

LD  
5655  
A7162  
1988f  
C.2

# Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

VIRGINIA TECH AND VIRGINIA STATE

VIRGINIA'S LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Publication 420-639

Reprinted 1988

## MARKETING ON A CHOOSE-AND-CUT CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

Thomas J. Nichols  
Extension Specialist, Forestry\*

and

Bonnie L. Appleton  
Extension Specialist, Horticulture\*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
AND STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

#### INTRODUCTION, GENERAL BACKGROUND

Introduction .....	1
General Background .....	2

#### FARM MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Road and Farm Considerations and Liabilities .....	3
Inventory and Tagging .....	4
Products and Services Offered .....	6
Providing an Enjoyable Experience for the Customer .....	9

#### MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

Identifying Markets .....	9
Expanding Markets-The Industry and Individual Farms .....	10
Promotional Activities to Attract Customers .....	11
Advertising Considerations .....	11
Comparing Advertising Media .....	13

SUMMARY, FURTHER INFORMATION .....	15
------------------------------------	----

### INTRODUCTION, GENERAL BACKGROUND

#### Introduction

Many potential choose-and-cut (C&C) operators view a C&C operation as turning customers loose on the farm and collecting payment as they leave. Most successful C&C growers plan and manage primarily for C&C from the beginning, not waiting until the year of harvest to plan for marketing. Failure to do so can be costly. This text offers ideas and suggestions to help eliminate errors by new growers.

Many ideas expressed in this text were obtained from C&C growers and from trade publications. Techniques discussed will work in given situations, but are not appropriate for all growers. Growers are encouraged to join local and national trade organizations, read trade and Extension literature, and attend organizational and educational meetings for further information.

\*Department of Forestry, School of Forestry and Wildlife Resources, and Department of Horticulture, Virginia Tech.



## General Background

The first requirement for successful marketing is having marketable trees. Most trees planted in Virginia for Christmas trees never reach the marketplace because most growers do not provide adequate tree care. Some poor-quality trees can still be sold at reduced prices, but increased competition will restrict this market.



Figure 1. Poor quality Christmas trees (left) cannot compete with good quality trees (right), and may not be saleable at any price.

Having trees inspected and graded by a USDA inspector informs potential buyers that trees are of good quality. Advertising tree quality by grading can draw customers. The availability of inspectors is presently limited, but this could change in the future.

C&C operators can increase markets by increasing quality and services at lower prices. C&C operations have an advantage over retail lots by providing an enjoyable outdoor adventure. A second advantage is that they sell the freshest tree available. They also offer a larger selection of trees than

retail lots and customers can view the entire season's inventory. Variety of trees offered on a C&C farm may be less than a retail lot since species available are limited to those growing on the farm.

Prices received for C&C trees are greater than for wholesale trees. To generate these higher revenues, C&C operations require more manpower during the marketing season to prepare and maintain the farm for direct sales. Not all the extra effort is viewed as work; many C&C growers enjoy helping customers and find the marketing season to be the most gratifying. An important advantage to selling trees C&C is the reduced risk of unsold cut trees, since only sold trees are cut.

C&C operators will find increasing competition from other growers and retail lots as an anticipated oversupply of Christmas trees materializes. Marketing areas for many C&C growers are limited in size. Growers in some areas will experience severe competition. Surpluses of trees will especially hurt growers of marginal quality trees. It is generally agreed there will always be a market for good-quality trees even with oversupplies, but profit margins may be reduced. Present and future marketing conditions will force growers to place more emphasis on marketing strategies.

## FARM MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### Road and Farm Considerations and Liabilities

Owners of C&C farms have unique considerations of safety and customer access not faced by wholesale growers, since each tree sold brings one or more customers to the farm. For example, C&C farms must be maintained in a "spruced up" condition for appearance, access, and safety of customers.

Liability on C&C farms is rarely tested, but the potential for injuries and claims is always present. Customers at C&C farms are legally considered guests "... who must be treated with extraordinary care. This means you must do everything possible to see that the customer is not injured on your premises...". Growers cannot simply place a sign stating "Owner not liable for injuries", nor is reasonable care for guest protection enough. Liability insurance, if available, is expensive and many growers do not purchase it. They spend the season worrying about lawsuits. Even when a grower is successfully defended in a lawsuit, the cost for legal fees is high and the headaches great. Growers should use all methods available to protect customers from injury. For example, if trees are dug, the sides of the holes should be sloped to diminish the chance of someone slipping into the hole. It is best to separate C&C fields from fields which have trees dug from them.

