FACTORS INFLUENCING AGRICULTURAL JOURNALISTS AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS

A Dissertation

by

EDITH ANNE CHENAULT

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2008

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Tracy Rutherford
Committee Members,	Gary Briers
	Barbara Gastel
	Douglas Starr
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ABSTRACT

Factors Influencing Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators.

(August 2008)

Edith Anne Chenault, B.S., Texas A&M University; M.Ed., Sul Ross State University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Tracy Rutherford

Agricultural journalism and agricultural communication have been researched in depth, identifying job skills, job satisfaction, educational backgrounds, and curriculum issues. However, a study examining the spheres (subjective, institutional, contextual, and societal) that influence how agricultural journalists and communicators do their jobs—as indicated by Esser's (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) model of spheres of influence on journalists—could not be found. This study utilized Esser's model to identify those factors and determine whether their influences differ demographically. A total of 256 members of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, American Agricultural Editors' Association, North American Agricultural Journalists, and Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences responded to a researcher-designed instrument and a third-party Web-based survey tool. The respondents demographically resembled populations in similar studies. Data were analyzed using statistical tools and quantitative content analysis.

This study found a relationship between the jobs that agricultural journalists and communicators do and the societal sphere (p=.04), which includes personal values, desire for self-realization, professional values, and conception of a journalist's role. The spheres of influence of international organization (IFAJ, AAEA, and NAAJ) members and domestic organization (ACE) members were compared. The difference in the societal sphere was of medium effect size (d = .39), indicating that organizational membership influences members' perceptions about themselves and their roles.

Respondents indicated the most important skills for new agricultural journalists were personal attributes and skills, such as curiosity and adaptability; writing; and communication. The most important skills for new agricultural communicators were communication, personal attributes and skills, and journalistic skills. The most important future issue for agricultural journalists and communicators was agricultural technology and development.

The findings indicate that agricultural journalists and communicators are influenced by their personal and professional values, perception of their professional roles, and desire for self-realization. Future agricultural journalists and communicators should seek training in personal attributes and skills, writing, communication, and journalistic skills. This study contributes to research in agricultural journalism and communication because it encompasses a global perspective by including respondents outside North America.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, John A. Chenault and the late Ferrell Greer Chenault. They encouraged me to learn.

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I would like to thank my committee members, Drs. Tracy Rutherford, Gary Briers, and Douglas P. Starr of the Department of Agricultural Education, Leadership, and Communications, and Dr. Barbara Gastel of the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, for always being willing to answer the multitude of questions I had. Each one has unique talents and viewpoints that contributed greatly to the value of this dissertation. I appreciate the encouragement of Dr. Deb Dunsford of the Department of Agricultural Education, Leadership, and Communications; she kept me going when I wanted to quit.

The American Agricultural Editors' Association and Department of Agricultural Education, Leadership, and Communications contributed funding for me to travel to Hamar, Norway, to introduce myself and for the survey to International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, and for that I am extremely grateful. Jim Evans and Donald Zumalt of the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center helped greatly in finding information. David Markey of Ireland and Mike Wilson of Decatur, Illinois, contributed names of people who could help me and identified resources that I could use from both the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists and the American Agricultural Editors' Association.

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NOMENCLATURE

AAEA	American Agricultural Editors' Association
ACE	Association for Communications Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences
IFAJ	International Federation of Agricultural Journalists
NAAJ	North American Agricultural Journalists

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Agricultural journalism and agricultural communication in the United States can trace their roots to the late 1700s, when the new country began shaking off the influences of the European methods of farming and began adopting its own. Before that, agricultural information—most of which was derived from the European way of farming—was passed from farmer to farmer by word of mouth (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000).

