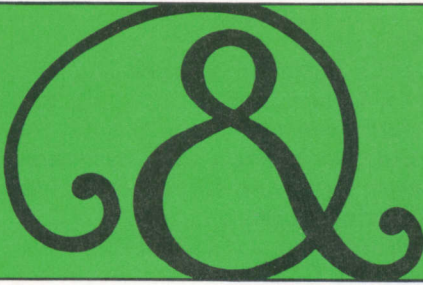


CIRCULAR 243  
MAY 1979

Information



needs of

Sources

used by

*Alabama Farmers*

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION/AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
R. DENNIS ROUSE, Director

AUBURN, ALABAMA

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*Information contained herein is available to all without regard to race, color, or national origin.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks is due Paul A. Walsh, State Statistician, of the Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service in Montgomery, who advised the authors in the early stages of planning for and taking the sample of Alabama farmers.

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# Information Needs Of And Sources Used By Alabama Farmers

\*J. L. STALLINGS and G. L. HARRISON

## INTRODUCTION

A number of people and organizations are interested in kinds of information farmers need for operating their farm business and where they get that information. Among different government agencies interested in this type of information is the Cooperative Extension Service, a direct link between the farmer and various sources of information. The Extension Service must constantly plan programs to inform farmers and be ready to answer farmers' questions on a wide variety of subjects. Also, providing information for the Extension Service and for farmers and others directly is the State Agricultural Experiment Station system. Much of the research carried on at these stations is based on an assessment of farmers' needs for information. The various State organizations such as the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service are interested in this kind of information in order to plan their programs and data needs. Farmer organizations, both general and commodity oriented, are vitally interested in the kinds of information needed by farmers and their various sources. Obviously, the newspaper, magazine, radio, and television media are interested in this type of information. More particularly, advertisers of different products used by farmers want to know through which media they can best get their message across to farmers.

A review of previous research on this subject for Alabama revealed no applicable previous work which could adequately answer the questions asked by various people as to what kinds of information farmers need and where they get it. This study was designed to answer some of these questions for Alabama.

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## OBJECTIVES

1. To determine *kinds* of information needed by:
  - a. All farmers,
  - b. Different commodity groups, and
  - c. Different income levels.
2. To determine *sources* of information used by:
  - a. All farmers,
  - b. Frequency of use,
  - c. Kind of information needed,
  - d. Commodity groups,
  - e. Gross farm income levels,
  - f. Years of formal education, and
  - g. Age of operator.

## PROCEDURE

A mail questionnaire was designed and sent to a sample of 1,335 farmers in Alabama in April 1977. Farmers were asked to give answers for 1976. A stratified random sample was drawn by nine important commodity groups: beef, corn, poultry, soybeans, pork, dairy, peanuts, pecans, and cotton. The sample was chosen in this way, with advice and help of the State Statistician of the Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, in order to ensure an adequate number of replies from each commodity group so that differences in kinds of information needed and sources used by these groups could be determined. If a completely random sample had been taken of all farmers in Alabama, regardless of commodity affiliation, the sample would have had to be unreasonably large and expensive in order to assure adequate numbers in each commodity group. Questionnaires returned with the initial mailing, plus one follow up letter one week later, were as follows:

	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Returned complete and usable	338	25.3
Returned partially completed and usable	42	3.1
Returned but not usable	10	.7
Returned but no longer farming	29	2.2
Returned, not deliverable	17	1.3
Total returned	436	32.7
Total sent	1,335	100.0

It was thought desirable to compare the characteristics of the sample with the characteristics of the whole State in order to test its validity in inference for all farmers as the sample was stratified by nine commodity groups and not randomized for all farmers. As the Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service does not publish much of its information on number of farms by the same characteristics as in the sample, it was necessary to make comparisons with the 1974 Census of Agriculture. Characteristics of the sample, with 1974 Census comparisons, when available, are as follows:

Commodity Group	<i>1976 Sample</i>		<i>1974 Census</i>	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Beef Cows	231	61	31,015	55
Corn	191	50	22,457	40
Soybeans	100	26	8,555	15
Laying Hens	64	17	7,216	13
Cotton	25	7	6,827	12
Milk Cows	70	18	6,120	11
Peanuts	64	17	4,369	8
Broilers	65	17	3,382	6
Feeder Pigs Sold	26	7	2,720	5
Pecans	31	8	921	2
Numbers	380		56,678	

While a comparison with the 1974 Census 2 years earlier than the sample is not an ideal comparison, the results indicate little problem in applying the total population to the two most numerous commodity groups (beef cows and corn), because the percentages here are reasonably close. Soybeans represent a larger percent in the 1976 sample than in the 1974 Census but this may be due to actual increases in acreages since 1974. The cotton farmers in the sample were fewer than desired, probably because the questionnaire came at a time when they were planting. The milk cows, peanuts, broilers, and pecans categories, however, were purposely chosen to represent a larger percent of the sample than for the State in order to get an adequate number for analysis. Considering that the more numerous commodity groups, beef and corn, are reasonably close, and that the rest of the commodity groups are, to a large extent, grown on farms containing these two commodities, it is felt that inferences to the total population may be very good and not be unduly biased.

## KINDS OF INFORMATION NEEDED BY ALABAMA FARMERS, 1976

There are two aspects of determining information needs of Alabama farmers, kinds of information needed and where this information is obtained. This section deals with the kinds of information needed while a following section deals with sources. First, information needs are presented for all farmers regardless of any other characteristic. Then needs by farmers in nine different commodity groups and six different gross farm income levels are compared to note differences if any.

### Needs By All Farmers

Important kinds of information needed by farmers in general, regardless of commodity group, income level, age, education or other variables, are presented in table 1. The 23 kinds of information presented in the table are not all of the many kinds of information needed by farmers, but represent those reported as needed by more than 10 percent of the farmers responding.

Livestock prices, either historic, present, or future, are the single most important kind of information reported as needed

TABLE 1. KINDS OF INFORMATION REPORTED NEEDED BY FARMERS,  
ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Kind of Information Reported Needed	Number	Pct.
1	Livestock Prices .....	308	81.1
2	Which Fertilizer to Use .....	272	71.6
3	How Much Fertilizer to Use .....	259	68.2
4	Livestock Disease Information .....	238	62.6
5	Which Insecticide to Use .....	226	59.5
6	Grain Prices .....	224	58.9
7	How to Apply Insecticides .....	208	54.7
8	Which Herbicide to Use .....	202	53.2
9	How to Apply Herbicides .....	188	49.5
10	New Farm Practices .....	183	48.2
11	Federal Government Programs for Farms .....	174	45.8
12	What Type of Farm Machinery to Buy .....	167	43.9
13	Farm Machinery Repair Methods .....	151	39.7
14	New Crop Varieties .....	151	39.7
15	Federal Government Regulations for Farms .....	150	39.5
16	New Crop or Livestock Enterprises for the Farm ...	149	39.2
17	New or Different Livestock Breeds .....	144	37.9
18	Soybean Prices .....	138	36.3
19	Federal Income Tax Problems .....	130	34.2
20	Expected Yields for Crops .....	129	33.9
21	Hedging Crops and Livestock .....	79	20.8
22	Cotton Prices .....	73	19.2
23	Farm Leasing and Tenure Arrangements .....	69	18.2
Total Number in Sample		380	100.0

by Alabama farmers.<sup>1</sup> This is not surprising when it is considered that well over half of Alabama farmers have beef cattle; and, by including other classes of livestock, an even higher percentage of Alabama farmers is accounted for.

