

A stylized landscape illustration. The top half features a bright yellow sun with rays rising over a dark blue horizon line. The bottom half shows green fields with diagonal lines receding into the distance. The entire scene is set against a dark blue background.

RESOURCE GUIDE

**FOR PLANNING AND EXECUTING
AGRICULTURAL RADIO MEDIA BUYS**

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- **What is Farm Radio?**
- **What is the NAFB?**
- **Explore the NAFB Difference**

Farm Radio is best described as:
"Information which is broadcast on the Radio in a regularly scheduled basis which provides Farmers, Producers, Growers, and Ranchers with data that is important in the operation of their business – both on a daily basis as well as long-term."

Over the years this "information" has evolved primarily into three areas ...

- **Market Reports**
track the ups and downs of the commodities relevant to the geography served by the radio station.
- **Weather Reports**
on Farm Radio Stations usually takes the form of a more in-depth analysis of weather conditions as they relate to both immediate and long term Farming and Ranching operations.
- **Farm News**
information on both a local and national basis pertaining to agricultural issues such as Farm Legislation, International issues like Brazil and China, as well as local agricultural conditions and issues.

The length and frequency of these reports varies by station and network, yet the "standard" configuration looks something like this ...

- **Morning Farm Reports** -- normally sometime between 5a – 7a, Monday-Friday, anywhere from 2 minutes to 30 minutes in length (though some stations also have Saturday Reports) which recaps Market Information, Farm News, and where we are headed for today.
- **Market Reports** -- normally on the hour from 9:30a until the markets close in the early afternoon at around 2:30p, Monday-Friday, usually 2 to 5 minutes in length.
- **Noon Farm Reports** -- normally sometime between 11:30a – 1p, Monday-Friday, recaps Markets and the days developing Agricultural News.

While the above is a "typical" configuration, a handful of stations broadcast continuous Farm and Agricultural Information throughout the day. You will want to get from the stations and networks you are considering their most current broadcast schedule. Please note that Networks are more complicated due to "feed" versus "carry" of programs. A Network may broadcast 20 or more Reports a day but the individual affiliates may be selective as to which Reports they decide to air. Also upon investigation you may discover that several reports are carried by 90% or more of the affiliates making these positions more desirable.



- **Membership**

- **Affiliates**

The National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) is a professional organization dedicated to Agricultural Broadcast Journalism. In order for a Farm Radio Broadcaster to become an NAFB member, the Broadcaster must meet a set of strict criteria regarding their broadcast employment. While NAFB members are on and in other mediums such as TV and the Internet, Radio NAFB membership is the vast majority of the organizations makeup.

NAFB Reports air on Radio Stations and Network Affiliates which account for over a 60% share of Farmer and Rancher listening in the areas where Farmer listening is documented. The NAFB's News Service, as well as the reporting efforts of the individual Farm Broadcasters, is the backbone of America's Agricultural Information link in Radio. For a more in-depth look at the NAFB, you can visit their Web site at www.nafb.com.

- **Signal Strength of the Station:**

You have to be able to cover the Ag Target which for the most part live outside of the metro area. Dial position and signal power play a key role in this fact. Just like at 5' 6" and 185 pounds it's not likely that one would be a linebacker for the NFL playing in the Super Bowl, it's just as unlikely that a 1,000-watt Station at 1550 on the AM dial will be a powerhouse Ag Station -- due to the Station's physical inability to cover where the target lives. While there are some exceptions due to being located in a particularly important agricultural county, a Station's dial position and signal power are key to anything else.

- **Format of the Station:**

You have to have a format that is compatible to the most common Farmer/Rancher demo of Men 45-64 (but the Farm Wife is just as important in most cases so that demo could be expanded to Adults

45-64). You are not going to go from Frank Zappa "Weasels Ripped My Flesh" to the Market Reports and maintain either audience. Historically, the two most common formats are News/Talk, followed at a distance by Country. This makes sense when you compare the Farmer/Rancher demos to other Adults in their age group. There have been exceptions but those Stations were successful because they put on a significant block of Ag programming for a ½ hour to an hour time period. That allows tune in on a regular basis and to a degree negates the Stations normal format and becomes a program destination similar to TV.

- **Ag Programming and/or NAFB Presence:**

You have to have the programming to cluster the Farmer/Rancher audience above and beyond normal format skews for their respective demo. Imagine a Station in your market that is not the best one in your area, but at 6:08 AM every morning

So What We Are Really Looking for in a Farm Radio Station is...