Agricultural societies, which began springing up to promote agricultural knowledge after the Revolutionary War, started publishing scientific information for farmers in the 1790s (Marti, 1980). But these publications did not reach a wide audience therefore early agricultural journals—such as the *American Farmer, Plough Boy,* and *New England Farmer*—began. They published practical information about using manure for fertilizer, new crops and farming implements, and improved livestock breeds (Boone et al., 2000). Metropolitan daily newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *The New York Times* began employing farm writers in the mid-1800s. Some early agricultural editors had little practical experience in agriculture (Boone et al., 2000).

This dissertation follows the style of the *Journal of Applied Communications.*

Early journalism was political; it had an agenda to put forward, said Jim Evans, agricultural communicator, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, and one of the founders of the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center (Starr & Evans, 2007). Agricultural societies—groups of farmers who gathered for fellowship and to exchange information—published the first journals. Later, the publications began publishing independently of the societies and began relying on scientists as the writers of scientific information (Marti, 1980; Boone et al., 2000). In the 1800s, the information that was disseminated by the agricultural press was responsible for many improvements in farming practices (Crawford and Rogers, 1926). Land-grant colleges were established by the Federal Land-Grant Act of 1857, legislation that allotted acreage to each state to establish colleges. These universities were charged with teaching agriculture, among other subjects. Congress established similar land allotments to historically black colleges of agriculture in 1890 (Boone et al.). The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 funded Cooperative Extension activities that had already begun at most agricultural land-grant colleges. The field of agricultural communication began to grow when land-grant colleges began hiring information specialists to promote the work of their agricultural researchers and Extension specialists (Boone et al., 2000). Early communicators edited publications and wrote news releases to make information available to the public.

With the advent of radio, market and weather reports became popular with farmers. State agricultural colleges took advantage of the new medium in the early 1920s to begin producing informational radio programs that targeted rural people (Boone et al., 2000). Movies and popular magazines provided additional sources of information and

entertainment in the early 20th century. Television was introduced in the 1940s and became popular with the general public. But programming directed at agriculture only had moderate success (Boone et al.).

In the early 1900s, the articles that agricultural journalists wrote focused mainly on production agriculture: how to farm and weather forecasts. Crawford and Rogers (1926) wrote that agricultural communication relayed detailed, unbiased, and timely information that pertained to agriculture or country life. That information had to be interesting, valuable, or important to a number of persons. They also suggested that agricultural communication had a missionary character.

> The fundamental purpose of the newspaper is to furnish the news; the fundamental purpose of the average magazine is to entertain. The writer on agricultural subjects wants to do more. He wants to make his material tend rather directly toward agricultural principles and practices. (p. 20)

That focus has changed. In recent years, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators have shifted their focus to such issues as diet and food safety (Starr & Evans, 2007). Zumalt said the "concept of agriculture has broadened to encompass a total complex enterprise—from research, production, processing, and marketing to consumption, nutrition, and health" (2007, p. 6). Communication that "embraces all means of human interaction—interpersonal, group, organizational, and mass" (Zumalt, 2007, p. 6) deals not only with agriculture but also with food, natural resources, and rural interests. Boone et al. wrote that agricultural journalism "refers to reporting and editing

for journals, newspapers, and broadcast media" (2000, p. 102). Agricultural journalists are journalists, first and foremost, Evans has said (Starr & Evans, 2007).

Communication covers more area and "includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy" (Boone et al., 2000, p. 102). The field of agricultural communication includes advertising, public relations, extension information services, organizational communication, and other non-journalistic aspects (Zumalt, 2007).

General journalists in democracies are expected to provide information for citizens so that they can be free and self-governing (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). Agricultural journalists are expected to fulfill no less a role (Pawlik, 2001; Weiss, 2005). Worldwide, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators face many of the same issues. They must cover or produce educational materials on such issues as economics, the environment, and bioterrorism (Starr & Evans, 2007).

