

31  
E2  
0.359

*add for 4 lbs*

**BULLETIN 359  
SEPTEMBER 1965**



# Response by URBAN HOMEMAKERS to MAILED ADVERTISING

**Agricultural Experiment Station  
AUBURN UNIVERSITY**

E. V. Smith, Director

Auburn, Alabama



## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION .....	3
PROCEDURE AND OBJECTIVES .....	4
ATTITUDES TOWARD DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING.....	5
RESPONSE TO ACTUAL MAILOUTS .....	8
EFFECT OF FEATURED FOOD ADVERTISING (COTTAGE CHEESE) ON RECIPE RESPONSE.....	12
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	18
APPENDIX .....	20
The Sample City.....	20
The Sample Families .....	20

# Response by URBAN HOMEMAKERS to MAILED ADVERTISING\*

RUTH A. HAMMETT and J. H. BLACKSTONE  
*Department of Agricultural Economics\*\**

## INTRODUCTION

**H**OMEMAKERS ARE chief buyers of food. They are continuously reminded by family members, food stores, advertisers, and marketing agencies of this important part of family living.

These reminders not only call attention to the need for food purchases but often influence food purchase decisions. The purpose of this study was to learn more of the homemaker's attitude toward, and uses made of, one particular type of reminder — unsolicited direct mail advertising.

In general, advertising material is designed to present information about, arouse desire for, and cause increased sales of a product. Direct mail advertising, as a promotional tool, has become increasingly important as venders strive to reach a wide audience. Widespread use of direct mail advertising has developed a need for researchers to find answers to some of the following questions: What are the attitudes of homemakers toward unsolicited advertising? To whom does mailed advertising appeal? What kinds of homemakers are susceptible to a particular type of advertising? What kinds of homemakers fail to receive specific

---

\* This study was supported with funds provided by the Agricultural and Marketing act of 1946 and State research funds. It is part of the Southern Regional Food Marketing Research Project SM-13 in which Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia are cooperating.

\*\* The authors acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of the 750 homemakers surveyed, the SM-13 Regional Food Marketing Research Technical Committee, and the enumerators who collected the data. Helpful suggestions of staff members of the Department of Agricultural Economics are also acknowledged. Special appreciation is extended to John B. Roberts of the University of Kentucky, and H. L. Steele of Clemson University for assistance in developing the study, and the American Dairy Association for providing recipe materials.

forms of mailed advertising? As one form of advertising, how effective are mailed recipes in increasing the use of a specific food?

This report, in providing partial answers to these questions for a specific city, should be of interest to those who need information about attitudes of homemakers to mailed advertising. The findings should also be of interest to commodity groups interested in the promotion of a particular food product.

## PROCEDURE AND OBJECTIVES

The sampling procedure used in this study was designed to represent all homemakers in the test city, Phenix City, Alabama.<sup>1</sup> A random sample of 933 addresses was drawn from the most recent city directory. This list was randomly separated into three parts, which were designated the card, letter, and control groups.

Homemakers in the card group were sent by first class mail an attractive, folded, lithographed card with a leaflet insert on which were printed five recipes for the use of cottage cheese. Homemakers in the letter group received the same recipes without illustrations, mimeographed on a single page in black on white. The remainder was sent no mailed recipes, and constituted a control group.

The objectives of the study were (a) to study responses of homemakers to unsolicited advertising which was sent to them through the mail, or left on the doorstep, and (b) by the use of a controlled experiment to determine the disposition of a particular piece of mailed advertising, with probable reasons for the action. By the use of identical recipes in two forms, it was possible to study the appeal of color versus black and white. Selection of recipes using a food which previous studies by the authors had shown to have relationships to certain family characteristics enabled further research to be made in homemaker motivation, and in the promotion of a particular food.

Telephone interviews were conducted with sample homemakers when possible. However, about one-third of the families were personally visited. Completed interview records were obtained from 250 homemakers in each of the card, letter, and control groups for a total of 750 schedules. The field work was conducted in April of 1963.

