

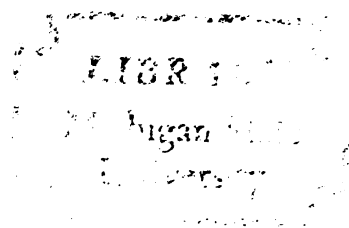
A SURVEY OF MICHIGAN TELEVISION
NEWS DIRECTORS AND THEIR USAGE OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S
AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Joseph James Marks

1967

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ABSTRACT

A SURVEY OF MICHIGAN TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS AND THEIR USAGE OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

by Joseph James Marks

The Michigan State University (MSU) Cooperative Extension Service specialists and Agricultural Experiment Station scientists continually have educational information and research findings which should be communicated to interested persons. Some of this information is of interest only to farmers, but some has general audience appeal.

It was the intent of this study to find out if Michigan's commercial television news directors could or would use some of the "agricultural" information originating from MSU. Also, an attempt was made to learn whether or not MSU could economically use the commercial television newscast as an outlet for this information.

To make these determinations, personal interviews were conducted with the news directors for sixteen commercial television stations (fourteen primary stations and two satellite stations). An attempt was made to determine the type of criteria used by news directors when selecting news or feature items for their news shows. Also, an attempt was made to determine the factors which influence these criteria. All of these factors were related to the news directors' potential usage of MSU's agricultural information.

Results of the study generally indicated the following:

1. Michigan television newscasts do offer an outlet for MSU's "agricultural" information if the information can be presented in such a way that it is of interest to a general audience, rather than just to farmers.

2. The cost of producing "agricultural" film clips for these newscasts does not seem prohibitive, especially when looked upon in terms of cost per viewer reached.

3. Each television news director uses a wide variety of criteria when making judgments about news or features to use on his news shows.

4. All the television news directors surveyed preferred film over any other type of visual for use in their newscasts. They also preferred color film clips (over black and white), and they wanted the film clips to be thirty seconds to one minute in length.

5. The news directors would be more likely to use "agricultural" film clips during noon newscasts when more "features" are generally used, and/or during weekend newscasts when "hard news" tends to taper off.

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A THESIS .

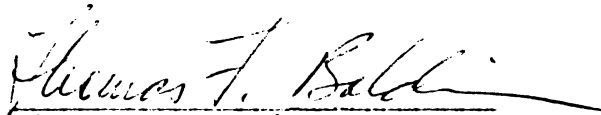
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Director of Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Problem.....	1
The Purpose of the Study.....	4
Literature Review.....	5
Summary of Assumptions.....	10
II. METHODOLOGY.....	12
Area of Study.....	12
Development of Instruments.....	13
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	20
Demographic Information.....	20
News Shows: Number and Length.....	21
Involvement in News Shows.....	23
Staff Size.....	23
News Show Content: With Whom Does the News Director Confer?.....	24
Who Decides What Goes on the Air?.....	25
Do You Ever Listen to Opinions?.....	27
Audience.....	29
Use of "Handouts".....	30
Handouts: What's Wrong with Them?.....	31
Staff Coverage.....	33
Use of MSU Releases.....	33
Format of Materials.....	35

Chapter	Page
The Use of Color.....	39
News and Feature Criteria.....	39
Film Clip Ratings by TV Stations.....	49
Economics of Producing News Film Clips.....	51
Effects of Background and Experience on Usage.....	54
Use of Agricultural Releases.....	58
Agriculture: Of General Interest?.....	59
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	62
Recommendations.....	67
Limitations of the Study.....	71
Implications for Further Research.....	72
REFERENCES.....	75
APPENDIX A: Questionnaire Used in Survey.....	78
APPENDIX B: Ratings and Detailed Comments on Film Clips.....	87

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Michigan television farm programming.....	2
2. Survey of Michigan television news directors.....	14
3. Number and length of local newscasts.....	22
4. Rank of release format.....	37
5. Film clip ratings (by title and category).....	41
6. Film clip ratings by TV stations.....	50
7. Cost of TV news clips - one minute, color.....	51
8. Potential homes and cost per thousand reached based on film clip ratings.....	53
9. Proposed television budget (Cooperative Extension Service-Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University).....	70

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The amount of commercial television time devoted to farm shows is by no means overwhelming in Michigan (see Table 1). An obvious reason is that commercial television stations will not air very many programs for a farm population which constitutes only a small and declining percentage of the total population. Census figures show a drop from 155,519 farms in the state in 1950 to 93,504 in 1964. (30) By 1980, the number is expected to drop to 45,000. (34:18)

But farm news -- or, better stated, "agricultural news" -- is still being made. Some of it is of interest only to farmers, but some has general audience appeal.

Examples of the latter can be found among the deluge of agricultural news and feature releases that are channeled to mass media outlets by the Michigan State University (MSU) agricultural information staff (in the Department of Information Services). MSU's Agricultural Experiment Station scientists and its Cooperative Extension Service personnel continually have research findings and educational information relating to subjects such as "food," "pesticides," "lawn and garden information," and others which seem to fit into the "general interest" category.

The Problem

A study of how MSU might disseminate its agricultural information on television was made for two reasons: (1) This author, as news editor for MSU's Agricultural Experiment Station, was concerned about the potential of television as an outlet for his agricultural

Table 1. Michigan television farm programming.¹

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
WXYZ-TV Detroit	Rural Newsreel 7 a.m.						Rural Report 6:30 a.m.
WWJ-TV Detroit	Country Living 7:30 a.m.						Country Living 7 a.m.
WJRT-TV Flint		Circadia 7 a.m.	Circadia 7 a.m.	Circadia 7 a.m.	Circadia 7 a.m.	Circadia 7 a.m.	Harvest 12:30 p.m.
WJIM-TV Lansing		Circadia 12:15 p.m.	Circadia 12:15 p.m.	Circadia 12:15 p.m.	Circadia 12:15 p.m.	Circadia 12:15 p.m.	
WMSB-TV E.Lansing	Harvest 12:30 p.m.					Harvest 7 p.m.	Rural Route 10 (WILX) 7:45 a.m.
WZZM-TV Gd.Rapids		Farm Report 7 a.m.	Farm Report 7 a.m.	Farm Report 7 a.m.	Farm Report 7 a.m.	Farm Report 7 a.m.	
WOOD-TV Gd.Rapids		Farm Weather 7:25 a.m.	Farm Weather 7:25 a.m.	Farm Weather 7:25 a.m.	Farm Weather 7:25 a.m.	Farm Weather 7:25 a.m.	Agricul- ture, USA 7:30 a.m.
WKZO-TV Kalamazoo		Farm Show 7:15 a.m.	Farm Show 7:15 a.m.	Farm Show 7:15 a.m.	Farm Show 7:15 a.m.	Farm Show 7:15 a.m.	
WKNX-TV Saginaw			Rural Report 6:45 a.m.				

¹Source: TV Guide, August 6, 1967.

information; and (2) It was believed the findings would be of interest to agricultural information staffs of other Land Grant universities who are also faced with the task of effectively disseminating agricultural information to the people of their states.

A glance at the Michigan situation indicated that current television "farm shows" offered some opportunities for airing MSU's agricultural research and extension information. But these shows were few in number and were generally offered when audience ratings were relatively low.

Another possibility was long public service "specials." But investigation indicated that very little of this time would be made readily available on a regular basis by television stations, and the time and cost expended by MSU's Department of Information Services would be relatively high on a per-viewer-reached basis. (11)

Another possibility for airing MSU's agricultural information seemed to be the local television news show. A check of TV programming schedules showed these newscasts were aired often and on a regular basis on every commercial television station in the state. (29) Furthermore, it was reasoned, at least some of MSU's agricultural news and feature material could be of interest to a large number of people who watch these newscasts (for example, the suburban "weekend farmers" who might want to know more about what the University has to say about lawns and gardens, women who might like to know about new food product developments, etc.).

Thus, the problem was to find out which of several possible MSU agricultural news and feature items might be used by the news directors, and whether or not MSU's agricultural information staff

could economically disseminate these items via the television newscast.

The Purpose of the Study

Over the years, several studies have been made to determine the best means for writing and broadcasting agricultural information for farmers. In this study, however, an attempt was made to learn more about the potential of communicating agricultural information to the varied kinds of people who watch television newscasts.

To do this, a survey was made of Michigan's television news directors to learn how they function as "gatekeepers," particularly in relation to agricultural news. The "gatekeeper," as defined by Lewin, is the person who "governs" the kinds of information that can flow through a communication channel. (15:145)

More specifically, the survey sought answers to these questions:

1. How does the gatekeeper's (news director's) background, experience, and knowledge of MSU and/or agriculture influence his usage of MSU's agricultural news and features?
2. Does the quantity of news shows and news staffs have any bearing on this usage?
3. Who (if anyone) influences the gatekeeper's criteria or judgments about the value of news or feature items?
4. Does release "format" (whether the stories are accompanied by films, slides, video tapes, still pictures or no visuals) have any bearing on usage?
5. Does the fact that a news or feature item is prepared in color (in contrast to black and white) have any bearing

on usage?

6. What are the gatekeeper's criteria for judging the value of news and feature material, and how do these criteria affect usage?
7. How does the gatekeeper's concept of his news audience affect usage?
8. Does the television news gatekeeper see any place for MSU's agricultural news and feature material in his newscasts?

Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to review studies that have been made of "gatekeepers" and their criteria (values) for selecting news and feature items. Appropriate assumptions are developed and are summarized at the end of this section.

As Schramm noted, "...all along the (communication) chain are a series of gatekeepers, who have the right to open or close the gate to any message that comes along." (21:176) The news director for a Michigan commercial television station fits into this chain. And so does each member of MSU's agricultural information staff who helps to select the news or feature items to be sent to the television news director.

But, as Taylor and MacLean and Kao found out, communication "prophets" aren't always accurate in predicting the effectiveness of a communication. (27:416; 17:332) Part of the reason may be due to the wide range of criteria used to determine the value of a news story. Hulteng, in his survey of Oregon newspapers, said his data suggested that "there are profound differences in news judgment even with

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respect to the central core of the news, the top-flight stories in which it might be assumed most seasoned editors would agree." (13:348) Stempel, who studied the wire stories used by six Michigan dailies, found only 31 per cent agreement between editors on the use of stories. (25:47)

In a later study of twenty five newspapers with circulation over 100,000, Stempel found six news factors which editors used in determining the use and placement of stories: suspense-conflict (e.g., Ohio Valley floods, Russian flights over Alaska), the public affairs factor (stories about actions of the government), human interest, timeliness, the positive element in the news (e.g., "Rocket Has Perfect Launch") and political controversy. (24) Brown referred to the criteria for judging news as "news elements," and he suggested that they were "proximity," "significance," "prominence," "human interest" and "timeliness." (5:11-12) There have been many other such criteria, judgments, elements and values cited by other communication researchers over the years. Most of these criteria, although called by different names, could fit into the factors and elements outlined by Stempel and Brown.

But, as White noted, news judgments are "highly subjective" and "reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations..." (32:386)

Thus, the answers to the questions, "What is news?" and "What is of interest?" are not easily given. If there is a single answer, it would probably be in terms of the "psychological proximity" discussed by Gieber. (9:9) This, he said, is related to how much (or how little) the recipient of a message can relate to the content of the

message. The importance of this "psychological proximity" factor was noted by Lippmann in his quotation from an 1860 letter by Horace Greeley:

Begin with the clear conception that the subject of deepest interest to an average human being is himself; next to that he is most concerned with his neighbor....(16:331)

While many gatekeepers are aware of the importance of the "psychological proximity" factor, some of them, particularly those on MSU's agricultural information staff, are unable to give the "local angle" to all stories because of several problems common to publicists. Sellers, who investigated the "Suitability of State Publicity Materials for Weekly Newspapers," summarized some of these problems quite well:

It should be recognized, however, that publicists often find it difficult to localize stories. Almost any subject may be capable of localization, but when budgets and staffs are limited, individual treatment of newspapers may be somewhat impractical. (22:469)

Even if a news or feature item has this "local angle" -- this "psychological proximity" -- and even if it does have some of the news "values" or "elements" mentioned earlier, there is still a chance that the item will not be used by the television news director. Unlike the telegraph wire editors surveyed by Gieber, the television news director is not desk-bound. (10) He has some contact with release sources, audience and his community. In addition, as Breed noted, there are many other forces which can act upon this gatekeeper and influence his judgments: professional codes, journalism schools, professional organizations, critics and the gatekeeper's colleagues. (3:335) In the survey of Michigan television news directors, an attempt was made to learn more about these "significant others" -- those persons who influence the news director's news decision-making processes. (18:44)

It was assumed in this study that one of these "significant others" was the station manager (sometimes called just the "manager" or the "general manager") and that he performed a role in relation to the news director in about the same way as the publisher relates to a news editor in a newspaper. It was also assumed that the manager, as the news director's "boss," would have at least some effect on the news policy of the station. If these assumptions are correct, the station manager may occupy a position similar to that of the publisher who, according to Breed, "...can be located at the apex of a T, the crucial point of decision making." (3:335) Breed added these comments:

News room and professional forces form the base of the T, outside forces from the community and society are the arms. It is for the publisher to decide which forces to propitiate.

...The newsman's source of rewards is located not among the readers, who are manifestly his clients, but among his colleagues and superiors. Instead of adhering to societal and professional ideals, he redefined his values to the more pragmatic level of the news room group.

...Any important change toward a more "free and responsible press" must stem from various possible pressures of the publisher, who epitomizes the policy making coordinating role. (3:335-36)

An even closer look at the television news director reveals a man who must be extremely selective in his choice of news show content. For example, he receives a great deal of material from the wire services and, if he is anything like some of the newspaper editors that have been surveyed, he only uses a small portion of it. Cutlip, in his survey of Wisconsin newspapers, found that the average paper used less than one-tenth of all stories provided to it by the AP news wire, and Jones, et al., found that Minnesota newspapers used only

from one-fifth to one-half of the state news on the AP wire. (8:435; 14:306) No doubt, the television news director must also be very selective, since the "space" he has to fill is less than that of most newspapers.