Good vegetation control removes poison ivy and blackberries, reducing a potential hazard. Proper road layout, maintenance, and signs reduce chances for accidents and claims. Prominent, legible signs containing basic rules and warnings help prevent accidents and reduce the grower's liability (i.e., "pets must be on leash", "children must be supervised", "no power saws", and speed limits). Public sales areas should be limited by signs, fences, or employees, preventing customers from entering non-sales areas. Store equipment not used in sales in an area not accessible to the public - growers can be held liable for accidents occurring on equipment that attracts children.

Road layout and maintenance on a C&C farm can require a major investment, but many C&C operations do not have suitable road systems. Roads must be stable during November and December regardless of weather. They should give customers a convenient route in, through, and out of the farm. A one-way circular road is easier to follow and provides better security than two-way roads. All-weather lanes off the main road should enable customers to cut their trees a short distance from their cars.

When parking requirements are ignored the result is haphazard parking and blocked lanes. Parking areas should be clearly marked, and sufficient space provided for the busiest days. Requirements are a function of the number of customers and their typical length of stay. Trial-and-error may be the only way to determine parking requirements, but it is better to have too much than not enough. Customers not able to find parking places will not return, nor will their friends. About 90 cars can be parked on a one-acre lot.

### Inventory and Tagging

Many growers inventory fields during late summer. This provides an estimate of supply by species, size, and grade, and allows comparison of tree supply with anticipated C&C demand. Arrangements can be made to market excess trees wholesale if necessary.

Several pricing methods are possible. Whatever the method used, growers should simplify things for customers in terms of determining prices, and for change-making. Rounding off to the nearest quarter, half-dollar, or dollar eliminates many problems.

Trees are graded and marked during inventory if priced by grade. In using this method the grower considers the species, size, and overall quality of the tree (form, density, etc.) and marks the determined price on a tag affixed to the tree. An alternative is to affix a colored tag on the tree, the color indicating the quality or price of the tree (which can be determined later). Individual tree pricing generates more revenues for better quality trees, but requires time for grading, and creates problems with missing tags. Unsold trees must be retagged the following year. Fewer low-quality trees are left in the field, though, since these trees are priced lower.

A second method of pricing considers only the species and height of the tree. Trees are usually not marked in the field but are measured after cutting and prior to sale (figure 2). Measuring and pricing trees after cutting saves labor, but sometimes results in customers breaking off terminals and leaving high stumps in the field to reduce their cost. Measuring and tagging by height in the field eliminates some abuse by customers, and provides an inventory. Labor costs increase, though, and unsold trees must be retagged in succeeding years. Colored tags designating heights without prices are often used, so that prices can be determined later.

Customers often cut smaller trees if they are lower priced. This may be undesirable to the growers since it is often more profitable to hold smaller trees for sale in future years. Failure to mark prices in the field also causes problems when customers cut more expensive trees than they wish to buy. Informing customers of species and prices prior to issuing saws promotes good relations. Sample trees and signs in parking lots and fields help customers identify species.