Monday – Friday, that Station will tell you what your competitors are paying for their media in your key markets. Imagine that they would also re-cap a summary of the value added programs that your competitors were able to negotiate in your clients top sales areas. Would you not listen to that type of information on the Radio if this makes your job better? That's what the NAFB Market Reports and Farm News is trying to do for the Farmers/Ranchers that are in their listening area. Granted in this day and age Farmer/Ranchers have multiple outlets for access to that information, but as of today's technology the Radio is still the most user friendly for providing daily Farm News, Market Reports, and Ag Weather on a consistent basis.

- **Agricultural Concentration and Acreage within the Station's Primary Signal Pattern:** This is almost a "chicken and egg" situation in terms of which comes first. Without an Ag Target, there

is no need for the Station to waste programming time on a non potential target within their listening constituency. The most common issue is just the reverse in that a powerhouse Station reaches a significant amount of Farmers/Ranchers but without #3 as listed earlier – the NAFB programming – the Ag audience does not cluster well for a spot schedule and would have to be approached more like Consumer Radio which tends to be more fragmented.

- A Station that is low on the dial with lots of power like 650 on the Dial at 5,000 watts or more.
- When that Station is not delivering Farm, it has a compatible format such as News/Talk or if it's a music Station has a Country format or "Men and Women 45+ friendly" music format.
- Ideally the Station has an NAFB member reporting Farm News and Information, or at a minimum a dedicated Ag Reporter with a regular schedule of programming.
- Is located smack in the middle of the best Farm and Ranch geography in the US or has the signal strength to cover such an area if the Station is located in a more "metro" area.



Can I Buy Farm Radio the Same as Consumer Radio?

While different from Consumer Radio Buying, Farm Radio Buying shares similarities with specific demographic Radio buys found in the Consumer Market. This being said, let's look at an example of how a Farm Radio buy and a Consumer Radio buy for the same market compare and contrast.

- **Buy 1: Target = Men 35 - 64 TSA**
(This is the closest match to a Farmer demographic available in ARB Radio Ratings)
- **Buy 2: Target = 250+ Corn Producers**
(Same geography as the TSA above)

For Media Buy #1

We begin by pulling an Arbitron Ranker for our demo – Men 35 - 64– by day part. Normally we would have a set of goals for the market such as GRP levels, reach and frequency objectives and a budget established on the estimated CPP (cost per point).

We would also be considering “value-added” opportunities from the Stations or Station Groups in the market, such as on-air product sampling and placement, remotes, give-away on air, trip packages, and contests to “stretch” the media impact of our schedule.

Typically we would also look at age cell concentration within the overall target by Radio Station for the 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64 age cells. This analysis will be indicative of format skews by age cell with the younger demos 34-44 going to more of the “hot” formats and the older cell 55-64 going towards the “easier” formats.

This sets up the balancing act of selecting Stations that reach all age cells within the target. It's possible that the listening preferences of a 36-year-old do not have much in common with the listening patterns and format choices of a 63-year-old. We will most likely buy three to five Stations deep minimum, with a strong number of spots to achieve our GRP goals and balances.

It would not be uncommon to have as many as 150 spots per week spread over five or more stations to achieve our goals and impact. The only thing that might skew the buy is a particularly strong Station or Station(s) that control the majority of the Men in the market or a particularly strong value-added promotion or tie-in from a Station or Station ownership group in the market.

For Media Buy #2

We face a totally different set of challenges. First there is no Arbitron Ranker for 250+ Acre Corn Producers. Yes, we could run an Arbitron on the closest demo match to our Corn Target, which would most likely be one of Men 35-64. But there is an actual ratings service for Radio, specifically designed to measure Farmer and Rancher listening, called AMR.

AMR was created over a two-year research period in the early 1990s out of a need for a better accountability of Radio, specifically, Farm Radio and the NAFB to deliver a significant audience above and beyond normal Radio buying. Statistically the AMR Radio ratings are more accurate against their respective demo than other syndicated audience research for broadcast ratings. This is primarily due to the random sample size of the Farmer/Rancher Target and the methodology involved.

AMR is based on a telephone interview for “day of” and “day after” unaided recall of listening. This type of research is more current than diary-based and has a tendency in Radio to provide a very accurate indication of what is known as the “P1” listener, due to the unaided methodology. “P1” listeners represent the primary listener group to that Station and account for the majority of the Station’s audience profile. If AMR has a weakness, it could be in the methodology of day

of/day after recall, which has a tendency to understate listenership of the non P1 audience – which is better than overstating any audience ratings. Sample sizes are required to have a minimum of 100 interviews prior to developing any ratings data though most areas contain many more interviews. The 100 sample requirement minimizes sampling error providing a maximum of only +/- 10% error at the 95% confidence level.

Let’s look at how significant the differences are between the ARB Men 35-64 Ratings and AMR Ratings for 250+ Corn Producers in the exact same geography over the exact same time period in Spring 2006.