In this study, it was expected that the television news director would, at best, be only slightly knowledgeable about agriculture and that this might affect his attitude and, ultimately, his usage of agricultural news and features. Some support of this assumption is provided by Backstrom and Hursh who have found that "what knowledge a person has of any subject is related to his attitudes toward it." (2:71) Carter reiterated this opinion, to some extent, in a report on his North Carolina press-medical study which showed "a positive relationship" between attitudes toward the press (by physicians) and "frequency of contact with newsmen." (6:138)

Numerous agricultural communication researchers have tried to learn more about the best way of presenting agricultural information on television. Most of these studies were concerned with airing agricultural information on "farm shows," but some of the findings appear to have some relationship to the study of usage of agricultural information on television news shows.

For example, Arneson, in a 1951 study of radio farm directors, noted that "farm directors feel that the state and county Extension Services ignore the 'timeliness' of news items." (1:93) He further stated that the farm directors "would like short items of events and occurrences happening now, with emphasis on success and human interest stories." These factors have been generally agreed upon by communication researchers and television information specialists throughout

the north central United States." (33)

Higbee, who analyzed radio-TV farm directors' comments about university releases, noted that the farm directors specifically cited a desire for "more short (one to three-minute) programs instead of the longer, more detailed programs" and "a preference for personal reports by the researchers and scientists themselves, rather than by a third person." (12:9)

Timely, short, human interest, easy-to-read, localized stories and personal reports from scientists -- all can be assumed to be considered "favorable" for television, but are sometimes neglected by university information staffs.

Summary of Assumptions

Based on the survey of the literature and several conferences with colleagues in MSU's Department of Information Services, several assumptions were made and then tested in the study.

For example, it was assumed that a news director's background, experience and knowledge of MSU and/or agriculture would have a direct and positive relationship to his usage of MSU's agricultural news and feature material.

But it was also assumed that a news director would be at least somewhat subjective in his judgments about the value of a news or feature item. It was believed that he would be influenced by "significant others," the writing style of a release, the audience intent (general interest vs. agricultural interest) of the release and the proximity of the release (the "local angle"). More specifically, it was believed that the news director would favor "general

interest" news or feature items over those which were "agricultural interest," "technical" or "promotional" in nature.

It was further assumed that the television news directors would prefer to have news or feature releases in the form of film or video tape (rather than still pictures, slides or no visuals), and that they would prefer color film over black-and-white.

Finally, it was assumed that the news directors most likely to use prepared film clips from MSU would be those who had relatively small news staffs and, apparently, small operating budgets.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Area of Study

There were twenty-one television stations in Michigan in May, 1967. (4) Of this total, sixteen were commercial VHF stations, two were commercial UHF stations, one was an educational VHF station and the other two were educational UHF stations.

Only sixteen stations were selected for study in this survey. Of the five that were not studied, three were the educational television stations. One of these, WMSB-TV, operated on a share time basis with WILX-TV (a commercial station which produced the news shows on Channel 10 and which was selected for the survey). The other two educational stations (WTVS, Channel 56, and WUCM-TV, Channel 19) were owned and operated by the Detroit Educational TV Foundation and Delta College, respectively. It was assumed that these last two stations would not be likely outlets for agricultural information from another educational institution, Michigan State University. The remaining two stations which were not included in the study were WKBD-TV (Channel 50), Detroit, which broadcasts mostly sports, and CKLW-TV, located in Detroit but licensed to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. (23)

To survey the sixteen stations intended for study, only fourteen news directors had to be contacted, since two of the stations were satellites. WTOM-TV, Cheboygan, was a satellite of WPBN-TV, Traverse City, and WWUP, Sault Ste. Marie, was a satellite of WNTV, Cadillac. (4:28, 30) Neither satellite had a news department. Each had reporters who sent their news and feature material to the primary

station for broadcasting.

Development of Instruments

To survey all the selected Michigan television news directors, an eight-page questionnaire was developed (see Appendix A). It was decided that this questionnaire would serve as a guide for a personal, semi-structured, focused interview with each of the fourteen news directors (for the sixteen stations) that were to be surveyed. (19) This method was selected because it was believed that news directors would be unlikely to respond very fully and freely (if at all) to a lengthy mail questionnaire. It was also believed that the focused face-to-face interview would allow the interviewer to discover more precisely some of the reasons why news directors expressed certain opinions and revealed certain attitudes during the study. As Nerton, et al., explained:

In the focused interview, the interviewer can play a more active role; he can introduce more explicit verbal cues to the stimulus situation or even re-present it.... In either case, this ordinarily activates a concrete report of responses by interviewees. (19:5)

Fourteen news directors (see Table 2) were initially contacted by telephone. This author identified himself only as an employee of Michigan State University's Department of Information Services. The news directors were not told that this author had anything to do with the production and dissemination of MSU's agricultural information. None of the directors had met this author before, with the exception of Mr. John North, who was then news director of WWTW, Cadillac.

The news directors were told that MSU's Department of Information Services was interested in expanding its services to Michigan

Table 2. Survey of Michigan television news directors.

<u>Station</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>News Director</u>	<u>Date Surveyed</u>
WJIM-TV	Lansing	Mike Wright (Acting Dir.)	May 10
WWTV (Satellite, WWUP, Sault Ste. Marie)	Cadillac	John North	May 11
WPBN-TV (Satellite, WTOM-TV, Cheboygan)	Traverse City	Bill Secrist (Station Mgr.)*	May 11
WJRT-TV	Flint	George Jacksa	May 12
WZZM-TV	Grand Rapids	Jack Hogan	May 15
WOOD-TV	Grand Rapids	Dick Cheverton	May 15
WNEM-TV	Saginaw	Tom Eynon	May 16
WKNX-TV	Saginaw	Dick Thompson	May 16
WILX-TV	Jackson	Larry Payne	May 18
WKZO-TV	Kalamazoo	Fred Douglas	May 18
WXYZ-TV	Detroit	William Fyffe**	May 24
WWJ-TV	Detroit	James Clark	May 24
WJBK-TV	Detroit	Robert McBride	May 24
WLUC-TV	Marquette	Irving Horton	June 2

*The Station Manager said he made many of the decisions for the news shows. At that time, the station had no news director.

**Some information also provided by Frank Benesh, assignment editor, and Ron Laufer, research department.

television stations, but first the information staff wanted some opinions and comments from the news directors around the state. They were also told that part of the information would be used in a master's thesis and that the information would be kept confidential. The news directors were told, however, that the general information they provided would be used to hopefully improve the Department of Information Services' production of film clips and releases for television stations. The interview, the directors were told, would take about an hour. This estimate of time was based on pilot studies conducted with members of MSU's Department of Information Services, May 8, 1967.

Appointments were made, and the survey was completed within three weeks (May 10 - June 2, 1967). When interviewed, the news directors were urged to speak freely, since their comments and criticisms were very important to the study being made. Apparently, most of the news directors took this suggestion quite seriously. This is indicated by the detailed and frank comments recorded from the interviews and by the fact that only three of the fourteen interviews took less than two hours.

During the interviews the questionnaire was used as a guide to seek information in these general areas:

1. Demographic information (page 1 of questionnaire).

This information was to be used to develop "profiles" on the Michigan television news "gatekeepers" (news directors) that were surveyed and to determine if any of these factors (such as past job experience, educational background, etc.) had any influence on the TV directors' opinions (and, ultimately, usage) of Michigan State University's agricultural information.

2. Time devoted to news shows and size of staff (page 2 of questionnaire).

This information was to be used to determine the potential outlets for news and features on each station and to test the assumption that MSU "handouts" (prepared films, in particular) will more likely be used at those TV stations where news staffs are small.

3. "Significant others" (page 2, questions 5-8).

This information was to be used to find out who might influence the news directors' "gatekeeping" decisions and who else (besides the news director) might be making these decisions.

4. Audience (page 3 of questionnaire).

It was hoped that answers to these questions would show the news director's concept of his news show audience and would indicate the numbers and types of people that might be reached if MSU agricultural news and feature material was used on his station.

5. Usage and types of "handouts" (under "news show content," page 4 of questionnaire).

It was hoped that by finding out what materials were (or were not) used and why (or why not), MSU's agricultural information staff could produce materials that would be used by these stations.

6. Format (page 5 of questionnaire).

The news directors were asked to rate, in order of preference, the form or release they would use most often. It was assumed that a release accompanied by film or video tape would be preferred over the same story accompanied by still pictures, slides or no visuals because of TV's characteristic of being able to show visual movement.

7. News staff's coverage (page 5, question 3).

It seemed possible that some news directors would prefer that they or their staffs cover MSU events themselves rather than receiving prepared releases from the University. If this were true, the Department of Information Services might function better by giving these news directors news tips and feature suggestions, rather than operating as a news and feature production unit.

8. MSU news and features: usage and opinions (page 5, questions 4 and 5).

The reasoning for these questions was twofold: (1) to find out what can be done to improve MSU news and feature information being sent these stations and (2) to find out which stations were already using MSU information.

9. News and feature criteria (pages 6 and 7 of questionnaire).

Titles and descriptions for eight hypothetical film clips were written with the intention that the film clips would fit into four different categories as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Film Clip Titles</u> (see descriptions in Appendix A)
General Interest-Informational (vs. agricultural interest, or promotional)	"Think Mink" "Hibernating Apples"
Agricultural Interest (vs. general interest)	"Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" "Cooling the Beet Generation"
Promotional (vs. general interest-informational)	"New Food Research Facilities Opened" "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!"
Technical (vs. non-technical in writing style)	"Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" "Science Reshapes Trees"

Writing the combination of titles and descriptions to fit these categories was done by this author and was based on his knowledge and eleven years of journalistic experience. General agreement that these hypothetical film clips could fall into the four categories listed above was received from this author's colleagues on the MSU agricultural information staff.

Before rating these hypothetical film clips, the news directors were given the following instructions:

Look at the titles and descriptions listed below. Each includes a silent, color film accompanied by a script. Each is about one and one-half minutes long. Now assume that each arrives on a normal news day (one per day).

Rate each separately according to the categories listed.

In total or in part, I would...probably use____, possibly use____, not use____. [Check one.]

After they rated all eight films, the news directors were asked why they rated each film as they did. This question was asked for each individual film clip. It was reasoned that comments by news directors would reveal their main criteria for judging film clips and that knowing these criteria would be useful to MSU's agricultural information staff when preparing or considering the preparation of news and features for use on television.

10. Use of agricultural releases (page 8 of questionnaire).

After the news directors were asked whether they ever used agricultural releases in their news shows, this author more fully identified himself, by job title and job description, to the news directors. They were told that all eight of the film clips they rated were actual MSU agricultural research projects. They were also given other examples of the general areas included in MSU's

agricultural projects. Then the news directors were asked whether these types of agricultural information had any place on their news shows.

Admittedly, this last question was not very subtle. It was intended to inform the news directors of the various types of information that could come from Michigan State University's agricultural information staff. It was also hoped that increasing the news directors' knowledge of the types of agricultural information available from MSU would result in a more favorable attitude (by the news director) toward MSU and its agricultural information. Whether or not such an attitude change resulted was to be investigated at a later date but was not a part of this study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The average age of the Michigan television news directors surveyed was 39. The range was 27 to 52.

Years of experience in broadcasting averaged 16.6; the range, 9 to 34. They had an average of 4 jobs in broadcasting. The range was 1 to 9.

The news directors had been working at the station at which they were interviewed for an average of 7.4 years, but the range was 1 to 28 years. They had been news directors at these stations an average of 4.7 years. The range was 0 (acting director) to 15.

In terms of educational background, all but one attended a college or a university -- and that one (the news director at WILX-TV) had taught broadcast journalism at Wayne State University for five and one-half years. Eight of the news directors had graduated from a college or university, three of them from MSU. None had advanced degrees, but two had worked on their master's degrees.

Six of the news directors were born in Michigan (Detroit, St. Johns, Boyne Falls, Sault Ste. Marie, Flint and Kalamazoo); two were born in Ohio (Cleveland and Loraine); two were born in Illinois (Joliet and Chicago); and one each was born in Great Falls, Montana; Plattsburg, New York; Norfolk, Virginia; and Providence, Rhode Island.

The news directors had lived in an average of three states (including Michigan and excluding military service). The range was from one (only Michigan) to six states plus England. Four had lived

only in Michigan.

Four were sons of unskilled laborers; two, skilled laborers; two, salesmen; two, professional men (an attorney and a certified public accountant); one, farmer; one, merchant; one, newspaperman (circulation department); and one, business manager.

In summary, it should be noted that the data helped to establish the surveyed Michigan television news directors as experienced "gatekeepers" of the news.

All of the findings in this section will be discussed later in this chapter under the section entitled, "Effects of Background and Experience on Usage."

News Shows: Number and Length

The 14 news directors said their 16 stations aired 53 local news shows per day, an average of 4.2. (See Table 3.) The range was from 2 a day on WJRT-TV and WLUC-TV to 11 on WZZM-TV. In addition, there were 28 news shows aired on weekends.

The most popular news show length was five minutes. Next most popular was fifteen minutes (including commercials) which was usually presented within a half-hour block of news, weather and sports.

The news directors reported a total of 580 minutes of news broadcasting daily (including commercials), an average of 41.4 minutes of local daily news per station. This figure may be somewhat distorted by the three stations which included weather and sports in their news shows. Still, the data indicated that some news time might be available for news and features from sources outside the wire services and the station's news staffs. And, at least a possibility existed that

Table 3. Number and length of local newscasts.

