

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



Amazement never ceases at the unique and creative marketing approaches that show up on an almost-daily basis via the mails, mass media, and telecommunication.

Even in our comparatively small, family-farm business operation, we seem to have gotten on more than our share of printed material and dial-a-customer marketing lists.

Take the orange double-folded postcard mailing that fell from a stack of miscellaneous mail a day or two ago. It informed me that due to an embarrassing error in this particular company's "MIS" department, my name had been left off a particular list of computer-material users.

Probably, I've never heard of it. And might MIS stand for Mistake Department?

Actually it was a pleasure to learn that I'd been left off something when it came to mass marketing. But - they'd just discovered it. Imagine that. Wonder how?

It had to do with some accounting program. I have only one, and that one happens to have originated with the Farm Credit system.

Anyway, they "feel responsible" and are making a special offer so that we users - and non-users,

in this case - could update our programs for only "X" dollars. And with six free months of technical support.

They even apologized at the end .... on this "official" letter, er postcard .... in ultra business like, but definitely eye-catching, pumpkin orange.

Our trash can eats well on such days.

But at least the mail we can read at leisure, unlike the telemarketing, which interrupts our days with increasing and ever-more-maddening regularity.

Calls from salesmen of storm-windows and siding, cemetery plots (no thanks, I'm not ready yet), overruns of pens, long-lasting light bulbs, and on and on, ad nauseum.

They call while we're milking, during meals, and after we've settled down, finally, long after dark and a day filled with chores, to read the evening paper.

Some claim to be charities, asking for support of some worthy cause. How do I know their cause is worthy and not some ripoff scheme? Usually I'll try to be reasonably polite, say I'm not interested and hang up.

With others, my patience wears thin. Fast.

Certain agriculture products are

doing increased marketing of this nature. The caller often claims to be responding to some "request for additional information" you've sent in. Could be. But probably not. We don't send for too much of that "additional information" stuff.

The information already stacked up and falling over in piles around here threatens some days to bury us in smothering avalanches - and often isn't even appropriate for recycling as bedding in the heifer pens.

One such caller that rang in here on a recent early morning, howev-

er, took telemarketing to new heights of arrogance. He asked for The Farmer, then told me he was with a chemical company and answering our request for "more information."

"I don't think so," I snapped. And hung up. When the phone immediately rang again, I figured it was the same caller - and left to finish feeding calves.

Later, I punched the answering machine to play back a taped call. And got the same voice leaving a two-word description of me that I can only translate in this family newspaper as loosely meaning a

female dog that can't speak. Wish I'd gotten his name and company.

After relating this later to dairy farmer friend Jane Thompson, she offered her favorite method for dealing with telemarketers. Just as soon as they start to give their pitch, she comes back asking them how much butter and cheese they'd like to buy. And, she adds, they usually ring off pretty quickly.

Guess what I'm going to try selling to the next telemarketer to call?

## Americans Don't Know What They Are Eating

DENVER, CO — In a just-released Gallup poll, 49 percent of Americans could not correctly define white bread as a wheat food. Forty-eight percent incorrectly identified oatmeal as wheat. And despite decades of advertisements touting Cheerios' oat content, 49 percent incorrectly characterized it, too, as a wheat food.

In short, the poll revealed that Americans are being bombarded by fairly complex nutritional messages without the educational base to understand them. Revised government guidelines urge consumers to cut fats while increasing their consumption of grain products and other complex carbohydrates. But two-thirds (68 percent) of Americans were unaware of this change from the "basic four food groups" dietary guidelines released in 1956, which 78 percent of respondents said they follow.

"We must admit to being perplexed," acknowledged Judi Adams, who heads the Denver-based Wheat Foods Council. "In a society where consumers are blanketed with nutrition information, Americans still know very little about the foods they eat."

Current government guidelines recommend Americans eat six to 11 servings from the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group each day — up from the four daily servings researchers say we now average. But poll respondents aren't getting the message: 15 percent said they need more, 10 percent said they need less, and 75 percent said they are getting the right amount.

Gallup conducted the poll on behalf of the Wheat Foods Council to help it shape an educational program teaching Americans how to add more grain products to their diet. The Council was surprised to

discover its task is even more basic: teaching the public what a wheat food is and why it's healthy.

The Wheat Foods Council is a nonprofit organization formed in 1972 to help increase public awareness of dietary grains, complex carbohydrates and fiber as essential components of a healthy diet. It is supported voluntarily by wheat producers, millers, bakers and related industries. The poll involved 1,006 respondents nationwide and has an error margin of 3.1 percent.



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