At one time, a shopper could tell the season by what was on the grocery store shelves. Produce can now be imported from all over the world, so the fruits and vegetables that once were available only seasonally are now available throughout the year. Likewise, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in the United States are not isolated from other countries (Starr & Evans, 2007) because agricultural markets have become global. "Some broad and lively issues appear as we gather information, globally, about matters that affect us as agricultural journalists and communicators," Evans wrote (2000, p. 1). The issues include the digital divide (the separation of the haves and have-nots in the realm of computers and the Internet), the freedom of expression through various media, open access to agricultural information,

scientific knowledge as related to indigenous knowledge, grass-roots involvement (local, inclusive participation), credibility of the media and the sources they use, pressure at the editorial/advertising interface, coverage of complex issues related to food and agriculture, effects on specific audiences, and ways to deal with official information (Evans, 2000). There's also a need for agricultural coverage in the urban media (Evans, 2000). "We are awash in information, but most (citizens) know very little about what is in their food or how it is produced. Establishing an organized system to share information about agriculture, specifically food safety, can be a matter of life and death" (Zumalt, 2007, p. 2).

The number of agricultural publications is increasing. But the increase is not in publications that cover general farming issues, but rather special-interest publications, such as those put out by commodity organizations, land-grant universities, and governmental agencies (Starr & Evans, 2007). With the explosion of the number of Internet publications and podcasts, even more information channels have been added (Starr & Evans, 2007).

Because good content is important, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators must keep updating their technology skills in order to produce the best content for an audience that is becoming increasingly more technology-savvy. With the advent of convergence—whether in ownership or format—journalists are increasingly asked to produce stories in multiple formats for print and broadcast. In the United States, people—including in agriculture—are getting more of their news electronically (Boone et al., 2000). More consumers are multitasking while getting their news, and people are

becoming comfortable with print, broadcast, and Internet platforms of media presentations (Kolodzy, 2006). Barriers to some types of convergence still occur in countries such as Australia and New Zealand, however, because they have legislation forbidding companies to own a daily newspaper and a television channel in the same market (Quinn, 2005).

Agricultural communicators must learn as much as possible about their counterparts in the mainstream media. This knowledge helps them utilize those venues well to educate the public about issues the communicators think are important. Media and public relations in agriculture are commonly practiced not only by university-based communicators, but also by those associated with commodity organizations, private companies, and state departments of agriculture.

Like their counterparts in the mainstream media, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators face thorny ethical issues. Agricultural journalists are feeling more pressure from advertisers than ever before (Banning & Evans, 2001), and convergence presents problems of overworked journalists and conflicts of interest (Starr & Evans, 2007).

Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators Unite

Agricultural journalism and agricultural communication practitioners began meeting together more than 100 years ago. The Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE) was formed in 1913 when editors from land-grant colleges met for the first time. That meeting was so successful that the editors decided they should meet annually. Three

years later, a constitution was adopted and the group organized as the American Association of Agricultural College Editors. The organization's name was changed to Agricultural Communicators in Education in 1978, and then, to the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences in 2003 (U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library, 2008). ACE members are writers, editors, photographers, graphic designers, videographers, electronic media producers, marketing and public relations practitioners, researchers, Web developers, database programmers, distance education specialists, educators, and managers who are employed by universities, governmental agencies, research organizations in the public sector, and companies and firms in the private sector (Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life Sciences, 2008).

The International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) was founded in 1956 in Paris. David Markey of Ireland, president in 2008, said the idea was and still is to encourage interaction among agricultural journalists, to discuss agricultural trends, and to work cooperatively to maintain freedom of the press. Markey said that the organization grew from four member countries in 1956 to 29 in the 1960s (personal communication, March 6, 2008). Writers, editors, photographers, videographers, and marketers from 32 countries are members of IFAJ (International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, 2008). Member countries are Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Moldova, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand,

Norway, Poland, Serbia-Montonegro, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States (IFAJ, 2008).

The American Agricultural Editors Association (AAEA) began meeting informally in about 1916 (Harvey & Swegle, 1996). Its members are agricultural editors, writers, photographers, and journalism students (AAEA, 2008).