Station	Daily Morning		Daily Noon Hour		Daily Afternoon and Evening		Total Daily		Weekend Newscasts		Total		Weekly	
	Length/Number		Length/Number		Length/Number		Newscasts		Length/Number		Newscasts		Total ALL	Newscasts
WKZO-TV	5-min (1)				5-min (1)		4		15-min (2)		2		22	
WATV			15-min (1)		15-min (2)		3		15-min (2)		2		17	
(S WKUP)														
WPBN-TV	5-min (1)				10-min (2)		3		10-min (2)		2		17	
(S WTOM-TV)														
WCRC-TV					15-min (2)		2		15-min (1)		1		11	
WZZM-TV	5-min (5)		5-min (1)		5-min (3)		11		5-min (4)		5		60	
					15-min (1)				15-min (1)					
					30-min* (1)									
WILX-TV	5-min (2)				15-min (2)		4				0		20	
WLUC-TV					10-min (2)		2		10-min (4)		4		14	
WPKX-TV	5-min (1)				15-min (2)		3				0		15	
WJMN-TV	5-min (2)				30-min* (2)		5		30-min* (2)		2		27	
15-min (1)														
WXY4-TV	5-min (2)				20-min (2)		4		10-min (1)		2		22	
									15-min (1)					
WJEX-TV			30-min (1)		5-min (2)		5		15-min (2)		2		27	
					15-min (2)									
WJW-TV	5-min (3)				5-min (1)		6		15-min (2)		2		32	
					10-min (1)									
					15-min (1)									
WJIM-TV			15-min (1)		10-min (2)		3		15-min (1)		1		16	
WOOD-TV	5-min (1)		30-min* (1)		15-min (2)		4		10-min (1)		2		22	
									15-min (1)					
Totals	19	5		35		59					28		326	

¹Total of all daily news shows per week, plus the total of weekend shows.

*Includes weather and sports. News directors would not separate from news only.

some of the material "from other sources" could come from MSU's agricultural information staff.

Involvement in News Shows

All the news directors said they were involved in all of their stations' newscasts to some extent. Only three were regular on-the-air personalities: Tom Eynon, WNEM-TV; Dick Thompson, WKNX-TV; and Mike Wright (acting director), WJIM-TV. Two others did short segments in local newscasts: Larry Payne, WILX-TV, and John North, WWTW.

The extent to which the respondents were "involved" in all their stations' newscasts was generally in terms of responsibility.

Here were some typical comments:

I get involved in all the rest from the standpoint of the overall operation of the news department.

I'm in charge of all of them.

I oversee all general production of news and assignments... and channel this direction through the news editor.

Most of my emphasis is on the 1:25 and 6:15 shows...but I make assignments for all of the shows.

All of them...but mostly in a supervisory capacity.

All of them...but writing, not reading.

Staff Size

The 14 news directors reported a total of 102 full-time equivalent people working in news on their 16 stations. The average was 7.3; range, 2.5 to 23. The biggest staffs were 23 at WWJ-TV, 15 at WJEK-TV, 12 at WOOD-TV and 8 each at WXYZ-TV and WKZO-TV. Four stations had five-man news staffs, one had four, three had three, and one (WLUC-TV) had 2.5.

News Show Content: With Whom Does the News Director Confer?

When asked if they ever conferred with anyone about the content of their news shows, the news directors' answers ranged from a flat "no" to "very seldom," except in the instance of WWJ-TV. The WWJ-TV news director said he conferred "frequently" with the general manager:

The news director is directly responsible to the general manager. I have to clear with him on all policy decisions... the fairness doctrine, racial unrest, how far to go on a political candidate. We do not editorialize, and we do not support any candidate. But we do select subjects for news specials. These are one-half hour to an hour long during prime time. We usually average about one a month.

Actually, even though the WWJ-TV news director said "frequently" when asked whether he conferred with anyone else about news show content, the fact that most of his discussions dealt with policy put him in the same category with many other news directors.

For example, ten of the news directors answered "very seldom," "rarely," or "only on policy problems or editorials." But these "rare conferences" were with the general manager or station manager in every instance, and the discussions usually had to do with policy. Here are some typical comments:

No...only on overall policy matters...but not on individual stories.

Very rarely. Sometimes I talk with the general manager. If there's some question [disagreement], he prevails. But usually we compromise. ...I confer with the news staff, of course, about content.

Very seldom...only when the story is "touchy" or there is some legal problem involved. None otherwise. I am given a very free hand [regarding content].

Occasionally to seldom. We use a well-documented [in writing] station policy on which to base decisions. This documentation [book] is a compilation of ten years of experience at the station and written because of changing personnel. It is for

the benefit of the four-man news team and the technical people who have anything to do with news.

I confer with technical people about visuals, but that's about all. We talk some about station policy, too.

No one. I will confer with the station manager and owner about editorials, however.

The news directors at WJBK-TV, WZZM-TV and WILX-TV gave a flat "no" when asked whether they conferred with anyone about news show content, indicating that the news director is definitely in charge of his own shows. These were the comments given:

No...this is my baby.

We have good [station] management from that standpoint. They know their place and stay in it.

No, I don't have to. All the news staff has a basic understanding of what is news. This understanding has developed over time under my direction.

Who Decides What Goes on the Air?

In every instance, except one (WOOD-TV), a large share of the decisions about what goes on the air were made by the on-the-air talent. The WOOD-TV news director said newsmen on duty made the decision and that the people doing the show were "strictly talent and have nothing to do with content."

In every case, the news directors said they aided in making decisions about what goes on the air. Sometimes this was only for one or two shows per day. On those stations with large staffs, the news director spent most of his time making assignments and keeping track of personnel and their problems.

Trying to pinpoint a single "gatekeeper" at all of these stations was rather difficult. In the Detroit market, for example,

the news director had news editors under them who could decide to include or omit individual stories from a news show. Here were some comments from the Detroit market:

The general manager and I have established broad policy guidelines. Each newscaster has a broad latitude within these guidelines. The on-the-air person decides what goes on the air during his show but he is aided by all the newsmen on duty in putting together his show.

I [the news director] decide what goes on the air at 5 p.m.; at 11, it's the newsmen on duty [two of them]; and at 7:30 and 8 a.m., it's another newsmen.

The news editor [news director] has the responsibility program by program. But we have assistant news editors, too, who also make decisions.

All of the rest of the news directors made assignments and most of the major news (content) decisions. But their newsmen on duty at the time a show was aired often made final decisions on what goes on the air. Here were some typical comments:

The news department. The on-the-air announcer decides what to use during a given show. I open all mail...and I delegate all assignments.

I do. Not story by story, but I have assigned a majority of those that go on the air.

The newsmen. The news department is solely responsible for the content of the shows. Production matters are handled by production people. [These newsmen are announcers.]

If it's hard news -- breaking news -- there's no problem. The newsmen do. But, if there's any editorial judgment involved, they better contact me. I tell them to "make sure this goes" if I think something is important. [The newsmen he refers to are the on-the-air people.]

Whoever is doing the show. But the newsmen who gets the idea for a story or film can usually get the on-the-air person to use it.

Do You Ever Listen to Opinions?

All the news directors answered "yes" when asked, "Do you ever listen (and take heed of) anyone's opinion of your news shows?"

When asked, "From whom?" the answer given in every instance was viewers (expressed as the "man on the street," "the people who write in," "everybody who watches," "anybody," etc.). All indicated that they felt it was important to know about audience reactions and opinions, but most of them said they would take heed of comments only if the comments were "responsible," "reasonable" and/or "constructive."

Each news director was asked specifically about opinions from the station manager. All of them said the station managers seldom gave opinions and that the news director generally was the "boss" of the news department. Here are some typical comments:

The station manager seldom has any comments...and when he does, they are mostly constructive criticism.

The managers or others here are the most important [people offering opinions]. But their philosophy is to pick someone who has the sense to run the joint...and then leave them alone.

The station manager will comment on grammar now and then. He's an English major. He's critical...but he's proud of what we've got [in the way of news staff and programming].

Two news directors implied that the management can be somewhat troublesome to the news department. The first news director commented: "The management is of prime importance...but they can often be impractical. They want us to do some things in the way of coverage, for example, that really isn't practical with our staff."

The other news director was more specific:

If the general manager hears two comments on Main Street, this can cause us to go through astronomical gyrations. The general manager doesn't understand what news is. He's sensitive to people he meets personally. He's a very strong personality.

What he says goes....goes. In the news department we think our stations are regional [in coverage]. The general manager and his "friends" think it's local. We try to put our news in a broader context. Local opinions shouldn't determine policy....

Apparently, peers and professional television people are also strongly considered among the "significant others" who influence the surveyed news directors' opinions. Six of the respondents, without being asked, mentioned that they listened to opinions from "the management group," "other professional television people," and "other newsmen at the station."

A rather interesting sidelight to the investigation of the news directors' "significant others" occurred when the respondents were asked if their wives ever gave any constructive criticisms of the news shows. Only four of the fourteen respondents said "yes." One said his wife's criticisms were helpful because she didn't know much about television and was therefore valuable as a "typical viewer." The other three who said "yes" noted that their wives had had some previous professional experience with television. Typical comments from the ten news directors who said "no" were: "My wife's main comment is that I'm not home often enough," "My wife doesn't watch," and "I don't pay any attention to what my wife says."

In summary of this section, it appears that the news directors surveyed think of themselves as the "boss" of the news department -- the man who delegates assignments and determines, to a large extent, the content of a news show. However, it appears that he is conscious of "station policy" and the opinions of the station manager. Some of the news directors also seemed to be concerned about the opinions of other members of the news staff. All of these "significant others"

could have some bearing on a news director's decision to use (or not to use) an agricultural news or feature item from MSU. It's also important to note that the news directors said they listened to audience opinions of their news shows. Their concept of this audience will be discussed in the next section. The relationship of this audience concept to usage will be noted under the "News and Feature Criteria" section.

Audience

In general, the television news directors' concept of audience numbers was no better than a guess, and their concept of audience composition was rather vague.

Only one news director out of fourteen said he knew almost exactly how many people watched his news shows. This was the news director of WJBK-TV who produced written proof to document his claims.

The news directors at three other stations wouldn't even guess how many people watched their shows. One of these sent this author to the research department to get the information, another said he didn't know but guessed it had increased in the past year and a third said, "We cover better than thirty counties, so at least have a potential audience of two and one-half million people, but I won't make any further guesses as to audience."

All the other news directors thought they had a fairly good idea of audience numbers, but admitted that they could only give estimates (rounded off to the five's or ten's of thousands).

In terms of audience composition, the news directors within the same general market areas seemed to agree on audience composition,

but their description of the audience was generally so vague it was really difficult to tell. Typical descriptions were: "a hodgepodge," "a balanced audience," "the full gamut -- agricultural, rural and urban." It's just possible -- in fact, likely -- that audiences for these TV shows are a mixture of several social and economic classes of people.

There was one exception to the general agreement on audience composition, but it didn't become readily apparent until two news directors for the same market rated the hypothetical film clips (see "News and Feature Criteria" section). For example, commenting about a film clip about apples, one of the news directors said, "This isn't apple country and wouldn't be of interest." The other news director said, however, "This is big apple growing country." Commenting on another film clip about a cow fertility enzyme, the first news director said, "The dairy industry is pretty big around here." But the news director at the other station said just the opposite: "Dairy farming is not too big up here."

The effect of audience concept and usage became more readily apparent for all news directors when they were asked to compare film clips ("News and Feature Criteria" section), but then this relationship was often expressed as "the local angle."

Use of "Handouts"

In general, Michigan television news directors get a wide variety of material from varied sources and use very little of it.

All mentioned that they had received materials from politicians, public relations men in industry, and colleges and universities.

All of the Detroit, Flint and Saginaw news directors indicated they received materials specifically from the auto industry.

And all news directors indicated that they used very little "handout" material -- that which comes from sources other than the wire and their own staff's coverage. (The term "handout" is that of the news directors and was not used by this author in this survey.)

One news director said he used three or four of these "handouts" a day. This was the largest amount indicated.

Six news directors said they used an average of less than one a day; one said he used an average of one feature story and one or two human interest stories a day; and the rest said they used one or two "handouts" a day.

Handouts: What's Wrong with them?

Most of the handouts received by the Michigan television news directors surveyed were in the form of printed releases. And, from the news directors' point of view, these releases were too long and too newspaper oriented. In general, they said, the visuals were too few and too poor: "Not for television...", "Not enough film...."

All said they got some film (from congressmen and some public relations men in industry), but they preferred to get more:

If it's well prepared, it's film.

We'd rather have film. Television means movement.

I hate to use anything without a picture. This is one of the determining factors in a news feature's use.

We prefer color film. [Of the handout materials we receive], we will look at films, particularly.

Politicians send a lot of film clips. I went to Washington and asked them to. But most of them are in black and white. Even

so, these are a lot more interesting than a written release on a new cyclotron at the University of California. ...We can always use visuals on the weekend.

We need film. We don't get enough of it. Send me more.

Stop sending us newspaper releases. Hell, we can't use a one-column cut. The films we receive are generally all O.K. -- both black and white and color.

These comments about film, color and visuals on weekends were considered in writing the "Recommendations" section in the last chapter of this thesis.

The news directors generally agreed that the material they received from other sources varied a great deal in quality and that they could or would not use most of it. The general complaints were that (1) the handout material was not particularly localized; (2) it often arrived too late to be news; (3) some is too commercial; (4) most of it is too long and not written for television; and (5) most of it lacks good visuals.

To improve these materials, the news directors suggested that senders try to make the material "more television oriented." In several cases, they suggested employing radio-television people to prepare this material. Nearly all emphasized the importance of visuals, condensation of length, timeliness and some attempt to get a "local angle." Some admitted, however, that public relations people would have a difficult job trying to serve all media effectively and that visuals can be expensive.

Do news directors throw away any "handout" materials without looking at them? Nine said "no," one said "from one outfit I do" and three said "yes." Here are comments from the latter:

Certain outfits we see often enough to know they won't have anything of interest to us. But if it's a film, we'll at least look at the script.

Yes. A lot. I don't have time to look at all of them. Some sources we know won't send us anything worthwhile... and we don't want fill stories.

Yes. I know what many of them have to offer. It's nonlocal. I'll look at something from Lansing and Detroit, but if it's good, it's probably on the wire already. And the wire does a better job of condensing it.

Staff Coverage

All but three of the news directors said they would prefer to cover a news or feature event with their own staff rather than having someone send them the material. Of the three exceptions, one (WPBN-TV) said: "No. We only have three men and usually only one to go out. Our budget is very limited." The news director at WWTW said, "We're limited by man power. There's only one man -- me -- available to go out and get these stories. We have the equipment, though -- sound, sound-on cameras and Auricon." The news director at WKZO-TV said, "We prefer to cover the event ourselves if it's a news event...but we don't if it's a feature. Features have to be timely. We do cover some features...but we can't always guarantee that we will because hard news has precedence."

The rest of the news directors indicated they had ample staffs and budget for travel. But all said they would not cover an event unless they considered the story worth the time and expense.

