

A STUDY OF FIVE MIDWESTERN  
REGIONAL GENERAL INTEREST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPERS

by

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B. S., Oklahoma State University, 1967

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A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

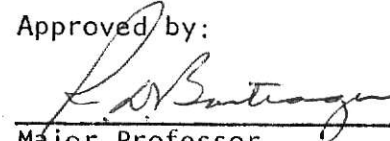
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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Although several regional general interest agricultural newspapers exist in Kansas and surrounding states, little information is available about them.

Journalism researchers have not explored these newspapers to any degree even though many of the papers are successful in terms of circulation and financial condition. Three of the five papers included in this study have a weekly paid circulation in excess of 13,000. The largest paper, The High Plains Journal, published in Dodge City, Kansas, has a circulation of more than 37,000 and is published in four regional editions.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of information about regional general interest agricultural newspapers is due in part to the difficulty of identifying these papers from available sources. When this study was being planned, a search through directories such as the Editor and Publisher International Year Book and the Ayer Directory of Publications failed to properly identify and isolate the type of papers wanted for the study. Letters were sent to several groups and institutions seeking the same information. This method also proved fruitless. The letters were sent to the Agricultural Publishers Association, the American Agricultural Editors' Association, United States Department of Agriculture information offices, and the respected University of Wisconsin Department of

Agricultural Journalism. The newspapers finally selected for study were identified by the method explained in Chapter II.

Since little information is available about regional agricultural newspapers, this study was designed to be exploratory in nature, covering many aspects of the appearance and operation of the papers.

For purposes of the study, regional general interest agricultural newspapers were operationally defined as those having primary circulation in more than one county, but not covering an entire state. A publication conceivably could overlap state boundaries with primary circulation and still qualify under the definition. The "general interest agricultural" part of the definition means that the papers studied do not deal exclusively with an agricultural specialty such as livestock, but with agricultural content of interest to all types of farm and ranch owners and workers in the primary circulation area.

The objectives of the study were to explore the following areas of the newspapers defined: (1) general information and physical characteristics, (2) history and ownership, (3) editorial content and policy, (4) characteristics and opinions of editors, (5) subscription and advertising rate structure, (6) production costs and profits, (7) problem areas, and (8) volume of news and advertising.

In addition to these general areas explored, the study was designed to answer several specific questions. Efforts were made to find which of the papers were most financially successful and the ingredients which lead to this success. The study also sought to

discover the methods taken by the editors and publishers to maintain and increase circulation and advertising revenue. Finally the study attempted to assess the opportunities for establishing more regional general interest agricultural newspapers.

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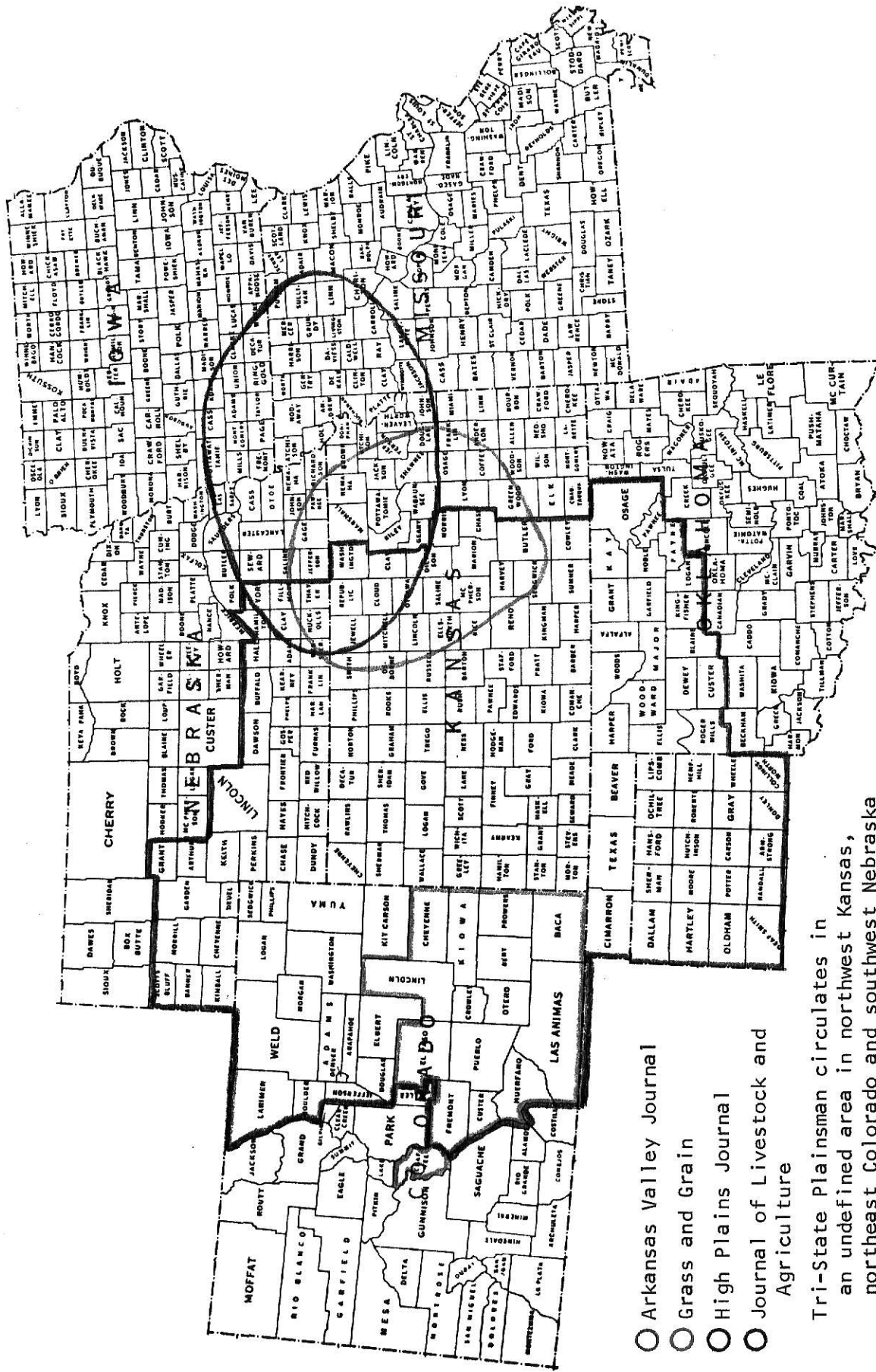


Illustration 1. Primary Circulation Areas of Newspapers Studied

# ARKANSAS VALLEY JOURNAL



Vol. 28 No. 4

Thursday, April 12, 1973

24 Pages

Published Every Thursday in La Junta, Colorado 81090 15 Cents Per Copy

## Saturday Blizzard Ups Area Cattle Losses

Saturday's 24 hour blizzard that spilled 6 to 18 inches of new wind driven snow on beleaguered cattle ranches along the Colorado-New Mexico border drifted all side roads closed, and temporarily closed Highway 160, setting back by a week efforts to reach stranded and starving cattle who had survived up until then, and adding sharply to the cruel death toll.

It'll be months before the full impact of the weeks of foul weather on southeastern Colorado agriculture can be assessed, and an accurate picture of the overall losses may never be given.

For not only has the unprecedented series of Spring storms wiped out a major portion of the 1973 fall crop in Las Animas, Baca, and southern Prowers, Bent and Otero counties, and resulted in a horrifying death toll among grown cattle weakened by the long, hard, wet and cold winter, but all farming operations in the Valley are at a standstill and each day of saturated fields puts farmers in the Valley that much further behind.

Apparently, with the Administration's ending of the disaster relief loan program there is confusion as to what help from the Federal level, if any, is going to be available to help the hard hit ranchers survive the shocking losses of the storm series.

Apparently USDA County Emergency Boards must make formal application to Leo French, Farmers Home Administration director for Colorado, and French in turn notifies the head office in

Washington, which in turn advises Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, who in turn asks President Nixon to declare the area a disaster area.

It is not clear just what help is then available with the need to prove inability to secure financing from conventional sources before the FHA disaster loan can be secured.

You can't buy cattle with red tape, you can't buy hay with red tape, you can't repair and clear roads with red tape, you can't even bind up your wounds with red tape, so just what help Uncle Sam will offer our beleaguered cattle industry is very unclear.

As far as the Arkansas Valley Journal was able to learn, none of the five counties involved has as yet filled out all the forms needed and applied thru the Farmers Home Administration for disaster designation.

At the other extreme the efforts of those working at

the local level to try to save the cattle has been as fine a record of cooperation and heroic effort as this area has ever seen.

The National Guard and Army pilots with the helicopters, such groups as the Pueblo County Rescue Unit, and various USDA County Emergency Boards, county road crews, and local volunteers who helped load hay and take care of other chores, were superb, heroic, really.

County Commissioners, local police, sheriff's officers, the state patrol, and Colorado Department of Agriculture all pitched in to help the rescue operation that saved tens of thousands of head of cattle in the hard hit areas stretching along the southern border of the State.

In each of the three counties primarily affected, Baca, Las Animas and Prowers, the USDA County Emergency board, with representatives of ASU, FHA, Extension, County Commissioners, and SCS has coordinated the relief efforts.

The Saturday storm which came on top of all the other storms that had battered the area, was accompanied by high winds that put the chill factor at Kim down to twenty below zero, so even though it was April, the cold was really rough on man and beast alike.

According to Alan Anders, chairman of the Las Animas

County emergency board an estimate by the board placed the loss prior to the Saturday storm at 4,800 head of cattle and 15,000 calves, with a value in excess of \$3.5 million, and this is for the Las Animas County area.

Lee Barden, extension agent in charge of the seven county southeast Colorado

area, said his group had estimated that loss of mature cows in the southern Prowers County area amounted to 15 per cent of the heads and of the calves to 50 per cent of the 1973 fall crop, but added that this estimate was made before the Saturday storm, and unquestionably losses would be upped sharply as a

result of this cruel blizzard, which reclaimed the roads.

While northeastern New Mexico had a number of isolated ranches in trouble with lack of food, and there were a few food drops by helicopter, for ranch families in Colorado, on the whole, there apparently were no

Concluded on Page 23



One of the Huey Helicopters that took part in the last week's search for cattle in the Kim down to twenty below zero, so even though it was April, the cold was really rough on man and beast alike. According to Alan Anders, chairman of the Las Animas County emergency board an estimate by the board placed the loss prior to the Saturday storm at 4,800 head of cattle and 15,000 calves, with a value in excess of \$3.5 million, and this is for the Las Animas County area.

Photo by Glenn M. McCarty



The big U.S. Army Chinook helicopter, with two blades, really packed a load in the bushy last week. Here it is being loaded with 1200 lbs. of hay for cattle herds in the stricken Kim County area. This week its wheel drive arms, which are replacing the outboard built-in skids to save cattle still in trouble in the Kim, Blumson and Innishree areas near the New Mexico border.

Photo by Glenn M. McCarty



The beef boycott may have kept some women away from the meat counters but not these members of the Otero County Cattlebelle. (from left) Patricia Feltz, Olive Ballou, Berneice Moore, Jane Gawn, Lyle Lantz and Neva Saults went shopping at Kupper's Supermarket in La Junta on Wednesday, April 18, to demonstrate their support of the cattle industry of Colorado. The shopping spree is part of action across the state planned by the Cattlebelle to promote beef. The reason for the Otero Cattlebelle action is, "to point out to our city fathers that the price of beef has not gone up drastically in line with other goods and services," explained Mrs. Ballou, Cattlebelle secretary.

**THIS BOOK  
CONTAINS  
NUMEROUS PAGES  
WITH THE ORIGINAL  
PRINTING BEING  
SKEWED  
DIFFERENTLY FROM  
THE TOP OF THE  
PAGE TO THE  
BOTTOM.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED  
FROM THE  
CUSTOMER.**



#### CONVENTION PLANNING

Rex "Beaver" Whitewater, and Paul Hurst, Valley Park, discuss the convention program prior to the second session. Whitewater served as convention chairman at a visit. Hurst was a member of the membership committee. Hurst was selected as president of the Kansas Auctioneer's Association for the coming year. Both men are G&G also auctioneers.

# GRASS

# & GRAIN

19th Year No. 6

April 10, 1973

## What Ya Gonna Give?

KANSAS AUCTIONEER'S CONVENTION



#### AUDITING THE BOOKS

Larry Laquise, Abilene, Ed Ringer, Garden and Bob Jessup, Philadelphia, audit the books of the Kansas Auctioneer's Association prior to one of the business sessions at the group's annual convention.



#### REGISTER HERE

L. H. Bing Carter, Gardner, and Lawrence Weller, Manhattan, register for the convention.



#### JUST VISITING

Mrs. Roy Wozel, Wichita, and Clifford Reese, Uxap City, visit prior to the second session of Kansas Auctioneer's Convention.



#### FUTURE AUCTIONEER

Jeff Persinger, son of Ernest Persinger of Langton, checks several of the auction bills on display at the recent convention of the Kansas Auctioneer's Association in Abilene.



#### ONE MORE CUP

Leroy Burkett, Milan, pours another cup of coffee prior to a business meeting of the Kansas Auctioneer's Association.

Illustration 3. Sample Front Page of Grass and Grain





# THE Journal

of Livestock & Agriculture

THE HERBERT PUBLISHING CO., INC.

Ewing Herbert, Jr. (1963-1972), Mrs. Ewing Herbert, Jr., Publisher

SUCCESSOR TO THE ST. JOSEPH STOCK YARDS JOURNAL, Established 1897

VOL. 12 NO. 50

Published Each Thursday—Second Class Postage Paid at HAWTHA, KANSAS 66434

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 1973

## Registered Angus Heifers Given To College



MR. AND MRS. DAVE MILLER, accept a special Angus trophy from Dr. M. C. Cooney, (right) president of Missouri Western College, St. Joseph, during a special luncheon in honor of the Miller family on June 12. The Millers donated to Missouri Western College six registered Angus heifers as a foundation herd for the college's agriculture department. The cattle will be kept for breeding at the Miller's Sun-Up Farms near Smithville until they are delivered to the Missouri Western College Farm this fall.

## Higher Wholesale Trade Influences Cattle Prices

Reduced marketings and slaughter of cattle this week induced higher wholesale dressed meat prices which, in turn, reflected in the live trade. Slaughter steers and heifers moved 25 cents to 50 cents higher than Wednesday of last week. Cows 25 to 50 cents higher than last Wednesday's auction bids and feeders were unchanged.

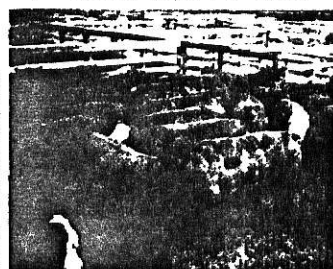
Slaughter under federal inspection last week again was under 60,000 head and so far this week national's kill below the same period last week. The kill has been considerably below a year ago since early April. In fact, the estimate has been above 60,000 for only two weeks since late March. First week of June last year registered over 60,000 slaughter and from mid-August to early November slaughter averaged over 60,000 per week.