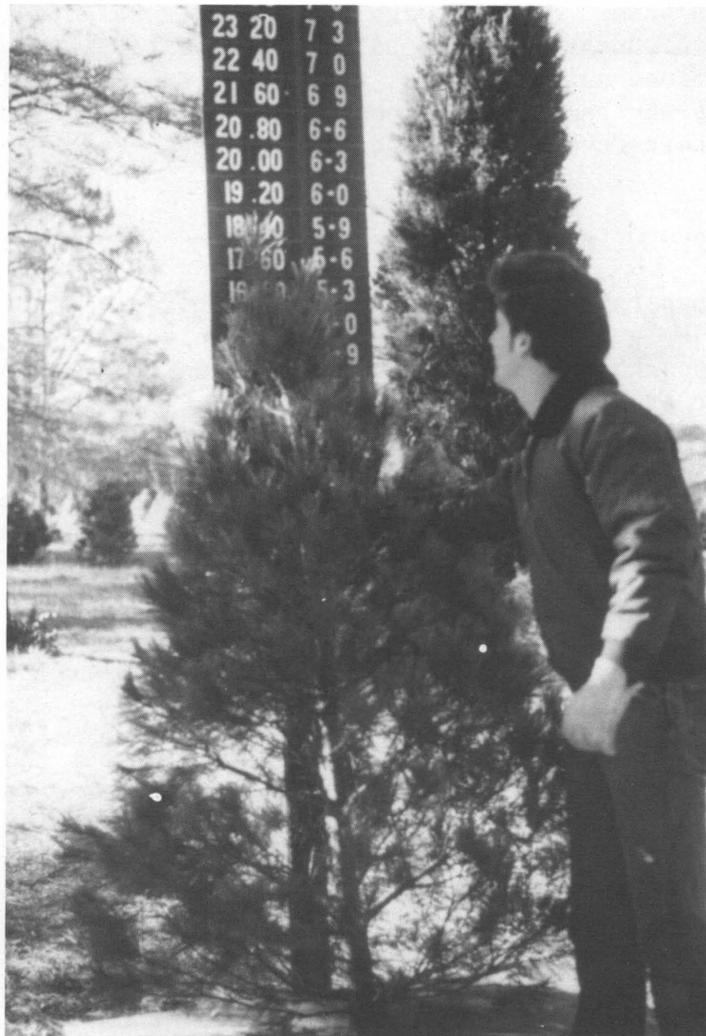


Figure 2. Tree price may be determined from tree height measured after cutting.

A third pricing method is based solely on species. All trees of a species are priced the same, regardless of height or quality. This method can be used in grouping by genus, i.e. all pines, all spruces, all firs, etc. No tagging is needed, but lower-quality trees will be left in the field. One grower is trying a new technique for selling low quality and crowded trees, by spraying the trees he wants sold with a blue-green colorant. Frequently customers select a lower quality "colored" tree over better-formed trees (that he wants to hold an additional year) that have not been colored.

Most C&C customers select and cut trees at one time during the harvesting season. Occasionally growers sell trees on a "lay-away" plan, especially if customers come to the farm during the off-season, such as to pick strawberries, etc. Customers select trees, pay a deposit, and the grower tags the trees with their names. Relocating the trees selected is helped by marking tree location on a map.

At harvest-time customers return and harvest their pre-selected trees, or the grower harvests them. Some growers even deliver selected trees to their customers' homes. Although lay-away sales increase total sales, the practice is time-consuming since customers must be dealt with twice. Abuse is minimal but later customers may remove tags from reserved trees. Also, customers are discouraged when their favorite trees have been reserved by someone else.

### Products and Services Offered

Gross revenues per tree for C&C farms are generally double that of wholesale operations, but costs and labor are considerably higher. Providing even minimal services to customers requires considerable manpower. Roughly 1/3 to 1/2 man-hour is required to market each tree. This is a semi-fixed cost, with time per tree increasing as number of trees sold decreases.

Labor availability during the C&C season (generally the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas, evenings and weekends at a minimum) is an important consideration. Growers with family help have an advantage over others if family members are interested, motivated, and available. Growers can also engage a contractor to sell trees C&C, or can have a civic group sell trees on consignment.

Growers generally provide additional services besides selling trees. Most provide handsaws, some forbidding use of any saws but those provided. Limiting cutting to the growers' saws requires the customer to contact a salesperson, at which time safety rules are stressed. This practice also provides a check on the number of customers in the field. Loss of saws is minimal, especially if a reminder sign is posted near the exit. Inexpensive saws that the customer buys and keeps are sometimes sold, or the saw cost is included in the price of the tree to be perceived as a "giveaway".

Some growers cut customer-selected trees, haul them to cars, and load and tie them. These services are covered in the cost of the tree. More often, buyers cut and haul the trees, and the grower helps load and tie. Growers should note that if they or their employees tie a tree on a car improperly and an accident occurs, the grower can be held liable. Although growers should not be liable for accidents caused by customer-tied trees, those who inspect the trees on cars reduce the risk of lawsuit.