Use of MSU Releases

All fourteen news directors said they had used releases, film features, etc., about Michigan State University. Five said most of the stories they used came in on the wire. Nine said they got them directly from MSU. The news director at one station -- WJBK-TV -- said he got no material directly from MSU.

The news directors were then asked, "If you get anything directly from MSU, please comment about its quality and content." Typical criticisms were: "Mostly releases [not enough visuals]," "written for newspapers," "too long," "it isn't that good," "it might give us a lead, but we have to rework everything."

MSU releases apparently had not made a strong impression on most of the news directors. Four said they couldn't remember receiving any releases directly from MSU (even though they had), three said the releases had "too much agriculture" in them, and three more said the releases were too long and there were too many of them.

The few good comments about MSU's material came from the two stations closest to the University, WILX-TV and WJIM-TV, and the two that cover the northern lower peninsula and part of the Upper Peninsula, WWTV and WPNB-TV (each of which has a satellite station). Comments from these stations are worth noting in some detail, since all four of these respondents had been receiving some of MSU's agricultural information (releases, stills and slides -- not film) in addition to some general news from MSU (mostly written releases and a little film).

The news director at WILX-TV said, "By and large, it's pretty good...except it is newspaper oriented as far as length is concerned. Most of the visuals have been agriculturally oriented. I look at it this way, it could be of interest, agricultural or not."

At WJIM-TV, the comment was similar. "It's generally good. We get more than we can use. Most of it is on agriculture."

John North, the WWTV news director at the time of the survey, knew this author, and this may have had some effect on his comments: "Content is our main consideration. We'll rework a good story even

if it isn't written for TV or our audience. We expect to have to do this. Films we've received from you have all been O.K. We shortened a few, but the quality is fine."

WPBN-TV's respondent made this comment: "We used to get scripts, slides and matte photos. They were very good, but we found them hard to use because our newscasts were too short to report much on agriculture. Most of these were strictly agriculture, not for news. We need film and we would use almost any we could get." Apparently, WPBN-TV did not have a large budget. The station manager said he would pay \$125 a week for a news director with five years of experience. He didn't have a news director at the time the survey was made.

Every news director indicated at sometime during the interview that a story accompanied by a film had a much better chance of being aired than one that did not. When this author visited with these men after the interview was completed, they said the competition from hard news and other public relations people was becoming very great and that MSU would have to produce some good, concise film clips to get very much use. About half of the news directors volunteered the suggestion that they should be contacted in advance to see if MSU should bother to make a film at all. They also said that in most cases they would rather cover an important news event themselves and wished that MSU would give them more advance notice of when important events were to occur. However, they said, they would not cover an event unless it constituted a "big" story.

Format of Materials

The news directors, when asked to rank the form of releases they would use most often, rated the formats thusly:

1. Sound-on-film
2. Silent film with script
3. Video tape (sound-on)
4. Slides, script
5. Stills, script
6. Script, no visuals

While the summation of the rankings (Table 4) indicated sound-on-film as being the most preferred, comments by the news directors indicated that silent film, generally, is most preferred -- unless the sound and/or the personality on the film is important. This comment was made by every news director which ranked silent film other than No. 1 -- with one exception. The exception was at WKZO-TV where the news director said, "We like to use good sound...even if it's narrated by someone outside of our own staff." He rated sound-on video tape first; sound-on-film, second; and sound film, script, third.

Two other news directors, at WXYZ-TV and WOOD-TV, also rated script, silent film, third. They rated sound-on-film first and sound-on video tape second. Both said that sound-on-film or video tape was preferred only when the personality is important to the story or when sound background can help.

There were five stations which ranked silent film second. But they agreed they would rather have silent film if the sound or the personality's voice was not important.

The reasons for preferring silent film: easier to edit, and newsmen can put on their own narration.

The most varied ratings in terms of format preference were

Table 4. Rank of release format.

Station	Script, No Visuals	Script, Still Pictures	Script, Slides	Script, Silent Film	Sound-on- Film	Sound-on Video Tape
WPBN-TV	5	4	3	2	1	6
WJRT-TV	6	4	5	2	1	3
WKZO-TV	6	5	4	3	2	1
WWTW	5	3	4	1	2	6
WNEM-TV	6	5	4	2	1	3
WKNX-TV	6	5	4	1	2	3
WILX-TV	6	4	3	1	2	5
WOOD-TV	6	5	4	3	1	2
WJIM-TV	5	4	6	1	3	2
WLUC-TV ¹	5	3	4	2	1	1
WJBK-TV ²	-	-	-	-	-	-
WXYZ-TV ³	-	-	-	3	1	2
WWJ-TV ⁴	-	4	3	2	1	-
WZZM-TV	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals:	62	49	48	24	20	39
Av. Ranking:	5.6	4.1	4.0	1.8	1.5	3.2

*News directors were asked to rank the form of release (the type of visual) in order of their preference. The most preferred was given a rating of "1" from the news director, the second most preferred was given a "2," etc. These were ratings of news or feature material received from sources outside of the wire services and their own staffs.

¹Ranked sound-on video tape and sound-on-film dead even.

²Would not rank. Said "it all depends" ... "form follows function."

³Said "we'd never use these" to script with no visuals, still pictures or slides.

⁴Would use "script, no visuals" for "leads only" and was concerned about the "technical problem ... quality" of sound-on video tape.

received by sound-on video tape. It was ranked first two times; second, three times; third, three times; fifth, twice; and sixth (last), three times.

Those who rated it first were the news directors at WKZO-TV and WLUC-TV. The news director at WLUC-TV gave a No. 1 ranking to both sound-on video tape and sound-on-film, saying that these two would rank evenly in terms of his preference and choice for quality -- but his station had only one video tape machine. Thus, he said, "A video tape commercial, for example, might present a conflict of usage on this machine."

Of the three news directors that rated video tape last, two of them (at WPNB-TV and WWTW) did not have the facilities to use video tape. The third news director, at WWJ-TV, said that video tape sometimes presented technical problems and the quality was "uncertain." He said, therefore, he would prefer not to have people send video tapes to him.

The rather erratic rating for video tape seems to be based on tying up machinery (low rating) vs. ease of use (high rating) and, apparently, some disagreement about quality. The news directors who rated video tape highly said the quality was very good.

After the news directors rated the different release formats, all of them were asked this question: "Supposing I sent you a film that you wanted for a news show. How long should it be?"

The answer given by all but two of the news directors was generally "one minute or less."

The two news directors giving different answers were those at WJBK-TV and WPNB-TV. The news director at WJBK-TV said the film

should be "long enough to tell the story...but we have placed an arbitrary limit of ninety seconds on film." The respondent at WPBN-TV said films should be "two minutes or less."

The rest of the news directors responded with variations on the "one minute or less" theme. At WOOD-TV, however, the news director said he would want films to be no more than thirty seconds long. The news director at WILX-TV said hard news should be about forty-five seconds long; features, no longer than one and a half minutes. The news director at WKNX-TV placed the maximum length at forty-five seconds for silent film and one minute for sound-on-film.

The Use of Color

Six of the news directors surveyed said their news shows were in color (WKYC-TV, WJDK TV, WOOD TV, WNEM-TV, WWJ-TV and WKYC TV). Two more (WJRT-TV and WJIM-TV) said their news shows would be in color by the end of 1967.

All of the news directors, except the one at WKNX-TV, said they could use color film and slides. And all of the news directors, except the one at WKNX-TV, said they would prefer color film over black and white, all other things being equal.

News and Feature Criteria

The news directors ranked the eight hypothetical film clips in the following order (rating score in parentheses):

- "New Food Research Facilities Opened" (20)
- "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" (20)
- "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" (16)
- "Think Mink" (14)

"Science Reshapes Trees" (11)

"Hibernating Apples" (10)

"Cooling the Beet Generation" (9)

"Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" (7)

A summary of these ratings by category appears in Table 5. Detailed comments (by the news directors) on each film clip appear in Appendix B.

The film clips rated highest by the news directors ("New Food Research Facilities Opened" and "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!") were those considered to be in the "promotional" category by the author and his colleagues.

But the reasons for rating these films so highly apparently had little to do with their "promotional" aspects. Here were some typical comments from the nine news directors who said they would probably use the film clip, "New Food Research Facilities Opened":

(WWTW) "It's news. It applies to the homemaker."

(WJBK-TV) "Reason? Women. It fits what we want to put on the air. It's about food. Everybody is interested in that."

(WOOD-TV) "[This subject] hits the housewife. Our surveys estimate a large women's audience for news shows."

All three news directors whose stations include MSU in their coverage area -- WJIM-TV, WJRT-TV and WILX-TV -- said they would use the film because "it's news...in our area."

Only three news directors said they would not use this film clip: those at stations WWJ-TV, WLUC-TV and WZZM-TV. The news director at WZZM-TV categorically said he would not use any of the eight film clips he was asked to rate for these reasons: "No news

Table 5. Film clip ratings (by title and category).

<u>Category</u>	<u>Film Title</u>	<u>Would Probably Use</u>	<u>Would Possibly Use</u>	<u>Would Not Use</u>	<u>Rating Score¹</u>
I. Promotional	"New Food Research Facilities Opened"	(9) WWTV WKZO-TV WJIM-TV WKNX-TV WPBN-TV WILX-TV WOOD-TV ² WJRT-TV WJBK-TV ²	(2) WXYZ-TV WNEM-TV	(3) WZZM-TV WWJ-TV WLUC-TV	20
	"Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!"	(9) WKNX-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV WNEM-TV WPBN-TV WILX-TV WOOD-TV ² WJRT-TV WJBK-TV ²	(2) WKZO-TV WJIM-TV	(3) WZZM-TV WXYZ-TV WWTV	20
<hr/>					
II. Technical	"Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed"	(7) WJIM-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV WPBN-TV WILX-TV WJRT-TV WXYZ-TV	(3) WWTV WKZO-TV WOOD-TV ²	(4) WZZM-TV WKNX-TV WNEM-TV WJBK-TV ²	17
	"Science Reshapes Trees"	(3) WLUX-TV WWTV WPBN-TV	(5) WXYZ-TV WKZO-TV WKNX-TV WNEM-TV WILX-TV	(6) WZZM-TV WJIM-TV WWJ-TV WOOD-TV ² WJRT-TV WJBK-TV ²	11

Continued...

Table 5--Continued.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Film Title</u>	<u>Would Probably Use</u>	<u>Would Possibly Use</u>	<u>Would Not Use</u>	<u>Rating Score¹</u>
III. General Interest	"Think Mink"	(4) WXYZ-TV WWTV WJRT-TV WJBK-TV ²	(6) WKZO-TV WJIM-TV WNEM-TV WPBN-TV WILX-TV WOOD-TV ²	(4) WZZM-TV WKNX-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV	14
	"Hibernating Apples"	(4) WWTV WKZO-TV WPBN-TV WOOD-TV ²	(2) WKNX-TV WJRT-TV	(8) WZZM-TV WXYZ-TV WJIM-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV WNEM-TV WILX-TV WJBK-TV ²	10
<hr/>					
IV. Agricultural Interest	"Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered"	(2) WNEM-TV WPBN-TV	(3) WWTV WKZO-TV WJIM-TV	(9) WZZM-TV WXYZ-TV WKNX-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV WILX-TV WOOD-TV ² WJRT-TV WJBK-TV ²	7
	"Cooling the Beet Generation"	(4) WKNX-TV WNEM-TV WJRT-TV WPBN-TV	(1) WKZO-TV	(9) WZZM-TV WJBK-TV ² WOOD-TV ² WXYZ-TV WWTV WJIM-TV WLUC-TV WWJ-TV WILX-TV	9

¹Rating score tabulated by scoring 2 points for "probably use," 1 for "possibly use" and 0 for "not use."

²Indicates "noon news show only" rating. These news directors would not use these film clips in their 6 or 11 p.m. newscasts.

value....," "We want hard news....," "We want local stuff....," "Our time is too limited to use these." The news directors at WWJ-TV and WLUC-TV would not use the films because of the proximity criteria ("It's not here....," "Not enough local interest here.").

The other highly rated film clip was "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" The novelty of this film (tulips blooming in winter), plus the fact that this was in color, seemed to outweigh other factors considered by the news directors in judging these film clips. Here were some typical comments of the nine news directors that said they would use this film clip:

(WJBK-TV) "This would be very colorful. Every woman is interested in flowers and candy...so you should talk about flowers and candy."

(WJRT-TV) "This would be no good in black and white, but it sells in color. The fact that it sounds promotional doesn't bother me, not when you're promoting a state institution."

(WNEM-TV) "Pretty. It's in color. The Tulip Festival was last week."

(WWJ-TV) "I think we'd use this. Like they say, kids, babies, flowers -- all have general appeal. It would probably go as a weekend feature."

Apparently, the feature angle offered by this film clip generally outweighed the promotional aspect.

The proximity factor bothered the news directors that would not use the film (those at WWTW, WXYZ-TV and WZZM-TV). But proximity apparently did not bother the other news directors, since they saw ways of tying it in with activities in their areas. For example, two of

the news directors in the Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo area (WOOD-TV and WKZO-TV) saw a "tie-in" with the Holland Tulip Festival, while the news director at WLUC-TV, Marquette, saw a "natural tie-in" with all of the snow his coverage area receives each winter.

The next highest rated category was the so-called "technical" grouping which included the "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" and "Science Reshapes Trees." These had rating scores of 17 and 11, respectively.

The news directors who said they would probably use the "inertial propulsion" film clip liked the visual appeal a film like this might offer, the novelty of a new mode of propulsion that would move vehicles over icy roads, and the possible tie-in with the automobile industry. Here were some typical comments:

(WXYZ-TV) "It has a little movement in it. ...I've found, by talking to people, that they're interested in the explanation of a scientific device."

(WJRT-TV) "There are a lot of people in industry here -- a lot of mechanical nuts. ...I'd like to have a sound background [of the machine running] on this."

(WLUC-TV) "...particularly because it has to do with icy roads. There's a lot of ice and snow and a lot of people getting stuck with their cars here in the U.P. [Upper Peninsula]."

