

Giving the readers what they want

I never thought I'd agree with James Kilpatrick, the syndicated newspaper columnist, until his column appeared in the local paper the other day. Jim usually talks about what a guy Ronnie Reagan is or how bad the local paper in Sioux City, Iowa, butchered a headline.



This time Jim wrote about knowing your reader and told of a young reporter in South Carolina who, in her review of the movie "Cocoon," used the phrase "old f____" to describe the old men in the movie. The word—certainly no stranger to most—denotes excessive gas. The cub reporter didn't know her conservative audience, didn't know readers would be offended, and consequently is now in the unemployment line.

We at WEEDS TREES & TURF don't want to join her. That's why we're taking an even more scrutinizing look at our audience (you) and what you want to see in the magazine.

We're a people-oriented magazine, out in the field at local shows and at national events. We will remain there but you may see less of the personality-type profiles in WT&T. Our Readex studies indicate the personality profiles are consistently the lowest-read of any feature stories. (Readex provides both editorial and advertising interest reports to clients like us.)

Other Readex reader surveys ask you what type of information you find most useful in the magazine. In the survey of the March 1986, issue, respondents gave multiple answers. Ninety-three percent said weed, fertilizer, disease, and insect guides are most useful. Another 65 percent said "how-to" articles are useful. The remainder: agronomic technical, 57 percent; products, 54 percent; news, 53 percent; advertisements, 50 percent; **personality profiles, 14 percent.**

The percentages, though based on just one issue, are consistent with our Readex scores dating to 1981. Of the 11 most highly read WT&T articles dating to 1981, five were guides and two were technical pieces. Personality profiles and some of our regular departments dominate the bottom half of the list.

The message is clear. You won't see a discontinuation of the personality profiles. We'll continue running them, but you'll see more information near the top of the story and in shorter form. Ideally, a reader will be able to glean the pertinent information he needs off the story's first page.

We will continue to bring you the guides and technical articles you say you want. But we'll keep our personality.

Ken Kuhajda, managing editor

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