Ranking second and third was kind and amount of fertilizer to use. Not far down in rank also, and in the top 10, were kinds and amount of insecticides and herbicides to use. Together, fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides were a class of inputs very much on the mind of Alabama farmers and represent an important concern of modern agriculture.

Livestock disease information ranked fourth and, again, reflects the importance of livestock in the Alabama agricultural economy.

Another type of information ranking in the top 10 concerns of Alabama farmers was grain prices. This also reflects the importance of livestock, because grain is an input to the livestock industry. However, grain prices, along with soybeans and cotton, are a very important class of information needed by Alabama farmers.

New farm practices complete the top 10 concerns of Alabama farmers. This, along with new crop varieties, new crop or livestock enterprises for the farm, and new or different livestock breeds, are similar types of concerns of Alabama farmers representing an important class of information needed.

## Needs By Commodity Groups

Livestock prices ranked as the number one kind of information needed by Alabama farmers for most commodity groups, as they did for all farmers, table 2. Over 90 percent of the pork producers and 88 percent of the beef producers reported a need for this kind of information. Only pecan and cotton producers ranked insecticide and fertilizer use, respectively, as their number one concern.

Ranking second and third for most commodity groups, however, was kind and amount of fertilizer to use. There was little difference in percentage for this kind of information. This is probably because most farmers in livestock groups also have crops and were, generally, equally concerned with this kind of information. There was some difference in the pecan, peanut,

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this publication, the information category "prices" is a general concept including historic, present, and future prices.

TABLE 2. PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT COMMODITY GROUPS REPORTING A NEED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Kinds of Information	Commodity Groups							
	Livestock				Row Crops			
	Beef	Poultry	Pork	Dairy	Feed grains	Soybeans	Peanuts	Cotton
	<i>Percent</i>							
<u>Prices</u>								
Livestock Prices .....	88.4	80.3	90.3	85.1	80.7	79.8	85.9	68.0
Grain Prices .....	61.5	52.5	72.0	67.6	69.0	77.8	71.8	60.0
Soybean Prices .....	36.9	33.6	40.9	44.6	41.6	77.8	42.2	52.0
Cotton Prices .....	19.4	20.5	16.1	27.0	22.8	30.3	15.6	64.0
[8] <u>Cultural Practices</u>								
Which Fertilizer to Use .....	73.9	70.5	80.6	81.1	75.1	78.8	81.3	76.0
How Much Fertilizer to Use .....	73.5	61.5	73.1	73.0	74.1	75.8	75.0	68.0
Which Insecticide to Use .....	61.6	54.9	66.7	63.5	69.0	74.7	82.8	72.0
How to Apply Insecticides .....	55.6	50.8	62.4	59.5	63.5	67.7	78.1	68.0
Which Herbicide to Use .....	56.7	47.5	64.5	59.5	68.0	69.7	76.6	72.0
How to Apply Herbicides .....	14.6	43.4	59.1	54.0	61.9	66.7	70.3	64.0
<u>Innovations</u>								
New Farm Practices .....	52.2	46.7	54.8	52.7	54.8	62.7	67.2	56.0
New Crop Varieties .....	42.2	35.2	52.7	54.0	49.2	93.9	64.1	52.0
New Crop or Livestock Enterprise for the Farm .....	42.5	40.2	45.2	36.5	43.1	47.5	51.6	60.0
New or Different Livestock Breeds .....	42.9	38.6	40.9	37.8	39.1	42.4	40.6	40.0

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TABLE 2 (CONTINUED) PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT COMMODITY GROUPS REPORTING A NEED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1978

<u>Federal Information</u>									
	Federal Government Programs for Farms.....	50.0	45.9	44.7	41.9	46.7	55.6	53.1	60.0
	Federal Government Regulations for Farms.....	41.8	41.8	36.6	39.2	43.7	50.5	51.6	48.0
	Federal Income Tax Problems .....	36.9	35.2	35.5	35.1	33.5	48.5	31.3	44.0
<u>Machinery Information</u>									
[6]	What Type of Farm Machinery to Buy .	46.3	47.5	48.4	47.3	50.8	59.6	51.6	52.0
	Farm Machinery Repair Methods .....	42.2	46.7	44.1	40.5	46.7	54.5	46.9	60.0
<u>Other Information</u>									
	Livestock Disease Information .....	68.3	59.8	66.7	62.2	62.4	69.7	64.1	64.0
	Expected Yields for Crops .....	35.1	31.1	43.0	31.1	41.6	50.5	46.9	44.0
	Hedging Crops and Livestock .....	23.1	23.0	22.9	20.3	22.8	40.4	20.3	32.0
	Farm Leasing and Tenure Arrangements	20.9	18.9	26.9	18.9	21.3	31.3	25.0	28.0
	<u>Sample Size</u> .....	268	122	94	74	197	99	64	25

and cotton groups, however. For these groups, insecticides ranked higher than fertilizers, reflecting the extreme importance of insecticide inputs for these commodity groups.

Grain prices ranked third and fourth with soybeans, pork, dairy, and pecan groups, while livestock disease information ranked fourth with the beef, poultry and cotton groups. The latter might be considered a surprise except an examination of the data revealed that most cotton farmers also had livestock.

## **Needs By Gross Farm Income**

It was expected that high and low income farmers would have need for different kinds of information; and, that high income farmers, in general, would perceive a need for all kinds of information more than low income farmers. Data generally bear out these hypotheses, table 3.

While it was generally true that the percent of farmers reporting a need for different kinds of information went up as income increased, there was a down turn in the percentage after a certain income, generally the \$40,000-99,999 level.

For some kinds of information the relationship between expressed need and income level was greater than others. The greatest relationships were for information on hedging and soybean prices. This is probably because only farmers with large volumes of products would be interested in hedging and these are the large farmers with high farm incomes. Perhaps less clear is why there is such a strong relationship for soybean prices. The best explanation appears to be that soybeans are generally more often grown on large farms.

Other types of information for which there was an important relationship between expressed need and income were leasing and tenure arrangements, type of machinery to buy, expected yields, new farm practices, new crop varieties, new crop and livestock enterprises, new and different livestock breeds, how to apply herbicides, and which herbicides to apply.