The North American Agricultural Journalists (NAAJ) was formed in 1953. Its members are newspaper farm writers and editors from the United States and Canada (Hendee, 2003, p. v). It was formerly the Newspaper Farm Editors of America and the National Association of Agricultural Journalists (North American Agricultural Journalists, 2008).

International Educational Systems

While media professionals are expected to maintain objectivity, they do not operate in a vacuum (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Many studies have been conducted on the effects of media on society. "A number of researchers who previously studied media effects—including ourselves—now find themselves asking why such effect-producing content exists to begin with" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p. 3). The same research questions could be asked about agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators since their jobs are essentially the same as their counterparts. Research has been found on the demographics of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators; on media theories such as gatekeeping; and on agricultural journalism and agricultural communication programs and courses at universities. However, no comprehensive study on why agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do their jobs the way

they do—what factors influence their decisions—could be found in a review of the literature.

Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are not trained the same throughout the world. Educational systems differ, and programs that focus strictly on agricultural journalism and agricultural communication are practically non-existent anywhere but in North America (Pawlick, 2001). To consider factors that influence agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in the United States and other countries, one may have to first examine journalism educational programs and processes. Becker wrote that "university-delivered journalism education is well established and dominant" in Finland, Spain, the United States, and Canada (2003, p. xiv). The first college-level course in agricultural journalism in the United States was offered at Iowa State College in 1905 (Boone et al., 2000), largely due to the efforts of John Clay, an immigrant from Scotland. He established a Chair of Journalism at Iowa State College believing that "farm journalists would be perfect candidates to steer the American press clear of the sectionalism and yellow journalism dominating the daily newspapers" (Schulman, 1999, p. 1). In the Netherlands and Denmark, journalism education is provided through institutions devoted to that topic. Some countries offer education at both universities and at institutions geared toward journalistic training; examples of those countries are France, Portugal, and Germany (Becker, 2003). Training on the job and at a university or dedicated training center is offered in countries such as Great Britain and Austria. Other areas of the world are experimenting with other types of training opportunities (Becker).

This study of the factors that influence agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators began with a journalism department in Estonia. Epp Lauk, head of the Department of Journalism at Tartu University in Tartu, Estonia, said that the educational systems of Estonia and the United States are different (personal communication, June 19, 2005). But challenges such as low pay and ethical difficulties were faced by journalists both in the United States and that country, which had regained its independence from the former Soviet Union only a little more than a decade earlier. Frölich & Holtz–Bacha (2003) wrote that the challenges faced by journalists were much the same in the United States and Europe, especially those of new technology. And even though other problems may not exist now, technological and economic changes may alter journalism and journalism education in the European countries (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha).

To help examine those problems and challenges, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) proposed a multitiered, hierarchical model of the influences on media content. “We cannot fully understand the effects of that version of social reality if we do not understand the forces that shape it” (Shoemaker & Reese, p. 258). The influences, or levels, were individual, media routines, organizational, extramedia (or outside the media), and ideological.

Individual factors are gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation; personal backgrounds and experiences; and professional backgrounds gained from university journalism school, trade school, or other education. Although media professionals’ characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences may not have a direct influence on what is

produced, their personal and professional attitudes and roles could be affected and thus influence content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Media routines are defined as those repeated patterns that media professionals use in their jobs. For instance, editors' responsibilities are very much the same from newspaper to newspaper. They select—usually from a massive amount of information—the stories that will be published. But one might question whether these decisions are made from a process or rather at a whim (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Consumers' wants and needs and publishing or broadcast deadlines may contribute to routines for professionals. Even human sources of information can determine routines for professionals because of the way they schedule news conferences or release of information.

The media organizational tier contains the charts, roles, policies, and goals, including the economics of media outlets. The extramedia layer consists of forces outside the organization that have an effect on news, such as sources of information and new technology. The ideological layer contains those symbolic forces that serve as a cohesive force in society (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Overall, the media are not just channels of information. The information that passes through the channels is changed in a number of ways before it offers a "specific view of social reality to the audience" (Shoemaker & Reese, p. 258).