The fact that the film clip was written to seem somewhat technical seemed to have some bearing on the number of "would not use" ratings. For example, the news director at WJBK-TV said, "We have a general rule: don't use anything more than two syllable words. 'Inertial' and 'propulsion' are both losers." The news

director at WNEM-TV said, "Too technical. People in this market wouldn't go for it." The news directors at WKNX-TV and WZZM-TV said they would not use the film because of its lack of a "local angle."

It was interesting to note that three of the news directors who said they would probably use this film include MSU in their coverage area: WILX-TV, WJIM-TV and WJRT-TV. It was possible that their analysis of their news audiences (a large segment of relatively highly educated white collar workers and university students, alumni and faculty) may have had something to do with the rating of this film clip. However, none of the reasons given by the news directors indicated the "university influence" of their audience. In other words, they did not say they would use the film because it was a new MSU research development that might appeal to this type of audience. Instead, their reasons included such things as "visually effective," "...a lot of people in industry here," and "...a new mode of propulsion that might have some merit for males."

Two Detroit news directors, those at WXYZ-TV and WWJ-TV, said they would probably use the film because it might have some relation to the automobile industry. But the third Detroit news director, at WJBK-TV, did not relate the title and film description to the automobile industry. Furthermore, he was rating films for noon news shows only at which time his station had a large female audience. He said this film clip, on the basis of its description, was "too obtuse for women." (He made all of his ratings for noon news, commenting that he would use none of the eight film clips at 6 or 11 p.m.)

The ratings of the other "technical" film clip, "Science Reshapes Trees," provided an excellent example of proximity as a

criterion for rating news or feature material.

Only three news directors said they would probably use the film clip -- and all three were from stations in areas where trees abound: WLUC-TV, Marquette; WWTW, Cadillac; and WPBN-TV, Traverse City. The latter two news directors also spoke for their satellites at Sault Ste. Marie and Cheboygan, respectively (WWUP and WTOM-TV). These news directors saw the importance of "tree quality," "the timber and Christmas tree industries," "trees -- for harvest, for recreation or just to see."

Six news directors said they would not use this film clip. Most of them reasoned that it was "too specialized" or "too technical" for a general audience appeal. Here were some typical comments:

(WJRT-TV) "I'd give this to the farm director. This is too specialized in appeal for a news show."

(WJBK-TV) "It sounds like an agronomist's lecture."

(WJIM-TV) "Inactive."

(WWJ-TV) "Not enough general interest."

So, the "technical" aspects of both "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" and "Science Reshapes Trees" had some influence on the rating of these film clips.

The third highest rated category of film clips was the so-called "general interest" category. This included the "Think Mink" and "Hibernating Apples" film clips. Their rating scores were 14 and 10, respectively.

Four news directors said they would probably use the "Think Mink" film clip, and six more directors gave it a "possible use" rating. Three of the news directors who said that they would probably

use the film (those at WJBK-TV, WXYZ-TV and WJRT-TV) thought the film clip would have some interest to women which, they said, made up a large portion of their news audiences. The news director at WWTW also thought he would probably use the film clip, but for a much different reason: "I know too many people who have been taken with so-called big profits in raising mink. I think we should set the record straight — let them know the problems, costs, etc."

The six news directors who said they would possibly use the film clip also saw that the film might have some interest to the women that made up a good share of their news audiences.

Of the four that would not use the film, two news directors (those at WWJ-TV and WLUC-TV) said the film clip did not have enough general interest. The other two, directors at WKNX-TV and WZZM-TV, saw "no local angle."

The lowest rated category was the "agricultural interest" category. The two films in this category, "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" and "Cooling the Beet Generation," finished dead last in the ratings with scores of 7 and 9, respectively.

The film clip, "Cooling the Beet Generation," got most of its rating score from three stations which have sugar beets grown in their coverage area, WKNX-TV, WNEM-TV and WJRT-TV. All three of the news directors at these stations said they would probably use the film clip, and all three indicated the proximity criterion in their comments: "We grow sugar beets in this area," "...this is beet country," and "...this is one of the sugar beet centers of the state."

The fourth "would probably use" rating came from station WPBN-TV. The respondent said, "We don't grow any sugar beets in this

area...but it sounds interesting because it's about sugar."

Of the nine news directors that said they would probably not use the film clip, nearly all said, in effect, "We don't have any sugar beets grown around here...and we don't have any farmers watching." As far as these news directors were concerned, such a film clip would be "purely agricultural in interest" and "not enough general interest" for their audiences.

These same kinds of comments were evident in the ratings of the other "agricultural interest" film clip, "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered." Only two news directors said they would probably use this film, those at WNEM-TV and WPBN-TV. The news director at WNEM-TV noted that "the dairy industry is pretty big around here." The respondent at WPBN-TV said he had "just read something like this [about fertility problems] in LIFE magazine...and would like to learn more about what's being done in this general area."

Nine news directors voted "not use" on this film clip for much the same reasons as they voted "not use" on the sugar beet film clip. Here were some typical comments: "Cows mean farmers and we don't have any farmers watching...", "There are very few farmers in our audience, and the average person doesn't care what happens to cows...", "It's for farmers -- strictly for educated farmers at that."

These ratings, by category, indicated that film clips of interest strictly to farmers were not likely to be used by Michigan television news directors. However, all eight of the films rated by the television news directors were actual agricultural news and feature items from Michigan State University. It appears, then, that "agricultural" news and features stand at least a chance of being

used by Michigan television news directors if these items are not labeled "agriculture" -- in other words, if they are not directed only to farmers.

Film Clip Ratings by TV Stations

A summary of how each TV station rated the eight film clips appears in Table 6.

At WPNB-TV (which also had the satellite WTOM-TV), the respondent said he would probably use seven of the film clips and would "possibly use" the other. This station had no news director at the time of the survey, and the station manager who was surveyed said simply, "We need film!"

Nearly the opposite reaction was received by the news director at WZZM-TV who said he would not use any of the eight film clips for these reasons: "No news value. We want hard news. We want local stuff. Our time is too limited to use these."

It might be expected that the three news directors at the stations which include MSU in their prime coverage area (WILX-TV, WJRT-TV and WJIM-TV) would be likely to rate MSU film clips highly. As a matter of fact, the news director at WJRT-TV did give the second highest overall rating score to the film clips. But the news director at WILX-TV gave the seventh rating, and the acting news director at WJIM-TV gave the ninth highest rating among the fourteen respondents who rated the film clips.

Not too unexpected were the low overall ratings from the three Detroit stations: WJBK-TV, WXYZ-TV and WWJ-TV. These stations have large news staffs gathering their own news, and they have a lot of

Table 6. Film clip ratings by TV stations.

Number of Film Clips News Directors Would...				Rating
	<u>Probably Use</u>	<u>Possibly Use</u>	<u>Not Use</u>	<u>Score*</u>
WPBN-TV (and WTOM-TV)**	7	1	0	15
WJRT-TV	5	1	2	11
WKZO-TV	2	6	0	10
WWTV (and WWUP)**	4	2	2	10
WNEM-TV	3	3	2	9
WKNX-TV	3	2	3	8
WILX-TV	3	2	3	8
WOOD-TV (N)***	3	2	3	8
WJIM-TV	2	3	3	7
WLUC-TV	5	0	5	6
WJBK-TV (N)***	3	0	5	6
WXYZ-TV	2	2	4	5
WWJ-TV	2	0	6	4
WZZM-TV	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total:	42	24	46	107
Av.:	3.0	1.7	3.3	7.6
Mean:	3.0	2.0	3.0	8

*Rating score tabulated by scoring 2 points for "probably use" rating, 1 for "possibly use" and 0 for "not use."

**Satellite stations indicated in parentheses.

***Station ratings were for noon news shows only. Would not use at either 6 or 11 p.m.

"hard news" from the Detroit metropolitan area.

Another station giving low overall ratings to the film clips was WLUC-TV, Marquette. Lack of proximity to MSU was the big reason.

It appeared, however, that all of the stations (with the exception, perhaps, of WZZM-TV) might use agricultural material from MSU, particularly if it had enough of the "general interest" these news directors often mentioned.

Economics of Producing News Film Clips

From the ratings of eight MSU film clips by Michigan television news directors, it can be noted that an average of only three of the film clips would be used by all of the stations and another 1.7 would "possibly" be used. Is it economical, then, to produce a film clip that might only be used by three or four stations?

To determine this, the author assumed that an average of ten copies of each film clip would be produced. And these figures were tabulated as follows:

Table 7. Cost* of TV news clips - one minute, color.

Raw stock - 200'	\$14.00
Processing	14.00
Work print	20.00
Answer print	10.80
Release prints 10	80.00
Bus (for transporting film to and from lab.)	4.50
Cameraman - 2 hrs shooting	18.00
Editing - 4 hrs	25.00
Conforming - 3 hrs	18.00
Writing Script - 2 hrs	<u>12.00</u>
	\$216.30

*These figures are based on costs at General Film Laboratory, Detroit, Mich., and approximate MSU rates for personnel to perform the above jobs.

It should be noted that the above figures are approximate only. They may be conservative in most instances, since the amount of raw stock to produce some film clips may go much higher. This would also increase the cost of processing, work prints, shooting time and editing.

To make these cost figures more meaningful to this survey, tabulations were made to determine the cost per thousand homes potentially reached by the film clips rated in the survey (see Table 8). It should be noted that the audience estimates used in these calculations were obtained at the stations surveyed and were based upon various surveys in various forms.

It should be noted that the broader the potential audience for a film clip, the better ratings it received and the lower its cost per thousand. The two film clips which were of interest mainly to an agricultural audience ("Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" and "Cooling the Beet Generation") had the highest cost per thousand homes.

It should also be noted that the film clip "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" had the second lowest cost per thousand, but was actually the third highest rated film. Only seven news directors said they would probably use this film, compared to nine news directors each who said they would use the film clips, "New Food Research Facilities Opened" and "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" The difference in cost per thousand is due to the fact that three news directors who claimed over 100,000 homes in their newscast audiences (WWJ-TV, WXYZ-TV and WLUC-TV) said they would probably use the inertial propulsion machine film, while only two large audience

Table 8. Potential homes and cost per thousand reached based on film clip ratings.*

Film Title	Estimated Audience of Stations Rating "Would Probably Use" ¹ (thousands of homes)	Estimated Audience of Stations Rating "Would Possibly Use" ² (thousands of homes)	Cost Per Thousand Homes of Estimated Audience "Probably" Reached ³		Cost Per Thousand Homes of Estimated Audience "Possibly" Reached ⁴	
"Tiptoe Through Tulips..."	634	60	\$.34		\$.31	
"Inertial Propulsion..."	503	161	.43		.32	
"New Food Research..."	462	160	.47		.35	
"Think Mink"	317	285	.68		.36	
"Hibernating Apples"	191	65	1.13		.84	
"Science Reshapes Trees"	164	245	1.32		.53	
"Cooling the Beet..."	155	30	1.39		1.17	
"Cow Fertility Enzyme..."	90	91	2.40		1.19	
Total:	2,516	1,097	\$8.16		\$5.07	
Av.:	314	137	\$1.02		\$.63	

*See Table 5 for film clip ratings.

¹Calculated by adding together the estimated audiences (provided by the stations surveyed) for the news shows during which the news directors said they "would probably use" the film clips.

²Calculated by adding together the estimated audiences (provided by the stations surveyed) for the news shows during which the news directors said they "would possibly use" the film clips.

³Calculated by dividing the cost of producing the film clips (see Table 7) by the number of homes in Column 1.

⁴Calculated by dividing the cost of producing the film clips (see Table 7) by the number of homes in Columns 1 and 2.

stations (WJBK-TV and WLUC-TV) gave this rating to "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" and only one (WJBK-TV) gave the "would probably use" rating to the "New Food Research Facilities Opened" film clip.

It is also interesting to note that three of the four highest rated films (lowest cost per thousand homes) were those with subject matter of relatively high interest to women (tulips, food and milk). As noted earlier, many of the news directors estimated (without being asked) that from 40 to 75 per cent of their news show audiences were women.

Effects of Background and Experience on Usage

The assumption that a news director's background, job experience and education would have some bearing on his usage of MSU's agricultural news and feature film clips could not be substantiated. It had been assumed that the news director with a farm background or one who had graduated from Michigan State University would be more likely to give high ratings to the film clips the directors evaluated in the survey.

The rating scores show news directors at five stations whose overall film clip rating scores were above the median of 8. These were the news directors at WPBN-TV (satellite, WTOM-TV), WJRT-TV, WKZO-TV, WWTW (satellite, WWUP) and WNEM-TV.

None of the news directors from these five stations were sons of farmers or had ever lived on a farm. Yet, the news directors at WPBN-TV and WNEM-TV said they would "probably use" both of the agricultural interest films ("Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" and "Cooling the Beet Generation"); the director at WJRT-TV said he would

"probably use" one of the films (the one on beets); the director at WKZO-TV said he would "possibly use" both films; and the director at WWTW said he would "possibly use" the one on the "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered."

It should be noted, however, that sugar beets are grown extensively within the coverage areas of WJRT-TV and WNEM-TV. Had this subject matter not been chosen as one of the "agricultural interest" film clips to be rated, the total rating scores given by these two news directors might have been lower.

All five of the news directors who generally gave high ratings to the hypothetical MSU film clips had attended college. Two of them (the news directors at WJRT-TV and WWTW) were graduates of MSU.

It should be noted, however, that all but one of the fourteen news directors surveyed had attended a college or university, and that man (the news director at WILX-TV) had taught at Wayne State University for five and one-half years. It should further be noted that the news director giving the lowest overall rating score to MSU's hypothetical film clips (the news director at WZZM-TV) was also a graduate of MSU.

Since no direct correlation between news directors' backgrounds and their usage of MSU film clips could be made, why did some news directors rate these film clips high while others generally rated them low? A closer look at the news directors of the stations giving the highest rating scores may offer some clues.

For example, the respondent at WPDN-TV was aware that his station and its satellite (WTOM-TV) covered a large rural area. He further noted that his news staff was small (a total of three men),

and the news film produced by the staff was limited. So, he said, "We want film!"

The news director at WJRT-TV probably gave his relatively good ratings to the film clips because "MSU is in our coverage area... we have a lot of students and alumni in our audience."