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED BY ALABAMA FARMERS, 1976**

While the previous section dealt with the kinds of information needed by Alabama farmers, this section concerns where information is obtained. First, information sources are presented for all farmers regardless of any other characteristics. Then

TABLE 3. PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT GROSS FARM INCOME LEVELS REPORTING A NEED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Kinds of Information	Gross Farm Income Levels					
	\$2,499 and Under	\$2,500— 9,999	\$10,000— 39,999	\$40,000— 99,999	\$100,000— 199,999	\$200,000 and Over
	<i>Percent</i>					
<u>Prices</u>						
Livestock Prices .....	54.5	76.8	84.7	90.4	87.5	76.9
Grain Prices .....	27.3	54.9	56.5	75.0	90.6	76.9
Soybean Prices .....	9.1	20.7	37.7	53.8	65.6	69.2
Cotton Prices .....	9.1	15.9	21.8	19.2	25.0	15.4
<u>Cultural Practices</u>						
Which Fertilizer to Use .....	41.6	67.1	74.2	74.2	78.1	76.9
How Much Fertilizer to Use .....	41.6	61.0	71.8	86.5	81.3	61.5
Which Insecticide to Use .....	32.5	46.3	57.9	86.5	78.1	61.5
How to Apply Insecticides .....	26.0	41.5	55.6	82.7	71.9	53.8
Which Herbicide to Use .....	22.1	35.4	57.3	80.8	78.1	69.2
How to Apply Herbicides .....	19.5	29.3	53.2	78.8	75.0	61.5
<u>Innovations</u>						
New Farm Practices .....	18.2	30.5	54.0	76.9	65.6	76.9
New Crop Varieties .....	16.9	20.7	43.6	65.4	62.5	61.5
New Crop or Livestock Enterprise for the Farm .....	18.2	24.4	42.7	65.4	43.8	61.5
New or Different Livestock Breeds .....	24.7	22.0	43.5	69.2	59.4	46.2

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TABLE 3. (CONTINUED). PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT GROSS FARM INCOME LEVELS REPORTING A NEED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Kinds of Information	Gross Farm Income Levels					
	\$2,499 and Under	\$2,500— 9,999	\$10,000— 39,999	\$40,000— 99,999	\$100,000— 199,999	\$200,000 and Over
	<i>Percent</i>					
<u>Federal Information</u>						
Federal Government Programs for the Farm .....	24.7	26.8	49.2	73.1	59.4	46.2
Federal Government Regulations for the Farm .....	24.7	31.7	43.6	46.2	43.8	15.4
Federal Income Tax Problems .....	15.6	17.1	41.9	50.0	40.6	46.2
<u>Machinery Information</u>						
What Type of Farm Machinery .....	16.9	35.4	46.0	73.1	53.1	53.8
Farm Machinery Repair Methods .....	16.9	28.0	45.2	59.6	46.9	46.2
<u>Other Information</u>						
Livestock Disease Information .....	40.3	56.1	66.1	73.1	75.0	69.2
Expected Yields for Crops .....	14.3	28.0	33.1	57.7	40.6	38.5
Hedging Crops and Livestock .....	7.8	9.8	19.4	40.4	34.4	46.2
Farm Leasing and Tenure Arrangements	10.4	6.1	17.7	36.5	28.1	23.1
Sample Size .....	77	82	124	52	32	13

[12]

comparisons are made concerning frequency of use of different sources, sources used for different important kinds of information, by different commodity groups, by gross farm income levels, by age levels, and by years of formal education to determine differences, if any.

### Sources For All Farmers

For persons interested in getting information to farmers, the survey indicated that nearly 85 percent of Alabama farmers report magazines as a source of at least some information for running their farm business, table 4. And, for advocates of the 'key farmer' approach to extension, the survey further indicated that 'other farmers' were a source of information for nearly 78 percent of Alabama farmers. Farm supply stores and cooperatives were another important source for nearly 69 percent of Alabama farmers. Other sources reported by over 50 percent of Alabama farmers, in order, were the County ASCS Office, the County Extension Office, the Alabama Crop and

TABLE 4. SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY ALABAMA FARMERS, 1976

Rank	Sources of Information Reported Used	Number	Pct.
1	Farm magazines.....	322	84.7
2	Other farmers.....	295	77.6
3	Farm supply stores and co-ops.....	261	68.7
4	County ASCS Office.....	243	63.9
5	County Extension Office.....	239	62.9
6	Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service....	231	60.8
7	Newspapers.....	227	59.7
8	Radio programs.....	212	55.8
9	Fertilizer dealers or sales representatives.....	209	55.0
10	Television.....	207	54.5
11	Experiment station scientists.....	198	50.8
12	Extension service publications.....	182	47.9
13	Extension specialist.....	181	47.6
14	Publications of farm organizations.....	178	46.8
15	County SCS Office.....	171	45.0
16	Machinery dealers or sales representatives.....	170	44.7
17	Handbooks.....	164	43.2
18	Chemical company representatives.....	164	43.2
19	Field days, tours and demonstrations.....	145	38.2
20	Experiment station publications.....	143	37.6
21	Local experiment stations.....	137	36.1
22	"Highlights of Agricultural Research".....	106	27.9
23	Vocational agriculture teacher.....	87	22.9
24	Meetings at Auburn University.....	49	12.9
25	Meetings at Alabama A & M University.....	8	2.1
26	Meetings at Tuskegee Institute.....	6	1.6
	Other sources under 1% each.....	6	1.6
Total Number in Sample		380	

Livestock Reporting Service, newspapers, radio programs, fertilizer dealers and sales representatives, television, and Experiment Station scientists.

### **Frequency Of Use Of Different Sources**

In addition to farm magazines being the most often reported source of information, they were also the most frequently used, table 5. Over 70 percent of Alabama farmers in the survey reported using farm magazines daily to once a month. No other source was even very close to this frequency of use. Newspapers, radio and television also were used often, with newspapers reported used daily to once a month by 52 percent of the farmers, radio by 47.7 percent, and television by 44.4 percent.

Some sources of information reported used by over 50 percent of Alabama farmers were not used frequently, however, mostly due to the nature of the information. While 'other farmers' were reported used by nearly 78 percent of Alabama farmers, only 48 percent of these reported using this source daily to once a month while another 44 percent reported using the source once a month to once a year. The same pattern was true for farm supply stores and cooperatives. It was also true of sources such as the county ASCS office, the County Extension Office, fertilizer dealers or sales representatives, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station scientists, Cooperative Extension Service publications, Cooperative Extension specialists, the County SCS Office, and similar sources where the type of information obtained tended to be needed less frequently.