However, according to the crop reporting board, cattle and calves ended June 1 for slaughter market in the seven months.

\$1.25 to \$2.25 and hams sold \$4.00 to \$6.00 higher.

The majority of this week's available supply was 1-3 210 to 270 pound barrows and gilts. Most aggressive competition and broadest demand was centered on hinds ranging from 210 to 235 pounds. Average weight and cost of all barrows and gilts sold on Wednesday was estimated at \$38.35 and 245 pounds compared with \$37.45 and 245 pounds for all last week and \$35.00 and 245 pounds a year ago. Sows made up six percent of the run.

## New Record High For Cattle



AN ALL-TIME HIGH for slaughter cattle sold on the St. Joseph Market was established Tuesday, June 12 when 31 Angus and black whiteface steers, averaging 1,236 pounds, sold for \$48.25 per hundredweight. This new record replaces a \$46.00 high set on Monday. The cattle were consigned to the partnership of Helling and Ward of Highland, Kansas. In addition to the steers, 15 head of Angus and black whiteface heifers, at 987 pounds, sold for \$46.50. A new record high of \$46.50 was set for heifers, surpassing the peak price of \$46.50 reached last March 19 and equaled on Tuesday. The new high was established with the sale of 31 heifers consigned to Bernard Helling of Bartley, Nebraska; the heifers weighed 1,090 pounds and sold on the open market. The price was matched on Wednesday with the sale of 20 Angus heifers weighing 958 pounds. These were consigned to Harold J. Oliver, of Atlantic, Iowa.

## Barrows And Gilts Show Strength At Midweek

Prices for barrows and gilts followed an uneven course this week although day to day fluctuations were only moderate. Modest receipts and sharply higher dressed pork prices failed to provide the stimulus needed to sustain any substantial price gain at the live end of these prices are very likely well above realizations at the dressed pork level, compared with last week's close. Barrows and gilts wound up strong to mostly 25 cents higher while sows advanced 75 cents to \$1.25. Local receipts, along with numbers at major markets elsewhere, were substantially less than those reported either during the same period last week or a year ago. Slaughter under federal inspection the first two days this week at 119,000 was 42,000 less than the same period last week and 25,000 below a year ago. Dressed pork prices at the wholesale level advanced virtually every session this week. By midweek pork hinds weighing 27 pounds up had accumulated gains amounting to \$1.00 to \$2.50 while picles were up

## Feeder Pigs Sell Lower At Tuesday's St. Joseph Auction

Receipts at the St. Joseph Feeder Pig Auction on Tuesday, June 12, totaled 1,666 with prices as much as \$4.00 to \$4.00 per head lower than a week ago. 18 1-2 grade pigs weighing 25 to 30 pounds brought from \$17.25 to \$19.25; \$5 to 45 pound pigs sold from \$21.00 to \$23.00, while 50 to 60 pound offerings cleared from \$24.25 to \$32.25. Pigs weighing from 60 to 70 pounds sold from \$26.00 to \$36.00, 70 to 80 pound pigs brought \$25.50 to \$40.00. Pigs weighing 80 to 90 pounds ranged from \$27.25 to \$44.00, with 90 to 105 pounds selling from \$44.00 to \$47.50.

All pigs sold on a per head basis.

The St. Joseph Feeder Pig Auction is held every Tuesday beginning at 2:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph Feeder Pig Arena.

## Odds 'N Ends

A skyjacker boarded an aircraft in Rio de Janeiro and at gunpoint ordered the pilot to fly to Miami. "That's our best stop, anyway," he was assured. "I listen," said the skyjacker, "three times. I've been on this route and three times the outfit of St. Nazaire. Take me to Miami."

## Four Percent Increase In Cattle On Feed

Cattle and calves on feed as of June 1 for the slaughter market in the seven months states totaled 9,455,000 head, up four percent from a year ago. Increases from June 1, 1972 were registered in five states ranging from three percent in Iowa to 10 percent in Nebraska and Texas. Colorado was down nine percent and all states except Arizona and California.

## Spring Slaughter Lamb Prices Up

Compared with last week's close Spring slaughter lambs sold strong to 50 cents higher. Slaughter ewes were unchanged. The majority of receipts were Spring slaughter lambs, including several hundred Kansas County Association lambs. Choice and Prime 46 to 100 pound Spring slaughter lambs sold from \$30.00 to \$35.75 with several shipments of Kansas lambs on Tuesday up to \$35.00. Choice 45 to 115 pound lambs brought \$28.00 to \$32.00. One package of Choice No. 1 pelts, 97 pound old crop lambs sold for \$27.00. Utility and Good shorn slaughter ewes brought \$10.00 to \$12.00.

## Missouri State 4-H Council Elected



OFFICERS FOR THE MISSOURI State 4-H Council were elected during State 4-H Week at the University of Missouri campus. They are, left to right, Michael Kaves, President, president, John F. Williams, Columbia, vice president, Alyson Kroeber, Indianapolis, secretary, and David M. Latch, treasurer. They will assist the state extension youth specialists in conducting the 1974 State 4-H Week.

Illustration 5. Sample Front Page of  
The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

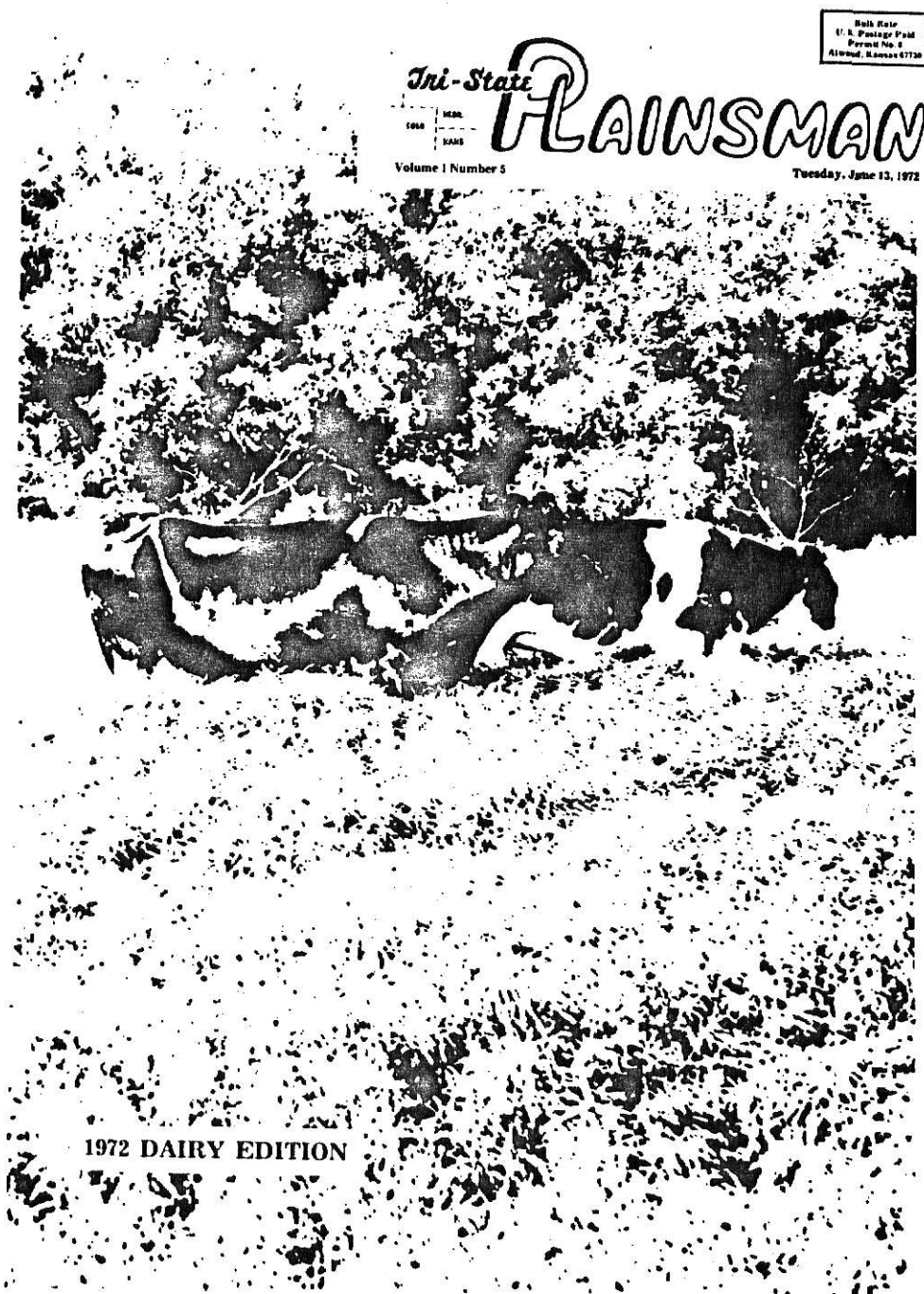


Illustration 6. Sample Front Page of Tri-State Plainsman

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

Since the information sought from the editors and publishers was extensive and of an in-depth nature it was decided the study could best be done by personal interviews.

Five regional general interest agricultural newspapers were selected. Three papers were selected in Kansas, one in Missouri, and one in Colorado. Four of the papers are well-established. These include the Arkansas Valley Journal, published in La Junta, Colorado; Grass and Grain, published in Manhattan, Kansas; The High Plains Journal, published in Dodge City, Kansas; and The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, published in Saint Joseph, Missouri. The fifth paper studied was the Tri-State Plainsman, published in Atwood, Kansas.\* This paper was selected because of its relative youth to give contrast with the other four papers and to determine some of the problems in establishing a paper of this type. When the interview was conducted (June 26, 1973) with the president of Tri-State Plainsman, Inc., the paper had been published only 14 months.

The papers were selected on the basis of the definition stated in Chapter I and on the following criteria: Apparent financial success,

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\* Because the names of the newspapers are often repeated in this study, the following abbreviations have been used: AVJ for Arkansas Valley Journal, G&G for Grass and Grain, HPJ for The High Plains Journal, JLA for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, and TSP for Tri-State Plainsman.

location in Kansas or a bordering state, and willingness of the personnel to submit to the interview and to provide requested materials.

The selection process was done in the following manner: (1) A letter was composed giving the definition of the newspapers which would qualify for inclusion in the study. (2) The letter was sent to the state Extension editors and the managers of the state press associations in Kansas and bordering states. The letter requested that the individuals send the names of the papers which would qualify and the names of the papers' editors. (3) This information was combined with personal prior knowledge and investigations and compared with information published in the latest issue of the Ayer Directory of Publications.<sup>2</sup> (4) The newspapers to be studied were tentatively selected. (5) The editors and/or publishers of newspapers selected for the study were contacted by telephone requesting their cooperation in the study. These individuals all agreed to the interview. (6) Follow-up letters were sent to the individuals confirming the dates of the interviews.

While the selection process was taking place, the interview schedule was being constructed. Consisting of 19 pages, the interview schedule was designed to be filled in by the interviewer during the personal interviews.\* Many questions called for short specific answers; others were open-ended. A portable tape recorder was used during the parts of the interviews when open-ended questions were being asked. This procedure allowed exact quotes of the interviewees to be incorporated into the study where appropriate.

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\* See Appendix for interview schedule.

The interviews were conducted between June 19, 1973, and August 14, 1973. The schedule, with dates, names of the newspapers, and names and titles of individuals interviewed is as follows:

1. June 19, 1973--The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture--Mrs. Helen Neese, managing editor.
2. June 25, 1973--The High Plains Journal--Mr. Ray Pierce, editor.
3. June 26, 1973--Tri-State Plainsman--Mr. Fred Hale, president of Tri-State Plainsman, Inc.
4. June 27, 1973--Arkansas Valley Journal--Mr. Milton Booth, publisher, editor, and president of Arkansas Valley Journal, Inc.
5. August 14, 1973--Grass and Grain--Mr. Dean Coughenour, publisher and president of Ag Press, Inc.

In several instances other employees provided part of the information sought.

In addition to the information gathered during the interview, other information later was compiled from actual copies of the five newspapers studied. Six issues of each of the newspapers were examined to provide an idea of the average size of the issues and the volume of news and advertising. The news was categorized into local/regional news, national news and international news. Advertising was categorized into local/regional display advertising, national display advertising and classified advertising.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF NEWSPAPERS

All newspapers described are now weekly papers. However, when the interview was conducted, the Tri-State Plainsman was published biweekly. Since the interview, the TSP was sold and converted to a weekly.<sup>3</sup> All five newspapers are operated as corporations. No lawsuits have been filed against any of the corporations.

#### Arkansas Valley Journal

The Arkansas Valley Journal was established in March, 1949, in La Junta, Colorado, as a completely new publishing venture. The original owner was Jim Martin, who now publishes the Rocky Ford (Colorado) Gazette. Martin sold the AVJ in early fall of 1949 to Robert Ellis and Milton Booth. Booth now is the principal stockholder in Arkansas Valley Journal, Inc. He also serves as publisher and editor of the paper.

The corporation does not do commercial job printing. It does publish the Pueblo Army Depot Illuminator, a joint venture with the Pueblo Army Depot Public Information Office near Pueblo, Colorado. Arkansas Valley Journal, Inc., publishes approximately 4,800 copies of the Illuminator on a contractual basis. The information office supplies the editorial pasteups and the corporation sells the advertising. Publishing the Illuminator is the only other business activity of the corporation.



The Arkansas Valley Journal has been published in tabloid format since it was begun. The tabloid format has a six column by 14 1/2 inch page size, making 87 column inches per page. The columns are 10 1/2 picas wide.

All type for the AVJ is set by photocomposition. The body type is set using two magnetic tape machines. The tapes are fed into an IBM Selectric computer for output of camera-ready type. Headlines are set on a VariTyper machine. The majority of the body type is set in nine point Press Roman; classified advertisements are set in eight point Aldine Roman. Futura bold condensed and Bodoni bold are the two most often used headline typefaces.

Spot color occasionally is used in parts of the AVJ but only when purchased by an advertiser for use in an advertisement. Process color has never been used.

The editor has no current plans to change the method of typesetting or printing for the paper. However, his plans depend greatly on the owners of the La Junta Tribune Democrat, since the typesetting equipment used by the AVJ is owned by them. The two papers have offices in the same building in La Junta to facilitate production. The building also is owned by the Democrat owners. The AVJ rents office space and contracts for use of the typesetting equipment. The printing of the AVJ is done on a contractual basis by Valley Offset, Inc., located in the basement area of the same building. Valley Offset also mails the AVJ. A metal Addressograph plate system is used. The plates are printed on paper rolls which are run through a machine which cuts the rolls into individual addresses and pastes them onto the paper.



