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Advertising
Geo. C. Humphrey.
1901

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By

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Michigan Agricultural College.

THESIS

Thesis.

Agricultural Advertising.

Summary.

1. Advertising is a subject with which every agriculturalist, and especially every stock breeder, should become familiar.
2. As yet agricultural advertising is in its infancy.
3. Agricultural pursuits engage a larger number of individuals than any other of the gainful occupations.
4. Owing to the increasing demands for agricultural products, agriculture must continue to be one of the leading occupations of the world.
5. Successful agriculture demands and should employ every factor essential to success in any occupation.
6. Advertising is a factor which can not be ignored or lost sight of in any business enterprise. It is the means to an end and the solution of a problem that can be attained in no other way.
7. Where one is specializing, advertising is absolutely necessary.
8. Advertising is not a small item of expense, but money expended for successful advertising is money well invested.
9. Successful advertising requires careful study and ingenious thought.
10. A keen desire to do business, honest straight

forward dealing, and courtesy to all are three general requisites necessary for the most successful advertising.

11. The farm is as much a place of business as is the manufacturing plant or the mercantile house.

12. The producers of the varied agricultural products has as many opportunities for employing advertising as a means to an end as has the producer of other commodities.

13. Successful advertising may be said to quickly bring together the producer and the consumer in such a manner as to be mutually profitable.

The Subject in General.

Agricultural advertising is perhaps a new and somewhat novel subject, yet it is a subject worthy of careful consideration, and one with which every agricultural producer, and especially the stock breeder, should thoroughly familiarize himself.

Agricultural advertising is in its infancy, and appreciated by a few only. The more study it is given, the more there seems in it, and the greater possibilities and advantages to be derived by its judicious use to the farmer and stock breeder.

The greatest number of persons engaged today in any one of the gainful occupations are in pursuit of agriculture. As a business enterprise, however, it is extensive rather than intensive, and as a rule not pursued with the

intense application of those business principles so characteristic and distinguishable in other occupations. This can not always be true. The increase in number of population and in demand for those necessities which the agricultural producer alone must furnish, is hastening forward the time when agriculture as a business enterprise must be engaged in after the same manner as are those occupations which involve every factor available in order to attain the highest degree of success.

The necessity for intensive methods in agriculture is recognized and practiced by a few today, and their success gives evidence that close observance of every law, and application of every factor, entering into the success of other occupations pursued after an intensive manner, apply as well to agriculture, and assure a high degree of success where otherwise only an average degree of success or failure is the result.

There are many factors which enter into every successful business enterprise. Capital, labor and judicious management are prime factors entering into the production of every commodity, but they are not the only factors that go to insure success. Farther than merely producing a commodity, a disposition must be made of it. This must be made in sufficient quantities and at prices which will pay the cost of production, and enough more to insure a profit which will offer some inducement to continue the business. To make



this disposition often becomes a problem, which the producer has solved when he succeeds in making ready sales of the commodity he is producing.

Advertising is the prime factor entering into the solution of the problem of making the best possible disposition of any commodity. Advertising may be called the key to ready and profitable sales, and consequently is a factor given very close attention by all producers and dealers unless we consider the average farmer or agricultural producer an exception. It is too true that the farmer actively engaged in producing agricultural products fails many times owing to his losing sight of the problem of making the best disposition of them.

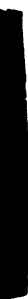
Advertising as a factor in business is a thing in itself. It is very abstract and hard to be governed by any fixed laws or rules which can be defined and laid down as being safe to follow whenever there is an occasion to resort to it in any business. It will be easily recognized however, that what is true concerning advertising as it is employed in one business is to a great extent true concerning it as it is employed in other lines of business. Successful agricultural advertising is merely successful advertising applied to agriculture. In considering this subject, it is only possible to become familiar with the things which go to make up successful advertising and endeavor to see where advertising can be applied to agriculture.

Successful business men realize best the importance and advantages of advertising, and they are usually the successful advertisers. P. T. Barnum, the world's greatest showman and perhaps greatest advertiser, has made the statement, that if he were to start into business with a capital of ten thousand dollars, he would invest one thousand of it in the actual business and spend the other nine thousand advertising it. This seems altogether out of proportion, yet it is very often true that money invested in advertising is money better invested than money invested in the actual business.