Station	ARB TSA Counties % of Men 35-64	AMR in TSA Counties % 250+ Corn Producers
Local Farm Station 1	11.2%	16%
Local Farm Station 2	0.0%	13.7%
Regional Farm Station 3	5.3%	17.9%
Farm Network 1	N/A	43.1%
Farm Network 2	N/A	16.0%
Farm Network 3	N/A	9.5%

The ARB Men 35-64 is considerably different when compared to the Farmer Ratings.

- The top actual Farmer Stations are not the top Men 35-64 Stations
- The # 2 local Farm Station does not even appear in the ARB Ratings for Men 35-64
- There is no Network “consolidation” in ARB, so Networks could be totally missed if you were relying on ARB
- Because Farmers represent less than 3% of the population, they will not be accurately sampled within a general Men 35-64 survey making an ARB type approach unstable in predicting actual Farmer delivery. Again, go back to our earlier example of a local Station – not the strongest in your market – which at regular time periods reported what

your competitors were paying for media time. You would have more incentive to listen than the general population within your age skews, but your profession of media buyer preferences would have no bearing on the ARB Ratings because media buyers represent such a small % of the population.

So in summary, AMR where available, is your best directional choice to select Stations to reach Farmers. Beyond AMR, your next best choice is format and the presence of Farm Reports and/or NAFB Broadcasters. Arbitron County by County reports could serve as directional tools for station coverage, but are not accurate in detailing Farmer listening or ratings.

The table below is the reverse and further illustrates the differences when you take the top 2 Men 35-64 Stations and look at their respective Farmer Ratings.

Station	ARB TSA Counties % of Men 35-64	AMR in TSA Counties % 250+ Corn Producers
Top Local Station	22.5%	0.9%
Second Top Station	18.7%	3.2%

- **The Media Mix with Farm Radio/NAFB**
- **Audience Delivery Comparison**
- **Programming Advantages**

While Farm Radio can be a strong medium by itself, it is more common to use Farm Radio in conjunction with other media in a mix.

Farm Radio does have regional skews and is noticeably stronger in certain geography depending upon...

- **Signal strength of NAFB Stations**
- **Number of NAFB Stations**
- **Number of NAFB Networks**

How Did We Create the AMR Ratings?

Using the AMR Software (which is a free service), we selected the counties which are in the Radio TSA. We simply entered those 11 counties which make up the TSA Market and then selected Corn Producers for the commodity and then created the report. This provided us with a sample of 322 Corn Producer interview samples. That translates to a maximum error of +/- 5.6% at the 95% confidence level for this particular sample – which in the world of research is an excellent sampling.

In reviewing the range of normal Farm Radio reach, the strongest States can deliver Reach in the 60% plus level, while States with fewer NAFB Stations and Networks can be in the 30% Reach range. Again, compared to consumer Radio, these are still strong numbers particularly when you consider that most markets are only served by one NAFB Station or Network Station. Please consult your AMR to get more detailed Reach perspective by geography.

Farm Radio and/or NAFB Radio Reach estimates correspond to Radio Reach in the consumer market with one exception – it takes fewer Stations or Networks to get to the Maximum Reach number in Farm than in Consumer. Also, you are talking broad reach with NAFB Radio covering a State as opposed to only a Metro or TSA Arbitron Market.

Comparing Farm Radio to other mediums gets a little tricky; however, historical media usage studies – some proprietary and others public – indicate the following patterns.

Print in the form of Farm Magazines and Farm Newspapers is your best reach medium for the Farm market. Historically, buying several to multiple print vehicles such as two Farm Magazines and a Farm Newspaper will maximize you reach potential at the 90%+ level. Readership of the ad is lower but still impressive in the 40 – 50% range from just three insertions in a typical row-crop state. Specialty crops such as Cotton have different but similar curves due

to more crop specific choices in addition to Farm Magazines and Farm Newspapers.

So historically, print would offer the following type reach tables.

- Single Farm Magazine or Farm Newspaper 40 – 60% reach
- Any two, such as a Magazine plus a Newspaper, or two Magazines 70 – 85% reach
- Any combo of three would give you 80 – 94% range
- Any combo of four or more leads to a 85 – 95% range

TV reach potential is relative to the time periods and programs that are purchased. TV, unlike Farm Radio, offers more broad coverage of the market and in the process reaches more of everyone – including Farmers. TV reach is a function of historical PVTs – Persons Viewing Television – ratings which are then translated into individual program ratings from share of viewing. A typical Farm TV buy concentrates on local and Farm News programs and may also include some sports.

Historically, the following reach by time periods could be expected from TV.

- Early Morning from 5a – 9a: 20 – **35% reach**
- Noon News: 25 – **40%**
- Early News from 5 – 6p: **30 – 50%**
- Late News from 10 – 10:30p: **40 – 70%**

So a combination of all of the above time periods could yield a TV reach in the 70 – 85% range for a given DMA, provided that enough rating points and spots were purchased to hit the key positions.