### **Sources By Kind Of Information**

Various persons and groups may be interested in where specific kinds of information are obtained by farmers. For example, a manufacturer or dealer in some product may wish to know whether or not it is advisable to advertise and where. The Cooperative Extension Service wants to know what kinds of information farmers usually obtain from them. The Agricultural Experiment Station system wishes to know where farmers get their ideas about new crop varieties or new or different livestock breeds. For various interests, it was considered useful to analyze the data concerning farmers' sources of information by specific kinds of information. These data are presented in table 6. Perhaps the most important point to be noted is the extremely important

TABLE 5. FREQUENCY OF USE OF DIFFERENT INFORMATION SOURCES BY ALABAMA FARMERS, 1976

Rank	Sources of Information	Total Number Reporting Use	Pct. Reporting Different Frequencies		
			Daily to Once a Month	Once a Month to Once a Year	Once a Year or Less
1	Farm Magazines.....	322	70.5	24.8	4.7
2	Other Farmers.....	295	48.1	44.4	7.5
3	Farm Supply Stores and Co-ops.....	261	42.6	49.0	8.4
4	County ASCS Office.....	243	23.0	51.9	25.1
5	County Extension Office.....	239	34.3	49.4	16.3
6	Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.....	231	46.3	39.8	13.9
7	Newspapers.....	227	52.0	39.2	8.8
8	Radio.....	212	47.7	35.8	16.5
9	Fertilizer Dealers or Sales Representatives.....	209	25.3	51.7	23.0
10	Television.....	207	44.4	41.1	14.5
11	Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Scientists.....	193	22.3	49.7	28.0
12	Cooperative Extension Service Publications.....	182	35.7	45.6	18.7
13	Cooperative Extension Service Specialists.....	181	22.7	52.4	24.9
14	Publications of Farm Organizations.....	178	41.0	41.6	17.4
15	County SCS Office.....	171	18.8	49.6	31.6
16	Machinery Dealers or Sales Representatives.....	170	17.1	55.8	27.1
17	Handbooks and Textbooks.....	164	26.8	51.9	21.3
18	Chemical Dealers or Sales Representatives.....	164	21.3	50.0	28.7
19	Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations.....	145	7.6	39.3	53.1
20	Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Publications.....	143	24.5	44.7	30.8
21	Local Experiment Stations.....	137	13.2	48.1	38.7
22	"Highlights of Agricultural Research".....	106	33.9	40.6	25.5
23	Vocational Agriculture Teacher.....	87	34.4	38.0	27.6
24	Meetings at Auburn University.....	49	4.0	30.6	65.4
Sample Size		380			

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TABLE 6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<u>Commodity Prices</u>					
	<u>Livestock Prices</u>				
1	Radio Programs .....	130	60	48	22
2	Farm Magazines .....	102	46	28	28
3	Newspapers .....	94	38	36	20
4	Other Farmers .....	92	30	32	30
5	Television .....	79	41	22	16
6	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	47	21	17	9
7	Direct from Broker .....	17	14	1	2
8	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	11	6	4	1
9	Market Reports .....	7	6	0	1
10	All Other Sources .....	13	12	0	1
	<u>Grain Prices</u>				
1	Radio Programs .....	75	29	35	11
2	Newspapers .....	70	26	32	12
3	Television .....	66	38	14	14
4	Farm Magazines .....	52	22	11	19
5	Other Farmers .....	52	19	18	15
6	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	34	25	7	2
7	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	22	13	6	3
8	Direct From Elevator .....	13	12	1	0
9	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	4	1	1	2
10	All Other Sources .....	19	6	4	9

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TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

<u>Soybean Prices</u>					
1	Newspapers .....	48	21	19	8
2	Radio Programs .....	47	16	20	11
3	Television .....	42	27	7	8
4	Farm Magazines .....	37	13	15	9
5	Other Farmers .....	23	3	11	9
6	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	21	15	3	3
7	Direct From Elevator .....	13	12	1	0
8	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	11	4	3	4
9	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	4	3	1	0
10	All Other Sources .....	12	6	3	3
<u>Cotton Prices</u>					
1	Radio Programs .....	29	12	11	6
2	Newspapers .....	25	10	13	2
3	Television .....	19	9	4	6
4	Other Farmers .....	16	4	6	6
5	Farm Magazines .....	13	5	2	6
6	Farm Supply Stores .....	10	5	4	1
7	Direct From Broker .....	9	9	0	0
8	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	3	2	0	1
9	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	2	2	0	0
10	All Other Sources .....	14	4	6	4

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<u>Cultural Practices Information</u>					
<u>Which Fertilizer to Use</u>					
1	Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representative .....	97	55	26	16
2	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	74	37	22	15
3	Other Farmers .....	58	15	25	18
4	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	53	22	19	12
5	Experiment Station Scientist .....	45	35	5	5
6	Extension Specialist .....	40	29	7	4
7	Farm Magazines .....	33	10	17	6
8	Soil Test Lab at Auburn University .....	19	17	2	0
9	Local Experiment Station .....	10	6	3	1
10	All Other Sources .....	75	17	27	31
<u>How Much Fertilizer to Use</u>					
1	Fertilizer Company Representatives .....	81	39	25	17
2	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	63	21	26	16
3	Other Farmers .....	58	18	22	18
4	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	54	26	19	9
5	Experiment Station Scientist .....	49	40	7	2
6	Extension Specialist .....	46	32	10	4
7	Farm Magazines .....	25	6	12	7
8	Soil Test Lab at Auburn University .....	21	19	2	0
9	Experiment Station Publications .....	19	9	1	9
10	All Other Sources .....	73	23	28	22

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Which Insecticide to Use					
1	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	78	45	22	11
2	Chemical Company Representatives .....	67	27	27	13
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	61	39	13	9
4	Farm Magazines .....	48	19	15	14
5	Other Farmers .....	47	19	17	11
6	Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representatives .....	27	6	10	11
7	Experiment Station Scientist .....	21	13	4	4
8	Extension Specialist .....	21	10	5	6
9	Experiment Station Publications .....	18	8	7	3
10	All Other Sources .....	75	24	26	25
How to Apply Insecticides					
1	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	71	40	23	8
2	Chemical Company Representatives .....	68	30	23	15
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	60	40	14	6
4	Other Farmers .....	43	15	20	8
5	Farm Magazines .....	31	15	10	6
6	Fertilizer Dealers or Sales Representatives .....	20	5	6	9
7	Extension Specialist .....	15	10	2	3
8	Experiment Station Publications .....	15	6	5	4
9	Experiment Station Scientist .....	12	8	2	2
10	All Other Sources .....	59	23	20	16

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<u>Which Herbicide to Use</u>					
1	Chemical Dealer or Sales Representatives .....	74	34	25	15
2	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	67	33	21	13
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	56	35	13	8
4	Other Farmers .....	48	20	18	10
5	Farm Magazines .....	39	15	12	12
6	Extension Specialist .....	19	9	5	5
7	Experiment Station Scientist .....	17	8	5	4
8	Experiment Station Publications .....	16	6	5	5
9	Extension Service Publications .....	15	8	5	2
10	All Other Sources .....	53	17	16	20
<u>How to Apply Herbicides</u>					
1	Chemical Dealer or Sales Representatives .....	68	38	20	10
2	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	58	26	18	14
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	52	34	10	8
4	Other Farmers .....	43	19	17	7
5	Farm Magazines .....	31	12	9	10
6	Experiment Station Publications .....	16	5	6	5
7	Extension Specialist .....	15	8	4	3
8	Experiment Station Scientist .....	14	5	5	4
9	Extension Service Publications .....	13	6	5	2
10	All Other Sources .....	56	19	17	20