The enormous wealth accumulated by men engaged in manufacturing and selling patent medicine is accumulated largely through extensive advertising. Unprincipled men, who are swindlers, and who make money out of nothing by humbugging the public, depend upon advertising as the means to gain their end; hence advertising is not always legitimate business.

This does not condemn advertising however, any more than counterfeiting condemns the legitimate coining of money. It only proves that advertising is a strong factor in any business when thoroughly understood. The thing one must do is to learn what constitutes legitimate advertising, and practice it with the same degree of honesty he would practice in doing any personal business transaction.

The first thing to be fixed in mind in regard to the practical use of advertising in any occupation, is that



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it is a means to an end. It becomes a factor in business when we have a desired end in view and to gain this end is somewhat of a problem. The end in view will be the desire to make a disposition of some article of wealth or to satisfy some want. Where there is no problem connected with reaching this end, the matter of advertising does not necessarily come into consideration. For example, the farmer producing an ordinary crop of wheat, for which he can not hope to secure any more than the general market price, would not be benefited by advertising: nor would he advertise for hired help, if he knew the person who would do his work satisfactorily, and who was willing to do it for him any time he desired to have it done. On the other hand, if he were producing some special variety of wheat for seed purposes, and desired to sell it at a special price, which he would be justified in demanding, he might^t find it a problem how to secure buyers enough to take all of his wheat, and judicious advertising would be his solution of the problem; or, if he were in want of help, and knew not where to secure it, advertising would be his best means through which to find it. The same would be true in case of any special produce one had to offer for sale, or in case of any want which must be satisfied.

Farmers producing dairy products, or engaged in what is commonly called "truck farming" and supplying a local market where there is more or less competition, find it necessary to resort to advertising, in order to secure patronage

and thus dispose of their products. Stock breeders, producing pure bred stock which is worth more than the general market price, must advertise in order to find a market for their animals. These are cases where it will pay to do special advertising, even going to considerable expense in order to do so. Advertising is always accompanied with more or less expense, but if the situation warrants one to go to this, and the advertising is done judiciously, it is money well spent.

Specialization and advertising go hand in hand; either one proving unprofitable without the other.

The amount of advertising to be done will depend upon how extensively one is engaged in business, and we can say the cost will depend upon how successfully one advertises. Successful advertising is never money thrown away or lost.

To do successful advertising one must make it a study, taking into consideration the situation and the end to be reached and endeavoring to gain this end in the best possible manner. There are so many things which enter into successful advertising it would be impossible to enumerate them all. The things which would go to make advertising successful in one case might be out of place and not answer the purpose in another case.

There are three general requisites which may be given as the foundation upon which all successful advertising rests, and which must be kept in mind by any one wishing to

attain the greatest success. The first of these requisites is a keen desire to do business and to gain some definite end. Without this desire one will never have occasion to do advertising, and if forced to advertise without this desire the chances are against its being successful advertising. They who have no other desire than merely to exist will have little to offer, and hence have little trouble so far as making a disposition of any articles of wealth is concerned. Honest straight forward dealing is the second requisite, and one very important. Dishonesty never entered into the greatest achievement of success and never can. One can not guard against misrepresentation or deception too carefully in advertising. An honest dealer or business firm will in the long run be awarded success over any dishonest competitor who may seem successful and who perhaps does gain his desired end, but such dealing is not to be countenanced in any case. The third requisite is courtesy, being prompt and respectful in looking after all inquiries and communications, whether they mean profit at the time or not, and seeking to please so far as possible all with whom one may have any dealing.

These three requisites soon give one a reputation which perhaps may be the only advertisement necessary after it has become established. The person who can keep these three requisites in mind and will practice them continually will be the successful advertiser and the successful business man, whether he be farmer or merchant.

The farmer has as great a chance to become a successful business man as has the merchant or manufacturer. The farm is as much a place of business as is the manufacturing plant or the mercantile house. They all need to be pursued in a thorough, business-like manner. The farmer is not only a producer but must exchange and deal more or less, and has many occasions to resort to advertising, and has equally as many means of advertising.

The abstract nature of advertising enables one to advertise through every means at his command. The farm offers a splendid chance for incidental advertising. The general appearance, and manner in which every farm is managed, advertises it the same as every manufacturing establishment and mercantile place of business is advertised in the same way. The method of performing work about the farm, the manner in which buildings, fences, yards about house and barns are kept, the reputation one has in dealing, either buying or selling, all go to advertise one's business. Every one likes to see enterprise, and will deal with an enterprising person in preference to any one else.