Growers sometimes offer use of a shaker to remove dead needles, drill (for drilling the hole in the base required by some stands), and baler (for wrapping the branches tightly to the stem to facilitate handling) for their customers. Some provide these services for an additional fee. Some growers have specially-made boxes for shipping trees, and will ship trees. Generally, C&C growers provide twine for tying trees to autos.

Many growers view their operation as selling only Christmas trees. Successful growers, however, have found that offering additional products attracts customers and adds to profits.

Many customers who go to C&C farms, sometimes 35% or more, purchase cut trees rather than cutting their own. An adequate supply of freshly cut trees, usually priced the same as customer-cut trees, should always be displayed (figure 3). Cut tree sales will increase during inclement weather, and many



Figure 3. Many customers at choose-and-cut farms prefer pre-cut or dug trees.

customers arriving at closing time will select a cut tree. Lower-quality cut trees can be sold at reduced prices. This practice also provides an outlet for trees that were cut and left in the field by customers.

Most growers cannot produce all the popular Christmas tree species on their farms, yet some customers insist on particular species. Growers can purchase (or trade for) species not raised on their farms to satisfy these customers. Diversifying the tree species offered can greatly affect markets, especially on a C&C farm. Many sites cannot support growth of particular tree species, but growers are encouraged to diversify plantings whenever possible. Many prospective C&C growers plan to offer only white pines to their customers, a limit to sales if a competitor offers other species. If only a few trees are large enough to sell the first year of operations, growers can buy larger trees to attract customers, and retain them as customers in future years. Having such trees available gives growers an earlier idea of demand from their farm, and they may determine the need to sell some wholesale. Prices may need to be reduced on cut trees as Christmas approaches.

Many C&C farms allow customers to dig trees. Although few customers select this method, large holes produced by inexperienced diggers can cause problems for equipment. Customers desiring to dig trees should be instructed on the proper techniques to decrease the number of large holes and to improve chances of successfully planting the trees in their yards. Burlap, twine, and nails should be provided to tie the rootballs of dug trees. Providing equipment to haul and load dug trees can be helpful. Some growers provide custom digging, transport and set dug trees at customers' homes, or provide names of independent contractors who will do this.

Pre-dug trees (dug by the grower or purchased balled-and-burlapped) can increase sales. Laws which restricted the sale of Christmas trees grown from seedlings purchased from the Virginia Department of Forestry have been lifted. These trees can now be sold as live trees with their roots intact, but for tax purposes must be treated as nursery stock.

Greens (cut branches, etc., from low-quality trees), roping, and wreaths are related products that should not be ignored (figure 4). Offering these products generates additional revenues, attracts customers, and makes use of materials from poor-quality trees.



Figure 4. Selling Christmas-related articles attracts customers to farms and provides substantial revenues.

Tree stands sell naturally with Christmas trees, and a Christmas shop filled with ornaments and gifts can produce as much income as the trees themselves. Growers also sell caps, buttons, and cups that promote the Christmas tree industry and the grower's farm.

Growers should consider marketing non-traditional Christmas tree products. Smaller trees (2-5 feet), sold as table-top and apartment-size, have recently become popular. Advertising these options may convince buyers of artificial trees to bring real trees into their homes and encourage more homes to have more than one tree.

### Providing an Enjoyable Experience for the Customer

Most C&C customers come to a farm for the experience, not just the tree; most can buy a high-quality tree in town. Since most do not live in a rural setting, they come to a C&C operation for an outdoor experience on a farm. Varying techniques can be used to improve the experience. The effectiveness of these techniques varies from farm to farm. The aesthetics of the farm and its location greatly affects the enjoyment of the customer. Traveling to farms located in remote areas with pleasant views of mountains, lakes and rural landscapes often is an enjoyable experience in itself.

Some growers plant trees in scattered fields across their farms, with forest stands surrounding each field. These plantings not only are more aesthetically pleasing, they are also good for wildlife management. Some growers, when clearing woodland for Christmas trees, leave large trees scattered throughout the farm. While these trees have little effect on the growth of Christmas trees and do not impact maintenance greatly, they improve the looks of a farm. Large trees also provide perches for predator birds who prey on insect and mammal pests.