Esser (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) developed a more elaborate model that integrates the interdependent factors influencing journalists. Some of these factors have been researched well, but others have not, particularly internationally (Frölich & Holtz–

Bacha, 2003). Esser's model formed the basis of this study, and Shoemaker and Reese's model was used to help explain the factors.

Purpose and Objectives

From Esser's model, this study sought to specify factors influencing the way agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do their jobs. This study was an attempt to fill some of the gaps in agricultural journalism and agricultural communication research and in Esser's model. The objectives of the study were to

1. Determine the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors influencing the jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
2. Determine whether the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors differed between (a) American agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators and (b) international agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
3. To determine whether the societal, institutional, contextual, and societal factors are different between (a) United States' agricultural journalism and agricultural communication associations and (b) international agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations.
4. Propose a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review the literature and research about agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. The literature review was conducted by searching for books and articles through the on-line databases at the Sterling Evans Library at Texas A&M University and the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center. Pertinent articles were selected from Poynter Online and the *IFAJ News.* Questions were asked of and interviews conducted with people considered experts in agricultural journalism and agricultural communication to gather more information.

To study what factors influence agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators, Esser's model of the interdependent factors that influence (general) journalists was used. This model was published in *Journalism Education in Europe and North America* (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). One definition of a model is a "preliminary representation of something, serving from which the final, usually larger, object is to be constructed" (Agnes & Guralnik, 2002, p. 925). With these types of models, Esser and others have studied the interdependent factors that influence the work of journalists. The model represents the many factors that influence how journalists select and present their information and how they do their work (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). The journalist's end product—whether it is a news story, educational material, public relations press article, or advertisement—may depend on a number of factors that are interchangeable. Some of these factors have been researched well and some have not. The factors have not been compared internationally (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, p. 307).

Research is even harder to do when the educational systems and training programs differ throughout the world; there is not that foundation from which to start.

To help study these factors, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) proposed a multitiered, hierarchical model of the influences on media content. These levels, or influences, are individual; media routines; organizational; extramedia, or outside, media; and ideological.

In the first level are intrinsic factors such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation; background and experiences; and professional training at university journalism or trade schools. Although media professionals' characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences might not have a direct influence, personal and professional attitudes and roles could be affected and thus affect content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

The second level consists of media routines. These are defined as those repeated patterns that media professionals use in their jobs. For instance, an editor's job is very much the same from newspaper to newspaper. He or she selects—usually from a massive amount of information—the stories that will be published or broadcast. But what influences that individual to make these decisions? Are these decisions "made at the whim" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 105) or as planned strategy? For instance, certain information may only be given out during press conferences; that can help establish a reporter's routine. In addition, consumers' wants and needs and publishing or broadcast deadlines can form routines (Shoemaker & Reese).

The third or organizational level contains organizational charts, roles, and policies. It also includes the goals of media outlets, for example, to make a profit as a

business. The extramedia layer contains those things outside the organization that affect news, such as the latest technology. Ideology is "a symbolic mechanism that serves as a cohesive and integrating force in society" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 221).

> The media are not just channels. Information that passes through them is changed in a variety of ways before ultimately offering a specific view of social reality to the audience. We cannot fully understand the effects of that version of social reality if we do not understand the forces that shape it. (Shoemaker & Reese, p. 258)

Esser's model (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) was chosen for the study of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators because he explained more fully the details than Shoemaker and Reese's. Instead of being hierarchal, Esser's model, as shown in Figure 1, recognized the possible interaction between the layers. The four spheres of Esser's model—subjective, contextual, societal, and institution—provided a framework for studying the literature about agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. Each sphere will be described and applied to agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators based on current literature from the discipline in this chapter.