This incidental advertising costs time and money, but it may be considered cheaper than much of the special advertising that is done. It is the best kind of local advertising, and is apt to extend farther than one may think. Giving the farm some suitable name which will distinguish it from other farms, and having this name with the name of the proprietor neatly put up where it can be seen by the

public will suggest enterprise and serve as an advertisement which may pay many times the expense of putting it up. One having seen such a place can appreciate the sense of enterprise it suggests. This will serve a purpose too, if one sees fit to do special or general advertising.

There are many ways in which we can advertise locally at a small expense if the matter is given careful thought. It is not uncommon to see a shingle or piece of board nailed to a farmer's gate post, telling of his wants or his desire to dispose of something. While this may answer the purpose, the farmer who buys and sells more or less grain, feed, and stock and hires more or less help can improve upon the shingle and manifest more enterprise by having a regular bulletin board neatly made and put in a conspicuous place to catch the eye of the public. The words "For Sale" and "Wanted" can be neatly painted upon the board so as to be permanent, and with very little trouble this can be made to serve a good means for advertising.

The farmer engaged in selling milk, retailing it, must do more or less advertising in order to secure and hold his desired number of customers. He must give special attention to neatness and enterprise in keeping wagons, horses, cans and milk itself in proper condition. This will be his best means of advertising, and can not be given too careful attention.

The farmer engaged in truck farming, selling fruit and vegetables must give the same thought and attention to this means of advertising. Making one's business a specialty

and using every means at command toward some definite end is the sure road to success.

A common means of advertising locally and extensively is through the vast number of newspapers and periodicals which give up considerable space to advertising matter. The farmer engaged in supplying a local market with fruit, vegetables, or dairy products will find his local editor a great help to him. For a very small sum to pay for the space he cares to make use of for advertising, he will find it much easier to make quick and profitable sales of whatever he has to market. People's mouths water for nice fresh strawberries and fruits and garden vegetables of all kinds when they read about them, and they are induced to buy when otherwise they might not think of such luxuries. They are very apt to try buying of the person advertising them, and if they are pleased with their purchase, which the seller should endeavor to have them, a customer is secured and the advertising has been successful.

When one is producing more of a commodity than can be disposed of locally in a satisfactory manner, he must use such means as he can find that will advertise his commodity and create a more extensive market for it. Farm newspapers and magazines and live stock journals offer the farmer this means of advertising. This means of advertising requires careful consideration on the part of the advertiser, and it is more apt to be true that one will fail more often in his

advertising through the various farm periodicals than in any other. This is true for the reason that many do not understand the art of advertising and pay a great deal for advertising which never counts.

The cost of advertising through the different periodicals varies as each publishing company has its price, one paying usually for the amount of space they desire to use. One glance^{ing} over the advertising columns of a few of the ordinary farm papers or magazines can see the variety of ways this space is employed; and a little careful thought or examination will reveal the fact that some advertisements are much more conspicuous and impressive than others, while perhaps they occupy the same space. For general advertising one can not afford to make use of too much space while perhaps he could afford to occupy a whole page or more for one or two publications, in order to advertise in some special manner. Special advertising is quite apt to be more successful than general advertising, but one must do both if he is producing extensively in order his name and business may be kept continually before the eyes of the public.

One advertising through periodicals must take into consideration first of all the number and class of people with whom he wishes to deal. In the second place he must select those periodicals which will reach the greatest number of these people. It is clear that it would seem poor policy to pay equally as much to advertise through a paper having a very small circulation as to advertise through one having a wide

circulation. This would be true in case both papers were circulated among the same class of people, while perhaps in another case where the difference in circulation was due to the subscription price of the papers, and where the papers represented two different classes of people it would not be true. If the paper having the smallest circulation represented a wealthier class of people with whom perhaps one would stand a better chance to deal, it would be a great mistake to ignore such a paper so far as advertising is concerned.

Putting an advertisement into several papers without giving any thought as to the result is very apt to be unsuccessful advertising. It is not possible to know perhaps, just which periodicals are the best to employ when one starts out. All one can do is to try them, keying the advertisements in a way one can tell from where they are noted when inquiries are made in reply to them.

To key an advertisement is to make a distinction in one's postoffice address accompanying the advertisement so it can be known in what paper the advertisement has been seen. If there happens to be a company, one member's name could be used in one paper and another member's name in another paper; or one could use a street number or post office box number in a way to make some distinction. This will save money in many cases, and insure success when otherwise advertising may seem expensive and unsuccessful.

