

Maximizing the Use of News Media

Linus Solberg
Cylinder, Iowa

Placing an ad in the newspaper, breed magazine, radio or TV does not sell a product, whether it's a car, tractor, beer or hogs. People come to your business because it has created an interest -- raised their curiosity, if you will. It's possible an ad may have gotten a vote or two for the Republicans on November 4. I'm sure that you can find a particular incident where I'm wrong; but by and large, 90 percent of the ads that you may run will not sell one pig -- it's supposed to arouse their interest to look at your product or hogs.

Every hog breeder has to decide what type of advertising he or she is going with -- what fits their sale program -- whether it's small and low-budget or large -- such as showing at fairs, importing hogs, testing in test stations, testing on the farm (it is a form of advertising) -- there are many more areas we could cover but we are going to show you what we do in the news media to sell our hogs.

Demographics (who the buyers are) tells us from our sales that 90 percent are commercial hog producers, and to zero in on those people, we run ads in local newspapers and farm publications, the Yorkshire Journal, on radio and on TV.

Anyone can call their local TV station and get the cost to run a 10, 30, or 60 second commercial. The price of a commercial varies on the amount of people they reach. An average evening news broadcast reaches 18,000 males between 25 and 64 years of age on Channel 9 in Sioux City, Iowa. If you mail 18,000 one cent postcards, you would reach that many households.

It cost us about \$750 to have a TV crew come to our farm and film 20 minutes of the sow and litter, 15 minutes of the old boar, 15 minutes of the young boar and 15 minutes of the young gilt. We got about one to two minutes of good tape of each. So if you think about that for a minute, we can use this tape for five years or more, depending on how often we change the ads. Some TV stations we have discovered will or may do this filming for free if you intend to advertise a lot with them.

A person can buy a package of ads, say 10 to 12, and they are called Run of Schedule. They may cost \$50 to \$60 each or \$600 for ten ads and are spread over a week or two. All these ads could end up in a poor time slot, however.

We try to film our pigs on a hill to eliminate background scenery that would distract from the ad. Too often people advertise showing everything but their product. They show their landscape, farmstead or house. What they're showing may have been inherited from their wife's parents -- it has nothing to do with their ability to raise hogs. General Motors doesn't film the largest manufacturing plant in the world, they show you a car. We make an effort to sell one thing -- hogs.

About five years ago, a group of hog breeders calling themselves the Purebred Club went together and bought time on WHO, probably the largest radio station in Iowa. They bought three spots a week at \$93 each. Since there are seven breeders and only three spots, they are rotated every other week. A couple of them have told me the secret to their success with this type of advertising is that they bought 45 second ads instead of 30 second ads. So when one person's ad is finished, there is still time to mention a name or two of the other seven. That puts a person's farm on the air waves two or three times a week.

I'd like to comment on this. If anyone is considering advertising as a group, it is very important to contact each and every firm to give them a chance to participate, not just pick out a select few.

In 1979, we spent 4.5 percent of our gross income from hogs on advertising. Farmland Industries spent one percent, John Deere spent 1.5 percent and Pabst Blue Ribbon spent 5.5 percent of their gross income on advertising.

We only sell 400 boars and 500 females a year. We sell another 100 head for other purebred breeders. Many people sitting here raise and sell more pigs than we do. If a person is selling all the good, sound, durable pigs he can raise efficiently now, this expanded media use may not fit in their program. I only hope it may give you some ideas in this or other areas.

And finally, my father would put this number one on top of everything else I've mentioned, honesty, morality, your family name

We advertise by the way we dress, by the way we speak, by the car we drive and the home we live in, by what we do for a living, what we do with our spare time and by the way we stand behind our product. We are advertising all day every day of our lives.

Thank you.