<sup>1</sup> More detailed information about Phenix City and the sample families may be found in the Appendix.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING

To inform and influence consumers, there has been considerable growth in direct mail advertising during recent years. This type of promotion is used for many kinds of merchandise and appears in various forms. Unsolicited advertising that comes through the mail or is left at the door may be responded to or rejected by the homemaker without personal sales pressure or, in most cases, obligation. The target groups may or may not be selective. Communication may be by (1) personal mail, (2) mail addressed to "occupant" or "boxholder," (3) materials left at the home by personal canvass, and (4) inserts in newspapers, magazines, packages, or other ingenious devices. In many of these materials, temporary price reductions of some form are the major information or attraction offered. The price reductions may require use of attached certificates or discount forms and may apply to new products or to those already in demand. Food advertisements in newspapers may carry coupons for free stamps tied in to store specials or to the size of cash register receipts.

About one-half the homemakers were "much pleased" when they received advertising through the mail or left at the door. One-third was less pleased but not resentful. The remainder was indifferent or mildly annoyed. Two-thirds of the respondents liked to get mail even though it was not personal.

There was almost unanimous agreement among homemakers that recipients of advertising material should look at it. A common remark was "I might miss something if I didn't," or "I don't have to buy it if I don't want to." There was also wide approval that companies should be allowed to use direct mail methods for advertising. Two-thirds of the homemakers felt that trading stamps were useful to buy extra items, commonly referred to as "gifts." Consequently, they were interested in receiving various materials by mail that enabled them to acquire additional stamps above those received from their dollar purchases.

While the study was largely concerned with attitudes toward food advertising, attitudes about advertising of other merchandise such as that sold by department or specialty stores were also obtained. Some 604 homemakers, or 81 per cent of the 750 families interviewed, recalled having received local advertising within a short period prior to the visit of the enumerator. Much of this

was local food store or other newspaper advertising, new business notices, or weekend sales in the department or specialty stores. Of those who recalled receiving local advertising, each was asked the use that was usually made of this material. Some 31 per cent said that they usually used the material, 53 per cent reported that they may use it, and 16 per cent never made any use of the local advertising material received, Table 1.

Local advertising was the most frequently received form of mailed advertising. Sample products and trading stamp coupons in food store advertisements were items most used by receivers. Mail order catalogs and magazines having discount coupons were available to one-fourth of the families in the survey, largely those in the upper income ranges. Two-thirds of the homemakers exposed to these forms of advertising said they often made use of them.

The typical homemaker who remembered receiving food store advertisements, usually in newspapers, probably had an average size family of 3 to 5 persons. She had to watch food expenditures because per capita income in her family was under \$900, and she spent less than 30 cents per person per meal for food. The homemaker who usually used local advertising in making purchases tended to have a grade school education, a number of children ranging from preschoolers to teenagers, limited income, and a restricted food budget.

One-third of the homemakers in the sample had received price discount coupons for a detergent shortly before being interviewed. One-half of the recipients had saved the coupons, one-fourth had used them, and the remainder had given them to someone or thrown them away. The homemaker who saved the

TABLE 1. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES RECEIVING, AND USUAL DISPOSITION OF, SELECTED TYPES OF DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING, 750 FAMILIES, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Kind of direct mail advertising	Families receiving		Usual disposition of item		
			Usually use	May use	Never use
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Local advertising.....	604	81	31	53	16
Sample products.....	579	77	93	6	1
Special offers, discount coupons.....	470	63	40	36	24
Trading stamp coupons.....	253	34	56	26	18
Mail order catalogs.....	209	28	20	52	28
Special offers in magazines.....	191	25	21	40	39
Discount catalogs.....	84	11	25	46	29

coupons usually had a large family and a tight budget. The homemakers who had used them had families of 2 to 4 persons, a per capita income of less than \$1,800, and meal costs indicated the probable presence of young children since these costs were under 30 cents per person per meal. Use of coupons declined with an increase in education of homemakers. Other studies by the authors have shown that the homemakers with more years of education usually have larger incomes, smaller families, and are often employed outside the home.