Children help determine where the family tree is bought, and improving their experience will bring the family back. One grower maintains a candy tree, where children pick candy canes tied to the branches as they exit. Another uses bales of hay for safe, inexpensive playground equipment. Children cherish pony rides, which can be offered for only a small fee. One grower, lacking his own ponies, lets 4-H youths bring their ponies and keep the ride revenues. Hayrides are also enjoyable, and hay wagons may be an efficient means of transportation between the fields and parking areas.

A down-home atmosphere and simple comforts leave pleasant memories. Sipping coffee or chocolate in front of a blazing fireplace in a Christmas store or an outdoor firepit adds enjoyment and prepares customers for the ride home. Well-maintained restrooms should be located near the exits for visits prior to leaving and also within reasonable walking distance from the fields. A courteous, helpful, knowledgeable staff is especially important for providing a pleasant customer experience. Growers should consider giving survey forms to customers to determine their needs.

## MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

### Identifying Markets

Identifying potential markets and competition are major considerations for growers. C&C operations often serve a clientele within a relatively short driving distance. If near a small city, farms may draw people within twenty-five miles. People in large metropolitan areas frequently drive 50 miles to a C&C farm, sometimes 100 miles. A small farm producing a limited number of trees, however, will not draw people from these distances.

Potential tree sales within a market area can be only roughly estimated. One rule of thumb for estimating the demand for Christmas trees is to divide the population within the marketing area by 10 (a little over one-third of all households have a real Christmas tree, few households purchase more than one tree, and there are about 3 people per household). Since about one-third of the Christmas trees in Virginia are sold C&C, this value should be divided by 3 to obtain the estimated C&C demand (or divide the total population by 30).

Competition within the market area must be considered, and growers should be honest with themselves if they believe they can attract their competitors' customers because their trees will be of higher quality. Good marketing of high-quality trees may change the proportions somewhat; each individual grower must estimate his impact on the market.

### Expanding Markets- the Industry and Individual Farms

The Christmas tree industry has greatly expanded recently so the industry as a whole must expand its market. Over three-fourths of all households have Christmas trees, but only a little over one-third have live trees. Individual growers and the industry as a whole must work toward increasing the number of homes with live trees and the numbers of trees per household.

More homes have artificial trees than real trees. The great increase in the artificial tree market was achieved by an intensive advertising campaign; 5% of the retail dollars spent on artificial trees goes for advertising the product. Growers need determine to spend more money on advertising; spending 5% is better than seeing a drop of 10% or more in prices.

Market expansion can come about through consumer education efforts by state and national associations and individual growers. Literature on the advantages of live trees (i.e., promoting Christmas trees as a renewable resource, "natural", pleasing fragrance, etc.), and on how to care for a real tree, can improve the industry's as well as an individual farm's market.

Building a clientele list over time is important, though growers frequently do not plan for this. Overzealous growers often plant all their land in one or two years, then attempt to manage this acreage until harvest. The supply of saleable trees can go from zero to a high number for several years, then drop off abruptly. Many customers are attracted to a farm by word of mouth; building a clientele list can take many years. Finding 3000, 1000, or even 100 new customers during the first year of harvest can be difficult.

Growers should manage their farms on a rotation basis, planting equal acreage each year rather than all at once. Depending on species, 1/6 to 1/12 of the farm should be planted each year. For example, a grower wanting to start a 16-acre farm may plant 2 acres each year. Assuming 1200 trees per acre, a 70% overall harvest rate, 25% harvests in years 6 and 8 and a 50% harvest in year 7 (these proportions are typical but vary) the grower may sell 400 trees in year 6, 1200 trees in year 7, and 1680 trees each year thereafter. If this grower were to plant all 16 acres at once, 3360 trees would be marketed in the 6th year, 6720 the 7th year, and 3360 trees in the 8th year. Fields would then be replanted and no trees would be marketed again for 6 years. In addition to staggering the years of harvest, managing on a rotation basis helps spread the maintenance workload.

New growers should start by planting less acreage--1/2 to 1 acre per year--until they experience the requirements of raising trees and are willing to commit themselves to Christmas tree farming. An estimate of manpower needs is 40 to 60 manhours per acre per year, increasing as the trees grow.

