

moment there are thousands of men on farms who have laid aside everything else in order to listen in on what is to them business information, a matter of dollars and cents.

"But in the long run perhaps the greatest utility of radio to the farmer is in tying in with the extension work of agricultural colleges and schools. The agricultural colleges enrol but 150,000 students. Radio should bring the advantages of scientific schooling to millions of farmers. It will enable the college student whose course has been interrupted to continue it, often with the same instructors.

"Of all that may be said of radio the best is that it will tend to keep the young people on the farm. There is the true independence, there is the real throne of the American sovereign. Entertainment, culture, and throbbing life of the metropolis, carried to the farm by radio, helping to make rural life more attractive, will sustain that class which is the very backbone of our national existence."

BY 1927, however, the farm population of America had given sufficient evidence of its whole-hearted support of radio that Station KFKX, of Hastings, Nebraska, decided to cater exclusively to farmers. Owned by Westinghouse, KFKX came under the management of the National Broadcasting Company on January 10, 1927. Immediately the N.B.C. decided that the farmers should have a station of their own and began to make KFKX the farmers' station. In outlining the scope and policies of KFKX, Mr. H. Aylesworth, president of N.B.C., said, on taking over the station: "Beyond the fact that broadcasting can bring the city to the farm, its mission is to destroy the isolation which formerly shrouded the lonely farmhouse, as well as to bring a service of weather, market, and other information which will enable the individual farmer to take advantage of market conditions."

Six separate informational services designed especially to help farmers in their everyday problems were inaugurated shortly after January 10, 1927, as regular features. Many authorities on various farm subjects presented talks on special phases of agriculture, and a leased wire was installed between the station and the Bureau of Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, with an operator always on duty.

Later other farm services grew in numbers to such an extent that KFKX was discontinued in favour of N.B.C.'s Farmers' Network.

FARMERS were quick to take advantage of this service, making the radio pay dividends right from the start. By May, 1927, ten thousand letters were received by the Department of Agriculture, commenting on the service.

Taking advantage of market quotations as they came in over the radio, farmers realised a greater profit from timely sales, and some of them by regulating shipments of crops and live stock in this way secured top prices. Others planned their work in accordance to radioed weather reports, harvesting and planting according to the forecasts. One farmer regulated the ventilators in his poultry house by the reports. Radio taught farmers how to make better rations for dairy cows, poultry, feeder cattle, pigs, horses, and sheep. Radio has given tips on crop ro-

tation systems, farm buildings, cultivation methods. It has taught the cotton planter how to get more per acre; it has taught his wife to prepare new dishes. Broadcasting encouraged farmers to organise for co-operative buying. Letters testify that radio "brought church services to our home," "helped out in the back country," "brought me out of the dark," "made it possible for us to hear a President speak and opera stars sing," "interested my wife in



CECILIE AUDIBERT
(Soprano).

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more efficient means of running the home," "makes me content to stay at home, now I don't run around so much," "taught us a number of new wrinkles." And so it goes.

Gratified by the wide acceptance of radio by the farmer, the broadcasts were extended until in short order the Department of Agriculture became the largest user of radio for informational purposes in the world, with daily educational programmes, market news reports, and weather forecasts. By October, 1927, 22 comprehensive farm programmes had been inaugurated over 100 stations. Between 4000 and 8000 letters poured into the Department of Agriculture each week. Farmers learned to do things "the radio way." Of all the programmes Aunt Sammy's chats proved the most popular. One old couple, Aunt Liz and Uncle John, wrote a letter to the Department of Agriculture contrasting radio with covered-wagon days. Formerly they would run to the window to see every passer-by and talk about it for a week. Now they get all the important events of the world. They hear all the sports they missed when they were young. They used to play a wheezy organ or drive 18 miles to a camp meeting to participate in the singing. Now they listen to the finest symphonies. They also learn how to kill

rats. "Learn and earn" is the way they put it.