Certain types of direct mail advertising were not received by many urban families. The following shows that even the most widely distributed advertising did not reach one-fifth of the families in the survey:

<i>Direct mail advertising</i>	<i>Percentage of families not receiving advertising</i>
Local advertising.....	19
Sample product.....	23
Special offers, discount coupons.....	37
Trading stamp coupons.....	66
Mail order catalogs.....	72
Special offers in magazines.....	75
Discount catalogs.....	89

Those least likely to receive direct mail advertising were single-member families, new households or those whose members were retired, the very low income, the nonwhite, the transient or the newly arrived, and addresses that had no mail receptacle. The high income white families often received such quantities of mail advertising that some of it was discarded unopened. Homemakers most likely to look at unsolicited advertising were those who liked to get mail, but who did not often receive more than a few pieces. Three-fourths of the Negro and two-fifths of the white homemakers reported they were "much pleased" when they received direct mail advertising.

Homemakers were asked only a limited number of questions regarding the use of mail advertising in general. Most questions dealt with material mailed to specific families as a part of this study. The remainder of this report deals with the response to actual mailouts that were a part of the experimental work of this study.

## RESPONSE TO ACTUAL MAILOUTS

When the study was developed, it was thought that an attractively designed set of recipes in color would be more likely to be remembered, saved, and used by homemakers than identical recipes on a mimeographed page. The recipes in the survey were identical, but the presentation involved black and white versus color, and the use of an illustrated dish for one of the recipes on the four-color lithographed card and insert. Both forms were sent by first class mail to specific names and addresses. There was no identification except that the cottage cheese recipes were developed by the American Dairy Association Test Kitchen. The test recipes used in this study were as follows:

### COTTAGE CHEESE SCRAMBLED EGGS

6 eggs	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. pepper
2 tbsp. milk	2 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. chopped chives	

In a mixing bowl beat eggs slightly; blend in cottage cheese, milk, chives, salt, and pepper. In a skillet, over low heat, melt butter; add egg mixture. Turn portions of the egg mixture with spatula as it begins to thicken; do not stir and do not overcook. Serve immediately. This recipe will provide 6 servings.

### CREAMY CHEESE DRESSING

1 cup cottage cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dairy sour cream	cucumber
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. paprika	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	

Combine cottage cheese, sour cream, salt, paprika, and Worcestershire sauce. Just before serving add cucumber. Serve over tomato or green salad. Yield is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups.

### FROZEN FRUIT SALAD

1 cup cottage cheese	1 cup (1-lb. can) sliced cling
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt	peaches, drained and cut-up
1 cup ( $13\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. can) pine-	2 bananas, sliced
apple tidbits, drained	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 cup (1-lb. can) pitted<br>Royal Anne cherries,<br>drained | 10 marshmallows, quartered<br>1 cup whipping cream,<br>whipped<br>$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dairy sour cream |
|---|--|

Combine cottage cheese, salt, pineapple, cherries, peaches, bananas, walnuts, and marshmallows. Gently fold whipped cream into sour cream; fold into fruit mixture. Spoon into 2 refrigerator trays, (1 qt.); freeze until firm. Yield is 8 to 10 servings.

#### PEACH AND GRAPE EMERALD SALAD

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2 cups (1-lb. 1-oz. can)<br>sliced cling peaches | 2 cups cold water<br>2 cups cottage cheese |
| 2 3-oz. packages lime-<br>flavored gelatin       | 1 red maraschino cherry                    |
| 1 cup boiling water                              | 1 cup fresh grapes, seeded<br>and halved   |
| 1 cup peach syrup                                | or 1 cup ( $8\frac{3}{4}$ -oz. can)        |
| Lettuce  | grapes, drained                            |

Drain peaches, reserving syrup. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water; blend in peach syrup and cold water. Pour 1 cup of gelatin into mold which has been rinsed in cold water; chill until partially set. Press 12 peach slices into gelatin and place cherry in center. Dice remaining peaches; combine with grapes and mix into remaining gelatin. Pour into 6-cup salad mold; chill until firm. Unmold on serving plate and surround with lettuce cups filled with cottage cheese. Yield is 8 to 10 servings.