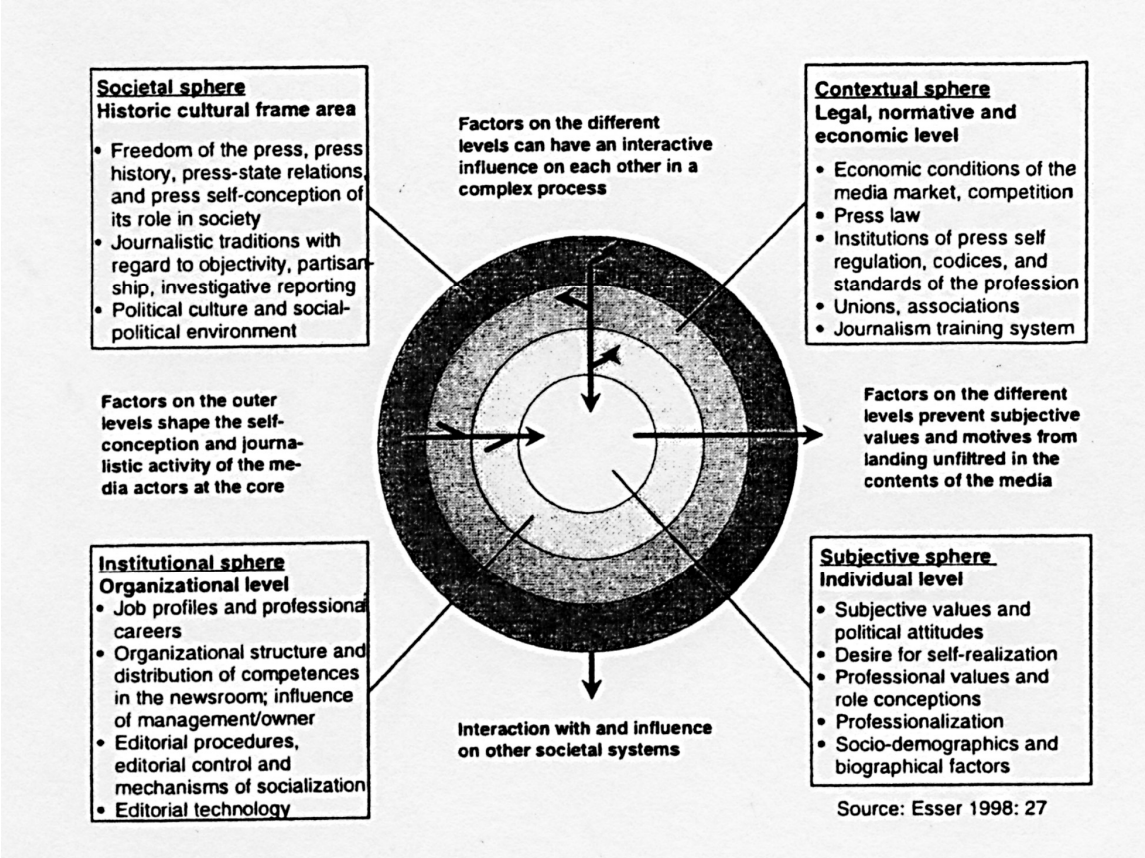

Figure 1. Esser's Spheres of Influence.

Note. From *Journalism Education in Europe and North America,* R. Frölich and C. Holtz–Bacha (Eds.). Copyright 2003 by Hampton Press. Reprinted with the permission of Hampton Press.

Subjective

The subjective sphere of influences on journalistic content includes personal values and political attitudes; the desire for self-realization, or fulfilling personal dreams and goals; professional values and conceptions of what a journalist's role is to be; professionalization (the processes by which a trade emerges into a profession); and socio-demographics and biographical factors such as age and background (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003).