The Radio Farm School was another popular feature, teaching farmers how to do things in other than the conventional way. The lack of unity which had been manifest in agricultural thought and action was counteracted by radio, tending to the more equal sharing by all agricultural interests of correct knowledge of production and marketing principles.

By January, 1928, 116 representative commercial and agricultural college radio stations were broadcasting farm radio programmes prepared by the Radio Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

There seemed to be no bounds to the enthusiasm of rural radio. It grew and grew. By October, 1928, some of the more popular features, corresponding to the best-known programmes of the East, included the Housekeeper's Chat, a 10-minute talk conducted by Aunt Sammy; two five-day-a-week programme features, the Farm Flashes, answering questions and giving timely tips for each section of the country; the U.S. Radio Farm Forum, taking up on successive days of each week the major production problems of all branches of agriculture; Outdoors with the Scientists; the Primer for Town Farmers; and Farm Science Snapshots. In addition the Agricultural Situation Review gave at the beginning of each month a national view of the farm outlook. And farm playlets, dramatised rural community life, endeavouring to stress the beauty of rural existence.

"—So Shall They Reap."

THE various Agricultural Extension Services conducted numerous surveys, which showed the tremendous interest of the farmers in radio. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture made a survey in 1928 which showed that:

Of 352 farm radio owners—
275 made a special effort to tune in on special farm programmes.

199 depended on market radio reports in buying and selling.

274 replied that radio weather reports helped them in planning their farm work.

323 were sure that their families would not be satisfied without a radio.

Dr. Daniel Starch, consultant in commercial research, in 1928 made a survey for the National Broadcasting Company in which 17,099 families were questioned by the "personal interview" method. The tenth question put to them was: "Do you enjoy talks on agricultural subjects?" Dr. Starch sums up the answers as follows:—

"Nearly three-fourths of the farmers (72.12 per cent.), representing approximately one-fourth of the population of the United States, one-third (31.44 per cent.) of the families in small towns, one-fourth (18.19 per cent.) of the families in large cities, over one-third (36.08 per cent.) of all families—including farmers—enjoy talks on agricultural subjects.

There are slight differences between the preferences of farm, town and city

families in respect to several types of programmes. Semi-classical and classical music and grand opera are preferred more by city than by town and farm families; whereas religious services, crop and market reports, and children's programmes are preferred more by farm than by city families."

To the question, "If you had to give up one or the other, which would you prefer to have left, talk or music?" 2358 preferred talk, and 1538 preferred music. This jars somewhat our preconceived notion that music had a wider appeal than talks.

"The Reaper."

THESE figures will give the reader a general idea of the scope of work now being done to aid the farmer by radio. The farmer, well informed on those issues which bear on his business, is now better able to farm efficiently. He makes more money and has more leisure to spend it. The news of the world and its entertainment is his for the turning of a knob. Business-like, well informed, educated, the farmer of 1930 comes to town to attend the conference of grain-growers. He attends the concert by the same orchestra that he hears weekly in his own home. Neither the orchestra nor the selections are less familiar to him than to the urban residents attending. He stays at the foremost hotels, listening while at dinner to the same fine orchestras that broadcast daily. He talks of the stock market, discusses the grain export prospects of the coming year, the latest developments in farm machinery. Spending a few hours in the vast department stores of the city, he purchases refinements for his home, perhaps the latest model radio receiver.

And now, as the farmer walks down the street of the city, smooth-shaven, neatly dressed, self-possessed—nobody turns to stare. He is no different from anyone else. His hands are clean. Machinery does most of the work. The style of his clothes is not different from that of the city. No longer is the farmer a man apart. Due in part to the automobile and the movie, due as much to the widespread influence of radio on all cultural and financial aspects of his daily life, he is truly a citizen of the world.

That picture of American attainment can be translated in degree into actuality in this Dominion. Much already done but paves the way for further attainment.

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