

Farm Radio Gives Big Money Return

Chief Pickard Tells of Observations He Made At East Lansing.

Radio on the farm is yielding more dollars and cents return on the investment, developing a more prosperous American agriculture and bringing about a better contented, understanding class of farmers than any other single scientific contribution of the age, Sam Pickard, Chief of Radio, United States Department of Agriculture, told the convention of agricultural college editors which recently met at East Lansing, Michigan.

After visiting the principal stations and approximately 600 farmers on a farm radio survey tour through twenty agricultural States, Mr. Pickard stated that both college and commercial broadcasters are making an intelligent effort to anticipate the farmer's problems with interesting, helpful programmes, and are winning large and faithful audiences of the most enterprising class of farmers.

Concrete examples of how practical application of information gained through radio is helping the farmer's bank balance were cited. In districts sixty miles from a railroad he discovered farmers who had changed their farming to more profitable lines suggested by authoritative radio talks.

"The farm fan," he said, "has two chief criticisms of radio. The one most often voiced is the curse of not getting enough sleep. Most of them admit they sit up with their sets late into the night. Many others say that while they like to be neighborly they tire of the entire community dropping in every winter evening and then forgetting to go home."

A plea for the college to dramatize informational programmes, injecting into them greater interest and more humor, was made.

"I know of no field into which educational agencies have entered that offers keener competition than that of radio. The day has passed when the mediocre speaker can hold a radio audience. The lecture of long difficult words and sentences must give way to the more friendly, natural dialogue presented by effective radio voices.

"Until educational institutions value the effectiveness of radio instruction highly enough to finance adequately a competent staff, trained in the technique of broadcasting, they can not expect to utilize successfully this new invention, probably the greatest boon to education since the printing press was invented."

The Department of Agriculture's new policy of providing a staff of feature writers to weave timely information into dialogue material to be broadcast by trained announcers was commended to the college editors.