According to the editor, the Arkansas Valley Journal now usually consists of 24 to 28 pages per week, up in pages from recent years due to increased advertising space sold. A 32-page paper is the largest ever run due to the limited capacity of the press. Special issues and special seasons at times account for larger than usual issues. These include a Christmas greetings issue, special fair issue, and other issues printed during the county fair season in southeast Colorado. Smaller than usual issues are often run during summer months.

According to the latest Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (October, 1972) filed with the U. S. Post Office, the AVJ has a total paid circulation of 6,153. The editor estimated circulation to be about the same or slightly higher at the time the interview took place. From 1963 to 1972 circulation grew fairly steadily, with the greatest increase coming between 1970 and 1971. The total paid circulation figures for 1963 through 1972 are detailed in the following table:

Table 1. Total Paid Circulation for Arkansas Valley Journal, 1963 through 1972<sup>a</sup>

| Year | Circulation |
|------|-------------|
| 1963 | 4,576       |
| 1964 | 4,611       |
| 1965 | 4,512       |
| 1966 | 4,611       |
| 1967 | 4,687       |
| 1968 | 4,659       |
| 1969 | 4,887       |
| 1970 | 5,208       |
| 1971 | 5,921       |
| 1972 | 6,153       |

<sup>a</sup> U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for the Arkansas Valley Journal, 1963 through 1972.

Most paid circulation is distributed through the mail. One newsstand in La Junta sells the Arkansas Valley Journal. The AVJ is not distributed free to anyone as a means of increasing subscriptions, nor are any added inducements offered to potential subscribers.

The primary circulation area for the AVJ is a 15-county area in southeast Colorado. This area corresponds closely with the Arkansas River drainage area. Only one edition of the paper is published.

The paper is printed on Wednesday and mailed the same night, with Thursday the day of publication. This schedule was set up largely to allow the printing of livestock market reports from two large livestock sale rings in La Junta. One of the sales is held on Monday and the other on Tuesday.

The staff of the AVJ consists of the editor and five other full-time persons, including an office girl who serves as receptionist and bookkeeper, an advertising salesman, a farm editor, a typesetter, and a pasteup man. In addition to these, a part-time advertising salesman is employed on a straight commission basis, and three editorial correspondents scattered throughout the primary circulation are paid on a space-rate basis.

#### Grass and Grain

Grass and Grain was established in 1957 in Manhattan, Kansas, by Albert Horlings. The paper was purchased in June, 1958, by Dean Coughenour, the current publisher. For the first two years of its existence the paper was operated as a third-class free advertising mailer. The only news items used were strictly for filler. In March, 1959, Coughenour converted Grass

and Grain into a newspaper with a paid circulation and soon acquired second-class mailing privileges.

The paper is operated as a part of Ag Press, Inc. The corporation was formed by Coughenour in January, 1964. He is president of the corporation.

In addition to publishing G&G, Ag Press, Inc., does commercial job printing, which Coughenour estimates contributes from 50 to 60 per cent of the overall gross income. Much of the commercial printing is done for agricultural businesses.

Grass and Grain has been published in its present tabloid format since March, 1959, when it was converted to a second-class newspaper. The format uses a five column by 16 inch deep page size. Columns are 12 picas wide.

The body type for the paper is set by photocomposition. Two paper tape punchers are used, and the tapes are fed into a Compugraphic model 4961 computer to produce camera-ready type when run through a photographic processor. Headline type is set in hot metal on Linotype and Ludlow machines. Body copy is set in 8 1/2 point News with 1 1/2 points space between lines; classified advertisements are set in 8 1/2 point News with no extra space between lines. Most headlines are set in the Tempo and Spartan families.

Spot color is printed in the paper about 50 to 60 per cent of the time. It is almost always used as a result of an advertiser purchasing color for use in an advertisement, but occasionally for emphasis on editorial matter in special issues. Process color also has been used for special issues.

The publisher has no plans to change the method of production of the paper. The paper is printed by offset-lithography. A new newspaper press was scheduled to be installed in September, 1973.

The building and all production equipment is owned by Ag Press, Inc. Employees do all of the mailing and keep the mailing lists up to date. Grass and Grain was mailed by utilizing Addressograph equipment when the interview was done, but plans were underway to convert to a computerized system of producing mailing labels.

According to the publisher, the paper averages about 44 pages per issue. The largest issues are printed during spring and fall when the livestock markets have increased activity. Issues do not vary more than one-third in size.

The latest Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (October, 1972) filed with the U. S. Post Office showed the total paid circulation to be 14,277. The publisher estimated paid circulation to be between 14,100 and 14,200 when the interview took place. Circulation showed a fairly steady growth pattern between 1966 and 1972. Paid circulation figures for 1966 through 1972 are detailed in Table 2.

An attempt was made to get total paid circulation figures for each year from 1963 to 1972, but records for 1963 through 1965 were not available.

Grass and Grain is circulated mostly through the mail. About 500 copies per week are sold in the office and at area livestock auctions throughout the primary circulation area. Sample copies are distributed through the mail as a means of increasing subscriptions. In past years

up to 10 per cent of the total mailed were sent as sample copies. This is the maximum allowable by the U. S. Post Office. In the past two or three years, about 200 sample copies per week have been mailed. No added inducements are offered to potential subscribers.

Table 2. Total Paid Circulation for Grass and Grain, 1966 through 1972<sup>a</sup>

| Year | Circulation |
|------|-------------|
| 1966 | 11,080      |
| 1967 | 11,867      |
| 1968 | 13,363      |
| 1969 | 13,959      |
| 1970 | 13,970      |
| 1971 | 14,040      |
| 1972 | 14,277      |

<sup>a</sup> U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for Grass and Grain, 1966 through 1972.

The primary circulation area for G&G reaches into a 52-county area in a circular pattern in eastern Kansas surrounding Manhattan. However, some circulation goes beyond this area, roughly east to the Missouri border, south across the Oklahoma border, west into middle western Kansas, and north across the Nebraska border. In past years, several editions have been printed for different sections of the primary circulation area, but now only one edition is published.

The paper is published on Tuesday. This schedule originally was set up to accommodate a large advertiser, and the publication day has been continued simply to keep from disrupting the schedule.

The professional staff of G&G includes the publisher, who now is only minimally involved in the editorial process, a full-time editor, two full-time advertising salesmen, two other part-time advertising salesmen equivalent to one full-time position, and four editorial part-time helpers and free-lance writers who are equivalent to a half-time employee.

### The High Plains Journal

The High Plains Journal has been published since 1949 in Dodge City, Kansas. The paper evolved from several earlier newspapers, dating from the Dodge City Journal which was established in 1882. In 1945 Joe Berkely and the late Nis Peterson purchased the Dodge City Journal, then a regular town weekly, and combined operations with Etrick Printers. Journal, Inc., was formed and the paper became a farm and ranch paper. The paper's name was changed to The High Plains Journal to reflect its character and enlarging circulation area. In 1959 the organization became a subsidiary corporation of McCormick-Armstrong Company, Inc., of Wichita, Kansas, with the firm name changed to High Plains Publishers, Inc.<sup>4</sup> Joe Berkely, one of the purchasers in 1945, is the current publisher.

The majority of the stock in High Plains Publishers, Inc., is owned by Pete Armstrong of the parent McCormick-Armstrong Company of Wichita. Publisher Joe Berkely owns most of the remaining stock.

A large commercial job printing and publishing facility is operated by High Plains Publishers. In addition, the corporation operates the High Plains Advertising Agency, and a life insurance agency, and performs public relations activities. All businesses are operated from the same location in Dodge City.

The High Plains Journal has been published in its present format since 1945. The tabloid paper has a five column by 16 inch deep page. Columns are 11 1/2 picas wide.

Reproduction is by the letterpress method most of the time. Special sections are printed once or twice a month by offset-lithography at the parent corporation in Wichita. These special sections often utilize process color printing according to Editor Ray Pierce.

Type composition is by the hot metal process for both body and headline type. Four Linotype machines are used for setting body type, and Linotype and Ludlow machines are used for setting headlines. Eight point Regal on a nine point slug is used for body type and for classified advertisements. Most headlines are set in the Tempo and Metro families of type.

Spot color is used in the HPJ only when an advertiser buys it. Process color is used only for special sections, as previously mentioned.

No plans are currently being made to change the method of type-setting or printing.

The building and composing and printing equipment are owned by the corporation. No equipment is leased. Employees of the paper keep mailing lists up to date and do the mailing. Mailing is done with a metal plate Addressograph system.

The editor strives to produce a 32-page paper every week, but he estimates that it averages about 31 pages. The largest issues are run in the spring and early summer.

The total paid circulation as reported in September, 1972, on the Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation was 33,242. At the

time the interview took place, the editor estimated that total paid circulation was over 37,000.

With slight fluctuations, the paid circulation showed a steady growth pattern. Paid circulation figures for 1963 through 1972 are detailed in the following table:

Table 3. Total Paid Circulation for The High Plains Journal, 1963 through 1972<sup>a</sup>

| Year | Circulation |
|------|-------------|
| 1963 | 22,929      |
| 1964 | 21,370      |
| 1965 | 23,417      |
| 1966 | 26,754      |
| 1967 | 26,930      |
| 1968 | 26,943      |
| 1969 | 27,737      |
| 1970 | 28,491      |
| 1971 | 31,526      |
| 1972 | 33,242      |

<sup>a</sup> U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for The High Plains Journal, 1963 through 1972.

The High Plains Journal is circulated entirely through the mail except for single copies sold in the office. Sample copies are mailed to potential subscribers on an irregular basis. The circulation manager decides when and how to distribute sample copies. The general pattern is to mail about 1200 sample copies per week during the fall and winter. Summer sample mailings are lighter. Most sample mailings are done in areas where paid circulation is light. As an inducement to subscribe, the HPJ offers a free classified advertisement which can be used any time



during the subscription period. A packet of flower seeds often is offered to subscribers who renew subscriptions soon after notified that their current subscription is about to expire.

The paper is published in four separate editions each week. The Western Kansas edition, going to approximately 14,000 subscribers, covers the extreme 34 western Kansas counties. The Central Kansas edition goes to approximately 10,000 subscribers in 31 middle Kansas counties. The Colorado-Nebraska edition goes to about 6,000 subscribers in 30 eastern Colorado counties and 35 southwestern Nebraska counties. The Oklahoma-Texas edition goes to about 5,000 subscribers in 22 northwestern Oklahoma counties and 20 counties in the northern section of the Texas "Panhandle."

The High Plains Journal is published on Monday. This publication day allows the mid-week area livestock markets to be covered and reported in the following issue.

The professional staff of the HPJ is made up of the publisher, editor, associate editor, an editorial assistant, an advertising sales manager, seven advertising salesmen (who also perform advertising agency functions), a circulation director, and an art director. Free-lance writers also provide some editorial copy. Seven persons work as subscription salesmen on a straight commission basis.

#### The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture has offices in the Livestock Exchange Building in Saint Joseph, Missouri, but is printed and mailed in Hiawatha, Kansas. The current paper is the successor to the Stock Yards Daily Journal, established in Saint Joseph in 1897. The

Journal of Livestock and Agriculture was purchased by the late Ewing Herbert in 1963 from Max Dawson.

The paper has been operated as a corporation since that time. It is now owned by Mrs. Ewing Herbert of Hiawatha, Kansas, and Mrs. Helen Neese, the managing editor. The sole business of the corporation is publishing the JLA.

The paper has been published in tabloid format since 1964. Prior to that time, it was published as a full-size newspaper. The JLA is published in a six column by 15 inch deep format. Columns are ten picas wide. Reproduction is by offset-lithography.

Body type is produced by photocomposition. Three Justowriter machines are used. Headlines are produced by photocomposition and with hot metal. The smaller headlines are set on a Linotype machine; larger headlines are set on two photosetters. Body type is set in seven point Ionic with approximately two points of space between lines. Classified advertisements are set in seven point Ionic with no extra space between lines. Century and Cheltenham type families are used most often for headlines.

Spot color is used occasionally in the JLA for special emphasis of editorial material or when an advertiser purchases it. Process color is not used.

No plans are in effect for changing the method of typesetting or printing in the foreseeable future.

The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture is printed on a contractual basis by the World Publishing Company in Hiawatha, Kansas. This company also does all typesetting. The JLA rents office space in the Livestock

Exchange Building in Saint Joseph, Missouri. The office girl in Saint Joseph keeps the mailing lists up to date. They are sent to Hiawatha where Addressograph plates are made and the paper is mailed.

Most issues of the paper run 12 or 16 pages. The largest issues are run during the fall when the farm and livestock sales are at their peaks.

According to the October, 1972, Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation filed with the U. S. Post Office, the JLA had a total paid circulation of 13,535. Paid circulation decreased during the nine-year period 1963 to 1972. A large decrease in circulation occurred between the 1965 and 1966 reporting dates, and modest growth has since been registered. Total paid circulation figures for 1963 to 1972 are as follows:

Table 4. Total Paid Circulation for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, 1963 through 1972<sup>a</sup>

| Year | Circulation |
|------|-------------|
| 1963 | 17,917      |
| 1964 | 20,411      |
| 1965 | 18,966      |
| 1966 | 12,093      |
| 1967 | 12,741      |
| 1968 | 12,461      |
| 1969 | 13,242      |
| 1970 | 13,355      |
| 1971 | 13,769      |
| 1972 | 13,535      |

<sup>a</sup> U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, 1963 through 1972.

All paid circulation is sent through the mail. Most requests for single issues are given complimentary. Sample mailings are done about four times a year as a means of encouraging subscriptions. Five to six thousand sample copies are mailed each time sampling is done. No extra inducements are offered to potential subscribers.

The primary circulation area for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture reaches 88 counties in four states. The area covers or partially covers the states and counties as follows: Missouri--27 northwestern counties, Kansas--25 northeastern counties, Nebraska--21 southwestern counties, and Iowa--15 southwestern counties. Only one edition is printed for the entire area.

The JLA is published on Thursday. The original reason for this publication day was to include much editorial matter about the large livestock sale days held Monday through Wednesday. The editor, Helen Neese, says this publication day is now less than ideal because pictures taken at the Saint Joseph Livestock Market cannot be processed in time for inclusion in the following issue of the paper.<sup>5</sup> For this reason many pictures of the marketing process are often more than a week old when used.

The staff of the JLA consists of the managing editor, an advertising salesman, and an office girl who works three days per week. All printing production is contracted to the World Publishing Company in Hiawatha, Kansas, eliminating the need for production personnel.

### Tri-State Plainsman

The Tri-State Plainsman was established in April, 1972, as a completely new publishing venture. Tri-State Plainsman, Inc., was formed at the time the paper was established. When the interview was done with its president, Fred Hale, the TSP was operated as a cooperative effort by seven northeast Kansas newspapers. The paper was published in Atwood, Kansas, where Hale also published the Atwood Citizen-Patriot, a local weekly paper. Since the interview took place (June 26, 1973), the paper has been sold to Richard Rippe, who moved the paper to Oberlin, Kansas.<sup>6</sup> All information in this study refers to the operation of the Tri-State Plainsman prior to the sale.