#### LIGHT AND FLUFFY PANCAKES

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 egg yolks                      | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese | $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk           | 3 egg whites            |

In a mixing bowl combine egg yolks and cottage cheese; beat until almost smooth. Blend in milk, flour, and salt. Beat egg whites until peaks fold over; fold into batter. Bake on lightly buttered griddle until brown on both sides, serve at once. Yield is 12 to 14 small pancakes.

Of the 250 homemakers mailed the lithographed recipe card, 150 or 60 per cent remembered receiving the card. Of the 150 women who recalled receiving the colored card, all but one remembered that the message concerned dairy products. Of the 250 homemakers who were mailed the mimeographed page, 133

or 53 per cent recalled receiving the letter. Of these who recalled receiving the letter, 125 or 94 per cent recalled that the letter dealt with dairy products. In the case of these two groups, only homemakers to whom a mailout had been sent were contacted and there had not been a return of the item to the post office. Assuming delivery was made to each home, 43 per cent of the homemakers were not aware of such an item reaching their home. Major explanations for this were that other persons brought in the mail, inability of homemakers to read, or they took a hurried look at the mail and discarded it before its content was established in their minds.

The use of color did serve to attract the attention of a few more homemakers. However, the mailout requires further participation by the receiver if it is to be effective. In this situation, the homemaker has received a suggestion which she could discard, use, or lay aside for possible future use. If she used one or more of the recipes, it can be said to be a successful information source because it stimulated purchase and use of the product.

Approximately one-half of each of two test groups did not remember receiving the recipes. The control group had not been sent the test mailouts. It was therefore possible to discover the actual disposition of the recipes received, as well as what homemakers said they would do with such information had they received it. In the card situation, a larger percentage of homemakers to whom cards were sent remembered getting the recipes, but a higher proportion of them threw the card away. About the same number of respondents saved, gave away, or used the recipes regardless of the form in which the recipe was presented.

Homemakers who failed to remember receiving the mailed item and those to whom none was sent reacted almost identically to the query as to what they would do if such a recipe should reach them. It should be noted that one-half of the homemakers in the hypothetical situation reported they **would use** the cottage cheese recipes. Of the homemakers who actually received the recipes only 3 per cent had used them at the time of the interview. In the hypothetical situation, one-fourth of the homemakers said they **would save** the recipe. Of the homemakers who actually received the recipes, more than two-thirds of the respondents had saved them. This provides an interesting situation for further research in attitudes of homemakers to the use of printed recipes unrelated to a personal influence or to actual tasting of the dish in a social

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TEST GROUP AND CONTROL RESPONDENTS TO ACTUAL AND HYPOTHETICAL RECIPE DISPOSITION, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Disposition of cottage cheese recipes (actual or hypothetical)	Control	Card	Letter
	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Remembered receiving actual recipe:			
Used.....	---	3	3
Gave away.....	---	1	3
Saved.....	---	67	73
Threw away.....	---	29	21
No. of families.....		150	133
Did not remember or see recipe, but if received would:			
Use.....	54	52	50
Give away.....	8	2	6
Save.....	28	25	30
Throw away.....	10	21	14
No. of families.....	250	100	117

setting. What happens to printed recipes that are not used within a few days?

Percentages of homemakers who said they would throw out or give away the recipe were about the same in the three test groups. However, relatively more of the homemakers in the card group had actually thrown away the recipe, Table 2.

It should be noted that homemakers more often remembered the recipes which used variations in habitual food combinations, such as cottage cheese with fruit in salads, rather than the more unusual cooked dishes. Sixty-nine per cent of the homemakers in each of the test groups recalled the salad recipes. In the letter group, mentions were about evenly divided between the molded and frozen forms. The pictured peach and grape emerald salad

TABLE 3. RELATIVE POPULARITY OF TEST COTTAGE CHEESE RECIPES, BY CARD, LETTER AND TOTAL TEST GROUPS, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Most interesting cottage cheese recipes	Proportion reporting in each test group		Both groups
	Card <sup>1</sup>	Letter <sup>2</sup>	
	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Peach and grape emerald salad <sup>3</sup> .....	41	33	37
Frozen fruit salad.....	28	36	32
Creamy cheese dressing.....	12	10	11
Liked all recipes.....	9	10	10
Cottage cheese and scrambled eggs.....	7	9	8
Light and fluffy pancakes.....	3	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 73 homemakers expressed choices.