### Promotional Activities to Attract Customers

Providing the best trees and service is usually not enough to attract the customers needed. Attention-getting activities and advertising are needed to draw customers. Growers often ignore customers for most of the year, then try to attract them during the Christmas season. Some are finding that customers attracted during the off-season will return to buy trees. Maintaining year-round signs advertising a farm can draw attention. Easter egg hunts are a way to attract attention in the off-season, and can draw free media coverage with a few phone calls.

The lay-away system of selection can attract customers during the off-season. An adaptation is to promote picnics for company and community groups. Group nights can be held during the off-season or the selling season (perhaps offering group discounts), creating an annual event for the group to enjoy hayrides, etc., before purchasing trees. Companies buying employees' trees provides a good gesture for the company and guarantees sales.

Frequently, growers operate other businesses, and the promotion of these businesses can enhance Christmas tree sales. Nursery plants, pick-your-own fruits and vegetables, fruit stands, pumpkin patches, etc. are all alternate business opportunities that promote Christmas tree sales. If growers don't operate other businesses they can consider trade promotions with other entrepreneurs in their area. One grower, for instance, displays several balled-and-burlapped Christmas trees at his neighbor's apple stand to advertise his C&C farm. During the Christmas season the apple grower displays boxes of apples at the C&C farm.

Everyone likes discounts or getting something for free. Discount coupons can be given to selected groups or distributed without restrictions. For instance, some growers offer wreaths at reduced prices when trees are purchased. Coupon ads have been found to be more effective than other ads. Putting time limits on a coupon gives the reader an incentive to act. Instead of discounts, some growers give away products such as small seedlings in pots, poinsettias, greens, or apples. Giving away products during slow times such as weekday afternoons attracts customers during slow periods.

One grower gives randomly selected customers a free tree or wreath, (offered after the customer has harvested his tree and is ready to pay). He is also contemplating awarding certificates for free trees in the future - for three to 5 years. Customers returning for free trees in future years will bring others along to purchase trees. Another promotional method is to donate money to civic groups for trees purchased by group members.

### Advertising Considerations

Providing high-quality trees, good service, and a pleasant experience does not help until potential customers know about a farm. Growers must advertise. Whatever the media used, a professional appearance should be

maintained in all advertising. Sloppy lettering on cardboard signs advertising "Xmas trees" hurts the farm and the industry.

The money spent for advertising varies between growers, from nothing to thousands of dollars each year. There are several ways for the grower to save money while attracting customers. Remember that 5% of the retail dollars for artificial trees goes for advertising. A comparable amount for C&C trees is \$2000 for 2000-\$20 trees. It may be difficult to accurately determine the effectiveness of a particular advertising program, but it is sometimes possible. Growers often offer sales through advertising, such as discount coupons in newspapers or handbills. These savings can also be offered through TV and radio ads to customers indicating they heard or saw the ad. These methods draw customers and enable the grower to determine the effect of different advertising media.

Often growers get free advertising by offering a story to a local newspaper or TV station. Growers should not wait for the media to come to them but should contact the media. If the media responds, have a news release or general outline prepared. Their interest is on both the industry and the individual farm, so growers should try to "sell" both.



Figure 5. Choose-and-cut farms often get free television coverage when local stations air human interest stories at Christmas time.

Customers react positively to brand names, so growers should identify their trees in their ads ("John Doe's Christmas Trees", "Blue Ridge Pines", etc.). C&C growers should emphasize tree freshness and the idea that the trees are locally grown. Ads should be clear, to the point, and large enough to adequately describe the operation. Products, prices and services offered should be clearly listed.

The purpose of advertising is to attract customers, so ads should clearly describe how customers can find the farm. Emphasize farm names several times if ads are on TV or radio. Customers can find a farm in the phone book if they remember the name. The name, phone number, and location should be repeated several times.

In written ads (newspapers, brochures, and handbills), it is best to include clear directions with a map. Do not simply provide a phone number to call for directions to a farm or for prices. Many customers prefer not calling, especially if long-distance charges are required. Many will ignore this type ad and drive to a farm with directions given in the ad. Always include operating hours.