The owners of the seven northeast Kansas newspapers owned stock in the corporation, and the staff of the seven papers contributed feature material and pictures for the Tri-State Plainsman. The seven papers included the Atwood Citizen-Patriot, Colby Free Press-Tribune, Goodland Daily News, Hoxie Sentinel, Oakley Graphic, Oberlin Herald, and Sharon Springs Western Times.

The Tri-State Plainsman is now operated as a weekly paper, but at the time of the interview it was operated as a biweekly. The corporation did not engage in commercial job printing or any other business activity.

The paper was published in tabloid format. A four column by 14 inch page was used, with 14 pica wide columns. Reproduction was by offset-lithography.

All type used in the TSP was produced by photocomposition. Body type was produced on a Compugraphic computer, model 2961TL. Headlines were set on a Compugraphic headliner machine, model 7200. Body copy was

set in both eight and nine point News; eight point News was used for classified advertisements. The Futura and Bodoni type families were used for headlines.

Neither spot color nor process color had been used in the TSP up to the time of the interview.

No plans were in effect to change the method of typesetting or printing of the paper.

The Tri-State Plainsman was produced, printed, and mailed on a contractual basis by the Atwood Citizen-Patriot in Atwood, Kansas. Editorial offices were located in the same building. The TSP was not charged for office space. Mailing was done by use of metal Addressograph plates.

According to the president of Tri-State Plainsman, Inc., Fred Hale, no pattern had yet developed for the number of pages printed in the paper. Seven back issues provided by Hale ranged in size from eight to 20 pages, averaging slightly more than 14 pages.

According to the October, 1972, Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation filed with the U. S. Post Office, the TSP had a total paid circulation of 1,092. This is the only certified paid circulation available since the paper was mailed free to about 10,000 boxholders by bulk rate postage for the first few months of its existence.

All paid circulation was distributed through the mail. After the initial free circulation to boxholders, no sample copies were mailed, and no extra inducements were offered to potential subscribers.

The primary circulation area for the TSP included northwest Kansas, northeast Colorado, and southwest Nebraska, with no strict

definition of boundaries. Most subscribers resided in northwest Kansas, in an area surrounding the seven newspapers which cooperated in publishing the paper. Only one edition of the Tri-State Plainsman was published for the entire primary circulation area.

The paper was published on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Tuesday was chosen as the date of publication because it best fit in with the printing production schedule at the Atwood Citizen-Patriot, where eight publications were printed. The owners of the TSP hoped to eventually make the paper into a weekly, but this was not done until the new owner bought the paper.

The TSP was operated by one full-time editor, with the assistance of personnel working for the cooperating area papers previously mentioned. At the time of the interview the position was vacant, and the operation was being handled by Fred Hale.

## CHAPTER IV

### EDITORIAL SOURCES AND POLICIES

Sources of news and editorial policies vary widely among the five agricultural newspapers. Some rely almost solely on outside sources for editorial matter; others mix outside sources with some staff reporting about events and people in the primary circulation area. The amount of regional, national and international news used by the papers also varies quite widely. These amounts are detailed in Tables 5-9 at the end of this chapter.

#### Arkansas Valley Journal

According to the publisher and editor, Milton Booth, much more emphasis is placed on news from the primary circulation area than is placed on national or international news. The policy is that all news used in the paper must apply to local readers, even though it may also apply nationally or internationally. A large portion of the editorial matter is composed of photographs of events and people in the primary circulation area. The editor estimates that about 40 per cent of the editorial space is occupied by photographs. Many times a long caption is used in conjunction with a photograph as a complete news item.

Editorial policy regarding regional feature material is to emphasize outstanding or unusual achievements by area farmers and ranchers. If an agricultural practice is being recommended to readers,



the staff tries to relate the practice to that of a farmer or rancher in the area. Articles of a "preaching" nature are avoided. Many tips for developing feature articles are received from personnel in county Extension offices and from the Soil Conservation Service. A continuing feature in the Arkansas Valley Journal is a biographical sketch of an area farmer, rancher, agribusinessman, or government agricultural administrator. Written in the form of a "salute to" the person, this continuing feature has made the paper many friends over the years, according to the editor.

The AVJ has a regular weekly editorial page, including columns by the editor and another staff member. In weeks prior to the interview, many subjects of interest to farmers and ranchers were covered on the editorial page. The subjects included the meat boycott, lifting of meat import quotas, price controls on meat, the need for gasoline during the wheat harvest, and the Watergate scandal. The paper attempts to be politically independent; political endorsements are seldom made. The editorial page is used quite often to promote events taking place in the area.

The paper utilizes a wide range of news sources. The editor estimates that about 30 per cent of the editorial matter is originated by the paper's regular staff members. Regular paid correspondents account for an additional 30 per cent of editorial content. The paper also uses quite a bit of material from government news sources, such as the United States Department of Agriculture, the Extension Service, and Soil Conservation Service. A large amount of news is obtained from volunteer correspondents of youth groups, such as 4-H and FFA, and from other volunteer correspondents of area saddle clubs and the Southern Colorado Horsemen's

Association. Very few public relations type news items are used from companies such as implement or feed manufacturers. Any such items used must relate to the region. Not over 3-4 per cent of the editorial matter is obtained from syndicated sources; the small amount used is composed of jokes and filler material.

### Grass and Grain

The editorial policy of Grass and Grain is to stress regional news more than national or international. Publisher Dean Coughenour estimates that about 90 per cent of the editorial matter deals with regional news, although the six issues examined do not show regional news to be quite this dominant. However, regional news comprises by far the greatest amount of news (see Table 6). Many photographs are used in the paper, most applying to the region. The publisher says about 20 photographs are used per issue.

Most feature articles in G&G are of the human interest type, according to the publisher. Methods of financial success are not used to any great degree. Coughenour feels strongly about his feature editorial policy. Speaking of feature material used in the paper, he said:

I try not to make it didactic in any way. I think that farmers are burdened with all this . . . I really like to get the dirty-overalled farmer in there . . . If it's some evidence of commercial success we don't give it a lot of space. They are just filled up with that stuff.<sup>8</sup>

Many suggestions and tips for feature stories come from farmers, ranchers, and individuals and groups with specialty interests, according to Coughenour. Most do not have a commercial interest as the inspiration for the news tip, he says.<sup>9</sup>

Editorials have been run in Grass and Grain in the past, but not for the past several years. The publisher says his experiences showed a temptation of the paper's staff to write editorials about things in which the staff did not have sufficient knowledge or background. This, combined with a lack of time to do justice to editorials caused the elimination of all editorials.

Most of the news in the paper involves rewrites and reprints of news from other news sources in the primary circulation area, including weekly and daily newspapers. This material is digested, condensed, combined with other material, and expounded upon by the staff of the paper. The publisher estimates that about 25 per cent of the editorial content is originated by his staff members and another 5 per cent is obtained from free-lance writers. Government news sources and public relations releases are estimated to make up about 15 per cent of the news.

#### The High Plains Journal

As with the other papers studied, The High Plains Journal places much more emphasis on regional news than on national and international news. Editor Ray Pierce estimates that 90 per cent of the editorial matter is regional news. Figures in Table 7 show this estimate to be too high. Of the approximate 15 photographs used in each issue, most also apply to regional persons and events.

Feature articles used in the HPJ are keyed around the "man on the farm making a living." Editor Pierce says:

We are specifically not interested in the big success. We are interested in any farmer who is doing a good job of some activity--how he is doing it. Then we find that other people read this and compare it to their operation. So it should be something that can be compared to someone else. It shouldn't be the man who is completely on top, who has no comparison.<sup>10</sup>

The HPJ relies mainly on government sources for feature article tips. The county Extension directors in the region are the prime sources.

Editorials are a regular weekly feature in The High Plains Journal. Subjects covered in editorials in weeks preceding the interview included beef prices, consumer protests, government farm programs, and the gasoline shortage.

The editor estimates that about one-third of the news in the paper is originated by the paper's staff, about one-third obtained from government news sources, and the other third obtained in nearly equal volume from free-lance writers and news releases from commercial enterprises. The paper has no regular correspondents, paid or volunteer, and does not use material from any syndicated or feature news services.

#### The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture places more emphasis on regional news than on national or international. Helen Neese, editor, estimates that 75 per cent of the editorial matter pertains to regional events and persons. The JLA prints a large number of photographs in each issue, usually more than 20. Most are used on the weekly two-page center spread; these are pictures of farmers and ranchers and the livestock sold at the Saint Joseph Livestock Market. The pictures are intended as a market promotion effort.

Feature articles in the JLA center around progress in improving livestock breeds and herds. Editor Neese says, "We try to make a point of modern profitable methods, with the person who has enough interest to look beyond yesteryear's ways as the focal point."<sup>11</sup> Tips for feature

articles are received from interested individuals and from the Saint Joseph Livestock Marketing Foundation.

Editorials are run irregularly in the paper, as appropriate subjects appear. Editorials in the JLA in weeks preceding the interview covered subjects such as the meat boycott, boxcar shortages, and the use and government control of livestock growth hormones. Editorials of a non-controversial nature are run about major holidays and about safety when the school year begins.

Much of the news in the paper comes from government sources, and a lesser amount is staff-written. The paper also uses quite a bit of news from breed services and research news from seed, implement, and chemical companies. Individuals associated with the Saint Joseph Livestock Market contribute a lot of regional news. No regular paid or volunteer correspondents are used. The paper does not subscribe to any syndicated news services.

#### Tri-State Plainsman

Like the other papers studied, the Tri-State Plainsman emphasizes regional news much more than national or international news. Fred Hale, president of the publishing corporation, estimated that 90 per cent of the news and photographs were regional in nature. Figures in Table 9 show this estimate to be too high.

Feature material in the paper centers around profitable agricultural practices, recognition of achievement by farmers and agribusinesses, and recognition of outstanding individuals. Extension Service personnel provided many tips for feature articles. Other

sources of tips were individuals working for the seven newspapers with financial interest in the Tri-State Plainsman. Quite a bit of farm editorial and feature material was gleaned from these seven papers. At times entire articles were reprinted; at other times the articles were condensed.

Editorials had not been run in the paper up to the time the interview took place. The main reason for the lack of editorials was the lack of sufficient personnel. Hale did say that he would like to see editorials run in the future.

Because the editor's position was vacant at the time the interview was done, no reliable estimates of news sources could be obtained.

#### Comparison of News Volume

Six back issues of each of the five newspapers were examined (752 total pages), and the editorial material was categorized into local/regional news, national news, and international news. Included in these categories were all news-editorial copy, headlines, photographs and captions.

The back issues of four of the five agricultural newspapers studied were published according to the following schedule: For 1972--the first issue of July, the third issue of September, the first issue of November; for 1973--the third issue of January, the first issue of March, the third issue of May. The editors of the Arkansas Valley Journal, Grass and Grain, The High Plains Journal, and The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture all provided these papers. (The Western Kansas edition of The High Plains Journal was requested and used for this part of the study.)

Because the Tri-State Plainsman was published biweekly and because only scattered back issues were available, the six issues of this paper examined do not correspond to the other newspapers examined. Four back issues of the TSP examined were published during late spring and summer of 1972. The other two issues were published in June, 1973. Because of this a strict comparison with the other four newspapers studied should be avoided. However, the information about the TSP has been included to provide some basis of comparison.

Tables 5-9 show the date of each newspaper examined; the news categorized into local/regional, national, and international; and the percentage of the total space occupied by each category in the composited six issues studied.

It must be noted that not all editorial matter is categorized into local/regional, national, and international news. Such items as jokes, white space between news and advertising, mailing statements, and obvious "filler" material are not included. Therefore the percentages of news and advertising do not add to 100 per cent.

All five newspapers studied had more local/regional news than any other type. The volume of national news ranked second in all newspapers, and international news was third in all cases.

The amount of local/regional news printed ranged from a low of 18.02 per cent of the total column inches in Grass and Grain to a high of 37.43 per cent for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture. The High Plains Journal contained 22.26 per cent local/regional news, the Arkansas Valley Journal contained 30.83 per cent, and the Tri-State Plainsman contained 32.01 per cent.

The amount of national news printed ranged from a low of 0.34 per cent in the Arkansas Valley Journal to a high of 9.97 per cent in The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture. The other papers and the percentages of national news in each are Grass and Grain, 3.64 per cent; the Tri-State Plainsman, 6.64 per cent; and The High Plains Journal, 6.97 per cent.

The amount of international news in the five newspapers was miniscule, ranging from none in the Arkansas Valley Journal to just 0.63 per cent in Grass and Grain. The other papers and the percentage of international news in each are The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, 0.17 per cent; The High Plains Journal, 0.17 per cent; and the Tri-State Plainsman, 0.37 per cent.

When the total percentage of news run in each newspaper was calculated, the figures show that Grass and Grain has the lowest percentage of news with 22.29 per cent, and that The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture has the highest percentage with 47.57 per cent. The other papers and the total percentage of news in each are The High Plains Journal, 29.40 per cent; the Arkansas Valley Journal, 31.17 per cent; and the Tri-State Plainsman, 39.02 per cent.