Again, it is very necessary to study to particularize one's advertisements, in order to avoid getting inquiries that

are of no value. For example if a stock breeder has bulls for sale and is trying to buy heifers, there is no use of having people write him for heifers and offer bulls for sale. General advertising fails in just this way. Special advertising is much better.

Telling the truth is a great secret in successful advertising. One having a white bull for sale, which has proved a valuable sire, could advertise him in two ways. One way would be to mislead the public and get inquiries. The majority of people would never write again when they had learned he was white, and one is very apt to have thrown his money away by advertising in this way. Another way would be to tell exactly what he was and get replies from those who cared to take their chances in purchasing such a bull. The following will offer a chance for one to judge which one of the two ways is the better way to advertise such a bull.

" Our Herd Bull,

Scottish Champion, 127305"

For Sale.

He has been an impressive sire, and we are parting with him for satisfactory reasons, one being we have had him for three years and must change or in-breed. We have his calves to show and they will please you.

Address, etc."

" White Bulls do not always get white calves. Few people want a white bull, but we have one that does not get white calves. He has sired 43 calves; 21 being red, 18 dark roan, 3 light roans, and only one white.

"Scottish Champion, 127305", is a yellow white, having a fine masculine head, yellow nose and horn, long silky hairs, big handfulls of loose mellow skin, is very gentle, and weighs 1950 pounds in breeding condition.

His calves are great feeders, always fat, square ended, low down, blocky, vigorous, and healthy. We have ten calves at the farm now which weigh on an average 775 pounds at eight months old. We have had him three years and must change. We want to sell and reap business.

Address, etc."

Both of these advertisements cost the same money and it is clear to see the difference in the merits of the two. A person never makes a mistake in representing a thing just as it is.

One who advertises, and who is just starting out must not expect to be flooded with inquiries within a week after he has had his advertisement published. He must be patient and wait a reasonable length of time for results. If after waiting a reasonable length of time no inquiries are received,

it may be well to change the advertisement to read in a different way as perhaps there is a mistake in the wording of it. One must not become discouraged but keep at it until inquiries are received.

Advertising solicits correspondence, which is a very important factor in successful business. One can not do successful advertising without giving the matter of correspondence very careful attention. More depends upon the manner in which inquiries are answered and promptly looked after than perhaps any one thing. One's business is advertised more by the promptness and regard he shows to those making inquiries, than it is by the advertisement leading to the inquiry. Correspondence in itself is a great means of advertising. It is a direct means of calling attention to the fact that one is doing business and making a specialty of some one line of business.

Many business men or firms take special pains to make their stationary do special advertising by having paper and envelopes covered with printed matter concerning their business. One must use good judgment in doing this, since in some cases making too much of a display in this way becomes obnoxious and nothing is gained.

Everyone who is obliged to do more or less corresponding can afford to buy his stationary in quantities sufficient to enable him to always have it at hand, and buying it in sufficiently large quantities will also enable him to buy it enough cheaper so that he can afford to have suitable letter

heads printed and stamped envelopes to correspond. This counts as a matter of business enterprise, the value of which has already been mentioned.

All correspondence relating to inquiries which are the result of advertising, should be given prompt attention in all cases, whether they seem to warrant a sale or not. One can not expect every inquiry to mean a sale, but it is impossible to tell in most instances the result of failing to answer any inquiry. The case may demand one's writing several letters.

In answering an inquiry, it is best not to write too much. The first letter should be a fair business proposition. If the inquiry is one concerning live stock, let everything that is said bear directly upon the animal for sale, describing the animal briefly, stating the price and terms of selling being careful not to misrepresent the animal in any way, and endeavoring to represent it so that the purchaser will be better pleased rather than disappointed upon seeing it. This may be followed by a second letter, if necessary, mentioning something farther concerning the animal which will be of interest to the person making the inquiry, and which will perhaps help him to decide whether he will buy or not.

If after a reasonable length of time nothing is heard from him, it will not be out of place to write him a third letter kindly asking his reasons for not replying to

your proposition. This will indicate you mean business and often where the person with whom one is dealing is slow, it insures a sale, when otherwise the matter might have been dropped and the person have changed his mind or become interested in some other animal which he would have bought. If the particular animal offered has not been satisfactory as an individual or in price, it may be possible some other animal could be offered which would be.