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TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Innovation News					
<u>New Farm Practices</u>					
1	Farm Magazines.....	85	56	19	10
2	Other Farmers.....	61	16	31	14
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff.....	43	27	10	6
4	Extension Specialist.....	20	9	9	2
5	Local Experiment Stations.....	16	9	5	2
6	Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations.....	15	7	5	3
7	County ASC Office.....	13	8	4	1
8	Experiment Station Publications.....	13	6	3	4
9	Experiment Station Scientist.....	12	9	2	1
10	All Other Sources.....	86	20	30	36
<u>New Crop Varieties</u>					
1	Farm Magazines.....	58	34	11	13
2	County Extension Chairman or His Staff.....	46	30	10	6
3	Other Farmers.....	33	6	15	12
4	Farm Supply Stores or Cooperatives.....	24	10	9	5
5	Experiment Station Publications.....	16	9	7	0
6	Extension Specialist.....	16	9	4	3
7	Experiment Station Scientist.....	15	7	6	2
8	Local Experiment Station.....	13	9	3	1
9	Extension Service Publications.....	9	5	3	1
10	All Other Sources.....	46	16	17	13

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<u>New Crop or Livestock Enterprises for the Farm</u>					
1	Farm Magazines . . . . .	64	38	22	4
2	Other Farmers . . . . .	50	20	19	11
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff . . . . .	33	21	8	4
4	Extension Specialist . . . . .	19	13	6	0
5	Local Experiment Stations . . . . .	13	5	6	2
6	Experiment Station Scientist . . . . .	12	7	4	1
7	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives . . . . .	10	3	3	4
8	Extension Service Publications . . . . .	10	3	3	4
9	Newspapers . . . . .	7	1	3	3
10	All Other Sources . . . . .	59	24	13	22
<u>New or Different Livestock Breeds</u>					
1	Farm Magazines . . . . .	82	58	12	12
2	Other Farmers . . . . .	56	21	27	8
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff . . . . .	21	16	3	2
4	Extension Specialist . . . . .	10	7	2	1
5	Experiment Station Scientist . . . . .	10	3	5	2
6	Experiment Station Publications . . . . .	9	4	1	4
7	Newspapers . . . . .	6	0	3	3
8	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service . . . . .	4	2	1	1
9	Handbooks . . . . .	4	2	1	1
10	All Other Sources . . . . .	44	15	20	9

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TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Federal Related Information

Federal Government Programs for Farms

1	County ASC Office .....	109	102	5	2
2	Farm Magazines .....	42	18	16	8
3	County SCS Office .....	33	8	24	1
4	County Extension Chairman .....	28	11	7	10
5	Other Farmers .....	17	5	5	7
6	Newspapers .....	15	0	8	7
7	Television .....	13	7	2	4
8	Extension Service Publications .....	6	3	3	0
9	Extension Specialist .....	4	1	1	2
10	All Other Sources .....	18	2	12	4

Federal Government Regulations for the Farm

1	Farm Magazines .....	60	38	12	10
2	County ASC Office .....	55	49	4	2
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	29	16	9	4
4	Newspapers .....	21	3	11	7
5	County SCS Office .....	17	5	10	2
6	Other Farmers .....	17	0	8	9
7	Television .....	15	5	5	5
8	Farm Organization Publications .....	6	3	3	0
9	Handbooks .....	5	2	3	0
10	All Other Sources .....	32	14	11	7

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<u>Federal Income Tax Problems</u>					
1	Farm Magazines . . . . .	44	26	15	3
2	CPA's and Other Accountants . . . . .	36	35	1	0
3	Newspapers . . . . .	23	8	12	3
4	Handbooks . . . . .	15	12	1	2
5	Other Farmers . . . . .	13	3	3	7
6	County Extension Chairman or His Staff . . . . .	9	6	2	1
7	Internal Revenue Service . . . . .	7	6	1	0
8	Private Tax Service . . . . .	4	4	0	0
9	Extension Service Publications . . . . .	4	2	2	0
10	All Other Sources . . . . .	41	16	14	11
<u>Farm Machinery Information</u>					
<u>What Type of Farm Machinery to Buy</u>					
1	Machinery Dealers . . . . .	115	78	24	13
2	Other Farmers . . . . .	86	41	33	12
3	Farm Magazines . . . . .	55	22	23	10
4	County Extension Chairman or His Staff . . . . .	9	4	3	2
5	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives . . . . .	7	2	2	3
6	Farm Organization Publications . . . . .	6	0	2	4
7	Experiment Station Scientist . . . . .	4	1	1	2
8	Local Experiment Stations . . . . .	2	2	0	0
9	Experiment Station Publications . . . . .	2	0	1	1
10	All Other Sources . . . . .	12	2	2	8

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TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

<u>Farm Machinery Repair Methods</u>					
1	Machinery Dealers .....	107	83	19	5
2	Other Farmers .....	69	28	32	9
3	Farm Magazines .....	32	14	10	8
4	Handbooks .....	11	4	4	3
5	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	5	3	2	0
6	Vocational Agriculture Teacher .....	3	2	1	0
7	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	3	0	2	1
8	Newspapers .....	3	0	1	2
9	Farm Organization Publications .....	3	0	1	2
10	All Other Sources .....	10	6	1	3
<u>Other Information</u>					
<u>Livestock Disease Information</u>					
1	Farm Magazines .....	83	48	25	10
2	Other Farmers .....	53	18	22	13
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	47	21	17	9
4	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	30	11	9	10
5	Extension Specialist .....	28	18	5	5
6	Veterinarians .....	28	22	4	2
7	Handbooks .....	27	15	8	4
8	Experiment Station Scientist .....	25	15	8	2
9	Newspapers .....	11	3	4	4
10	All Other Sources .....	72	36	18	18
<u>Expected Yields for Crops</u>					
1	Other Farmers .....	38	14	10	14
2	Farm Magazines .....	36	19	9	8
3	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	26	19	3	4
4	Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	16	13	2	1

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TABLE 6 (CONTINUED). SOURCES OF INFORMATION REPORTED USED BY FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION, WITH NUMBER REPORTING EACH SOURCE AS THEIR FIRST, SECOND, OR THIRD CHOICES, ALABAMA, 1976