<sup>2</sup> 62 homemakers expressed choices.

<sup>3</sup> Lithographed illustration of completed dish was shown only on the materials mailed to the card group.

was more often remembered than the frozen fruit salad recipe by respondents in the card group. About half the remaining mentions concerned the creamy cheese dressing to be used on vegetable salads, Table 3.

### EFFECT OF FEATURED FOOD ADVERTISING (COTTAGE CHEESE) ON RECIPE RESPONSE

Since cottage cheese was the featured food in the recipes used, some facts on the use of cottage cheese were obtained. Among the 750 families in the study, 33 per cent reported they served cottage cheese at least once a week, 36 per cent sometimes served it, while 31 per cent never used cottage cheese. Previous studies of this product have shown that cottage cheese is most frequently used by small families of middle-aged adults who have relatively high per capita incomes and per person meal costs.<sup>2</sup> It is most likely to be used by the homemaker with a good education who has access to printed and personal food information sources. While the survey was made in a relatively low per capita income city, families in the study were quite typical of families in other Alabama cities in their use of cottage cheese. Some of the relationships of selected family characteristics to the frequency of use of cottage cheese are shown in Table 4.

A refrigerator check showed that among the cottage cheese users, families most likely to have it on hand had under four persons. Percentages of homemakers who reported possession of cottage cheese were related to per capita income, per capita meal cost, and race, as shown below:

<i>Family characteristic of homes with cottage cheese on hand</i>	<i>Per cent of families</i>
Per capita income, <i>dollars</i>	
Under 600.....	7
600-1,199.....	15
1,200-1,799.....	25
1,800 and over.....	38
Per capita meal cost, <i>cents</i>	
Under 20.....	8
20-39.....	19
40 and over.....	30
White families.....	27
Negro families.....	6

<sup>2</sup> *Alabama Urban Homemakers and Milk Products*. Auburn Univ. Agri. Expt. Sta. Bul. 352. June 1964.

TABLE 4. RELATIONSHIP OF SELECTED FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS TO THE FREQUENCY OF USE OF COTTAGE CHEESE, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Family characteristic	Frequency of serving cottage cheese		
	Weekly	Sometimes	Never
	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
<i>Per capital income, dollars</i>			
Under 600.....	28	39	33
600-1,199.....	28	40	32
1,200-1,799.....	37	33	30
1,800 and over.....	42	30	28
<i>Per person meal cost, cents</i>			
Under 20.....	24	38	38
20-29.....	25	43	32
30-39.....	32	42	26
40 and over.....	48	21	31
<i>Size of household, meal equivalent persons</i>			
Under 2.0.....	35	27	38
2.0-3.9.....	37	34	29
4.0-5.9.....	25	47	28
6.0 and over.....	30	37	33
<i>Age of homemaker, years</i>			
Under 30.....	27	38	35
30-39.....	25	48	31
40-49.....	38	34	28
50-59.....	43	31	26
60 and over.....	33	18	39
<i>Education of homemaker, years</i>			
Under 5.....	24	34	42
5-8.....	34	30	36
9-12.....	35	39	26
13 or more.....	36	48	16
Number of families.....	249	267	234

The families that use cottage cheese, regardless of frequency, served cottage cheese mainly with fruit in a salad, or on the plate with other food. There was little difference in the three test groups in ways in which they served cottage cheese, Table 5.

TABLE 5. COMPARISON OF CUSTOMARY WAYS OF SERVING COTTAGE CHEESE, ACCORDING TO CARD, LETTER, CONTROL AND ALL FAMILY GROUPS, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Ways of using cottage cheese	Test groups			All families
	Card	Letter	Control	
	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	
Salad with fruit.....	39	35	37	37
Plain as part of meal.....	25	29	30	28
Snack out of carton.....	14	16	14	15
Salad with vegetables.....	15	14	14	14
Cooked dishes.....	5	4	3	4
Other ways.....	2	2	2	2
Total mentions <sup>1</sup> , number.....	318	345	353	1,016

<sup>1</sup> Many user families listed more than one way that they used cottage cheese.