Table 5. News-Editorial Volume for the Arkansas Valley Journal  
 Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--148  
 Page Size--Six columns by 14 1/2 inches  
 Column Width--10 1/2 picas  
 Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--12,876\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size  | Expressed in column inches |                  |                       |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                            | Local/Regional<br>News     | National<br>News | International<br>News |
| July 6, 1972<br>20 pages   | 573.75                     | 0.               | 0.                    |
| Sept. 21, 1972<br>20 pages | 607.25                     | 0.               | 0.                    |
| Nov. 2, 1972<br>32 pages   | 643.25                     | 23.50            | 0.                    |
| Jan. 18, 1973<br>24 pages  | 675.00                     | 0.               | 0.                    |
| March 1, 1973<br>24 pages  | 640.50                     | 10.25            | 0.                    |
| May 17, 1973<br>28 pages   | <u>829.75</u>              | <u>9.50</u>      | <u>0.</u>             |
| Totals                     | <u>3969.50</u>             | <u>43.25</u>     | <u>0.</u>             |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches* | 30.83%                     | .34%             | 0.0%                  |

Table 6. News-Editorial Volume for Grass and Grain

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--236

Page Size--Five columns by 16 inches

Column Width--12 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--18,880\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches |                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>News     | National<br>News | International<br>News |
| July 4, 1972<br>32 pages    | 505.00                     | 102.00           | 37.00                 |
| Sept. 19, 1972<br>40 pages  | 558.25                     | 148.00           | 20.50                 |
| Nov. 7, 1972<br>40 pages    | 723.25                     | 111.25           | 30.50                 |
| Jan. 16, 1973<br>36 pages   | 453.25                     | 113.25           | 18.50                 |
| March 6, 1973<br>48 pages   | 614.75                     | 124.75           | 12.00                 |
| May 15, 1973<br>40 pages    | <u>548.50</u>              | <u>87.50</u>     | <u>0.</u>             |
| Totals                      | <u>3403.00</u>             | <u>687.75</u>    | <u>118.50</u>         |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 18.02%                     | 3.64%            | .63%                  |

Table 7. News-Editorial volume for The High Plains Journal

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--200

Page Size--Five columns by 16 inches

Column Width--11 1/2 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--16,000\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches |                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>News     | National<br>News | International<br>News |
| July 3, 1972<br>28 pages    | 618.00                     | 190.75           | 9.50                  |
| Sept. 18, 1972<br>32 pages  | 492.00                     | 179.25           | 0.                    |
| Nov. 6, 1972<br>32 pages    | 516.50                     | 170.00           | 0.                    |
| Jan. 15, 1973<br>32 pages   | 640.50                     | 176.00           | 11.00                 |
| March 5, 1973<br>40 pages   | 727.00                     | 186.25           | 0.                    |
| May 21, 1973<br>36 pages    | <u>567.75</u>              | <u>212.75</u>    | <u>6.00</u>           |
| Totals                      | <u>3561.75</u>             | <u>1115.00</u>   | <u>26.50</u>          |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 22.26%                     | 6.97%            | .17%                  |

Table 8. News-Editorial Volume for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--88

Page Size--Six columns by 15 inches

Column Width--10 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--7,920\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches |                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>News     | National<br>News | International<br>News |
| July 6, 1972<br>16 pages    | 495.00                     | 255.75           | 0.                    |
| Sept. 21, 1972<br>16 pages  | 529.50                     | 131.50           | 3.00                  |
| Nov. 2, 1972<br>16 pages    | 541.50                     | 108.00           | 0.                    |
| Jan. 18, 1973<br>12 pages   | 391.75                     | 101.00           | 0.                    |
| March 1, 1973<br>16 pages   | 530.00                     | 101.75           | 10.50                 |
| May 17, 1973<br>12 pages    | <u>476.75</u>              | <u>91.50</u>     | <u>0.</u>             |
| Totals                      | <u>2964.50</u>             | <u>789.50</u>    | <u>13.50</u>          |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 37.43%                     | 9.97%            | .17%                  |

Table 9. News-Editorial Volume for the Tri-State Plainsman

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--80

Page Size--Four columns by 14 inches

Column Width--14 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--4,480\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches |                  |                       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>News     | National<br>News | International<br>News |
| May 16, 1972<br>16 pages    | 255.25                     | 82.50            | 11.50                 |
| June 27, 1972<br>12 pages   | 237.25                     | 45.75            | 0.                    |
| July 25, 1972<br>20 pages   | 333.75                     | 114.75           | 5.00                  |
| Aug. 22, 1972<br>12 pages   | 202.00                     | 16.50            | 0.                    |
| June 5, 1973<br>12 pages    | 241.25                     | 26.25            | 0.                    |
| June 19, 1973<br>8 pages    | <u>164.50</u>              | <u>11.50</u>     | <u>0.</u>             |
| Totals                      | <u>1434.00</u>             | <u>297.25</u>    | <u>16.50</u>          |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 32.01%                     | 6.64%            | .37%                  |

## CHAPTER V

### FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

The success of any newspaper ultimately must be judged on its financial condition. Although this study did not examine financial records of the agricultural newspapers studied, inferences can be drawn from the subscription and advertising rates, circulation, and advertising volume. Three of the newspapers appear to be in good to excellent financial condition. These include the Arkansas Valley Journal, Grass and Grain, and The High Plains Journal. The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture seems to be marginally successful. The Tri-State Plainsman was obviously in financial difficulty when the interview took place.

#### Arkansas Valley Journal

A one-year subscription to the Arkansas Valley Journal costs \$5. A two and one-half year subscription is sold for \$10. Single copies are sold for 15 cents each.

The \$5 annual subscription fee went into effect in March, 1973. The previous price was \$4. Five years ago the annual subscription was \$3. Milton Booth, editor and publisher, said no further increases were anticipated in the near future.

The flat rate for retail display advertising in the Arkansas Valley Journal is \$1.60 per column inch. An advertiser is charged

this rate for using 1-30 column inches per month. Retail display advertisers can earn a rate as low as \$1.15 per column inch by using 300 column inches or more per month. The monthly earned rate for local retail display advertising varies according to the scheduled outline:

Table 10. Monthly Earned Rates for Local Retail Advertisers in the Arkansas Valley Journal

| Column Inches Used | Inch Rate Earned |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1-30               | \$1.60           |
| 31-60              | 1.50             |
| 61-90              | 1.40             |
| 91-140             | 1.30             |
| 141-200            | 1.25             |
| 201-300            | 1.20             |
| 300 and over       | 1.15             |

In addition to the monthly earned rate, the AVJ offers annual bulk space contracts to retail display advertisers. Advertisers must contract for the annual space rates in advance.

Table 11. Annual Space Contract Rates for Local Retail Advertisers in the Arkansas Valley Journal

| Column Inches Used | Inch Rate Earned |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 500                | \$1.45           |
| 750                | 1.40             |
| 1000               | 1.35             |
| 2000               | 1.25             |
| 3000               | 1.15             |

The AVJ also gives continuity discounts. Standing advertisements with no more than one copy change per month are charged at the rate of \$1.40 per column inch based on the ad running in 13 consecutive issues, and at \$1.30 per column inch for 26 consecutive issues. An advance contract must be signed before these rates are available to the advertiser.

No extra charge is assessed advertisers if they wish to have their display advertisements run in the classified advertising section. Classified display advertisements qualify for the same discounts as regular display advertising.

National display advertising is run in the Arkansas Valley Journal for \$2.10 per column inch. A 15 per cent commission is paid to advertising agencies placing national ads. Agencies also are given a 2 per cent discount for cash payment of the bill if it is paid by the twentieth day of the month following the month in which the national advertisement was printed. Editor Booth said the AVJ is now beginning to charge the agencies 1.5 per cent interest per month on past due bills. Booth does not have any private national advertising representatives. Some national advertising is received directly from companies and their agencies. The only other national advertising is received from the Colorado Press Service and from American Newspaper Representatives, Inc. As with the other four agricultural newspapers included in this study, national advertising makes up only a small part of the total advertising volume in the Arkansas Valley Journal.

No extra charge is assessed retail or national display advertisers for preferential placement of advertisements in the AVJ. Preferential



placement is given on a first come, first serve basis. Editor Booth believes some of his local advertisers run advertisements consistently to hold the position which they have.

Classified advertising is sold at 10 cents per word for a single insertion, with a minimum of \$1 charged. If a classified ad is run for three or more times, 8 cents per word is charged.

The AVJ promotes advertising sales mainly by promotion of special events, such as FFA and 4-H Weeks, fairs, national agricultural months and weeks, and civic celebrations such as the annual merchants' barbeque for farmers held in La Junta, Colorado. Classified advertising is promoted by a blank form run in the paper each week. Classified advertisers are expected to fill in the blank and mail it to the paper.

The part-time advertising salesman headquartered in Pueblo is paid on a straight commission basis. The full-time salesman in La Junta is paid on a straight salary basis. The AVJ may be missing some advertising sales by not offering the full-time salesman at least a partial commission.

Editor and Publisher Milton Booth says his production costs have risen "pretty rapidly" in the past five years, due mainly to increased payroll and newsprint costs. Two separate price increases for printing his paper were assessed during the year preceding the interview. He expects production costs to continue to rise rapidly in the next five years because of general inflation, scheduled postal increases, and a constantly accelerating pay scale.

However, he says that the paper has experienced "amazing growth" in recent years, especially during the past year. He attributes the growth to a much greater advertising volume, and to a lesser degree circulation growth. He estimates that his gross revenue for the current year might turn out to be double what it was five years ago. Booth believes his paper has a chance for even greater growth in the next five years. He cites no concrete reasons for this view; he notes that the Arkansas Valley Journal has more advertising accounts than ever before and that the accounts were using larger advertisements.

#### Grass and Grain

A one-year subscription to Grass and Grain costs \$4.14. A two-year subscription is sold for \$7.25. Single copies are 25 cents each.

The one-year subscription rate went into effect about five years ago. Prior to the change the rate was \$4 per year. The 14 cent increase was added to cover sales tax. The tax was paid several years by the paper before it was added to the cost of the subscription. Subscriptions sold for only \$1 per year 13 years ago. Publisher Dean Coughenour said a likelihood exists that the subscription rates will be revised in the near future, but no definite plans have been made.

The flat rate for display advertising in G&G is \$2.24 per column inch. This rate, along with all discounts, applies to both retail and national display advertising. The only other display rates available are \$2.10 and \$1.82 per column inch. The \$2.10 rate is for 50 inches of

advertising per month or for an ad in each issue in a three-month period. Advertisers qualify for the \$1.82 rate by using 200 inches of advertising per calendar month or by placing an ad in every issue for a year.

No extra charge is assessed advertisers for classified display advertisements. The same discounts apply to classified display advertising, but Publisher Coughenour says few actually qualify because of the difficulty of an advertiser qualifying for the minimum inch requirements. Grass and Grain does not allow any artwork other than logotypes or any type larger than 14 point within the classified section. Also, only one-column advertisements are allowed.

The only national advertising representative is the Kansas Press Association. No other association or private national representative is used.

There is no extra charge for preferential placement of advertisements. Preferential placement is given based on the longevity of the advertising relationship.

Classified advertising is sold at 8 cents per word for a single insertion. There is a \$1 minimum charge. A classified advertisement can be run for four consecutive times for the price of three normal insertions. Grass and Grain charges an additional 25 cents if the advertiser has to be billed for the classified advertisement.

Coughenour says he does not use many methods to promote display advertising. He does have two full-time advertising salesmen who are paid a salary plus commission. The salesmen split (unevenly) a 10 per

cent commission on the gross advertising revenue over \$1,000 per week. The head salesman receives two-thirds of the commission, and the other salesman receives one-third.

Grass and Grain has a healthy classified advertising section. Classified ads are heavily promoted, especially to retail advertisers. Direct mail and telephone solicitations are used, and a blank is printed in the paper for prospective classified advertisers' use.

Coughenour says his production costs have increased rapidly in the past five years, citing increased costs of newsprint, labor and postage. He expects production costs to continue a rapid rise in the next five years, perhaps even more rapid than in the previous five years.

However, he feels that in the past five years the percentage of profit has increased more than the general inflation and more than the increase in his gross business volume. He does not feel that the next five years will allow the same increase in profitability. He says profits probably will be fortunate to hold even over the next five years because it will be harder to control some expenses.

#### The High Plains Journal

A one-year subscription to The High Plains Journal costs \$7. A 27-month subscription is sold for \$14, and a 42-month subscription is sold for \$21. Single copies are sold for 15 cents each.

The one-year subscription rate has gone up several times in the past five years, according to Editor Ray Pierce. The cost was raised

from \$5.50 to the current \$7 about a year prior to the interview. Pierce says no further upward revisions in price will be put in effect if they can be avoided.

As mentioned earlier, The High Plains Journal publishes four regional editions. The flat rate for retail display advertising varies according to the editions' circulation. The flat rate per column inch varies from a low of \$2.17 for the Oklahoma-Texas edition to \$5.39 for the Western Kansas edition. (Since the Western Kansas edition was the one examined for purposes of this study, the breakdown of the retail display advertising rates which follow are for this edition only.)

By purchasing a 12-month bulk contract in advance, a retail display advertiser can earn a column inch rate as low as \$5.04.

Table 12. Annual Space Contract Rates for Local Retail Advertisers in The High Plains Journal (Western Kansas Edition)

| Column Inches Used | Inch Rate Earned |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 200                | \$5.32           |
| 400                | 5.25             |
| 600                | 5.18             |
| 800                | 5.11             |
| 1000               | 5.04             |

Display advertisers also can earn discounts for multiple insertions. These discounts are in addition to the bulk contract discounts. A 4 per cent discount is given for 13 consecutive multiple insertions, a 5 per cent discount for 17 consecutive insertions, an

8 per cent discount for 26 consecutive insertions, a 10 per cent discount for 39 consecutive insertions, and a 12 per cent discount for 52 consecutive insertions.

Classified display advertising is charged at the rate of \$7.50 per column inch. This rate applies to both retail and national advertisers. All classified and classified display advertisements are run in all four editions. A rate of \$6.50 per column inch can be earned for a 13-week consecutive contract, and a rate of \$5.50 can be earned for a 26-week contract. No art, photographs or special effects can be used in classified display advertisements, and only two styles of type can be used. The maximum typeface size that can be used is 14 point.

National display advertising can be run in The High Plains Journal (all four editions) at a flat rate of \$13.72 per column inch. A discount rate as low as \$12.32 per column inch can be earned with a contract for 1,000 column inches per year. A 15 per cent commission on the gross billing is paid to recognized advertising agencies that place display advertising in the HPJ. Agencies also are given a 2 per cent discount of the net allowed for payment on or before the tenth day of the month. The paper has four national advertising representatives, one each in New York, New York; Neshanic, New Jersey; Chicago, Illinois; and Tiburon, California.

The HPJ does not charge extra for preferential placement of either retail or national display advertising.

Regular classified advertising is sold at 23 cents per word, with a minimum charge of \$2.50. Discounts are given for regular

classified ads by reducing the per word per issue rate 1 cent for each additional consecutive insertion of the ad, but the best rate that can be earned is a six-time consecutive insertion rate--18 cents per word.

Advertising salesmen for The High Plains Journal are paid on a straight commission basis; the commission percentage remains the same no matter what volume of advertising the salesmen sell. Display advertising sales also are promoted by direct mail efforts and by the 15 special issues printed each year. These special issues pertain to such things and events as state fairs, livestock shows, dairy month, agricultural equipment previews, horse shows, and special crops. Classified advertising is promoted by direct mail, by offering a free ad to subscribers, and by printing an order insertion blank in each issue.

Publisher Joe Berkely says production costs have been going up steadily over the past five years because of increased costs of wages, paper and machinery. He expects production costs to continue to rise fairly constantly over the next five years because of these same items.

He says the operation of the HPJ has been profitable over the past five years. Net profit is projected ahead at a certain figure, and profits are expected not to exceed this figure. Because of this arrangement for sound financial management, he does not expect the profit margin to increase over the next five years.

#### The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

A one-year subscription to this paper cost \$3 at the time of the interview. A two-year subscription was sold for \$5. Single copies are not sold; they are given complimentary to occasional requests.

The \$3 annual subscription fee has been in effect since 1963. Editor Helen Neese said tentative plans were in effect to raise the fee in the second half of 1973, but the price had not been set. Reasons given for the anticipated subscription price were increased paper, labor, and mailing costs.

For several reasons, Editor Neese did not want the display advertising rates of The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture published. This request has been honored.

No extra charge is assessed advertisers if they wish to run a display advertisement within the classified section. No discounts are offered for classified display advertising.

A commission of 15 per cent of the gross billing is paid to recognized advertising agencies for national display advertising. A 2 per cent cash discount on the net billing is given to advertising agencies for bills paid within ten days of the invoice date. The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture uses only the Missouri Press Association and American Newspaper Representatives, Inc., as national advertising representatives.