The best advertising for repeat business is high-quality products and services. Tags with the farm name plus directions on tree care placed on each tree remind customers where they purchased their trees. Customers will have an incentive to retain the tag if a discount coupon for next year's tree or wreath is attached. Retaining the name and address of each customer provides a mailing list to send notices and coupons next year. Some growers obtain name and addresses for their mailing list from checks.

### Comparing Advertising Media

The forms of media used to attract C&C customers include: signs, brochures/handbills, newspapers, radio, TV, and word-of-mouth. Few growers use only one form, mixing two or more. When selecting advertising media, growers should consider (in addition to cost) who will be reached, how often the audience will hear or see the ad, when they will see it, and how strongly it will capture their attention.

Large signs or billboards along major roadways can be used to attract passing motorists (figure 6). Smaller signs are used to direct customers to a farm. Signs should be left up year-round. They are the most repetitive form of advertising and are low in cost.

Brochures and handbills mass-distributed have limited use in advertising C&C farms. Handbills may be sent by bulk mail to homes in a community, or youth groups may be hired to distribute them door-to-door. In general, the cost of printing and distributing handbills is expensive for the non-selective nature of this media. Many people are offended by "junk mail" and throw it away without reading. Brochures, generally more descriptive than handbills, may be distributed selectively by offering them at fairs, etc.

Virginia C&C growers can be listed in a brochure published annually by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Division of Marketing. This brochure lists products, services, and locations of C&C farms throughout Virginia. Growers pay a small annual fee, and the brochures are distributed throughout the state by the VDACS and cooperating agencies. Growers should contact the VDACS office (listed at the end of this bulletin) or their local Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCES) office for more information.



Figure 6. Colorful signs, professionally done, can be used to attract customers and direct them to a choose-and-cut farm.

Newspaper ads, available to most consumers, are a common form of advertising for C&C farms. An advantage of newspapers is that consumers do not have to write down information as they do with radio and TV ads. Most newspapers will help compose ads at no charge. A small ad run frequently is usually more effective than a large ad run less frequently. Some growers advertise only on several weekends each season, others advertise each weekend from Thanksgiving to Christmas, while others advertise daily during this season. Since the majority of customers purchase their tree on weekends, placing ads in Friday, Saturday, and Sunday papers may be efficient but newspapers often offer discount rates so that daily advertising costs the same as advertising on weekends only.

Proponents of radio advertising claim this medium reaches more people in a given time than TV or newspapers; that 90% of the public can be reached on the weekend through the radio. Radio also reaches a variety of audiences, and the station will often help in writing and producing commercials. A major disadvantage of radio is that it is easy for the listener to ignore the short commercials typical of an ad for a C&C farm.

Television is used only infrequently for advertising C&C farms. Producing a TV ad is expensive, so the ad must be broadcast enough times to justify the expense. The cost of broadcasting is also expensive. Although some local UHF stations can be less expensive, audiences reached are usually small. As noted earlier, TV stations are often interested in bringing a film crew to a farm for interesting stories.

## SUMMARY, FURTHER INFORMATION

Marketing Christmas trees choose-and-cut is not simply a matter of opening fields of Christmas trees to customers. Many details must be considered and attended to and salesmanship is needed. Growers have many avenues of marketing help and should take advantage of them.

Further marketing information and help is available from:

Division of Markets  
VDACS  
810 Washington Building  
Richmond, VA 23219

Virginia Christmas Tree Growers  
Association  
Box 291  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
(distributes the trade journals  
Limbs & Needles and  
Christmas Trees to its members)

Growing and Marketing Christmas  
Trees in Virginia (FWS-4-84)

is available for \$3.00 from:

Department of Forestry  
310 Cheatham Hall  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

National Christmas Tree Association  
611 E. Wells St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
(publishes and distributes the  
American Christmas Tree Journal  
to its members)

Information on educational meetings and bus tours, and other publications about marketing and growing Christmas trees, are available from the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service by writing:

Christmas Trees  
228 Cheatham Hall  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

---

Trade names are used in this publication for information purposes only. The Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Virginia State University do not warrant those mentioned nor do they intend or imply discrimination against those not mentioned.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Mitchell R. Geasler, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, and Vice Provost for Extension, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; Clinton V. Turner, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia.