8.

What Kind of Folks Read Your Ad or Article?

SUPPOSE AN ADVERTISEMENT for hog feed finds 80 readers out of a sample of 200. That looks like a good score.

But also suppose that 60 of these readers aren't raising hogs. That leaves only 20 readers who are the kind of prospects the advertiser wants to reach.

This happens more often than you might think. A flashy photograph may pull in some casual readers. It may not pull in and hold the prospects the advertiser wants.

To measure the effectiveness of an ad we need to know more than just how many folks noticed it and how many read the sales copy. We also need to know what kind of folks did the noticing and the reading.

Wallaces Farmer and Wisconsin Agriculturist call this kind of investigation "market analysis." It is probably the most helpful thing a farm paper can do for its advertisers.

The same kind of "market analysis" is also useful with articles prepared by the editors. Did an article

prepared for young renters really reach them? Did an article aimed at women with big families get read by that kind of subscriber?

Starting in 1951, we prepared market analyses of this kind on a number of articles and ads. In many cases, the analysis showed the ad to be stronger or weaker than you would guess from the score of the whole sample.

For instance, how well did an ad aimed at cattle feeders reach its mark? (Schering Corporation — Trilafon — September 20, 1958, Wallaces Farmer).

The ad scored 26.5 per cent with men. That is, 53 men out of the 200 in the sample looked at the ad. But what kind of folks were these 53?

The Poll asked whether farmers were feeding or planning to feed cattle. Here is the response:

Any This Ad	ir	No. of nterviews	No. of ad readers	Per cent
Plan to feed		82	29	35.3%
Do not plan to feed		105	23	21.9
Undecided about feeding		9	1	11.1

This ad reached a fair share of the possible prospects.

An Oliver ad for field shelling of corn in Wallaces Farmer (September 20, 1958) needed to define its prospects in a little different way. The Poll asked:

"What do you think about the future of field shelling corn?"

- "1) I'm doing it or thinking seriously about doing it.
- "2) Looks interesting, but don't know whether it will work well.
- "3) It isn't practical."

The three groups scored as follows:

		No. of "Any This Ad" readers		
1. Convinced	. 26	8	30.8%	
2. On the fence	. 120	47	39.2	
3. Opposed	. 44	22	50.0	

Note that the men who said, "It isn't practical" were still the best readers. For the long pull, the ad's major service may have been to shake the convictions of this hostile group.

Another way to check on this ad was by corn acres. In this case, the farmers with 75 acres or more in corn had a 43.4 per cent score. This was the largest group, in terms of acres, and the ad scored better with these folks than with smaller farmers.

How does this method work with articles by the editors? Take the department "What's Ahead," a discussion of market prospects. In the same issue of Wallaces Farmer (September 20, 1958), the Poll tried to find out how this outlook copy was getting across to farmers who took one, two or three farm papers.

If a farmer took three farm papers, would this competition make him less interested in "What's Ahead?"

To find out, the Poll checked farmers who had Read Most of the copy in "What's Ahead."

Farm papers	ir	No. of nterviews	No. of readers	Per cent
Take Wallaces Farmer only		12	4	33.3%
Take two farm papers .		46	16	34.8
Take three farm papers		136	77	56.6

The big and important group was made up of those who took three farm papers. In this group, we found a higher percentage of readers of the department than in the other two groups.

A Purina ad for hog feed in Wallaces Farmer (September 20, 1958) raised the usual question: Did the adget read by hog farmers who were good prospects? Any This Ad scores were used.

No. of hogs sold	No. (intervi		Per cent
None	. 27	5	18.5%
Less than 50	. 24	6	25.0
50-99	. 49	12	24.5
100 or more	. 92	33	35.9

Here the biggest group and the most important to the advertiser also made the highest score.

In some advertisements, the age of the prospect, whether he is an owner or renter, or whether he is in the upper third of income returns may be the important factor.

In a Purina hog feed ad in Wallaces Farmer (November 21, 1959) market analysis showed the following:

- 1. Younger farmers (21–34) were better readers than older ones.
- 2. Farmers with gross incomes of \$10,000 or more were better readers than farmers with smaller incomes.
- 3. Farmers with fewer than 50 hogs sold during the year were the poorest readers.

In a Starcross Alfalfa ad in Wallaces Farmer (January 17, 1959) several breakdowns were used. The critical one probably was "Are you planning to sow alfalfa in 1959?" Any This Ad scores follow:

	No. of interviews	No. of ad readers	Per cent
Plan to sow alfalfa	. 132	49	37.1%
Do not plan to sow alfalfa	65	16	24.6

Apparently the ad reached its target in a fair number of cases. But suppose the scores had been reversed and there had been 16 ad readers among those who planned to sow alfalfa and 49 among those who did not so plan?

The over-all score of 33 per cent would have been exactly the same, but the effectiveness of the ad would have been quite different.

A John Deere ad in Wallaces Farmer (January 17, 1959) checked corn acreage, income, total crop acreage and number of tractors owned (Figure 8.7). On the basis of corn acreage, the Poll found:

Any This Ad					No. of ad readers	Per cent
No corn .				21	8	38.1%
1-49 acres				55	23	41.8
50-74 acres				50	19	38.0
75 acres and	up	٠		62	39	62.9

The appeal of the ad was broad, but the bigger corn growers showed the most interest.

Another ad, Protein Blenders, Wallaces Farmer (January 17, 1959) was aimed at both hog and cattle feeders but did better with hog feeders than with cattlemen. With hog feeders the ad scored almost twice as high with those who sold 100 hogs or more as with those who sold less than 50. But with cattle, the feeders and the folks who didn't plan to feed came out almost the same (Figure 8.5).

The market analysis may throw additional light on split runs. A Bovitrin (Merck) ad on treatment for mastitis, *Wisconsin Agriculturist* (October 3, 1959), found the A ad scoring 20 per cent Any This Ad and the B ad, 32 per cent. Different illustrations were used — a test tube in A and a cow in B (Figures 4.4, 4.5).

These were men's scores for whole samples. But what kind of folks were the real prospects? Probably those who were having trouble with mastitis. A question on this found that 87 (55.4 per cent) of the sample were having trouble and the balance were not — or, at least, didn't admit it.

How did the ad appeal to those two groups? Scores follow for men:

		Had tr	ouble	No trouble		
		Α	В	Α	В	
Any This Ad		16.7%	47.0%	20.0%	20.0%	
Read Some .		11.1	41.2	8.9	12.0	

This indicated that the superiority of B over A was considerably greater in terms of prospects than was shown by the total score.

Market analysis of food ads brought out some useful facts. In Wisconsin Agriculturist (April 4, 1959) a check of the King Midas flour ad showed that families of four or more made up 59.5 per cent of the whole sample. But this part of the sample actually provided four-fifths of the persons in the households reached by the ad. A household with four eaters was worth twice as much as a household with two eaters. So the score of the flour ad with women in families of four or more was the vital item in the analysis (Figure 8.3). This group scored as follows:

		Four or more in family			
		No.	Per cent		
Any This Ad	•	70	58.8%		
Read Some (Sales Copy)		39	32.8		
Read Some (recipe)		58	48.7		

The Poll asked, "Have you done any baking in the last three days?" And 89.4 per cent of the sample said "Yes." These bakers paid more attention to the ad than the non-bakers.

This point was checked again with a Robin Hood ad in *Wisconsin Agriculturist* (April 5, 1958) (Figure 8.6).

	Baking — Yes	Baking — No
Any This Ad	. 54.7%	37.9%
Read Most (Sales Copy) .	. 18.0	6.9

Another use of the market analysis shows up in a Ford Tractor ad in *Wallaces Farmer* (January 16, 1960). Here, among other things, the Poll asked the brand of the last tractor bought and then checked this reply against readership.

Any This Ad	No. of interviews	No. of ad readers	Per cent
Allis Chalmers	. 15	5	33.3%
Ford	. 27	13	48.1
International	. 62	14	22.6
John Deere	. 51	15	29.4
Massey Ferguson	. 8	4	50.0
Other		9	28.1

Of the 27 who had bought a Ford at last purchase, 13 looked at the ad. Of the 168 who had NOT bought a Ford at last purchase, 47 looked at the ad.

Ordinarily you expect that a user of a product will be more attracted to the ad than a non-user. The ad has two jobs at least: to renew the faith of the old customer and to attract a new customer. This Ford ad did well on both counts.

The critical point in using market analysis in ad-

vertising is this: What kind of breakdown will really throw light on the effectiveness of the ad? With feed ads, one question is obvious. Does the farmer who reads the ad have any hogs, or cattle or poultry or any other kind of livestock aimed at by the advertiser?

In some new products, age may be a factor. Young men will respond better than older ones. In some cases, income is important. A costly product won't stand much chance with a farmer of low income.