Rank	Source of Information	Total reporting use of sources	Number reporting as:		
			First choice	Second choice	Third choice
5	Experiment Station Publications .....	15	10	3	2
6	Extension Specialist .....	14	6	6	2
7	Television .....	9	0	4	5
8	Experiment Station Scientist .....	8	5	3	0
9	Extension Service Publications .....	7	3	3	1
10	All Other Sources .....	53	23	19	11
<u>Hedging Your Crops or Livestock</u>					
1	Farm Magazines .....	29	17	10	2
2	Newspapers .....	12	7	3	2
3	Other Farmers .....	12	4	2	6
4	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	11	9	1	1
5	Commodity Brokers .....	5	5	0	0
6	Farm Supply Stores and Cooperatives .....	5	3	1	1
7	Handbooks .....	4	3	1	0
8	Television .....	4	2	1	1
9	County ASC Office .....	3	3	0	0
10	All Other Sources .....	28	14	9	5
<u>Farm Leasing or Tenure Arrangements</u>					
1	Other Farmers .....	24	16	6	2
2	Farm Magazines .....	23	14	7	2
3	County ASC Office .....	16	13	2	1
4	County Extension Chairman or His Staff .....	11	6	4	1
5	Farm Organization Publications .....	5	3	0	2
6	Extension Service Publications .....	5	1	3	1
7	Extension Specialist .....	3	2	1	0
8	Handbooks .....	3	0	1	2
9	Experiment Station Publications .....	2	1	0	1
10	All Other Sources .....	14	5	4	5

place farm magazines play as a source for a wide variety of information reported needed by Alabama farmers.

### **Prices Of Crops And Livestock**

For livestock, feed grains, and cotton prices in table 6, radio was the most reported source. Soybean prices were an exception where radio was second. Newspapers and television were among the top three sources reported for all the crop prices and were in the top four sources for livestock prices, along with farm magazines. 'Other farmers' were an important source of all kinds of price information ranking fourth or fifth in each case. Farm magazines ranked second for livestock prices and fourth or fifth for all crop prices. Other important sources of prices were farm supply stores and cooperatives, the Alabama Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, the County Extension Office, elevators and brokers, and market reports.

### **Fertilizer, Insecticide, and Herbicide Information**

Kind and amount of a wide array of fertilizers and farm chemicals are some of the more important kinds of information reported needed by Alabama farmers. Fertilizer or chemical dealer or sales representative was the most frequent source mentioned for four of the six kinds of information of this type mentioned as needed. Farm supply stores and cooperatives ranked first for the other two and second for the previous four. 'Other farmers' and the County Extension Office ranked third or fourth for all the six categories for this type of information. Other important sources of this type of information were farm magazines, Experiment Station scientists, Extension specialists, Experiment Station publications, Extension Service publications, local Experiment Stations<sup>2</sup>, and the Soil Test Laboratory at Auburn University.

### **New Farm Practices, Crop and Livestock Varieties and Breeds, and Enterprises**

Innovations of all kinds seemed to have a common pattern whether or not they pertained to practices, varieties, breeds, or enterprises. Farmers listed farm magazines as the number one source for all of these kinds of information characterized by the

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<sup>2</sup>Substations of the Main Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn. These substations are located at 20 locations throughout the state and conduct research on crops and commodities important to the area.

word 'new'. 'Other farmers' and the County Extension Office ranked either second or third for all information of this type. After these three sources, farmers listed a variety of sources for innovations but Extension specialists, Experiment Station scientists, Experiment Station publications, and Extension publications were all mentioned and all ranked in the top 10 sources for information of this type. So, after magazines and 'other farmers', the Extension Service and the Experiment Station system were important sources for this type of information. And, it is quite likely that the sources for magazines and 'other farmers' were from these sources also. Local Experiment Stations were mentioned often as were field days, tours, and demonstrations carried out separately or jointly by the Extension Service and the Experiment Station system. Other sources ranking in the top 10 for this kind of information were farm supply stores and cooperatives, handbooks and textbooks, and newspapers.

### **Other Kinds Of Information**

The sources for the rest of the various kinds of information reported in table 6 show a more varied pattern.

The first five sources for livestock disease information, in order of rank, were farm magazines, other farmers, the County Extension Office, farm supply stores and cooperatives, and Extension specialists.

The first six sources for Federal Government Programs and Federal Government Regulations were the County ASC Office, farm magazines, the County SCS Office, the County Extension Office, newspapers, and 'other farmers'. The two Federal Government agencies were major sources of this kind of information as they are charged with administration of the programs and regulations.

Information on what machinery to buy and machinery repair methods most often came, as expected, from machinery dealers, 'other farmers', and farm magazines in that order.

Federal income tax information came from a variety of sources. Farm magazines again ranked first, as they have in a wide variety of information needed by farmers.

Expected yields were obtained most often from 'other farmers', farm magazines, and the County Extension Office.

Hedging information, again, was most often obtained from farm magazines. Farm leasing and tenure arrangements were most often obtained from 'other farmers' and farm magazines.

## **Sources By Commodity Groups**

While there was generally no great difference in use of most sources of information by commodity groups, there were exceptions.

Generally, all commodity groups used farm magazines, 'other farmers', and farm supply stores and cooperatives a high percentage of the time, table 7.

As expected, farmers with controlled crops such as cotton and peanuts used ASCS offices more and dairy and poultry farmers used them less.

Peanut farmers used the County Extension Office more than any other commodity group. For all commodity groups but poultry, nearly two-thirds or more of the farmers reported using this source of information.

Cotton farmers were frequent users of newspapers and radio, as were soybean farmers. Peanut farmers led in use of television. Peanut farmers also were the highest average users of all sources of information followed by soybean farmers and cotton farmers, while poultry farmers were the lowest.

## **Sources By Farm Income Levels**

One important generalization that can be made concerning income levels is that use of different sources of information goes up as gross farm income levels rise, table 8. However, this may vary for certain specific cases. One exception, which appears for some sources of information, is a downturn in percent of use after reaching certain higher income levels, especially \$200,000 and over.

## **Sources By Education Levels**

As with income, it was expected that different sources of information would be used more as education levels rose and this appeared generally true from the data, table 9. Again, however, there were some exceptions in specific cases.

The relationship was especially true for sources requiring reading such as farm magazines, newspapers, and the various other published materials. It was less so for radio and television.