The JLA does not charge extra for preferential placement of retail or national display advertising.

Classified advertising is sold at 10 cents per word with a minimum order of \$1. No discounts are given for classified advertising.

Advertising sales are encouraged by paying the full-time salesman a commission based on his individual sales volume. The commission supplements a guaranteed salary. The JLA also promotes display



advertising by running special issues concerning several agriculturally related weeks. Classified advertising is encouraged by running promotions in the paper and by solicitation of prospective advertisers for the special issues.

Editor Neese says the past five years have seen production costs rising. Some costs had risen gradually, and salaries to employees had gone up more rapidly. She expects production costs to rise rapidly in the next five years due in large part to increased printing and mailing costs.

#### Tri-State Plainsman

At the time of the interview a one-year subscription to the TSP cost \$2. A three-year subscription was sold for \$5. Single copies were sold for 10 cents. These rates had been in effect since the paper was established in 1972. No change in these rates were anticipated.

Both retail and national display advertising in the Tri-State Plainsman sold for \$2.50 per column inch. Classified display advertising was sold for \$4.65 per column inch. An effort was made to obtain information about discounts for display advertising, but this information was not made available.

No national advertising representatives had been used by the TSP up until the time of the interview. No discernible national advertisements were run in any of the six issues examined.

As with the other agricultural newspapers, the Tri-State Plainsman did not charge extra for preferential placement of display

advertisements, except for the higher charge for display classified advertising.

Regular classified advertising was run in the TSP for 15 cents per word for a single insertion, with a minimum of \$3 charged. Classifieds were run twice for a total of 27 cents per word; if an ad ran three or more times, the charge was 12 cents per word per insertion. Classified ads which were telephoned to the paper were charged an additional 25 cents for billing and handling. In early issues of the TSP a special offer was printed whereby a classified advertisement could be run two times for the regular price of a single insertion. This practice was not being followed when the interview took place.

No commissions were being paid to advertising salesmen at the time of the interview. Commissions formerly were paid. One advertising promotion employed was the use of outside specialty advertising salesmen. A private firm in Missouri bought advertising space in the TSP and in turn resold the space to advertisers in the region. Much of this space sold was of a cooperative type, whereby a single theme such as meat promotion was stressed. The theme was developed in the main part of the advertisement, and small "business card" type messages were included for several different advertisers.

The production costs had remained about constant through the first year's operation of the Tri-State Plainsman. However, Tri-State Plainsman, Inc., President Fred Hale expected production costs to rise because of general inflation, increased newsprint costs and scheduled postal rate increases.

Hale said that difficulties had been experienced in making the operation of the TSP profitable. The paper had been mailed free of charge by bulk rate postage to rural boxholders for the first eight or nine months of its existence. It had qualified for second-class postage rates only two or three months prior to the interview, and Hale said it was being operated on about an "even keel" basis after that time. He said additional circulation and a good full-time editor and manager were needed if the operation were to become profitable in the future.

#### Comparison of Advertising Volume

The advertising volume of the five newspapers has been computed by examining six issues of each newspaper. These six issues are the same as those used to compute the volume of news as discussed in Chapter IV.

Again it must be noted that each of the five issues of each newspaper examined were published during similar time periods except for the Tri-State Plainsman. Since the TSP was published biweekly at the time of the interview and since only scattered back issues were available, exact comparisons of advertising volume between this newspaper and the four others should be avoided. But as with the volume of news, the figures for advertising volume for the Tri-State Plainsman have been included.

Advertising was split into three categories: local/regional display advertising, national display advertising, and classified advertising. Promotional advertisements run on behalf of the newspapers were included in the breakdown.

It is important to note that classified display advertising was counted either as local/regional display advertising or national display advertising, and not as regular classified advertising. This was done to give a clearer indication of the revenue generated, as classified display advertising is billed at the same rate as regular display advertising in most of the newspapers studied. It also is important to note that some advertising billed as classified display advertising has been included in the regular classified advertising category. This is because there was no way to distinguish between some classified display advertising and regular classified advertising. Some classified display ads were obvious because of larger typefaces, logotypes, and general format. Other ads in the classified sections placed by commercial advertisers were set up exactly as regular classified advertisements, making it impossible to determine if these ads were billed at regular classified rates or at classified display rates.

Tables 13-17 (at the end of this chapter) show the date of each newspaper examined; the advertising categorized into local/regional display advertisements, national display advertisements, and classified advertisements; and the percentage of the total column inches occupied by each category in the composited six issues of each newspaper.

All five newspapers studied had by far more local/regional display advertising than any other type. Regular classified advertising was the second largest category in all five newspapers, and national display advertising was third in all cases.

The amount of local/regional advertising ranged from a low of 41.41 per cent of the total column inches in The Journal of Livestock

and Agriculture to a high of 69.89 per cent for Grass and Grain. The Tri-State Plainsman contained 52.99 per cent local/regional advertising, The High Plains Journal contained 54.03 per cent, and the Arkansas Valley Journal contained 60.47 per cent.

The amount of national display advertising ranged from none in the Tri-State Plainsman to a high of 1.25 per cent of the total column inches in the Arkansas Valley Journal. The other papers and the percentage of national display advertising in each are The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, 0.28 per cent; Grass and Grain, 0.71 per cent; and The High Plains Journal, 0.86 per cent.

The amount of regular classified advertising ranged from a low of 1.40 per cent of the total column inches in The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture to a high of 10.77 per cent in The High Plains Journal. The other papers and the percentage of regular classified advertising in each are the Tri-State Plainsman, 1.88 per cent; the Arkansas Valley Journal, 1.89 per cent; and Grass and Grain, 3.82 per cent.

When the total percentage of advertising in each newspaper is calculated, figures show The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture with the lowest percentage of advertising with 43.09 per cent of the total column inches, and Grass and Grain with the highest at 74.42 per cent. The other newspapers and the total percentage of advertising in each are the Tri-State Plainsman, 54.87 per cent; the Arkansas Valley Journal, 63.61 per cent; and The High Plains Journal, 65.66 per cent.

Table 13. Advertising Volume for the Arkansas Valley Journal

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--148

Page Size--Six columns by 14 1/2 inches

Column Width--10 1/2 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--12,876\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size  | Expressed in column inches    |                         |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | Local/Regional<br>Display Ads | National<br>Display Ads | Classified<br>Ads |
| July 6, 1972<br>20 pages   | 953.50                        | 57.00                   | 39.50             |
| Sept. 21, 1972<br>20 pages | 950.00                        | 22.50                   | 48.50             |
| Nov. 2, 1972<br>32 pages   | 1924.75                       | 0.                      | 36.00             |
| Jan. 18, 1973<br>24 pages  | 1266.00                       | 23.50                   | 38.00             |
| March 1, 1973<br>24 pages  | 1311.00                       | 1.50                    | 39.00             |
| May 17, 1973<br>28 pages   | <u>1380.50</u>                | <u>57.00</u>            | <u>42.00</u>      |
| Totals                     | <u>7785.75</u>                | <u>161.50</u>           | <u>243.00</u>     |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches* | 60.47%                        | 1.25%                   | 1.89%             |

Table 14. Advertising Volume for Grass and Grain

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--236

Page Size--Five columns by 16 inches

Column Width--12 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--18,880\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches    |                         |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>Display Ads | National<br>Display Ads | Classified<br>Ads |
| July 4, 1972<br>32 pages    | 1778.75                       | 0.                      | 61.00             |
| Sept. 19, 1972<br>40 pages  | 2168.50                       | 35.00                   | 145.50            |
| Nov. 7, 1972<br>40 pages    | 2175.00                       | 0.                      | 67.25             |
| Jan. 16, 1973<br>36 pages   | 2029.25                       | 40.50                   | 109.50            |
| March 6, 1973<br>48 pages   | 2777.25                       | 0.                      | 198.50            |
| May 15, 1973<br>40 pages    | <u>2267.00</u>                | <u>58.00</u>            | <u>139.75</u>     |
| Totals                      | <u>13195.75</u>               | <u>133.50</u>           | <u>721.50</u>     |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 69.89%                        | .71%                    | 3.82%             |

Table 15. Advertising Volume for The High Plains Journal

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--200

Page Size--Five columns by 16 inches

Column Width--11 1/2 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--16,000\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size  | Expressed in column inches    |                         |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | Local/Regional<br>Display Ads | National<br>Display Ads | Classified<br>Ads |
| July 3, 1972<br>28 pages   | 1058.50                       | 47.75                   | 178.75            |
| Sept. 18, 1972<br>32 pages | 1440.00                       | 4.00                    | 308.75            |
| Nov. 6, 1972<br>32 pages   | 1541.25                       | 0.                      | 195.25            |
| Jan. 15, 1973<br>32 pages  | 1306.00                       | 0.                      | 277.25            |
| March 5, 1973<br>40 pages  | 1649.25                       | 49.00                   | 421.25            |
| May 21, 1973<br>36 pages   | <u>1649.50</u>                | <u>37.00</u>            | <u>342.25</u>     |
| Totals                     | <u>8644.50</u>                | <u>137.75</u>           | <u>1723.50</u>    |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches* | 54.03%                        | .86%                    | 10.77%            |



Table 16. Advertising Volume for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--88

Page Size--Six columns by 15 inches

Column Width--10 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--7,920\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches    |                         |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>Display Ads | National<br>Display Ads | Classified<br>Ads |
| July 6, 1972<br>16 pages    | 538.50                        | 3.00                    | 25.00             |
| Sept. 21, 1972<br>16 pages  | 603.50                        | 3.00                    | 21.00             |
| Nov. 2, 1972<br>16 pages    | 619.00                        | 0.                      | 20.00             |
| Jan. 18, 1973<br>12 pages   | 460.50                        | 4.50                    | 13.25             |
| March 1, 1973<br>16 pages   | 670.00                        | 5.00                    | 17.00             |
| May 17, 1973<br>12 pages    | <u>388.50</u>                 | <u>7.00</u>             | <u>15.00</u>      |
| Totals                      | <u>3280.00</u>                | <u>22.50</u>            | <u>111.25</u>     |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 41.41%                        | .28%                    | 1.40%             |

Table 17. Advertising Volume for the Tri-State Plainsman

Total Pages in All Six Issues Studied--80

Page Size--Four columns by 14 inches

Column Width--14 picas

Total Column Inches in All Six Issues--4,480\*

| Date of Issue<br>and Size   | Expressed in column inches    |                         |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | Local/Regional<br>Display Ads | National<br>Display Ads | Classified<br>Ads |
| May 16, 1972<br>16 pages    | 465.50                        | 0.                      | 14.00             |
| June 27, 1972<br>12 pages   | 313.50                        | 0.                      | 14.00             |
| July 25, 1972<br>20 pages   | 609.00                        | 0.                      | 22.50             |
| Aug. 22, 1972<br>12 pages   | 412.75                        | 0.                      | 9.50              |
| June 5, 1973<br>12 pages    | 346.00                        | 0.                      | 8.00              |
| June 19, 1973<br>8 pages    | <u>227.00</u>                 | <u>0.</u>               | <u>16.00</u>      |
| Totals                      | <u>2373.75</u>                | <u>0.</u>               | <u>84.00</u>      |
| % of Total<br>Col. Inches * | 52.99%                        | 0.0%                    | 1.88%             |

## CHAPTER VI

### SURVEY OF CHIEF PERSONNEL

The editors and publishers of the five agricultural newspapers studied vary widely in background, experience, and age. Most have formal training in journalism.

#### Arkansas Valley Journal

Milton Booth, editor and publisher of the Arkansas Valley Journal, has been a journalist since 1929, with several small breaks when he pursued other business activities. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1928 from the University of Southern California. The next year he bought the Florence Citizen, then a Colorado daily paper.

He became editor of the Arkansas Valley Journal in 1949 immediately following a period of self-employment in the wholesale oil business.

When asked for the qualifications he felt were most important for being editor of his paper, he listed training in agricultural journalism, a farm background, familiarity with the territory, and several years experience.

He believes that regional agricultural newspapers will continue to be successful in the near future, but believes reader interest is built around the livestock reports such as he uses in the AVJ. Without this type of approach, he feels it is difficult to make regional agricultural newspapers successful.

He does not believe that corporate farming threatens his operations in terms of a decreasing farm population and thereby a possible reduction in the circulation of the AVJ. He says the nature of the territory does not lend itself to corporate farming. Likewise he is not too concerned with the general trend of a decreasing farm population. He believes the trend has now slowed, and he cites that his circulation is now 50 per cent larger than five years ago.

Booth does not feel any great threats from competing media. He says most of his business is generated by the paper's staff and that this is not business that is taken away from other media. He does believe some advertising revenue may be going to area radio stations which he otherwise could get if the stations were not in operation. He does not feel that television is much of a threat to his advertising revenue because of its high cost; however, he believes some national automobile advertising has been lost in recent years to television.

When asked for the main advantage his paper offered to readers over other agricultural publications, he cited the localized approach to agricultural matters, especially the livestock reports. He also stresses the localized advantage for advertisers in his paper. Local retail advertisers can reach a wide rural audience that cannot be reached by local daily papers.

Booth believes there are some problems in publishing a paper such as his. One of the problems involves getting and keeping qualified employees. Another is the problem of high costs of covering a wide geographical territory. The problem of educating advertisers to the advantages of a specialized rural audience is another. He also cites

the problem of competing with advertising rates of the daily papers and agricultural publications covering his entire state.

Booth says he is experiencing difficulty finding adequate supplies of newsprint for his paper, but up to the time of the interview he had not had to cut back the size of any of his issues.

### Grass and Grain

Dean Coughenour, publisher of Grass and Grain began journalism work in 1955. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in history in 1951 from McPherson College (Kansas). He became interested in journalism while in college. He worked as a "stringer" writing mostly sports while in college. He also worked on weekly newspapers during summers between academic years. He continued doing stringer work when he became a high school English teacher. He eventually became editor of the Oberlin Herald in western Kansas.

He purchased G&G in 1958 and worked as its editor while also handling commercial job printing. In recent years he has relinquished his duties as editor to concentrate on the overall operation of Ag Press, Inc.

The qualifications Coughenour sees as important for being editor of Grass and Grain include a background in livestock and some journalistic exposure. But most important, he feels the editor should be someone with good writing ability and a great deal of general knowledge.

He believes regional agricultural publications such as Grass and Grain will continue to be successful in the future if they are well managed. Coughenour does not fear that corporate farming poses any

threat to his operation. He does believe he must compensate for decreases in the farm population by having a larger geographical area of circulation. He says that former fringe areas of circulation have become primary circulation areas for G&G.

He does not believe he has any major competition in his primary circulation area as far as subscription sales go. However, he thinks that radio and television advertising relating to regional messages may be providing some competition for advertising dollars.