There is a temptation sometimes to use this kind of Poll as just another census. Since the number of questions that can be asked is limited (respondents run out of patience), the only questions used should be those that throw light on the specific ad being measured.

To get full value out of market analysis of advertisements demands study and cooperation between the advertiser and our research department. Properly handled, it can be one of the most useful of research tools.

Do young people read articles — and advertisements — as eagerly as older people? This is a vital question. The young farmers will be around for a good while. The older ones are getting close to retirement.

Suppose we had two articles, A and B. Each scored 45 per cent Read Most, which is good. But A had a 60 per cent Read Most score with young farmers and a 30 per cent score with farmers age 50 and over. Then suppose B had a 30 per cent score with young farmers and a 60 per cent score with farmers of 50 and over.

Which article would an editor prefer? Often the one which scored high with young farmers. (1)

Actually, most articles score fairly well with all age groups. This may be the result of editorial concern over the problem. Some reminiscent articles, like Bill Groves' department in the Wisconsin Agriculturist or an article on bang-boards in Wallaces Farmer, are bound to score higher with older folks than with younger. But these are balanced by other articles and departments.

One of our surprises on age breakdowns is the high score made by younger people on social security articles. Apparently younger farmers valued the insurance features for widows and young children. They also seemed to think that social security for older farmers might lead to retirement and help younger men to farms.

Young men, in a weaker financial position than older, have been responding lately (1960) to articles that seemed to give hope for some improvement in income. A Washington report in *Wisconsin Agriculturist* (September, 1960), which told of plans for new farm programs, scored well for younger readers.

Wallaces Farmer checked on the effect of age on readership in the issue of February 4, 1961. Here are Read Most figures:

	21-34 yrs.	35—49 yrs.	50 and up
Men (20 items)	35.1%	39.1%	36.4%
Women (13 items)	36.2	41.4	41.1

This shows a fair score for people 21–34, but nothing to brag about. Editors would be happier if young people scored higher than older groups.

What about education? On this point too, the farm papers have been fairly successful in attracting both those with a grade school education and those who stayed in school longer. There are some differences. For instance in *Wallaces Farmer* (November 19, 1960) a somewhat technical livestock article showed a slight but not significant margin for farmers with more education.

A surprise came in a tax article in Wisconsin Agriculturist (September 3, 1960) where the men who attended grade school only did significantly better than the other group. This may be a tribute to unusually clear exposition of a difficult but vital subject.

In the issue of *Wallaces Farmer* for February 4, 1961, articles and departments for men and women produced a mean Read Most as follows:

	•	1—8 years	9 years and up
Men (20 items)		30.6%	41.4%
Women (13 items)		32.0	38.3

This seems to indicate that one of our problems is getting hold of the subscriber who has not gone beyond eighth grade.

How many of these folks are there? Of our Iowa subscribers less than half of the men and only about one-fifth of the women have stopped at eighth grade. In Wisconsin, around half of the men and two-fifths of the women are in this class.

This group shrinks every year. But for several years, at least, it is an important bloc. Are we shooting over the heads of those whose education stopped in the grades? What can be done to pull them in?

Do part-time farmers read different copy than full-time farmers? In one case in *Wisconsin Agriculturist* (September 3, 1960) an article on part-time farming did what you might expect. It drew a heavy vote from part-time farmers (64 per cent Read Most for men). Outlook copy (Agri-Vision) drew only 32 per cent Read Most for this group. On other items, part-time response was much like full-time.

These are points to remember:

- 1. The total score on an ad or article may not mean much. If a hog feed ad is read mostly by farmers without hogs, what good is it?
- 2. Market analysis can show whether the ad or article reached the folks at whom the copy was aimed.
- 3. Split runs may yield more meaning if we can find out how many real prospects read A and how many real prospects read B.
- 4. Watch the readership of young farm people. They are the subscribers of the future.
- 5. Subscribers who had only eight grades or less in school are not usually as good readers as those with more education. This is an editorial point that should be kept in mind in copy preparation and copy editing.



Men 35%

Women 17%



Did Cattle Feeders Read?

This page advertisement had a fair score for all readers. The important point, however, is: How many farmers who were feeding or who expected to feed cattle looked at the ad?

Of the men readers of the issue, 39.3 per cent were feeding or planning to feed, 55.6 per cent were not feeding or planning to feed.

These two groups scored as follows:

		A	any This Ad	Read Some	
Feeding cattle .			39.0%	18.2%	
Not feeding			28.4	11.0	

The cattle feeders showed more interest than the non-feeders.



