grades should be used as ways to encourage children to learn more about particular subjects or to understand areas that need additional work.

Grades, he adds, are at best an external motivation to real learning. Promises of candy, a new bike or such favors as "a dollar for every A" are outwardly visible forms used to tempt a child toward prescribed goals.

Instead, those goals should be ones children set for themselves, with some direction from parents. Too often the goals are ones set by parents who see their children, not as individuals, but as extensions of themselves, Smith believes. Such comments as, "I was a whiz at math. I don't understand why you can't get a better grade in geometry," does little to make children feel their parents appreciate them for their own qualities, even though they may not be quiz kids.

Dangling the comparison "carrot" is another game parents sometimes play that is generally more destructive than constructive. "I understand your friend, Sharon, is at the top of the class in chemistry. Don't you think you should try for that?"

Smith suggests a better approach might be for parents to discuss what their children would like to accomplish in various subjects and what grades they

would like to shoot for. "Maybe some children would be happy with a B or a C so that they could spend more time in other activities that interest them."

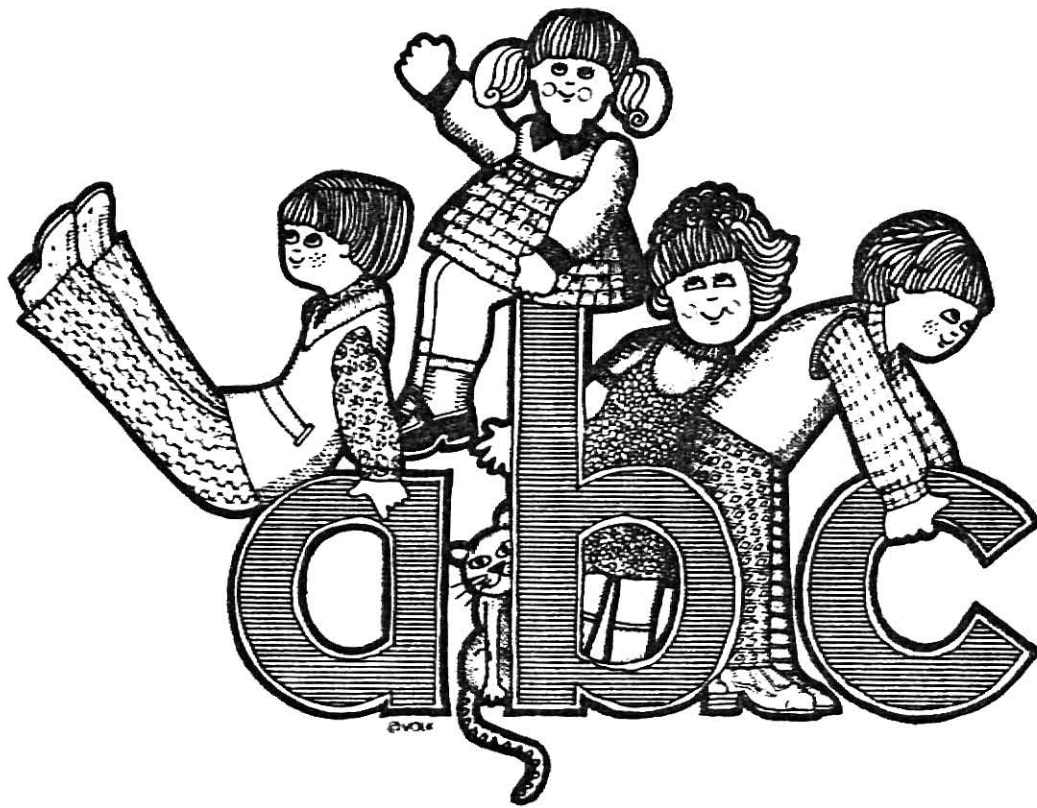
Often, it's those other activities--pouring over a stamp collection or diligently construction a model airplane--that create excitement and keep learning fun.

Smith says parents should work with teachers to help transfer that excitement to the classroom and to homework. Crouch agrees that parents who are enthusiastic about what happens at schools usually convey those feelings to their children. Parents who "hook-up" with schools and attend functions, join school organizations and come to parent-teacher conferences usually have children who see school as a challenge.

Couch called parent-teacher conferences a valuable communication tool that keeps parents abreast of what's happening in classrooms and ways parents can augment subject matter at home.

"Some districts send home tip sheets that tell what students are currently working on," he adds. Tip sheets may offer "recipes" for multiplication tables or word game ideas, for example, which parents can use during homework sessions.

"We're also seeing more fathers take an interest in their children's school activities," Couch concluded. "There was a time when primarily mothers came to conferences, but these days, many parents come together and in some cases fathers come alone while the mother is at work."



Art To Accompany Story 4

THE HOME ECONOMICS AGENT AS A DELIVERY RELAY FOR
INCREASING PUBLICATION OF EXTENSION NEWS:
A CONTROLLED FIELD EXPERIMENT

by

DOLORES MCGLASHON

B.S., Baker University, 1973

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Journalism and Mass Communications

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

One of the goals of Extension Information Departments at land grant universities is to disseminate news and feature stories through the established newspaper press. Publication of Extension news releases by a newspaper is the decision of the gatekeeper, usually an editor.

The purpose of this study, a controlled field experiment, was to determine whether using county extension home economists as delivery relays is better than direct mail for effecting the publication of Extension information stories by weekly newspapers.

In this experiment, 100 Kansas weekly newspapers, ranked by circulation were alternately assigned in five Kansas Extension areas to an experimental group and to a control group. Stories were sent to the control group newspapers by direct mail; the usual delivery mode. In the experimental group, the same stories were sent to county home economists who acted as relays in the delivery of the stories to the designated newspapers.

One feature story and three news stories, written by the Extension information editor, were sent via the two modes--one story per week, during the month of August, 1980. Stories met the criteria of timeliness, current news value and content variety; they were typical of stories that have been written in the past by the Extension editor. All newspapers in the study were monitored for story use during August and September.

Results showed significantly greater frequency of publication in the experimental group of newspapers (Chi square 9.649, 1 df), with a result close to the .001 level. The use rate in the experimental group was 24.3 percent, compared to a 11.5 percent use rate in the direct mail control group.

Secondary findings of the study showed that line art that accompanied two stories had low usage by newspapers in both groups. When used, art seemed to help in a priority placement of the story. Editors in both groups generally retained some attribution in the published stories--the Extension editor's name, the Extension editor's title, the Manhattan dateline or some combination of these.