Homemakers who reported they had never used cottage cheese were less likely to remember receiving the recipes. They were also much more likely to throw out or give away the recipe they had received. Fewer of these homemakers said they might use the recipe than did respondents who use cottage cheese. Saving the mailed recipes was not related to familiarity with cottage cheese except that the "seldom" user appeared to be somewhat more interested in perhaps trying it at some future date, Table 6.

TABLE 6. PROBABLE DISPOSITION OF HYPOTHETICAL COTTAGE CHEESE RECIPES BY HOMEMAKER WHO DID NOT RECALL GETTING THE ACTUAL CARD OR LETTER RECIPES, BY FREQUENCY OF THEIR USE OF COTTAGE CHEESE, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Frequency of use of cottage cheese—did not recall receiving card or letter recipes	Homemaker did not recall receiving recipes		Probable disposition—cottage cheese recipes			
			Would use	Give away	Save	Throw out
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Weekly.....	79	47	65	1	28	6
Monthly.....	33	46	65	1	24	6
Seldom.....	42	48	57	0	33	9
Never.....	65	38	20	12	25	43
Total or average.....	219	44	51	3	28	18

In the combined card and letter groups, there were 279 homemakers who remembered receiving the recipes, out of a possible 500. Homemakers who were frequent users of cottage cheese were much more interested in the recipes than were those who never served it:

<i>Frequency of serving cottage cheese</i>	<i>Percentage who liked recipes</i>
Every week.....	73
Sometimes.....	64
Seldom.....	68
Never.....	13

The recipe for frozen fruit salad appealed especially to homemakers who used cottage cheese infrequently and saw an opportunity for serving it for a special occasion. The regular user was likely to mention peach salad or creamy cheese dressing which was quick and easy to fix. One-fourth of the regular users did not like the recipes, largely because they were using cottage cheese in restricted diets. Cottage cheese scrambled eggs and the pancake recipe were more often mentioned by the occasional

TABLE 7. RELATIVE POPULARITY OF TEST RECIPES AMONG HOMEMAKERS, BY FREQUENCY OF THEIR USE OF COTTAGE CHEESE, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Cottage cheese test recipes	Average mention	Frequency of use of cottage cheese			
		Every week	Some- times	Seldom	Never
	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Frozen fruit salad.....	35	31	40	36	50
Peach and grape emerald salad.....	34	36	28	34	36
Creamy cheese dressing.....	11	13	5	11	0
Liked all recipes.....	9	10	5	11	7
Cottage cheese scrambled eggs.....	8	8	12	6	7
Light and fluffy pancakes.....	3	2	10	2	0
Liked recipes.....	49	73	64	68	13
Number liked recipes.....	135	66	25	32	13
Number did not like recipes.....	144	24	14	15	90

user who noticed that cottage cheese was used in cooked dishes. Ninety per cent of the nonusers of cottage cheese did not like any of the recipes, Table 7.

Some of the factors that affect responses of homemakers to questions about specific recipes may be related to the socio-economic situation of the homemaker, the composition of her family, or the components in the recipe itself. If the homemaker is familiar with ingredients in the recipe, she shows more interest in trying it. If her family likes the major food in the recipe, she is more prone to experiment than if the food was one that would not be eaten by family members.<sup>3</sup>

There were nearly equal numbers of homemakers to whom the recipes appealed, or did not appeal. Major differences in the two groups of homemakers were related less to family characteristics than to attitudes of family members toward the product itself. When all family members liked cottage cheese, about half the homemakers liked the recipes. If some family member disliked cottage cheese, over four-fifths of the homemakers did not like the recipes.

Homemakers to whom the mailed recipes did not appeal varied by age groups and frequency of use. More than one-half the homemakers who were "frequent" users of cottage cheese, but did not care for the recipes, were over 50 years of age. More than one-half the homemakers who were occasional users, but who did not like the recipes, were between 30 and 40 years of age. Most of the homemakers who "never use" cottage cheese, and who did not

<sup>3</sup> *How Homemakers Select Foods*. Auburn Univ. Agri. Expt. Sta. Bul. 353. June 1964.

care for the recipes, were under 40 years of age. More than one-fourth of the homemakers who liked the recipes had cottage cheese on hand at the time of the interviewer's visit as compared with one-seventh of those who did not like the recipes. The following table illustrates the relationship of frequency of use of the featured food with attitudes about the test recipes:

<i>Frequency of serving cottage cheese</i>	<i>Percentage that liked recipe</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Weekly.....	73	27
Monthly.....	64	36
Seldom.....	68	32
Never.....	13	87

Homemakers who discarded the cottage cheese recipes that were mailed to them usually said it was because they or their families did not like this food. The distribution of family members who disliked cottage cheese was quite uniform, whether these families were in the card, letter, or control group, Table 8.

TABLE 8. ATTITUDES TOWARD COTTAGE CHEESE BY FAMILY MEMBERS OF TEST GROUPS, PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA

Sample group	Families in which some family members disliked cottage cheese				All liked cottage cheese	
	Male head	Home-maker	Children	Other	No.	Pct.
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	Pct.
Card.....	107	23	31	0	89	36
Letter.....	101	27	33	3	86	34
Control.....	97	23	30	1	99	40
Total or av.....	305	73	94	4	274	37

The sample families included families of only one member, unrelated adults who lived together, households with no male head, and the normal family types. One-fifth of the families had no male head. However, all families contained a person who performed the duties of a homemaker.

Of the 250 families in the card group, all members of 89 families or 36 per cent of the families in the group, liked cottage cheese. In the remaining 161 families in which one or more family members did not like cottage cheese, two-thirds of the objectors included the husband or male head of the house.

Analysis was made of the 476 families of the total sample in which some family member disliked cottage cheese. The results of this analysis were as follows:



<i>Family members who dislike cottage cheese</i>	<i>No. of families</i>	<i>Percentage of all</i>
Male head, homemaker, children.....	108	22
Children only.....	97	21
Male head, children.....	76	16
Male head only.....	76	16
Male head, homemaker (other adults).....	46	10
Homemaker only.....	37	8
Homemaker, children (other adults).....	36	7
	476	100

In 16 per cent of the families, the male head was the only person who disliked cottage cheese, but in 42 per cent of the families he was only one of several family members who limited the use of this milk product. In 8 per cent of the families, only the homemaker disliked cottage cheese. However, she was likely a limiting factor in 47 per cent of the families. One-fifth of the families never used cottage cheese because all family members disliked it. The dislike of cottage cheese only by the children was noted in 21 per cent of the families, but their preferences along with some other family member occurred in 66 per cent of the families.

If promotion of cottage cheese is to be successful, the person who refuses to eat it or who does so reluctantly should be studied as an individual and the reason for this feeling analyzed. If sales of this product are to increase, convincing other family members that cottage cheese is a desirable food is at least as important as influencing the homemaker to buy it. Cottage cheese use, for many family members, is related to doctor's orders or other health approaches. Homemakers tend to use this versatile milk product in limited combinations unaware of its compatibility with many foods. The feeling that cottage cheese is a diet food to be eaten plain or with fruit in a salad by middle-aged persons on a diet requires modification if the total population is to enjoy its nutritional benefits.

Homemakers evaluate recipes they see or hear about on the basis of attitudes of family members, familiarity with the food, and their socio-economic situation. However they might save recipes for use on special occasions that could feature a food that would not have met with family approval. Attitudes of homemakers toward recipes in general and their disposition of actual recipes showed considerable discrepancy. If a check had been made several months later on respondents who "saved" the recipes, data might have been collected on propensities to "save" compared with "save to use" as homemaker characteristics.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study included interviews with 750 randomly selected homemakers in Phenix City, Alabama, in 1963. Homemakers were divided into three groups prior to the beginning of the study. One group had been mailed a multicolored folded card of advertisements in which cottage cheese had been built into five recipes. The second group was sent the same materials but as a mimeographed sheet without illustrations. The third group was the control and was not mailed any material. All homemakers were asked selected questions relating to direct mail advertising. Parts of the findings of this study are reported with all families as one group. Other parts are broken into the three groups.

Homemakers like to get mail and 57 per cent gave enough attention to unsolicited mail to know what it was about. Homemakers who were most receptive to various kinds of mailed advertising usually had lower income, less education, and were more frequently nonwhite than the "average."

Response to nonlocal mailed advertising such as mail order catalogs and magazines was more frequent among homemakers with higher incomes and education. These persons have a wider variety of wants and the means to satisfy them. They tend to be comparative shoppers and look for specific qualities in merchandise in which they are interested.

Response to or use of local advertising was more apparent among homemakers with children and some years of experience in buying. To learn how to recognize when a "sale is a sale" requires a level of income that makes possible participation in various sales experiences.

Certain difficulties exist that may limit use of direct mail promotion. Accurate mailing lists are difficult to keep current. A considerable number of very low per capita income families have no mail box receptacle. Magazines and newspapers do not reach a considerable number of low income families, hence other methods are more effective. It is difficult to measure effectiveness by increase in sales, number of new customers, or possible interests that can be translated into action at a later date.

Direct mail advertising is probably most effective as an information source about sale prices or new products, or for sample distribution. Receptiveness of homemakers was strongest for sam-

ple products delivered to the home, but was much less for catalogs that required purchase of items by descriptions.

For articles small enough to go through the mail, sample products can reach a wide consumer audience. Often discount coupons were used only by homemakers already familiar with the product. Remembering to have coupons available when and if the product is seen can prove a barrier to their use.

Direct mail media as a means of increasing consumption of cottage cheese in Phenix City was not successful. The control and exposed groups were all quite similar in their reaction to actual and potential recipes and the frequency of use, preference for, and purchase of cottage cheese, as well as their general attitudes toward mailed advertising.

Insofar as recipes for cottage cheese were concerned, there was a slight advantage in having colored illustrations of completed dishes in attracting attention, but not in disposal or use of the product. Whether it is desirable to use the more expensive color illustrations will depend on the message to be carried. When a new product is introduced, color may result in wider recognition of the name.

If sales of cottage cheese are to be increased, more direct methods than mail advertising alone are needed. Samples of a product in which evaluation can be made by the homemaker without cost have a wide appeal. It is to be remembered that this study was not directed at increasing product sales *per se*. Had this been an objective, store promotion programs featuring the product at the same time as the mailed materials went into the home might have resulted in entirely different findings.

## APPENDIX

### The Sample City

Phenix City, Alabama, is located across the Chattahoochee River from Columbus, Georgia. It is the county seat of Russell County, and had a population of 27,630 in 1960.

Of the seven cities in Alabama with populations between 25,000 and 35,000 population, Phenix City has the third largest non-white population, and the largest average size of household. It also has the lowest median education of 8.1 years among adults over 25 years of age, and nearly the lowest median family income, \$3,776. The median family income of Negro families was \$2,436.

In 1960, the average population per household in Phenix City was 3.4 persons in white families and 4.2 persons in nonwhite families. These were 7,475 households of which 5,045 were husband-wife families. Thirty per cent of the families had children under 6 years of age.

### The Sample Families

Two-thirds of the families interviewed had annual incomes under \$4,000. Half of the families had a meal equivalent size of household between 2 and 4 persons. Five-sixths of the families contained no more than 5 persons. Two-thirds of the families had per capita incomes between \$600 and \$1,800. In two-fifths of the families the male head of the house was the sole support.

The homemaker also worked in nearly a third of the sample households. Other than the 58 respondents who had been to college, the homemakers were about evenly divided between those with a grade school education and those who had been to high school. One-fifth of the homemakers were in each of the age decades above 20, or beyond 60 years. Chi Square tests showed there were no significant differences with respect to family characteristics among the three test groups — card, letter, or control.