Coughenour has definite feelings about the advantages which his paper gives his readers over other agricultural publications:

The commercial advertisers, the livestock markets and the classifieds are important to them (readers) commercially, and they are actually of news value to the subscriber. We get there early and we supply them with a lot of it--eight to ten pages of classifieds, probably four or five pages of livestock listings--all of which a great many of them are going to read almost line for line.<sup>12</sup>

He believes his paper also offers much for advertisers. The advantages to advertisers which he stresses include good readership among subscribers and the ability to demonstrate the fact, and a late scheduling deadline for advertisements. Grass and Grain has a 9 a.m. Monday advertising scheduling deadline for the paper published on Tuesday.

Coughenour cites several problem areas in publishing his paper. These include postal delivery problems, grossing enough money to pay his personnel what he feels they should be paid, and the difficulty of making jobs on the paper attractive enough to get good people.

He attempts to keep good employees by contributing to a profit-sharing program. For about six years he has been contributing the

equivalent of 15 per cent of employees' income into the program. Employees become eligible for the program after they become 21 years of age and complete two years with the corporation.

Coughenour says he has been having difficulty finding adequate supplies of newsprint. So far he has not printed smaller issues of his paper because of the shortage, but he has refused some commercial printing business because of it. He believes newsprint will become even more difficult to obtain in sufficient quantity in future years and sees this as possibly disastrous.

### The High Plains Journal

Ray Pierce, editor of The High Plains Journal, has been a journalist for 32 years. He received a bachelor's degree in English in the mid-1930s from Coe College (Iowa). Journalism classes were taken by Pierce as a part of his curriculum.

Pierce became editor of the HPJ in 1947 immediately following his resignation as editor of the daily paper in Liberal, Kansas.

The qualifications Pierce sees as important for being editor of his paper include a good background in English, a knowledge of western Kansas agriculture, and a personality which allows one to get along with other persons and to understand their problems. This latter point is important so the editor can relate to the problems. Pierce says, for instance, a government regulation may be passed in Washington by people who have figured it out with a pencil, but it may fail to work on a western Kansas farm. "We have to find that problem and raise cane about it," he says.<sup>13</sup>

Pierce believes that regional agricultural publications will continue to be successful in the near future. He believes the day of the general farm organization is coming to a close, due largely to improvements in recent years of the commodity organizations. He says regional agricultural publications can be successful by serving farm families on a family living basis and on a commodity basis.

He believes that corporate farming does pose somewhat of a threat to the success of regional agricultural publications. He believes corporate farming does not belong. He says it removes people from the farms and does not add any benefits to farming, while it adds to the problems of the cities by the infusion of displaced farm families. He also is concerned about a generally decreasing farm population, but says if there is proper development in the areas of pricing and profits the problem will take care of itself.

Pierce believes the biggest competition to subscription and advertising sales comes from the statewide agricultural publications because advertisers have been sold on the idea that a state publication will do a proper job of getting the message to farmers across an entire state.

He believes The High Plains Journal offers readers several advantages over other agricultural publications. These advantages include fresher news since the paper is a weekly, a grass roots approach to farm news, and the editorial policy of catering to the family farm operation. He believes monthly farm magazines are likely to move away from this approach to a "how to do it" approach that has a "preaching" tone. Pierce says, "What we try to do is to put in the paper the sort of things that two farmers meeting down at the sale ring will talk about."



He also believes the HPJ offers definite advantages to advertisers. He says many readers in the primary circulation area handle a lot of money in their farming operations and they have larger spendable incomes than farmers in areas of the country that generally have smaller acreages.

Pierce cites several problem areas in publishing The High Plains Journal. These include getting and keeping qualified personnel for the paper, a short supply of newsprint, problems with the Post Office, and the time-distance factor for editorial and advertising personnel in covering the primary circulation areas. He sees one problem which may become even more of a problem in the future--decreasing national advertising sales because of a cloudy future concerning the availability of farm machinery, planting materials and raw materials used to manufacture and produce these items.

The editor says the HPJ has had difficulty in obtaining newsprint, but had not published smaller issues because of the shortage. He thinks it will become increasingly difficult to get newsprint because of ecological pressures on the paper mills and because many of the paper mills are old and new ones are not being built.

#### The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture

Helen Neese, editor of The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, has been a working journalist for 19 years. She received a bachelor's degree in business, with courses in journalism and advertising, from Tulsa University (Oklahoma). After graduation she worked in the business world and eventually was asked to do some part-time work for a radio station in Saint Joseph, Missouri. This led to a full-time position in

advertising coordination work with the same station. She then became an executive secretary of the Saint Joseph Livestock Marketing Foundation, the job she had immediately prior to becoming editor of JLA in 1964.

Mrs. Neese says qualities needed to qualify one to edit a publication such as the JLA include a farm background, business background, a good grasp of the English language, and some journalistic training.

She believes regional agricultural newspapers will continue to be successful in the near future because of their importance to commercial agricultural advertisers in getting a wider area and market to which to appeal. She also believes these papers are especially important to farmers and ranchers as a marketing and buying tool during sale seasons.

Mrs. Neese is not concerned about corporate farming in terms of possibly reducing circulation of the JLA, but she does express general regrets about the possibility of increased corporate farming:

I don't think of it in terms of circulation, but in terms of the farmer. The wholesome people on the farms--when they become a corporate interest (big business)--I think we have lost a part of America.<sup>15</sup>

The editor is not concerned about any other particular medium or publication in terms of competition for her newspaper, but she is concerned about anyone who compromises on advertising rates. For instance, she expresses displeasure about one publication that gives a free half page of advertising for each full page that is purchased.

Mrs. Neese believes The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture gives its readers certain definite advantages over other agricultural publications. She stresses the personalized approach of the editorial

policy, citing the fact that about 90 per cent of the subscribers are patrons of the Saint Joseph Livestock Market. The editorial policy is keyed around covering this market thoroughly by such things as daily market reports, photographs of the patrons selling their livestock at the market, sales results, and weekly market summaries. She believes the main advantage offered to advertisers in the JLA is the fact that subscribers are the people who have the money to buy the goods and services offered.

The main problem the editor sees in publishing the paper is one of scattered circulation. She says retail advertisers cannot get good advertising saturation when the limited circulation covers such a relatively large area. Another problem that Mrs. Neese cites is ever-increasing salaries for employees of the paper, especially for part-time helpers such as the women who help prepare the paper for mailing.

Like the other editors, she says the JLA has had difficulty in obtaining adequate supplies of newsprint, but at the time of the interview she had never cut the size of the paper because of the shortage. She believes newsprint will become even more difficult to obtain in the future.

#### Tri-State Plainsman

Because of the vacancy of the editor's position at the time of the interview, the survey of personnel of the TSP could not be done as extensively as it was for the other newspapers, but Fred Hale, president of the publishing corporation did provide some information.

Hale believed certain qualifications are necessary for the editor of the TSP, including journalistic training, a background in country journalism, advertising sales ability, and photographic ability. He does not believe an agricultural background is as important to the editor as is good basic reporting ability and the ability to understand and report the agricultural scene.

He believed that regional agricultural publications would continue to be successful in the future because he felt such publications served a real need for both subscribers and advertisers.

Hale did feel that corporate farming hurts areas such as his. He felt that rural areas need to maintain a stable population, citing the fact that agriculture can still produce corporate-wise but that a decreasing rural population hurts the whole rural economy: "The greatest loss that our area and a lot of other rural areas have is the loss of people."<sup>16</sup> However, he believed that the trend of a decreasing rural population was slowing and was in the process of stabilizing.

Even though The High Plains Journal circulates in the same areas as the Tri-State Plainsman, Hale did not believe that any competing publications hurt advertising or subscription sales of the TSP. Hale believed the main competitors for advertising were the area radio and television stations.

Hale believed his paper offered readers the advantage of localized agricultural news and feature coverage. He felt that advertisers received the advantage of circulation concentrated in a local area, but conceded that circulation needed to be built to further interest advertisers.

The biggest problem in publishing the TSP mentioned by Hale was developing enough revenue to justify hiring adequate personnel.

He said obtaining adequate newsprint was difficult, but this had not dictated that smaller issues of his paper be printed. He says newsprint will become even more difficult to obtain in the future because of a paper machine shortage at the mills, citing the fact that a two-year lag exists between the time a new paper machine is ordered and the time it is installed and ready for production. He also pointed out that newsprint consumption was higher throughout the nation than ever before.

#### Composite Job Satisfaction Opinions of Editors

The editors of the agricultural newspapers were asked several questions pertaining to job satisfaction. To encourage candid answers the editors were assured their answers would be used only in the context of a composite view. Only four editors were asked the questions since the editor's position was vacant at the time on the Tri-State Plainsman. Most of the interview concerning Grass and Grain was done with Publisher Dean Coughenour. The editor of G&G interviewed concerning job satisfaction was Frank Buchman, a 1972 agricultural education graduate of Kansas State University.

The editors were asked: "Do you find your work as editor interesting and challenging, or would you describe it in some other way, and why?" All four editors indicated they were satisfied with their jobs. Some of the reasons cited by the editors included the opportunity to work and meet with good people, an appreciation on the part of readers for the service offered through the newspaper, the awards one editor had received from

various groups for service performed to agriculture, the dedication of one editor to promoting livestock and farming, the varied scope and type of people and activities dealt with, the challenge of telling the story of agriculture, and the opportunity to deal with many different types of agriculture.

The editors then were asked to name the job they would most like to have in the field of journalism, including their present job. One editor said he preferred his present job to any other journalism job. Another replied that he presently had no desire for any other job, but that he might prefer to edit an equine publication in the near future. Another editor said he would prefer to be a free-lance writer who would have the freedom to tell the "real story" of his section of the country and its people, but he noted this probably was not economically feasible. Another editor expressed a desire to edit an agricultural marketing publication which would utilize field men who would report marketing information from a wide geographical area.

The editors then were asked if any job outside the field of journalism would interest them more than a journalism job. Only one editor responded affirmatively, stating that he liked to teach and would prefer a "relaxed teaching situation," which he clarified to mean a teaching position wherein the teacher would not be subject to unnecessary interference from administrators or others outside the classroom.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The regional general interest agricultural newspapers studied show a wide variance in their approach to success. But reduced to fundamentals, the relative success of each newspaper depends not so much on one proven formula, but on the same ingredients as for most businesses--sound financial management and strong promotion.

Two common denominators regarding editorial policy were found among the five newspapers. First, all publishers and editors surveyed - said their news policies focused on local/regional news. This was borne out by the examination of copies of each newspaper. Of the news printed by each paper, at least three-fourths was local/regional news in all cases. Second, all editors and publishers expressed a true concern for the agricultural people they served with their newspapers. Most of the personnel said the editorial policies were keyed to informing and helping farmers and ranchers with small to medium size operations.

As evidenced by the increasing circulation over the past six to seven years, regional general interest agricultural newspapers apparently are becoming more popular. Of the five newspapers studied, only the Tri-State Plainsman did not show healthy growth. And since the TSP was only in its second year of operation at the time of the study, future growth is a possibility.

All newspapers studied printed much more local/regional advertising than national advertising. However, three of the newspapers--Grass and

Grain, The High Plains Journal and The Arkansas Valley Journal--printed quite a bit of cooperative advertising. For example, a national equipment manufacturer will provide the advertisement, and several local dealers will cooperate in purchasing the advertising space. These dealers have their names and addresses printed as a part of the advertisement. Grass and Grain has more of this type advertising than any of the other newspapers.

Grass and Grain and The High Plains Journal consistently have a large volume of classified advertising. Ten or more pages of classified advertising is not unusual in either newspaper. Much of this consists of retail classified display advertising.

Both the Arkansas Valley Journal and The High Plains Journal have much success by promoting advertising through special issues. Each newspaper has several regularly scheduled special issues.

Three of the five newspapers studied appear to be in good to excellent financial condition. These include the Arkansas Valley Journal, Grass and Grain and The High Plains Journal. The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture is marginally successful, and the Tri-State Plainsman was in obvious financial difficulty when the interview was done.

Based on the six issues examined, the Arkansas Valley Journal would gross more than \$2000 per week from local/regional display advertising if figured at the flat rate. The paid circulation of more than 6000 must be considered healthy since much of the primary circulation area is sparsely populated.



Grass and Grain would have gross advertising revenue of nearly \$5000 per week from local/regional display advertising if figured at the flat rate. Circulation is healthy at about 14,000.

The Western Kansas edition of The High Plains Journal would gross more than \$7700 per week from local/regional display advertising if figured at the flat rate. The Western Kansas edition has a circulation of about 14,000. The \$7 per year subscription rate is the highest of the five newspapers studied; this generates additional revenue for the HPJ.

The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture is successful in terms of circulation, with more than 13,500 subscribers, but is not as financially successful as it might be. The annual subscription rate of \$3 probably is too low to net much, if any, money for the paper. Although the advertising rates for this paper were not made known, the rates would have to be high if a great deal of revenue is realized from advertising. Based on the six issues examined, only about 550 column inches of local/regional display advertising is printed per week.

Several possible reasons exist for the financial difficulties experienced by the owners of the Tri-State Plainsman. First, the circulation grew to only about 1100 after it was mailed free to all area rural boxholders for several months. This could have resulted from several things, but certainly the existence of The High Plains Journal in the same area for many years prior to the establishment of the TSP did not help. Second, the local/regional display advertising rate of \$2.50 per column inch probably was too high to encourage advertisers since circulation was so low. Another factor which may

have contributed to the lack of success for the TSP is the very arrangement under which it was formed--a cooperative effort by the owners of several area newspapers. These owners may have failed to put enough effort into the TSP because of a preoccupation with their main enterprises.

Most editors indicate satisfaction with their jobs, but they point out several problem areas in editing and publishing regional general interest agricultural newspapers. These problems include the newsprint shortage, getting and keeping qualified personnel, adequately covering the primary circulation area in terms of news and advertising sales, scattered circulation as a problem for advertising sales and newspaper delivery problems with the U. S. Post Office.

It is hoped this study of regional general interest agricultural newspapers will lead to more studies. As with most exploratory efforts, this study probably raises more questions than it answers.

Additional information is needed about the content of the papers--the specific sources of news, why certain types of news are printed, how the editors decide which news will be printed, if and how much news is printed for commercially advantageous benefits to the publishers, the quality of the content and the journalistic abilities of the editors and reporters.

More information is needed about the readers of the newspapers--average age and other demographic characteristics, where they reside in proximity to the newspaper location, if they subscribe mainly for the news-editorial matter or the advertising, what parts of the paper they

read and don't read, what they would like to see in the papers that is not now in them and if they patronize the advertisers.

More research needs to be done about the advertisers--if and how they benefit from advertising in such newspapers, if they advertise in other media and how they decide when and how much to advertise.

Research is needed about the degree of popularity of these agricultural newspapers--exactly why they are popular, why some are more popular than others and if the personalities of the editors, publishers and reporters play a role in the popularity of the papers.

The business practices of the newspapers need to be studied--accounting and billing methods, how profits can be increased and how production methods can be improved.

More study is needed about the layout and graphics of the newspapers--which papers are more graphically appealing, if the graphics and design affect readership and if so in what ways.