So with Farm Radio, you have a medium that most likely will provide less reach potential than Magazines and TV, but has other strengths and reasons to have it included in the media mix:

- Increased frequency when combined with Print and to a lesser degree TV
- Cost efficiency compared to other media choices
- Localized coverage with a specific message to target key counties, acreage, or livestock

- Less lead time than with the other media
- Potentially lower production costs – particularly when compared to TV
- Value-added opportunities not offered by Print or TV such as interviews or “remotes” from field events

These values offset the two major weaknesses of Radio as a medium. Coverage and impact of the creative message are the two primary obstacles to Radio, but are less of a factor in Farm Radio due to the concentrated listening patterns and larger ratings of Farm Radio Programs.

Note: The previous historical reach estimates for the various media are based on the reach data of various national and regional media surveys over the last 10 years.

Building a Farm Radio Schedule/Plan

So we get the call from the Client at 2p on a Wednesday afternoon that Radio needs to be on the air the next Monday for the following counties.

- The whole State of Iowa
- 12 Counties in Illinois
 - Mc Clean, La Salle, Kankakee, Iroquois, Tazwell, Vermillion, Lee, Whiteside, Knox, Macoupin, Effingham, and Jasper
- 6 Counties in Nebraska
 - Lancaster, Fillmore, Clay, Hamilton, Saline, and Gage
- Eastern Washington (in the Spokane area)

What Are Our First Steps?

- Check and see if AMR is available for our Target Counties
- Check in the NAFB Directory and see what Stations and Networks are listed for our Target Counties

- If possible, secure Arbitron County by County as a back-up and to indicate true Station County Penetration for those non-AMR rated areas
- Map our Target Counties using programs such as Microsoft MapPoint so we can visually picture potential Radio coverage needs
- Consult SRDS as well as www.srds.com (if you are a subscriber) for Stations and / or Network listings, as well as programming and Station Formats – if you have the hard-copy version, SRDS maps can also be useful
- Contact Station and Network Representatives for their properties located in your Target Geographies for avails and any other objective information you would like – not just sales materials and hype
- Check the Radio locator Web site www.radio-locator.com and search for your Target Geography

With experience you should be able to turn this type of project in several hours and with lots of experience you could have your Station and Network selection down

with-in less than an hour. The true work then becomes negotiating your schedules relative to programming avails.

Building the Schedule

While it can be difficult to find the right Stations and Networks – the real tough part is the schedule. Radio is harder to buy than TV, in that you have more definition in programming in TV in ½-hour and 1-hour increments. The key to buying Farm Radio is how much is enough? In the old days, as well as often today, you see Radio Schedules with only two spots per day Monday – Friday for a total spot level of 10 per week. This would rarely if ever be done in the consumer world. The logic is in covering one morning Farm Report and one noon Farm Report per day.

This can have some impact if...

- Turn-over is low, meaning that the Programs you have selected have a very high composition of the same Farmers listening every day
- You have the best position in the commercial pod – first spot and preferably the only spot
- You have a decent commercial with some call to action or interest level

So what is the ideal weekly schedule...

- Cover as many key Farm Reports in prime listening times as you can given the budget
- Shoot for a weekly average frequency per station of a minimum of 3.0 to solid a 5.0 if you have the money
- Divide Cume Rating by AQH Rating and multiply by 3.5 and that will give you weekly spot levels that can deliver incredible frequency with surprisingly high reach as well

- If no ratings are available count the number of Farm Programs or weather reports per day in a period from roughly 6a – 2p and place a spot within 33% of them – 1 out of 3
- The reason for frequency is to ensure that the spot is heard given the attentiveness factors of Radio commercial listening habits
- In the event of multiple Farm Stations and Networks covering the same geography...
- Buy as deep as possible if it is cost effective and generates the reach and frequency you need to get the job done – ideally the more the better – until you reach a point of diminishing returns (remember in Consumer Radio we are most always on multiple Stations to get the job done)
- If you must choose one over the other you will need to examine...
- Head to head county coverage
- Ratings if available
- Programming choices and when the spots will actually air
- Cost relative to delivery
- Field incentives, interview options, etc.

Summary

- Farm Radio is different, yet still must be approached with a Radio discipline in media planning
- NAFB is your best first stop for Station and Network information
- Farm Radio at its best is “media surgery” not broad coverage of a 12+ state area
- Fine tune your schedule based on individual Station and Network ratings and programming, and make sure you use enough spots to get the job done

If you follow the basics of this document, you should be able to develop effective and targeted Farm Radio campaigns which can be a valuable part of your overall media mix.



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