## **Sources By Age Level**

There was doubt that age would be associated with use of different sources of information and this appeared to be borne

TABLE 7. PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT COMMODITY GROUPS REPORTING A USE OF THE DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Sources of Information	Commodity Groups							
	Livestock				Row Crops			
	Beef	Poultry	Pork	Dairy	Feed grains	Soybeans	Peanuts	Cotton
<b>Print Media</b>	<i>Percent</i>							
Farm Magazines .....	85.8	80.3	86.2	91.9	83.2	89.9	89.1	84.0
Crop and Livestock Reporting Service ..	66.0	54.1	63.8	64.9	64.0	70.7	68.8	60.0
Newspapers .....	65.7	53.3	66.0	56.8	62.4	72.7	67.2	81.1
Extension Service Publications .....	51.9	33.6	55.3	48.6	53.8	58.6	70.3	64.0
Publications of Farm Organizations ....	49.6	39.3	46.8	50.0	46.7	54.5	51.6	60.0
Handbooks .....	46.3	38.5	46.8	45.9	45.7	51.5	48.4	64.0
Experiment Station Publications .....	39.2	24.6	44.7	39.2	46.2	47.4	56.3	48.0
"Highlights of Agricultural Research" ...	29.1	22.1	27.7	33.8	34.5	39.4	37.5	28.0
<b>Electronic Media</b>								
Radio Programs .....	58.6	55.7	61.7	47.3	56.3	68.7	59.4	72.0
Television .....	58.2	50.0	66.0	55.4	55.3	69.7	76.6	60.0
<b>Personal Sources</b>								
Other Farmers .....	79.9	73.8	74.5	82.4	79.2	86.9	79.7	80.0
Farm Supply Stores and Co-ops .....	73.1	71.3	73.4	71.6	69.0	72.7	68.8	72.0
County ASCS Office .....	69.4	54.9	69.1	44.7	67.5	74.7	82.8	80.0
County Extension Office .....	69.4	53.3	72.3	63.5	68.0	70.7	84.4	76.0
Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representative	59.3	44.3	68.1	56.8	59.9	70.7	67.2	60.0
Experiment Station Scientist .....	53.4	38.5	51.4	51.4	55.8	61.6	70.3	48.0
Extension Specialist .....	50.7	32.8	57.4	52.7	53.3	58.6	68.8	56.0
County SCS Office .....	50.4	40.2	47.9	39.2	44.2	54.5	60.9	60.0
Machinery Dealer or Sales Representative	48.1	40.2	48.9	44.6	47.2	59.6	57.8	60.0
Chemical Company Representative ....	46.6	34.4	55.3	47.3	54.3	66.7	59.4	56.0
Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations .....	39.9	27.0	48.9	50.0	44.7	52.5	56.3	40.0
Local Experiment Stations .....	40.3	25.4	48.9	37.8	48.7	48.5	57.8	52.0
Vocational Agriculture Teacher .....	23.9	23.0	26.6	20.3	25.4	25.3	17.2	24.0
Meetings at Auburn University .....	14.6	6.6	11.7	14.9	14.7	17.2	21.9	12.0
Sample Size .....	268	122	94	74	197	99	64	25

TABLE 8. PERCENT OF FARMERS IN DIFFERENT GROSS FARM INCOME LEVELS REPORTING A USE OF THE DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Sources of information	Gross Farm Income Levels					
	\$2,499 and Under	\$2,500— 9,999	\$10,000— 39,999	\$40,000— 99,999	\$100,000— 199,999	\$200,000 and Over
<u>Print Media</u>	<i>Percent</i>					
Farm Magazines . . . . .	58.4	76.8	88.7	98.1	90.6	84.6
Crop and Livestock Reporting Service . . . . .	39.0	51.2	63.7	76.9	68.8	61.5
Newspapers . . . . .	36.4	62.2	62.9	73.1	62.5	61.5
Extension Service Publications . . . . .	13.0	41.5	44.4	69.2	78.1	61.5
Publications of Farm Organizations . . . . .	22.1	43.9	52.4	59.6	56.3	53.8
Handbooks . . . . .	19.5	37.8	48.4	51.9	50.0	61.5
Experiment Station Publications . . . . .	22.1	31.7	36.3	51.9	59.9	61.5
"Highlights of Agricultural Research" . . . . .	11.7	18.3	27.4	36.5	50.0	61.5
<u>Electronic Media</u>						
Radio Programs . . . . .	36.4	50.0	61.3	61.5	62.5	53.8
Television . . . . .	31.2	52.4	56.5	73.1	56.3	53.8
<u>Personal Sources</u>						
Other Farmers . . . . .	50.6	72.0	80.6	94.2	81.3	76.9
Farm Supply Stores and Co-ops . . . . .	45.5	70.0	74.2	71.2	71.9	53.8
County ASCS Office . . . . .	49.4	56.1	65.3	78.8	62.5	53.8
County Extension Office . . . . .	35.1	53.7	62.9	82.7	90.6	69.2
Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representative . . . . .	22.1	53.7	57.3	69.2	78.1	69.2
Experiment Station Scientist . . . . .	28.6	41.5	48.4	75.0	71.9	61.5
Extension Specialist . . . . .	24.7	34.1	42.7	76.9	81.3	61.5
County SCS Office . . . . .	23.4	34.1	46.8	63.5	56.3	53.8
Machinery Dealer or Sales Representative . . . . .	13.0	32.9	51.6	63.5	68.8	61.5
Chemical Company Representative . . . . .	13.0	25.6	49.2	67.3	65.6	84.6
Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations . . . . .	10.4	23.2	39.5	63.5	68.8	69.2
Local Experiment Stations . . . . .	10.4	28.0	35.5	59.6	59.4	61.5
Vocational Agriculture Teacher . . . . .	18.2	20.7	22.6	26.9	25.0	23.1
Meetings at Auburn University . . . . .	5.2	3.7	10.5	23.1	31.3	46.2
Sample Size . . . . .	77	82	124	52	32	13

[311]

TABLE 9. PERCENT OF DIFFERENT EDUCATION LEVELS USING DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Sources of information	Formal Education				
	1-4 Years	5-8 Years	9-12 Years	13-16 Years	17 Years or More
	<i>Percent</i>				
<u>Print Media</u>					
Farm Magazines.....	33.3	66.0	86.8	95.2	95.0
Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.....	25.0	38.3	64.4	66.3	70.0
Newspapers.....	33.0	42.6	63.9	66.3	70.0
Extension Service Publications.....	8.3	27.7	48.8	50.6	55.0
Publications of Farm Organizations.....	0.0	23.4	45.9	66.3	70.0
Handbooks.....	0.0	14.9	42.4	60.2	70.0
Experiment Station Publications.....	8.3	14.9	35.6	53.0	55.0
"Highlights of Agricultural Research".....	0.0	17.0	24.9	45.8	45.0
<u>Electronic Media</u>					
[32] Radio Programs.....	33.3	38.3	58.6	63.9	55.0
Television.....	33.3	46.8	55.1	61.4	55.0
<u>Personal Sources</u>					
Other Farmers.....	41.7	53.2	79.5	94.0	80.0
Farm Supply Stores and Co-ops.....	41.7	55.3	73.2	65.1	90.0
County ASCS Office.....	25.0	53.2	66.8	66.3	70.0
County Extension Office.....	25.0	48.9	62.9	73.5	75.0
Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representative.....	16.7	40.4	57.6	61.4	70.0
Experiment Station Scientist.....	16.7	27.7	52.7	63.9	55.0
Extension Specialist.....	8.3	25.5	49.8	62.7	40.0
County SCS Office.....	8.3	23.4	41.0	55.4	55.0
Machinery Dealer or Sales Representative.....	16.7	25.5	46.8	53.0	60.0
Chemical Company Representative.....	0.0	34.0	42.9	56.6	50.0
Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations.....	0.0	27.7	31.2	62.7	55.0
Local Experiment Stations.....	0.0	25.5	32.2	61.4	30.0
Vocational Agriculture Teacher.....	0.0	12.8	22.4	33.7	30.0
Meetings at Auburn University.....	0.0	4.3	9.8	25.3	25.0
Sample Size.....	12	47	205	83	20



out by the data, table 10. There was no consistent relationship between age and use of different sources of information. This is probably because age is associated with the other factors tested. For instance, as age rises, farmers tend historically to have less formal education. On the other hand, as age rises, and a farmer gains experience and capital, gross farm income rises. These factors, no doubt, confuse any association between age itself and use of different sources of information.

## SUMMARY

A mail survey was sent to 1,335 Alabama farmers in 1977 asking them what kinds of information they needed for their farm operations and the sources of information they used for different kinds of information. About a third of the questionnaires were returned (436) which is usual for a mail survey of this type. Analysis was made by nine commodity groups, different gross income levels, education levels, and age of operator.

Livestock prices were the single most important category of information reported needed by Alabama farmers, followed by which and how much fertilizer to use. Other important categories of information needed were livestock disease information, which and how to apply herbicides, new farm practices, Federal Government programs, what type of farm machinery to buy, machinery repair methods, and new crop varieties, among others.

Farm magazines were the single most important source of information and were mentioned by nearly 85 percent of the farmers. They ranked high for a wide variety of kinds of information. They were also used more frequently than any other source. Radio, newspapers, and television also were important sources for a wide variety of livestock and crop price information.

There was little difference in use of different sources of information by commodity groups except that peanut farmers were the highest average users of all sources of information and poultry farmers were the lowest. By income levels, generally, use of all sources increased as incomes rose except at high income levels. This was also true of education levels. There was little difference in use of different sources of information by age level.

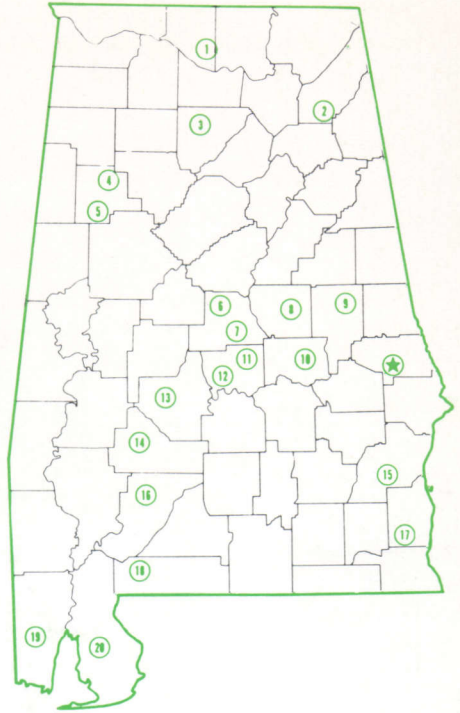
TABLE 10. PERCENT OF DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS USING DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ALABAMA, 1976

Sources of information	Age of Operator				
	30 Years and Under	31-40 Years	41-50 Years	50-61 Years	Over 60 Years
	<i>Percent</i>				
<u>Print Media</u>					
Farm Magazines .....	90.9	85.1	90.7	82.5	81.0
Crop and Livestock Reporting Service .....	72.7	66.0	61.6	57.9	57.1
Newspapers .....	72.7	70.2	65.1	61.9	47.6
Extension Service Publications .....	54.5	44.7	50.0	49.2	46.4
Publications of Farm Organizations .....	81.8	53.2	54.7	40.5	39.3
Handbooks .....	63.6	55.3	53.5	34.1	33.3
Experiment Station Publications .....	40.9	31.9	43.1	34.9	35.7
"Highlights of Agricultural Research" .....	36.4	34.0	27.9	24.6	23.8
<u>Electronic Media</u>					
Radio Programs .....	77.3	61.7	67.4	49.2	46.4
Television .....	81.8	63.2	59.3	51.6	48.8
<u>Personal Sources</u>					
Other Farmers .....	95.5	87.2	87.2	74.6	65.5
Farm Supply Stores and Co-ops .....	86.4	74.5	75.6	68.3	56.0
County ASCS Office .....	63.6	63.8	66.3	57.1	71.4
County Extension Office .....	72.7	63.8	67.4	61.9	57.1
Fertilizer Dealer or Sales Representative .....	59.1	61.7	64.0	52.4	47.6
Experiment Station Scientist .....	59.1	51.1	50.0	48.4	53.6
Extension Specialist .....	68.2	46.8	52.3	46.8	39.3
County SCS Office .....	64.6	27.7	53.5	40.5	33.3
Machinery Dealer or Sales Representative .....	77.3	44.7	58.1	42.9	28.6
Chemical Company Representative .....	59.1	40.4	58.1	42.1	29.8
Field Days, Tours, and Demonstrations .....	50.0	36.2	39.5	39.7	33.3
Local Experiment Stations .....	36.4	31.9	36.0	41.3	32.1
Vocational Agriculture Teacher .....	31.8	25.5	26.7	18.3	23.8
Meetings at Auburn University .....	18.2	12.8	14.0	12.7	11.9
Sample Size .....	21	47	86	126	84



# Alabama's Agricultural Experiment Station System AUBURN UNIVERSITY

With an agricultural research unit in every major soil area, Auburn University serves the needs of field crop, livestock, forestry, and horticultural producers in each region in Alabama. Every citizen of the State has a stake in this research program, since any advantage from new and more economical ways of producing and handling farm products directly benefits the consuming public.



## Research Unit Identification

### ★ Main Agricultural Experiment Station, Auburn.

1. Tennessee Valley Substation, Belle Mina.
2. Sand Mountain Substation, Crossville.
3. North Alabama Horticulture Substation, Cullman.
4. Upper Coastal Plain Substation, Winfield.
5. Forestry Unit, Fayette County.
6. Thorsby Foundation Seed Stocks Farm, Thorsby.
7. Chilton Area Horticulture Substation, Clanton.
8. Forestry Unit, Coosa County.
9. Piedmont Substation, Camp Hill.
10. Plant Breeding Unit, Tallassee.
11. Forestry Unit, Autauga County.
12. Prattville Experiment Field, Prattville.
13. Black Belt Substation, Marion Junction.
14. Lower Coastal Plain Substation, Camden.
15. Forestry Unit, Barbour County.
16. Monroeville Experiment Field, Monroeville.
17. Wiregrass Substation, Headland.
18. Brewton Experiment Field, Brewton.
19. Ornamental Horticulture Field Station, Spring Hill.
20. Gulf Coast Substation, Fairhope.