Following up an inquiry in this way not only increases the chances of making a sale at that time, but acquaints one's self and business to the person concerned, in a way that may mean a great deal to some future time. One should always endeavor to convey the idea that he means business, and expects the same on the part of those with whom he is dealing.

In doing business with unknown parties through correspondence always demand cash or check to accompany their order, and if possible get them to certify by a written statement that whatever they have purchased was perfectly satisfactory when received. Have it understood that if it is not, it is to be returned immediately at your expense, and return the money received with the order promptly. Having purchasers well satisfied and their statements to the fact in black and white is the best kind of advertising.

Where one is desirous of doing an extensive business¹ an enlarging it as much as possible, another good plan in connection with correspondence is to keep a record of all correspondents, noting their wants and inquiries and the result

of any business transacted with them. This will tend to keep one in touch with them, and perhaps do considerable business with and through them in the future.

In order to make such a record of the most value, if one would take the pains each year to mail to each of these persons whose names had been recorded, some little thing that would remind them that you were still doing business, and solicited their patronage, it would be very apt to increase one's business each year enough to more than pay for the time and expense of going to such trouble. If one were to send out nothing more than a business card, it might mean a great deal. If one feels that he can afford it, something more expensive and which could be prized as being of some value would answer better.

There are a great variety of novelties which are used for no other purpose than to advertise. They may be had at very reasonable prices, and where employed judiciously, they serve their purpose well. In selecting novelties for this purpose, it is best to select something a person will have occasion to refer to often. Their doing this will be very apt to cause them to favor you with their orders, if at any time they may happen to be in want of any thing you are producing.

Successful business firms who issue catalogues, calenders, pocket memorandums, and a thousand other things of the kind, do so as a means of advertising. One may wonder how they can afford to do so, but stopping to think that the

profits of one or two sales made by so doing, perhaps will cover the entire expense, it is plain to see that it is a good investment rather than money thrown ~~away~~.

The successful agricultural producer could well afford to resort to some such means of advertising. The stock breeder, for example, could have printed, at a very small expense, a small hand-book of suitable size to be enclosed in an ordinary envelope and carried in one's pocket which would serve as a splendid advertisement. Incorporated within such a hand-book an announcement of the business he hoped to do with a few facts concerning whatever he expected to dispose of during the year would answer for the advertisement. A few testimonials of good quality and right to the point given by some of the best breeders who had purchased his stock and been well satisfied with it might be added. Then to have the hand-book of some practical value, space could be given for memorandums, and there might be put into it a few practical rules and hints relative to the commodity he was advertising. These would all have a tendency to make the advertising successful.

The expense of having such a hand-book printed could be lessened by getting a few other advertisements or something farmers would be interested to note, and manufacturers would be willing to pay a reasonable amount for the privilege of having their business advertised in this way. By carefully handing these out, and mailing them to persons interested in what they represent, one may be surprised at the business they will

creat. This plan may be varied in a way to best suit the conditions and circumstances of any one wishing to employ such a means of advertising. Photographic representations can be printed and obtained at reasonable sums, and they offer excellent means for advertising.

The agricultural producer has a great chance to advertise through county, state, and international fairs and expositions. If he is able to compete with the best exhibitors, and win his share of the prizes offered, the expense is very much lessened, but one must feel that he is exhibiting for another purpose than merely for the prize money offered.

Whatever one may see fit to put on exhibition at any fair or exposition, it should be exhibited in the best possible manner and made as attractive as possible, otherwise it will be ignored, and one loses rather than gains in going to the trouble of exhibiting. Unless one feels they can or care to take the pains to compete with the very best, it will be better not to show at all so far as advertising is concerned.

To consider our subject further will be merely enlarging upon the points already mentioned. The subject of advertising is a broad one, and admits of much study and ingenious thought. It becomes an art where one is able to practice it successfully. It may seem to some an art which is prompted by a purely selfish motive, but where one is honest in his dealing, and employs it in connection with an honorable business, it should rather be considered one of the

prime factors entering into a successful business, whereby the producer is not only benefited but the consumer as well. To do successful business one must advertise more or less, and to do successful advertising after one has considered the subject he must practice it.

In closing I wish to acknowledge the valuable suggestions and help given me by Professor H. W. Mumford, College; A. Chrystal, Marshall, Mich; and R. M. Kellogg, Three Rivers, Mich.

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