Figure 8.2

Split A

Ad Score
Women 64%

The Balloon Went Down

In this three-column ad, the B picture with the balloon (to show a quotation) didn't do well. Here are the scores for women on the two pictures:

						A	В
Picture						55%	39%

The superiority of A on the illustration carried over into the copy. On the recipe at left, the Read Some scores were:

Read Some 51% 41%

Figure 8.3

Split B

Ad Score
Women 49%



This test does not, of course, prove that the balloon is worse or better than the ordinary head. It does seem to show, however, that a good picture is weakened by cutting down space or introducing extraneous material. Don't mutilate a good cut!

The advertisement, taken as a whole, made a strong appeal to women with four or more in the family. These are the big bread eaters. The ad also did well with women who said they had baked in the last three days.

Wisconsin Agriculturist, April 4, 1959

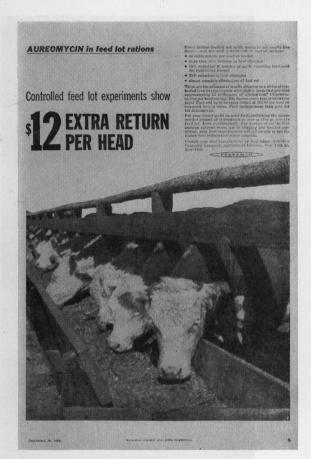


Figure 8.4

Men 47.5%

Women 17.5%

Copy at the Top of Page

In several ads (some of them splits) we found that Sales Copy at the top of the page seemed to score better than Sales Copy lower in the page. What does this page ad show? Score of the Sales Copy is good, but not outstanding:

Read Some 16.5% Read Most 11.5

Question: Is the type too small to get full advantage from this position?

Cattle feeders paid more attention to the ad than non-feeders. Feeders gave an "Any This Ad" score of 63.4 per cent; non-feeders a score of 36.2 per cent.

Wallaces Farmer, September 20, 1958





Men 37%

Women 8%

Big Hog Raisers Read the Ad

This page advertisement was aimed mainly at hog raisers, with a side shot at cattle feeders. The long sales copy (mainly a report of show winners) pulled a Read Some of 20 per cent. Attention was divided among five pictures. None scored very high.

The copy did hit the big hog raisers. Read Some scores follow for hog raisers who sold differing numbers of hogs during the year.

Less than 50 hogs sold . . . 13.2% 50–99 hogs sold 7.4 100 hogs or more 24.0

Cattle feeders and non-feeders did about the same amount of reading.

Wallaces Farmer, January 17, 1959



Figure 8.6

Ad Score

Women 60%

Cookies Score High

This ad (only 230 lines) scored as well as some much larger ads. Here are the Read Some scores for women on the Sales Copy and the recipe copy.

Sales Copy 43.0% Recipe copy 57.5

The ad pulled well with all sizes of families. The critical point here, of course, is that a food ad must do well with the big families, those with four or more.

Age groups scored about the same. Younger women (21–34 years) seemed slightly less interested than older ones.

Pies and cakes rank a little higher with farm women than do cookies. But still over 40 per cent of Wisconsin farm women bake 4 dozen cookies or more in a week.

Wisconsin Agriculturist, October 3, 1959

Figure 8.7

Men 39%

Women 26%



Big Dairymen Read the Ad

Men gave the following scores to different parts of the ad, but the main interest lies in the response of the better prospects, the men with the big herds.

	Me	n			
Any This Ad					39.0%
Picture					38.5
Head					18.5
Sales Copy Read Some		aia ā	ato Fo	to _z	9.0

Of the farmers who were milking 30 cows or more, 56 per cent looked at the ad. The low score, 7.7 per cent, came appropriately from farmers who had no dairy cows. Farmers with gross incomes of \$10,000 or more showed more interest in the ad than farmers with smaller incomes.

Wisconsin Agriculturist, April 4, 1959



Figure 8.8

Page Score

Men 46%

Women 14.5%

Bigger Farmers Read This Ad

What kind of farmers are the best prospects for an ad like this? Perhaps corn acreage may be a clue:

Men		A	ny This Ad
1-49 acres of corn			41.8%
50 to 74 acres			38.0
75 acres or more.			62.9

The bigger corn raisers paid the most attention to the ad as did the farmers with the biggest gross income and the farmers with the biggest acreage in all crops.

Sales Copy, with all farmers, scored 19 per cent. The illustration drew 43 per cent.

Wallaces Farmer, January 17, 1959