Another phase which could be studied is the possibility for establishing more regional general interest agricultural newspapers. Many agricultural areas are not served by such publications. In view of the demonstrated success of some of the newspapers in this study, perhaps more publishers should move into this area. This may be especially significant for publishers of rural weekly newspapers which are in financial danger because of a decreasing population.

The potential for more newspapers of this type should especially be considered now when agricultural income is at record levels. According to an Associated Press news story in late September, 1973, farm income in Kansas was at an all-time high. The story reported: "Kansas

farmers received a record \$3.1 billion in 1972, an increase in income of 25 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

And this trend of greater agricultural income and profits is not confined to Kansas. A news story in the October 29, 1973, issue of Newsweek reports the trend throughout the United States:

. . . the boom that began in 1972 is likely to continue for years with little interruption. Farm profits, which hit a record of \$19.7 billion last year, are expected to rise again to \$24.5 billion in 1973, for a total jump of 61 per cent in just two years. What's more, profits are expected to rise again in 1974. With that kind of money to spend, farmers are ordering new tractors and other equipment at a fast clip. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Such a situation seems ideal for establishing regional general interest agricultural newspapers. Farmers have more money to spend on subscriptions and farm equipment, among other things. And advertisers should be anxious to advertise when farmers have sufficient income with which to purchase more goods and services.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for The High Plains Journal, 13 September 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard Bray, ed., Ayer Directory of Publications 1973 (Philadelphia: Ayer Press, 1973).

<sup>3</sup>Jean Greenlee, ed., "Plainsman Sold," The Kansas Publisher, September 1973, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>The Old Spirit In The New High Plains (Dodge City, Kansas: High Plains Publishers, Inc., 1972).

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Helen Neese, The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, Saint Joseph, Missouri, 19 June 1973.

<sup>6</sup>Greenlee, ed., "Plainsman Sold," p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>The Tri-State Plainsman, 16 May 1972, 13 June 1972, 27 June 1972, 25 July 1972, 22 August 1972, 5 June 1973, 19 June 1973.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Dean Coughenour, Ag Press, Inc., Manhattan, Kansas, 14 August 1973.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Ray Pierce, High Plains Publishers, Inc., Dodge City, Kansas, 25 June 1973.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with Helen Neese, 19 June 1973.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Dean Coughenour, 14 August 1973.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Ray Pierce, 25 June 1973.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Helen Neese, 19 June 1973.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with Fred Hale, Tri-State Plainsman, Inc., Atwood, Kansas, 26 June 1973.

<sup>17</sup>"Farmers Income up 25% in 72," Manhattan (Kansas) Mercury,  
26 September 1973.

<sup>18</sup>"A Bumper Harvest of Prices," Newsweek, 29 October 1973, p. 91.

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U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for Grass and Grain, 1966 through 1972.

U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for The High Plains Journal, 1963 through 1973.

U. S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, 1963 through 1972.

## A P P E N D I X



Name of Publication \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Person Interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION A--General Information and Physical Characteristics of Publication

1. Is the body type for your paper set by hot type or photocomposition?

\_\_\_\_\_ What brand of typesetting equipment  
and model number) do you use for the bulk of your body type? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of these machines do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you use hot type or photocomposition for your headlines? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What brand of equipment (and model number) do you use for  
headlines? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of these machines do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is your paper printed by the offset or letterpress method? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you print your own paper, or is it contracted out to another printer?

\_\_\_\_\_ If contracted out, what is the name and  
location of your printer? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is your paper a tabloid or full size publication? \_\_\_\_\_

How many columns of body type do you use per page? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the width of your columns (in picas)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the depth of your columns (in inches)? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What typeface and size do you use for your body copy? \_\_\_\_\_

What typeface and size do you use for classified ads? \_\_\_\_\_

What two typefaces do you use the most for headlines? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many pages were in your paper printed during the week of June 17?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you usually print more or less than this number in an average issue? \_\_\_\_\_ During which time of the year do you print your largest issues? \_\_\_\_\_

Could I have a copy of your paper for the following issues? First issue of the past July, second issue of the past August, third issue of the past September, fourth issue of the past October, first issue of the past November, second issue of the past December, third issue of the past January, fourth issue of the past February, first issue of the past March, second issue of the past April, third issue of the past May, and your last issue printed before this interview.

7. According to your last Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation filed with the Post Office, what is the total paid circulation of your publication? \_\_\_\_\_

According to this same statement, what were the total paid circulation figures for the preceding 10 years?

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1972 _____ | 1967 _____ |
| 1971 _____ | 1966 _____ |
| 1970 _____ | 1965 _____ |
| 1969 _____ | 1964 _____ |
| 1968 _____ | 1963 _____ |

3. Is all of your paid circulation distributed through the mail? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, how else is it distributed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If all of paid circulation is not distributed through the mail, what percent is distributed through the mail? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent of paid circulation is distributed by other methods? (Give percent for each other method.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you distribute any free copies as a means of increasing subscriptions?

\_\_\_\_\_ If so, how often do you do this, how many copies, and how are they distributed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you offer any added benefits for new or renewed subscriptions?

\_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you ever print spot color in your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when? Every issue \_\_\_\_\_, only when an advertiser buys it \_\_\_\_\_,  
whenever the editor wishes to use it \_\_\_\_\_, other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you ever use process color in your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when? Every issue \_\_\_\_\_, only when an advertiser buys it \_\_\_\_\_,  
whenever the editor wishes to use it \_\_\_\_\_, other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How many total employees (full-time and part-time, paid and unpaid) are  
used in writing, producing, and managing your paper? (Include writers,  
editors, regular paid and unpaid correspondents, photographers, darkroom  
technicians, printers, clerical workers, and all others.) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the job title of each employee and give the full-time equivalent (in a  
fraction) of duties \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the present population of the town in which you are located?

\_\_\_\_\_ As best you know, is the population growing, shrinking, or remaining about the same as compared to the 1970 census of population?

\_\_\_\_\_ If answer is either growing or shrinking, what do you think is the main reason for this? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is your primary circulation area? (Describe in terms of counties, sections of state, area surrounding major cities, or whatever the formula is built around.) \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you publish only one edition of your paper, or do you publish different editions for different parts of your circulation area? \_\_\_\_\_

If different editions, how many? \_\_\_\_\_ What are the primary circulation areas and current circulation figures for each of your editions? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do your employees do the mailing of your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, who does the mailing? \_\_\_\_\_

Do your employees keep the mailing list up to date? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, who does? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What type of system do you use for keeping mailing lists? Describe.

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9. Does the owner of the paper also own the building in which it is produced, or is the building leased? \_\_\_\_\_ Is any of your production equipment leased? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, describe which equipment is leased. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Do you currently have any plans to change your method of typesetting or printing? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when do you expect to make these changes, and what changes will be made? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What day of the week is your paper published, and why that day? \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION B--History of the Paper and Ownership

1. What year was the paper established? \_\_\_\_\_

When the paper was established, was it formed as a completely new effort, as an offshoot of another paper or publication, or by merger with another paper or publication? \_\_\_\_\_

If other than a new effort, describe the circumstances behind its formation.

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2. How long has the paper been published in its present format? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ If the format has changed, what was the previous format? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is the owner of the paper? \_\_\_\_\_

When did this person acquire ownership? \_\_\_\_\_

If this person is not the original owner, what is the name of the previous owner? \_\_\_\_\_ If the former owner is a relative, what is the relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is your paper one of a group of papers (part of a chain)? If so, what are the names and locations of the other papers? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Is your paper operated as a corporation? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when was it incorporated? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your paper's owner, editor, or other employees ever been sued by an individual or business? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, has a judgment ever been awarded to a plaintiff? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your business also do commercial job printing? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, approximately what percent of gross income would you estimate the job printing contributes to the overall operation? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the business have any other business activities which produce income?

\_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

. What percent of the editorial content of your paper would you estimate is written by the staff members? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent of the editorial content is obtained from government news sources (such as U. S. D. A. , Extension Service, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent is obtained from news releases from private companies (such as PR releases from implement dealers, feed and seed companies, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent from paid regular correspondents? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent from volunteer regular correspondents? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent from feature news services to which you subscribe? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have other sources of news? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are these sources? \_\_\_\_\_

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. Is more emphasis placed on national agricultural news or regional/local agricultural news in your paper? \_\_\_\_\_ What percent of each would you estimate is run in an average issue of your paper? National \_\_\_\_\_ local \_\_\_\_\_

. Regarding local news, do you receive most of it from individuals through the mail and on the telephone, or is most of it developed and written by your staff? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the primary sources of news leads or tips for developing feature articles of a local nature? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What single most important point do you try to stress when developing feature articles about farmers and ranchers in your locale (human interest, methods of financial success, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Do you ever run editorials in your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

What subjects have you dealt with in recent editorials? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

6. If you do not run editorials, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you usually print photographs in each issue? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, about how many? \_\_\_\_\_ Are most photos used about people and events in your locale or are most of national scope? \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION D--Characteristics of Editors and Editor Opinion Survey

1. How many years have you been a working journalist? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have formal educational training in journalism? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, specify degrees and dates of the degrees. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

If not, what field of work were you in immediately prior to becoming a journalist, and how did you get into journalistic work? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was your job immediately prior to being editor of this publication?

\_\_\_\_\_

When did you become the editor of this publication? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you find your work as editor interesting and challenging, or would you describe it some other way, and why? (Your name will not be used in the results of this question. A composite answer will be compiled from the answers of all editors surveyed.) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Ideally, what training and background do you believe would be best for being editor of your publication? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Disregarding the salary and other benefits, what job would you most like to have in the field of journalism, including your present position? (Your name will not be used.) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is there any other job outside of journalism that you would prefer to have in place of a journalism job? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel the regional agricultural publications, such as yours, will continue to be successful in the near future? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you feel a threat from the idea of corporate farming in terms of decreasing farm population and thereby a possible reduction in your circulation? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Even if corporate farming per se doesn't come about, does the idea of larger farms and a decreasing farm population worry you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. In terms of competition from other media, which particular publication, radio station, or television station do you feel poses the greatest threat to your subscription and advertising sales? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the main advantage you feel you offer your readers over and above other agricultural publications you must compete with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the main advantage you feel you offer your advertisers over and above other agricultural publications you must compete with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

. What is the cost of a one-year subscription to your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the single copy price? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have shorter or longer

subscription periods? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are the rates and periods?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

. Have you revised your subscription rates in the past five years? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how much was the former rate for a one-year subscription? \_\_\_\_\_

If revised more than once in the past five years, give details. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
When was your last revision in subscription rates? \_\_\_\_\_

. Do you anticipate making a revision in subscription rates within the near  
future? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when, and how much of an increase? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What are the main reasons for this anticipated increase?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

. May I have a copy of your advertising rate card? (If the card answers any  
of the following questions, they will not be asked separately.)

What is the flat rate per column inch for display advertising? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you offer discounts for space purchased in advance, long-term contracts,  
cash payment, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please detail. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Do you charge extra for display advertising in your classified section?

\_\_\_\_\_ If so, what is the rate? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you offer any discounts for classified display? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, detail.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the rate for regular classified advertising? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you offer any discounts for classified? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, detail. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you charge extra for national (general) advertising in your display or classified sections? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, detail. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you have national advertising representatives? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what firms and where are they located? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you have national advertising representatives, what is your estimate of the average weekly volume (in column inches) of national ads you receive through these representatives? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have special higher rates for preferential placement of display advertising? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, detail. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



11. If someone wants a photographer from your paper to take a photograph to use in a display advertisement in your paper, do you charge extra for this?

\_\_\_\_\_ If so, how is the charge determined? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you promote display advertising sales by offering your salesmen commissions? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how is the commission determined? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

13. What are the other primary methods you use to promote advertising sales? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Do you have methods of promoting classified advertising? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what are the main ones used? \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION F--Editor Statement on Costs and Profits

1. Over the past five years what has been the trend in your production costs?

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2. In the next five years, do you expect production costs will rise rapidly?

Why? 

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3. Over the past five years what has been the trend in the overall profits of your paper? (A composite answer will be determined. Your specific answer will be used only in the composite.) 

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4. Do you see your paper as having a chance for greater profits in the next five years? 

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 Why? 

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## SECTION G--Problem Areas and Additional Comments

1. What do you feel are your biggest problem areas in publishing your paper?

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2. Do you foresee any new problems in future years which you have not yet had to face? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. (If not mentioned in the above questions) Are you currently having difficulty finding adequate supplies of newsprint for your paper? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, have you been printing smaller issues of your paper because of this?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you believe newsprint will become even more difficult to get in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If there is anything I have not covered about your operations which you feel should be mentioned, please do so. \_\_\_\_\_

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A STUDY OF FIVE MIDWESTERN  
REGIONAL GENERAL INTEREST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPERS

by

LARRY GENE PERRINE

B. S., Oklahoma State University, 1967

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Farmers and ranchers have a large selection of publications which cater to their needs and desires for agricultural news and advertising information. One type of publication which has proven popular in some areas of the Midwest is the regional general interest agricultural newspaper.

For purposes of this study, a regional publication has been defined as having primary circulation in more than one county, but not covering an entire state. The "general interest agricultural" part of the definition means that the newspapers contain content of interest to all farm and ranch owners and workers in the primary circulation area, not to a select audience.

Five such newspapers located in Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri were examined, and personal interviews were done with the editors and/or publishers. Three are located in Kansas, including Grass and Grain, Manhattan; The High Plains Journal, Dodge City; and the Tri-State Plainsman, Atwood. The Arkansas Valley Journal, published in La Junta, Colorado, and The Journal of Livestock and Agriculture, published in Saint Joseph, Missouri, also were examined. At the time the interviews were done, all papers were published weekly, except for the Tri-State Plainsman which was published biweekly.

Although several of these publications appear to be highly successful in terms of circulation and advertising revenue generated, little information was available about the papers prior to the study. Therefore the study was designed to be exploratory in nature, examining many aspects of the newspapers. Areas examined include general information

and physical characteristics, history and ownership, editorial content and policies, characteristics and opinions of editors, subscription and advertising rates, production costs and profits, problem areas, and the volume of news and advertising.

The personnel who publish and edit the newspapers vary in background and the approaches they take to make their papers successful. Some of the editors and publishers attempt to build circulation and advertising revenue by producing a good editorial product. Others apparently believe in achieving financial success by catering more to advertisers in hopes that the readers are more interested in bargains than in fresh editorial content. Both approaches are shown to be successful for some newspapers.

One common denominator among all publishers and editors surveyed is an expressed concern for agricultural people. Although the method of expressing the idea varied, the publishers and editors indicated an emotional involvement with agriculture and the people on the farms and ranches who make American agriculture the most productive in the world. Most of the personnel expressed that their editorial policies were keyed to informing and helping farmers and ranchers with small to medium size operations.

Another common denominator is the localized approach to editorial and advertising content. All of the newspapers in the study ran much more local/regional news and advertising than any other types.