The news director at WKZO-TV saw at least a possibility for using all eight of the film clips. He had gone to college (although not to MSU), and his father-in-law owned and operated a farm. He said he might give the two agricultural interest films to the farm director, but he saw possibilities for the news show if he could make some tie-in (1) between the "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" film clip and fertility in general, and (2) between the "Cooling the Beet Generation" film clip and sugar prices.

The news director at WWTN (satellite, WWUP) was an MSU graduate. He had had no farm background, but he had experience working at radio and television stations located where farming is important to the area (Woodward, Okla.; Roswell, N.M.; Rapid City, S.D.; and his present location, Cadillac, Mich.). When asked whether he ever used agricultural stories in his newscasts, he commented: "Yes...especially those with a fruit or natural resources angle. Agriculture (rural farm area) constitutes 25-35 per cent of our coverage area." He said he would not use the "Cooling the Beet Generation" film clip, but he would possibly use the "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" film clip. He also said he would probably use the film clips on milk, apples, food and trees.

The relatively high rating that WNEB-TV gave the film clips is due, at least in part, to the fact that this news director rated

both "agricultural interest" films in the "would probably use" category. The news director said he would probably use the "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" film clip because "the dairy industry is pretty big around here." He said he would probably use the "Cooling the Beet Generation" film clip because "this is beet country...we [the station and staff] sit right in the middle of a beet field." Had the two film clips in the "agricultural interest" category been of different subject matter, the WNEM-TV ratings might not have been so high.

The rest of the rating score from WNEM-TV came from four film clips that the news directors saw as being feature possibilities: "Think Mink," "New Food Research Facilities Opened," "Science Reshapes Trees," and "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" Most of the other news directors surveyed shared the view of this news director who saw the possibility for these features on "slow" news days when "hard news" did not dominate the entire newscast.

What accounts for the generally low ratings of some news directors? The news director at WZZM-TV said he would use none of the films because, as noted earlier, he did not consider them as "news."

The next three low rating stations were all in Detroit: WWJ-TV (rating score: 4), WXYZ-TV (rating score: 5) and WJBK-TV (rating score: 6). Their relatively large news staffs and the large amount of "hard news" from the metropolitan Detroit area seemed to be the major reasons for their relatively low ratings of the MSU film clips.

The other station giving a low overall rating, WLUC-TV

(rating score: 6) is the farthest in geographic distance from Michigan State University. The news director at this Marquette station said, for example, "If these film clips came from Michigan Tech [Michigan Technological University] or Northern [Michigan University], we would be more likely to use them." He rated only three films in the "probably use" category, and all of them had some subject matter tie-in to his Upper Peninsula coverage area. For example, he said he would probably have used the "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" film clip "particularly because it has to do with icy roads...this has interest in the U.P." He said he would probably use "Science Reshapes Trees" because "forestry is a big industry up here." And he said he would probably use "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" because it would make "a good feature...particularly since it talks about snow."

Use of Agricultural Releases

When asked, "Do you use agricultural stories in your newscasts?" all but two of the news directors said they did, but only when the agricultural story was of major importance (the long drought, a major crop loss, an agricultural notable visiting in the area, etc.) or when the agricultural story had an effect on consumers (milk price increase, fresh fruit shortage, etc.). The directors also generally agreed that agricultural stories were often "played down" in their newscasts and seldom rated as a top story.

The two news directors that said they did use agricultural stories and quite often gave them "top billing" in their newscasts were directors of WWTW, Cadillac, and WLUC-TV, Marquette. The WWTW news director said he used a lot of agricultural stories related to

the fruit industry and the natural resources in the area. And the director of WLUC-TV said he used a lot of local agricultural stories such as "farm tours," "stuff from the Cooperative Extension Service," "features on maple syrup," etc.

Agriculture: Of General Interest?

At this point in the survey, and after the news directors had had an opportunity to evaluate films and to comment as to whether agriculture had any place in their newscasts, the news directors were told more about who was interviewing them:

I should tell you that I am the news director for Michigan State University's Agricultural Experiment Station and send out stories and films on agricultural research. All of the stories and films you just rated are about some of our agricultural research projects which include studies of pests and pesticides, development of new food products, and research on fish, wildlife, trees, packaging, harvesters, lawns, plants, economics, etc.

After the news directors were given this information, they were asked this question:

Do you think this kind of agriculture news and features has any place on your news show...or, put another way, do you think it has enough general interest to be used?

The answer to this question could generally be summed up as follows: "Yes -- as long as the information is directed to the general public and not specifically to commercial farmers." The only exception to this answer was given by the news director at WZZM-TV who said this type of information had no place in his news show and that the film clips "might make good commercials" if MSU could get someone to sponsor the products. He insisted that the only agricultural news of interest to him was "hard news" such as "Freeman's visit to Grand Rapids," "the NFO milk dumping episode," or "when the

weather has damaged crops."

The other thirteen news directors agreed that there was a place for agriculture on news shows, but the information had to be of wider appeal than to the very small percentage of commercial farmers that might be in their audience. Here were some typical comments by news directors when asked if they thought agriculture news and features had enough general interest to be used on their news shows:

(WWJ-TV) "Yes. Take pesticides [for example]. There's a greater awakening on the part of people using pesticides since Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. There's a lot of interest in pesticides outside of agriculture -- for people, dogs, fish and wildlife. ...We'll use agricultural stories if they can be related to food prices."

(WJIM-TV) "It depends on the story. If you handle it right, you can sell anything to anybody. For example, tobacco as a crop isn't very interesting, but if you relate it to cigarettes, then just about everybody is interested."

(WILX-TV) "For the average run of a story, I don't think it does. But research related to increasing food production, for example, is of interest to everybody. With all of the land being taken out of agricultural production, we have to increase production per acre or we'll all be in trouble."

(WOOD-TV) "A new spray for mosquitoes may be of general interest, but we may use the story and not the film. We have twelve minutes at 11 p.m. to cover the world and, more specifically, the United States, Michigan, Kent County, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

Your chances of getting anything on the air, then, are slim. But there is a chance -- if you can make it of general interest."

(WJBK-TV) "Pests and pesticides for the farmer -- no. For roses -- yes. Everyone is interested in how some pesticides applied to a rose might kill everything else in the garden. An agricultural story can be made interesting if it's made generally applicable."

(WJRT-TV) "Yes, if it's well done...if it appeals to the general public. These clips offer good feature possibilities. ...Consider the audience when you're making these. We don't want someone cutting holes in a cow's stomach while we're eating. Think in terms of the guy sitting with a can of beer watching the news, or the housewife with the kids hanging around her neck."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study was designed to determine the potential usage of Michigan State University's agricultural information by Michigan's commercial television news directors on their newscasts. An attempt was also made to learn which factors might influence news directors' judgments when they are deciding whether they should or should not use MSU's agricultural news and features. Fourteen news directors were personally interviewed to get this information.

The results of the survey indicated that the television news director uses a wide range of criteria in making decisions about the news or feature stories he will use on his news shows. And, just as White (32) found in his "gatekeeper" research, the news director "gatekeeper" is somewhat subjective in making his decisions.

One of the major reasons for the news directors deciding for or against a news or feature item was related to what they generally called "the local angle" or, as Gieber (9) would have called it, "psychological proximity." The news directors felt that in order to justify the use of a story, the story had to relate, in some way, to the news audience.

It was also noted that the news directors were influenced by "significant others," described by Merton (18) as those persons the gatekeeper takes into account when making his news decisions. Apparently, the news directors were also influenced by some of the "forces" referred to by Breed (3) as "professional codes, critics and the gatekeeper's colleagues." However, the full effect of these "significant

others" and other "forces" on the news director was not established in this study.

In general, the survey also indicated that Michigan's television news directors preferred film over any other form of visual and that they preferred film clips to be thirty seconds to one minute in length. The survey further indicated that more "agricultural" film clips were likely to be used during noon newscasts when "features" were generally used and/or during weekend newscasts when "hard news" tended to taper off.

More specifically, the survey showed that the average news director was 39 years old, had been an employee at the station at which he was interviewed for an average of 7.4 years, and had been news director at that station for an average of 4.7 years.

He was involved, to some extent, in all the news shows at his station -- an average of 4.2 (about 40 minutes of air time) a day. He had an average of six other people working with him in preparing news shows.

All of the news directors said they seldom conferred with anyone else about the content of the show, but they were at least aware of "station policy," particularly that established by the station manager. Most noted, however, that they shared some of the decisions about what goes on the air with other members of their news staff, particularly the on-the-air talent.

All said they listened to (and took heed of) opinions of their news shows, particularly the opinions of viewers. Some mentioned that opinions offered by their colleagues and the station manager were also of prime importance to them.

Only one news director out of the fourteen said he knew almost exactly how many people watched his news shows. The rest could only guess or call upon someone else at the station to provide information on audience numbers.

All, however, said they had a good idea of their newscasts' audience composition, but their descriptions of this audience were rather vague ("a hodgepodge," "a balanced audience," "the full gamut -- agricultural, rural and urban").

The television news directors surveyed said they received a wide variety of material from varied sources and used very little of it. The material received from sources other than wire services or their own news staffs, called "handouts" by the news directors, was generally not used because it lacked good visuals for television (particularly film).

When asked to rate the form of releases they would use most often, the news directors rated the forms in this order of preference: sound-on-film, silent film with script, sound-on video tape, script accompanied by slides, script with still pictures and script with no visuals. All of the news directors, except the one at WKNX-TV, said they would prefer color film over black and white, all other things being equal. (WKNX-TV could not air color film at the time of the survey.)

All but three of the news directors said they would prefer to cover a news or feature event themselves rather than having someone send them the material. But all admitted that the story would have to be good enough to merit the expenditure of time, personnel and travel expenses involved.

All of the news directors said they had used releases about Michigan State University. Five said the stories came in on the wire, and nine said they received them directly from the University. Most of the news directors were critical about what they had received directly from MSU: "Mostly releases [not enough visuals]...", "Written for newspapers...", "Too long...", "It might give us a lead, but we have to rework everything."

In their rating of eight hypothetical film clips, the news directors seemed quite subjective in making their judgments. Reasons for using the film clips were given as follows: "It's news...", "It's of interest to women...", "It's colorful...", "It has a little movement in it...", and "It relates to people in this area." Some of the reasons most commonly given for not using film clips were: "No local angle...", "It's not news...", "Too technical...", "Inactive...", and "It's strictly for farmers, and we don't have many of those in our audience."

Of the film clips that were rated, those receiving the highest overall rating were in the "promotional" category; second were those in the "technical" category; third were the "general interest" film clips and fourth were those of "agricultural interest." The relatively high ratings for the "promotional" and "technical" film clips apparently had little to do with the fact that these film clips were either "promotional" or "technical." According to the news directors, these film clips seemed like they would have the greatest appeal to the largest number of people in their newscasts' audiences.

But the "agricultural interest" film clips did receive their low rating because they were of "agricultural interest." It was quite

evident that the Michigan television news directors did not want to air news or features that would be of interest to only a very small portion of their news audience.

A summary of the ratings of the eight hypothetical film clips by Michigan television news directors showed that an average of three film clips would "probably" be used by all of the stations and another 1.7 would "possibly" be used.

Using audience estimates provided by the news directors, it was estimated that the lowest rated hypothetical film clip, "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered," would "probably" be received in approximately 91,000 homes. Thus, the cost per thousand homes "probably" reached would be \$2.40. The cost of reaching both the "probable" and the "possible" audiences would be \$1.19 per thousand homes.

The highest rated film clip, "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!" would "probably" be received in 634,000 homes and would "possibly" be received in another 60,000. The cost per thousand homes "probably" reached would be \$.34, and the cost per thousand homes both "probably" and "possibly" reached would be \$.31.

Based on these costs, and based on the opinion of most of the fourteen news directors that some agricultural news and features can be of enough "general interest" to be used on their newscasts, the following conclusions can be drawn: (a) Television newscasts do offer an outlet for "agricultural" information if the information can be presented in such a way that it is of interest to a general audience, rather than just to farmers; and (b) The cost of producing "agricultural" film clips is not prohibitive, especially when looked upon in terms of numbers of viewers reached.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations can be made to Michigan State University personnel involved with disseminating MSU's agricultural information to Michigan television news directors for use on their newscasts:

1. Establish and maintain good working relationships with Michigan's television news directors. These men are quite often individualists who can make very subjective judgments about what they will use on their newscasts. It is important, then, to be aware of each news director's likes and dislikes and his criteria for judging news and features.

Since there is some expense involved in producing film clips for television newscasts, news directors should preferably be asked whether or not they might use the film clip before it is made. Furthermore, news directors should be told in advance about important MSU news and feature possibilities, since they may want to cover the story themselves.

2. Prepare material for television. Television news directors surveyed said that too much of the MSU material they had received was written for newspapers. A man with television experience should prepare materials specifically for this medium.

3. Make film clips and make them in color. The television news directors said they preferred film over any other form of visual and that they would be more likely to use a story accompanied by a film clip rather than one with no visuals, still pictures or slides. Video tapes can also be sent, but some of the stations do not have adequate equipment for using video tapes and some of the news directors

appear concerned about inconsistent quality.

Color film is recommended because all but one of the fourteen news directors surveyed said their stations would prefer color over black and white, all other things being equal. Furthermore, the news directors said the number of color television sets in their coverage areas was steadily increasing.

4. Film clips should be thirty seconds to one minute in length. This was the length preferred by the television news directors surveyed. Anyway, since the actual time available to the newscasters for presenting local news is only about ten minutes per show, it would seem unlikely that a news director would want to use a film that would take up more than one-tenth of his newscast.

5. Do not label the film clip "agriculture." Findings indicated that news directors will use agricultural stories if the stories are not aimed directly at farmers. In other words, they would use "agricultural" stories when they were of "general interest." For this reason, it seems advisable that film clips sent from Michigan State University should not be mailed under the Cooperative Extension Service or Agricultural Experiment Station label.

6. Send out more stories of interest to women, the suburban "weekend farmer," and the person who might be classified as an "outdoor type." MSU's Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service have a lot of information on food, lawns and natural resources which should be appealing to larger segments of news audiences than those in the "commercial farmer" category.

