SELLING THE FARM MARKET

# HOW. . .

# SURVEYS

One of the most successful methods for getting your foot in the door of the farmer's business is the farm survey, which can be used in a variety of ways. And any way you choose to use it, you're performing a service for both the farmers and yourself.

One of the primary reasons for the success of the survey approach is that you're saving time for the farmer. By using the survey to isolate the parts that are on his machinery and then tailoring your inventory based on the information collected, you're offering the farmer the time-saving advantage of having a single source for many *different makes* of farm equipment — an advantage not offered by the implement dealer.

What's more, you can offer him the advantage of having the items he needs most, *when* he needs them — of prime concern to the farmer during planting or harvesting.

If a farmer appears initially hesitant about allowing you to perform a complete survey on all of his equipment needs, why not offer to survey his equipment on a single line? For many NAPA Jobbers, this approach has proven to be a great way to get "their foot in the barn door," it gives them the chance to prove they mean business when they promise the farmer the best service possible and often leads to the farmer giving them more business once he's seen you're serious about helping him.

On the other hand, if the farmer seems receptive to a complete survey, you can take it a step farther by offering to set him up as a stocking account, using the survey to determine his stocking requirements. And with NAPA's obsolescence prevention, you can assure him of proper utilization of his investment. You can either offer to maintain a stock for him, or set-up a stock right at his farm and then send someone to check on stock regularly or wait until the farmer calls for replenishment. Either way, you've opened up a new account that encourages repeat business and establishes your store as a single supply source.

All of the forms you'll need for performing a complete farm survey are included here. (If you find yourself in the position of performing numerous single line surveys, you can also check with your NAPA Manufacturer representatives for any single line survey forms they may have available for their particular line.) You may also wish to enlist the help of your NAPA Manufacturer representatives in actually performing the surveys.

To get started, make a list of the farmers in your area with whom you'd like to do business. (If you're unfamiliar with the farm population in your area, the U.S. Department of Agriculture or your local Farm Extension Agent should be able to help you locate the farmers in your area with enough equipment to warrant their maintaining a stock of parts.) When searching for prospects, don't overlook colleges with agriculture departments, county governments and other groups that maintain tractors and farming equipment.

Once you have your list of prospects, contact them and express your interest in helping them by performing a farm equipment survey. Be prepared to discuss the advantages of doing business with your store and NAPA, and the advantages of stocking their own parts. Obtain a commitment and set a specific date and time for the survey. (NOTE: Never approach a farmer to perform a survey during planting or harvesting. You're trying to save him time, not take up valuable time during his busiest seasons.)

A complete farm survey actually consists of three parts: a Farm Equipment Survey, to be completed by yourself or whoever is representing your store (an outside salesperson, a manufacturer representative, etc.) and the farmer; a Machinery Identification Sheet, to be completed by yourself or whoever is representing your store; and a Recommended Stocking Sheet, again to be completed by yourself or a store representative.

The first step is the NAPA Farm Equipment Survey (see page 19). This is the only portion of the survey that must be done right at the farm and it takes only about 20 or 30 minutes to complete (which is important to let the farmer know when you approach him).

As you can see, the Farm Equipment Survey sheet is divided into sections to allow you to list each piece of equipment for which you can supply parts. All pertinent information concerning make, model, year, engine size, etc., should be listed. In addition to taking down this information for all farm equipment, make sure you also list all cars, trucks and stationary engines in addition to all lawn and garden equipment.

Once the Farm Equipment Survey sheet is completed, it's time to move on to the next phase of the complete survey, which is where your homework really begins.

Using the information collected on the Farm Equipment Survey sheet, fill out a Machinery Identification Sheet (see page 20) for each piece of equipment listed. Identify each piece of machinery individually and group its parts by manufacturer. Items you have in stock should be indicated, as well as those that require special ordering. For any part that will require special order, you should also indicate the average waiting time for that part after ordering.

Then, either by yourself or with the help of your NAPA Distribution Center sales representative, work off of the completed Machinery Identification Sheets and determine which parts would be necessary for the farmer's stocking requirements, how many of each and their cost. Then write these recommendations on your NAPA Recommended Stocking Sheet (page 21).

You are now ready to return to the farmer and make your sales presentation. Using the completed Recommended Stocking Sheet, come to an agreement with the farmer as to what kind of stock should be maintained, whether it should be maintained for him at your store or whether he should be set up with his own stock right at the farm.

Even after you've made your sales presentation to the farmer, your job isn't done. Whether or not you secured a commitment for his business on your first attempt, or whether or not the farmer agrees to become a stocking account, you still have valuable information about his needs and you should continue to call on him regularly.

To track your efforts and make sure your information is kept up-to-date, you should establish a file on each current and prospective farm account. Keep copies of each portion of the account's farm survey in these files and then review and update them regularly according to that particular farmer's changing needs.