7. Prepare film clips for use on noon or weekend newscasts. Noon newscasts, according to the survey, had a high percentage of

women watching them. Furthermore, there seemed to be a tendency to use at least some "features" during noontime, rather than concentrating only on "hard news." The survey also showed that "hard news" tended to taper off during the weekends, and that more film features could be used on Saturdays and Sundays.

8. Some adjustments should be made in the MSU Cooperative Extension Service-Agricultural Experiment Station television budget to allow for the preparation of film clips for television newscasts. The budget at the time of this study (1967-68 fiscal year) and proposed changes for 1968-69 are outlined in Table 9.

Based on this study, a recommendation was made to MSU's Department of Information Services to allow \$5,200 annually for the preparation of film clips for news shows. Using the cost figures in Table 7, this would provide enough funds for the production of about two film clips per month, on the average. This is not to say that two film clips should be made and sent out every month. Instead, film clips should be prepared only when it appears that there is a story worth filming that will likely be used by television news directors. In fact, an effort should be made to avoid "flooding the market" with film clips.

Note also that the proposed budget calls for a cut in the budget for "specials" by \$1,200. The cut was made because previous investigations showed that times available for airing these "specials" was not readily available. (11) Furthermore, audience ratings during these public service times were low and production cost-per-viewer-reached would be relatively high.

Table 9. Proposed television budget (Cooperative Extension Service-Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University).

<u>Account</u>	<u>1967-68 Budget¹</u>	<u>1968-69 Request</u>
General Operating	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
<u>News Services²</u>	--	5,200
Equipment, tape, etc.	2,000	2,000
Salaries, TV Director, Associate Director, talent	10,000	10,000
"Harvest" ³ 52 weeks (all production costs) WMSB-TV plus 3-4 VTR outlets	10,400	10,400
Specials (features) ⁴	<u>4,800</u>	<u>3,600</u>
Film and production		
Total	\$29,600	\$33,600

¹Source of current budget figures obtained from Dr. Howard L. Miller, project leader, agricultural extension-research information, Department of Information Services, Michigan State University.

²Included are all the production and salary costs included in Table 7.

³"Harvest" is a weekly half-hour show produced at WMSB-TV by the Cooperative Extension Service and made available to other stations. See Table 1.

⁴"Specials" are public service shows or segments produced on an irregular basis and on a wide variety of "timely" topics.

Limitations of the Study

While this study indicated that Michigan television newscasts do offer an outlet for MSU's agricultural information at this time, there are many obvious limitations to the study which should be noted.

For example, all of the news directors in this study were located at commercial television stations in Michigan. News directors in other states may not have reacted in the same way.

Many judgments by news directors are so subjective that changes in the personnel occupying news director positions could alter the survey's findings. While this survey showed the average news director had occupied that position for 4.7 years, it should also be noted that three of the news directors had occupied their jobs for less than two years and, at two more stations, there were no news directors at the time of the survey. This mobility among news directors, plus changes in a station's policy and/or management, could also alter survey findings.

Results of the study represent the news director's judgments on a particular day -- the day he was interviewed. No check was made for reliability or stability of these judgments over time.

The hypothetical film clips evaluated by the news directors in this study were submitted to the news directors in written form. Thus, the news directors could only imagine the film clips' visual content. Furthermore, the film clips were limited in number and subject matter, and the breakdown into various categories ("general interest," "promotional," "technical," and "agricultural interest") was only as effective as the author's ability to write them to fit these categories.

Finally, and most important, even if MSU is successful in getting some of its agricultural information on television newscasts, this will only mean that viewers watching the newscasts will be made aware of some of the research and extension activities of MSU's agricultural staff. The present study provides no indication of the response of the news audience to these news and feature items.

Implications for Further Research

This study only began to scratch the surface in terms of revealing potential usage for university agricultural information on television newscasts.

For example, similar studies could be conducted in other states. It is likely that findings in a more agricultural state such as Iowa or a highly urban state such as New York would be different from those in Michigan.

And several follow-up studies on the Michigan survey could be made. A similar survey at another time might show some interesting trends in the use of MSU's agricultural information. This might be especially revealing if MSU's agricultural information staff follows the recommendations listed in this study.

More thorough studies are needed to investigate some of the variables touched upon only briefly here. For example, an intense study could be made of the "significant others" who influence the television news director, particularly when he is selecting the kinds of stories to use in newscasts. For example, it should be worthwhile to find out if a television news director behaves like the telegraph editors studied by Gieber who were "selecting news items about

specific groups, not what news did to or for the reader." (9:430)

Another research project might involve a more thorough comparison of the television news "gatekeeper" with the telegraph and/or newspaper "gatekeeper." For example, there is an element of television newscasting which, for want of a better term, could be called "show business." This is the attempt to provide visually dramatic items because people watch television. It might be interesting to find out at what point in the news director's scheme a story with visual appeal is selected over one of a more "newsy" nature. Then, if possible, comparisons could be made between a television news director's "placement" of the "visual appeal" story within a newscast and the relative "placement" of the same or similar story in the state and local news of a newspaper.

Some other future research might help to answer these questions:

1. What effect, if any, will a one-minute film clip on MSU's agricultural research or extension activities have on the viewers who see the newscast? Can they recall what they saw? Have any of their opinions of agriculture and/or the University been changed? Have they gained any new information? Is the new information of any use to them?

2. What are the criteria for judging film clips and what are the values in determining film quality? What are the effects of different forms of script writing and film continuity on the news directors' value judgments?

3. When an "agricultural" news or feature or informational item is written or rewritten so that it is of "general interest," is

the message seriously distorted by the time it reaches the television viewer? In other words, what are the limits and/or effects of "popularizing" certain technical or scientific agricultural information?

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Appendix A
Questionnaire Used in Survey

Television News Survey
Joseph J. Marks
Dept. of Information Services
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A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age _____

2. Years of experience in broadcasting _____

Jobs (list)

3. What other jobs have you had (office, factory, farm, etc.)?

4. Years at this station _____ as news director _____?

5. Educational background (academic education; technical training schools; etc.):

6. Birthplace: _____

7. Other places lived (places and dates):

8. Father's occupation: _____

Page 2

B. QUANTITY OF NEWS SHOWS AND STAFF

1. Number of news shows per day? _____ per week? _____
2. Length of shows? _____
3. No. and length of above in which news director is involved: _____

4. How many people help news director put these shows together? _____
(Include full-time and fractions for part-time personnel)
5. Do you ever confer with anyone (station manager or anyone else)
about the content of a news show before putting it on the air?
Explain.

6. Who decides what goes on the air (news shows, that is)?

7. Who does the on-the-air work? _____
8. Do you ever listen (and take heed) of anyone's opinion of your
news shows (wife, pastor, station manager, etc.)?

Page 3

C. AUDIENCE

1. Please estimate the size of the audience for your news shows: _____

2. What kind of people are these (urban, rural, farm, nonfarm, factory, etc.)?

Page 4

D. NEWS SHOW CONTENT

1. In addition to the material you get from the wire services and from your news staff's coverage, where would you say your other news and feature material comes from?

2. How much of this do you use? _____

3. What kind of stuff is it? (slides, film, pictures, releases, sound-on-film, video tape, etc.)

4. What do you think of the material you receive from these other sources? (If some are good, why? If some are bad, why?)

5. What can these other sources do to improve their materials?

6. Do you throw many away without looking at them? Why?

7. Do you ever give these materials to anyone else at the station? Who?

Page 5

E. FORMAT OF MATERIALS (outside wire services and own coverage)

1. Rank the form of release you would use most often:

_____ script, no visuals
 _____ script, still pictures
 _____ script, slides
 _____ script, silent film
 _____ sound-on-film
 _____ sound-on video tape

2. Supposing I sent you a film that you wanted for a news show. How long should it be?

3. Would you prefer to cover a news event or feature yourself, rather than having someone send you the material? _____ Do you have the equipment, staff and budget for coverage of other than local news events or features? Explain:

4. Do you ever use any releases, film features, etc., from Michigan State University? _____ Do they come directly from the university or are they taken from the wire? _____

5. If you get anything directly from MSU, please comment about its quality and content.

Page 6

F. NEWS AND FEATURE CRITERIA

Look at the titles and descriptions listed below. Each includes a silent, color film accompanied by a script. Each is about one and one-half minutes long. Now assume that each arrives on a normal news day (one per day).

Rate each separately according to the categories listed.

In total or in part, I would...*

Probably use	Possibly use	Not use
-----------------	-----------------	------------

—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Think Mink"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Story of how scientists help mink ranchers cope with the vicious, cantankerous mink; how mink pelts are turned into mink garments; why mink garments are so expensive; and why just 200 Michigan mink ranchers can boast a \$7 million mink industry---sixth largest in the U.S.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Hibernating Apples"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Tells late research developments which make it possible to keep apples (and other fruits and vegetables) fresh and crisp for months after harvest. The trick is to store the apples in "controlled atmosphere" where high levels of carbon dioxide and low levels of oxygen reduce the apples' rate of breathing and deterioration.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "New Food Research Facilities Opened"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: New facilities for Michigan State University's food science department were opened this week. Film shows research in progress to (1) develop new turkey products, (2) extend the keeping quality of mushrooms by bombarding them with radiation, and (3) improve the taste and nutrition of eggs.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Film shows scientist operating scale model of inertial propulsion machine he developed. The strange-looking machine operates on the theory of inertia and can conquer the slickest, iciest terrain without slippage. This is only the fourth basic type of propulsion developed in the history of the world (the others are traction, jet and propeller) and offers fantastic implications for travel on earth or in outer space.</p>

Page 7

Probably use	Possibly use	Not use
-----------------	-----------------	------------

—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Researchers have found the enzyme that capacitates sperm and makes it capable of fertilizing an egg. The discovery could greatly reduce infertility problems in cows. At present, Michigan dairymen lose hundreds of thousands of dollars each year because some cows cannot be bred and therefore will not produce milk.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Cooling the Beet Generation"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Scientists show new technique they're developing to cool sugar beets and thus reduce sugar losses which cost beet growers and processors about \$1 million each year.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Science Reshapes Trees"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Basic genetic research and careful analysis of tree origin help foresters as they seek knowledge about tree color and growing efficiency. Film and script explain the factors which influence tree size, shape and color.</p>
—	—	—	<p>TITLE: "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter!"</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Michigan State University's Dept. of Horticulture starts tulips blooming in winter for the benefit of visitors who want to tour the university's greenhouses. Varieties from throughout the world help to give the campus an air of springtime while snow is falling outside.</p>

*Note: If news director will not use these on his news show, ask if he would give the films to anyone else at the station to use...or if he'd like us to send these to someone else at the station.

Page 8

G. USE OF AGRICULTURAL RELEASES

1. Do you use agricultural stories in your newscasts?

2. I should tell you that I am the news director for Michigan State University's Agricultural Experiment Station and send out stories and films on agricultural research. All of the stories and films you just rated are about some of our agricultural research projects which include studies of pests and pesticides, development of new food products, and research on fish, wildlife, trees, packaging, harvesters, lawns, plants, economics, etc.

Do you think this kind of agriculture news and features has any place on your news show...or, put another way, do you think it has enough general interest to be used?

3. Are your news shows in color? _____ If not, when will they be?

4. Does your station air any farm or garden shows? _____ When? _____

How often? _____

Appendix B

Ratings and Detailed Comments on Film Clips

TITLE: "Think Mink"

DESCRIPTION: Story of how scientists help mink ranchers cope with the vicious, cantankerous mink; how mink pelts are turned into mink garments; why mink garments are so expensive; and why just 200 Michigan mink ranchers can boast a \$7 million mink industry -- sixth largest in the U.S.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 4* Would possibly use: 6*
Would not use: 4

COMMENTS:

WWTV. Would probably use. "This isn't a big industry in the area, but I know too many people who have been taken by the so-called big profits in raising mink. I think we should set the record straight...let them know the problems, costs, etc."

WJBK-TV. Would probably use (noon newscast only). "About 75% of the noon audience is women. If I was smart, I'd run it at 11 p.m. -- there are plenty of women watching then, too -- but my conscience wouldn't allow it. We should be running hard news at 6 and 11 p.m."

WXYZ-TV. Would probably use. "People are interested in mink whether they can afford it or not. ...We've heard a lot of weird tales about mink habits, and I think people would like to learn the real story."

WJRT-TV. Would probably use. "I think the gals would like it ...that's about 40% of our audience, you know. And I think other people would like to know how mink coats are made, etc."

WOOD-TV. Would possibly use (noon newscasts only). "Theoretically, all of these film clips are good subjects. As for the mink film, I think women would be interested. Farmers interested in raising mink would also be interested."

WJIM-TV. Would possibly use. "Seems to be a big enough story, and there should be enough interest in it."

WILX-TV. Would possibly use. "The time available would be the factor. I would at least give it serious consideration. But this would have to balance with the rest of the show...this is show business. If we did use it, it would be strictly as a feature and used only if it fit in."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "Depends on how the news day was and if there is any way to tie it in. It's got to fit in with the general news format of the day. ...Timeliness is also important. We should get it during the mink season -- like near Christmas."

WPBN-TV. Would possibly use. "I'm fairly sure we'd use it, but I'd like to see the film first. There should be enough interest in this subject, but if the film isn't any good it won't be used."

"Think Mink" (Cont'd)

WNEM-TV. Would possibly use. "Reason? Women. We have a lot of them in our audience."

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "...not unless it had an obvious feature angle. Competition for space and time from hard news is keen. In the last 5 to 10 years, the so-called 'routine' news pace has picked up radically. ...I don't think there would be enough interest to the general public in this film."

WLUC-TV. Would not use. "...little interest to very many people. People can't afford mink coats up here...and we have only one or two ranches in the area."

WKNX-TV. Would not use. "No local angle. The industry is not common here...it's not locally oriented."

WZZM-TV. Would not use. "No news value. We want hard news. We want local stuff. Our time is too limited to use these." (Note: This news director said he would not use any of the eight films for the same reasons. He said he would probably give them to the farm director "who might possibly use them.")

TITLE: "Hibernating Apples"

DESCRIPTION: Tells late research developments which make it possible to keep apples (and other fruits and vegetables) fresh and crisp for months after harvest. The trick is to store the apples in "controlled atmosphere" where high levels of carbon dioxide and low levels of oxygen reduce the apples' rate of breathing and deterioration.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 4* Would possibly use: 2
Would not use: 8*

COMMENTS:

WWTB. Would probably use. "This is a large apple producing area. There are a half dozen CA (controlled atmosphere) storage places around here." (Note: When asked if the terminology used in the description was too technical, he said, "No. I know all about CA storage.")

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "Sounds interesting. We grow some apples around here."

WKZO-TV. Would probably use. "We are in the fruit belt. This should be extremely interesting to those in the industry or in fields related to it. Also, there's a good tie-in with consumers."

WOOD-TV. Would probably use (noon newscast only). "There should be interest in this area in Michigan. We have a number of people in the orchard business...and the housewife should be interested in eating fresh apples. We'd only use it at 6 or 11 p.m. if we had time...and that's not likely."

WKNX-TV. Would possibly use. "This is big apple growing country." (Note: The news director of WNEM-TV, also in Saginaw, said he would not use the film because there aren't many apples grown in that area. According to the Michigan Crop Reporting Service, the WNEM-TV news director was correct.)

WJRT-TV. Would possibly use. "I can't really tell if we could use this. It really depends on whether the film can carry the story."

WLUC-TV. Would not use. "People don't get that many apples around here to store them. This is not apple country. People just grow enough for their own use."

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "Not enough general interest."

WNEM-TV. Would not use. "This isn't apple country and wouldn't be of interest. If it was about how to pick out apples in a supermarket, then we might use it."

"Hibernating Apples" (Cont'd)

WILX-TV. Would not use. "I can't see that this would be of interest to anyone but someone in the orchard business. I'm afraid of the interest to the general public. Someone could use it in an agricultural show, however."

WJIM-TV. Would not use. "I think it would be visually dull. I can't see how 'hibernating apples' can provide much action."

WXYZ-TV. Would not use. "I don't think people really care about something like this."

WJBK-TV. Would not use. "This looks like a recipe -- a how-to-do-it story. We're looking for news of interest to women."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

TITLE: "New Food Research Facilities Opened"
DESCRIPTION: New facilities for Michigan State University's food science department were opened this week. Film shows research in progress to (1) develop new turkey products, (2) extend the keeping quality of mushrooms by bombarding them with radiation, and (3) improve the taste and nutrition of eggs.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 9* Would possibly use: 2
Would not use: 3

COMMENTS:

WWTV. Would probably use. "It's news. It applies to the homemaker."

WJBK-TV. Would probably use. "Reason? Women. It fits what we want to put on the air. It's about food. Everybody is interested in that."

WJRT-TV. Would probably use. "This is a news event. We hit the Lansing area, reaching a potential of about 50,000 homes. ...A lot of people from this area go to school there (MSU)."

WOOD-TV. Would probably use (at noon only). "(This subject) hits the housewife. Our surveys estimate a large women's audience for news shows."

WJIM-TV. Would probably use. "That's news. It has local interest. It should have wide appeal...everyone eats."

WILX-TV. Would probably use. "We got into a feature on world food problems the other day...so I know the subject is important. Anything having to do with food and food production is related to all of us. We'll all have to face up to the world food problems sometime."

WKZO-TV. Would probably use. "We have a lot of turkey growers (in the Zeeland area). This is a big chicken area, too. We might re-write the script and use just the portion on turkeys and show the tie-in of this area with MSU."

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "Sounds like it would be important to a lot of people."

WKNX-TV. Would probably use. "This community, I think, feels some connection with State (MSU). We've got both alumni and students. State is the university up here."

WXYZ-TV. Would possibly use. "One part of this seemed interesting to me: irradiation. That's a new technique they're using on food. We might edit the film and use only this part. But it depends on the day...we might use all of it."

WNEM-TV. Would possibly use. "Everybody is interested in food. This is more newsworthy (than some of the others he had evaluated)."

"New Food Research Facilities Opened" (Cont'd)

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "Not enough general interest...and it's not here."

WLUC-TV. Would not use. "We might possibly use it if it were a real slow news day because it does have a little universal interest. But there's not enough local interest here. If this were about Michigan Tech or Northern (Northern Michigan University), we would be likely to use it."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

*Two news directors said they would use the film at noon only.

TITLE: "Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed"
DESCRIPTION: Film shows a scientist operating a scale model of inertial propulsion machine he developed. The strange looking machine operates on the theory of inertia and can conquer the slickest, iciest terrain without slippage. This is only the fourth basic type of propulsion developed in the history of the world (the others are traction, jet and propeller) and offers fantastic implications for travel on earth or in outer space.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 7 Would possibly use: 3*
Would not use: 4*

COMMENTS :

WXYZ-TV. Would probably use. "It has a little movement in it. ...and I've found, by talking to people, that they're interested in the explanation of a scientific device."

WJRT-TV. Would probably use. "There are a lot of people in industry here -- a lot of mechanical nuts. ...I'd like to have a sound background (of the machine running) on this."

WJIM-TV. Would probably use. "It should be very visually effective."

WILX-TV. Would probably use "Since it involves a new mode of propulsion, it might have some merit for males. We have plenty of men in our audience at 6 p.m."

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "This should be good for TV...
a lot of movement."

WWJ-TV. Would probably use. "We'd use this if the subject matter is handled properly. Even then, it might end up as a weekend feature. If it's related to cars in any way, it affects all of the people in our area and would definitely be used."

WLUC-TV. Would probably use. "...particularly because it has to do with icy roads. There's a lot of ice and snow and a lot of people getting stuck with their cars here in the U.P."

WWTW. Would possibly use. "My only question is what's its application to me and to the audience. If it applies or if we can make it apply, we'll use it."

WOOD-TV. Would possibly use (at noon only). "Intriguing... but only of secondary interest. It might be of more interest on an icy day. We could use it on a slow day as an interesting development."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "We'd use it if we could get an interview with the scientist or someone else around here who could explain the importance of this machine. I'd want an authority on a story like this. If you'd make a video tape with the scientist, we'd probably use it."

"Inertial Propulsion Machine Developed" (Cont'd)

WJBK-TV. Would not use. "Too obtuse for women. ...It really depends on what this machine looks like. If it's a real Rube Goldberg contraption, or if it's a real visual, we might reconsider. We'd use it if it had any relationship to the automobile industry. ...We have a general rule: don't use anything more than two syllable words. 'Inertial' and 'propulsion' are both losers."

WKNX-TV. Would not use. "No local angle. But...if this had something to do with the automobile industry we would probably use it."

WNEM-TV. Would not use. "Too technical. People in this market wouldn't go for it." (Note: He said later he might use it if this were sent for use on an icy day and if the film script showed possibility for any tie-in with the automobile industry.)

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

*One news director said he would possibly use the film at noon and the other said he would not use, even at noon.

TITLE: "Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered"

DESCRIPTION: Researchers have found the enzyme that capacitates sperm and makes it capable of fertilizing an egg. The discovery could greatly reduce infertility problems in cows. At present, Michigan dairymen lose hundreds of dollars each year because some cows cannot be bred and therefore will not produce milk.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 2 Would possibly use: 3
Would not use: 9*

COMMENTS:

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "I just read something like this in Life Magazine (about fertility problems). ...We -- my wife and I -- are interested in this sort of thing. We had trouble having children of our own, and we'd like to learn more about what's being done in this general area."

WNEM-TV. Would probably use. "The dairy industry is pretty big around here."

WWTW. Would possibly use. "I really think this should be in a 'discretionary' column. There are a bunch of old ladies in our coverage area who would be bothered if we talked at all about sex."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "I'd probably give this to the farm director. It's unlikely that anyone else would get a damn out of it. I do see some importance here...because my father-in-law has a farm and he'd care about something like this."

WJIM-TV. Would possibly use. "Sounds like a big enough discovery. ...Technical? Not too bad...anyway we could rewrite it."

WJBK-TV. Would not use. "Cows mean farmers, and we don't have any farmers watching."

WXYZ-TV. Would not use. "There are very few farmers in our audience. And the average person doesn't care what happens to cows."

WJRT-TV. Would not use. "I'd give this to the farm director. ...It sounds too complicated."

WOOD-TV. Would not use. "Who knows anything about it? It's for farmers...strictly for educated farmers at that. It's too technical."

WILX-TV. Would not use. "Purely agricultural in interest."

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "Not enough general interest."

WLUC-TV. Would not use. "This is not a cattle raising, cattle breeding area. There are other farm things I do use once in a while, but this is not of universal interest."

"Cow Fertility Enzyme Discovered" (Cont'd)

WKNX-TV. Would not use. "No local angle. Dairy farming is not too big up here."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

*Two news directors rated films for noon only.

TITLE: "Cooling the Beet Generation"
 DESCRIPTION: Scientists show new techniques that they're developing to cool sugar beets and thus reduce sugar losses which cost feed growers and processors about \$1 million each year.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 4 Would possibly use: 1
 Would not use: 9*

COMMENTS:

WJRT-TV. Would probably use. "We grow sugar beets in this area."

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "We don't grow any sugar beets in this area...but it sounds interesting because it's about sugar. ...We want film."

WNEM-TV. Would probably use. "This is beet country. We (the station) sit in the middle of a beet field."

WKNX-TV. Would probably use. "This is one of the sugar beet centers of the state."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "This would probably be directed toward the farm director unless it meant a significant increase in beet prices or lower sugar prices."

WWTU. Would not use. "...out of our area. No sugar beets grown around here."

WJBK-TV. Would not use (not even at noon). "We don't have any farmers watching."

WXYZ-TV. Would not use. "There are very few farmers in our audience."

WOOD-TV. Would not use (on any of the newscasts). "Too much (of interest) for beet farmers. Everyone else would wonder what we're talking about."

WJIM-TV. Would not use. "Visually dull. Anyway it's not (happening) here."

WILX-TV. Would not use. "Purely agricultural in interest."

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "Not enough general interest."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

WLUC-TV. Would not use. "...No sugar beets grown up here at all. People don't even know what they are."

*Indicates noon ratings.

TITLE: "Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter"
 DESCRIPTION: Michigan State University's Dept. of Horticulture starts tulips blooming in winter for the benefit of visitors who want to tour the University's greenhouses. Varieties from throughout the world help to give the campus an air of springtime while snow is falling outside.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 9* Would possibly use: 2
 Would not use: 3

COMMENTS:

WJBK-TV. Would probably use. "This would be very colorful. Every woman is interested in flowers and candy...so you should talk about flowers and candy."

WJRT-TV. Would probably use. "This would be no good in black and white, but it sells in color. The fact that it sounds promotional doesn't bother me, not when you're promoting a state institution."

WOOD-TV. Would probably use. "It's that time of year. Holland (Michigan) is in our coverage area. Their tulips are in our back yard. ...Tulips are western Michigan. This would give us rapport with a large number of people."

WILX-TV. Would probably use. "I'd use this purely because of its uniqueness: a breath of spring in winter."

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "I'd like to see it, especially in color!"

WNEM-TV. Would probably use. "Pretty. It's in color. The Tulip Festival was last week."

WWJ-TV. Would probably use. "I think we'd use this. Like they say, kids, babies, flowers -- all have general appeal. It would probably go as a weekend feature."

WLUC-TV. Would probably use. "A good feature, particularly since it talks about snow. It should be particularly interesting to women. If this came in the wintertime, it would put a little sun in everybody's day."

WKNX-TV. Would probably use. "This is a state tourist attraction...and this (Saginaw) is the start of the tourist industry."

WJIM-TV. Would possibly use. "It's odd. Should be pretty, too."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "Maybe we'd use this -- as a news 'kicker.' We would have really liked to have had this during last winter's snowstorm."

"Tiptoe Through the Tulips...In Winter" (Cont'd)

WWTW. Would not use. "Not in our area. ...It's just that you're talking about something that isn't here, and not too many people are going to want to spend time and money to take a trip to East Lansing to see this."

WXYZ-TV. Would not use. "We have similar things around here. We might use the idea to shoot something local."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

TITLE: "Science Reshapes Trees"
 DESCRIPTION: Basic genetic research and careful analysis of tree origin help foresters as they seek knowledge about tree color and growing efficiency. Film and script explain the factors which influence tree size, shape and color.

SUMMARY OF RATINGS: Would probably use: 3 Would possibly use: 5
 Would not use: 6*

COMMENTS:

WWTN. Would probably use. "Tree quality is very important around here...and genetics make a big difference." (Note: The news director talked several minutes about the effects of genetics and management on tree quality, and appeared to be very knowledgeable about the subject.)

WPBN-TV. Would probably use. "We have a lot of tourists and resort people around here, and I think they'd be interested. Anyway, I understand the timber and Christmas tree industries are pretty big around here."

WLUC-TV. Would possibly use. "There are a lot of forests... and forestry is a big industry up here. Practically everybody is interested in trees -- for harvest, for recreation or just to see as they hunt or walk through the woods."

WXYZ-TV. Would possibly use. "This has possibilities. Most people have trees. ...It's springtime (so it's timely)."

WILX-TV. Would possibly use. "Forestry is a big item, and the people of Michigan are more aware of it than people of some other states."

WKZO-TV. Would possibly use. "This might be used by us or the farm director. We just ran one (film) from the conservation department on forestry. ...It really depends on how the script is written...so we can tell if it has enough general interest."

WNEM-TV. Would possibly use. "This would be a weekend story. Up north, we have a lot of pulp mills and forests."

WKNX-TV. Would possibly use. "The people around here have some historical connection with lumbering. I read somewhere that Michigan was the leading lumber producer in the nation in the 1800s. There's still some connection with the industry up here. They're going to build a lumbering museum in the area."

WJBK-TV. Would not use. "If it had a lot of beautiful roses, instead of trees, that might go. ...It sounds like an agronomist's lecture."

WJRT-TV. Would not use. "I'd give this to the farm director. This is too specialized in appeal for a news show."

"Science Reshapes Trees" (Cont'd)

WOOD-TV. Would not use. "...too specialized in interest.
Too technical."

WJIM-TV. Would not use. "Inactive."

WWJ-TV. Would not use. "Not enough general interest."

WZZM-TV. Would not use.

*Two news directors' ratings are for noon shows only.

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