Socio-demographic and Biographical Factors

The first sphere describes much about whom agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are. A 1994 survey of the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, Agricultural Communicators in Education (now the Association for Communications Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences), the Agricultural Relations Council, the American Agricultural Editors' Association, the Cooperative Communicators Association, the Livestock Publications Council, and the National Association of Farm Broadcasters found that leaders had earned bachelor's degrees, had not served as interns while in college, and had farm or ranch backgrounds and an extensive background in agriculture (Bailey–Evans). Most had worked in agricultural communication from 11 to 20 years and were between 31 and 50 years old (Bailey–Evans).

A study by Buck and Paulson (1995) found that the typical agricultural communicator was a 45-year-old Caucasian male who had worked in agricultural communication for approximately 20 years and had earned a bachelor's degree in English, journalism, or agricultural journalism. Some respondents did not consider themselves agricultural communicators, despite membership in organizations that had agricultural communication as part of their mission. Respondents also could not agree on what qualifications yield the best agricultural communicator. Buck and Paulson surveyed members of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, Agricultural Communicators in Education (now the Association for Communications Excellence in

Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences), Agricultural Relations Council, Cooperative Communicators Association, National Association of Agricultural Journalists (now the North American Agricultural Journalists), and the National Association of Farm Broadcasters.

In contrast, a study commissioned by the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (*IFAJ News*, December 2005) found that the average member of that organization was a woman in her mid-40s. Many respondents said they were agricultural journalists, but some better fit the description of agricultural communicator or public relations practitioner (*IFAJ News*).

Professional Values and Role Conception

Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators develop news releases or other material for their audiences. In their day-to-day activities, they need to gather extensive background, often very quickly, and sift out error from truth. They communicate information through traditional newspapers, Web sites, broadcasting, podcasting, publications, and fact sheets that are delivered in paper form or electronically. They write and broadcast news to farmers, ranchers, and the rest of the agricultural industry, Cooperative Extension specialists or researchers, and the mainstream media (Boone et al., 2000; Starr & Evans, 2007).

> Agricultural communicators understand that a lack of knowledge about a subject leads to misconceptions and the distribution of misinformation; therefore, they promote the exchange of agricultural information to the people involved in agriculture, as well as the lay public. (Townsend, 2003, p. 1)

Markey (IFAJ president) said the agricultural journalist's role is to promote awareness of agriculture and how it relates to consumers, "from the price of milk to the enlargement of the EU or the WTO talks." Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, bluetongue, and foot-and-mouth disease are frightening, and journalists who understand these issues and others are needed to keep the public informed (personal communication, March 6, 2007).

The earliest audiences for the agricultural media were agricultural producers who sought farm or ranch business news, information, and entertainment. Farmers and ranchers are still the major consumer of agricultural news (Boone et al., 2000; Starr & Evans, 2007). A Gallup Trends in Agriculture 2000 survey found that 65% of large-scale agricultural producers ranked farm publications as a 4 or 5 (with 5 the top) in importance as a source of information (Gallup Organization, 2000).

In the l980s, the farm media were still generally covering production agriculture: how to farm, production practices, and weather that affected farmers (Starr & Evans, 2007). Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are still needed to help farmers produce more efficiently in a world that is complex and rapidly changing; however, they are also needed to help urban audiences understand agriculture (Starr & Evans, 2007). "Unlike previous generations, most Americans do not understand how food is produced, which results in a lack of confidence in the safety and quality of the food supply" (Boone et al., 2000, p. 49). Agricultural issues such as food safety, the environmental impact of farming, and community safety should be front-page news (Starr & Evans, 2007).

Therefore, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are needed to bridge the gap between farmers and ranchers and urban dwellers. Ward (1959) wrote that agriculture must deal with the age-old chasm between agricultural producers and the people in the cities. Two-way communication is needed, and the urban press for the most part has not helped to build that bridge (Ward, 1959). Markey (personal communication, March 12, 2008) said people in certain areas all over the world are ignorant about quality assurance, traceability of products, and food safety, although he believed that consumers in Europe are better educated in how the food supply chain works. He said that the foot-and-mouth disease crisis in the United Kingdom in 2001 helped consumers understand and appreciate the role of farmers and ranchers. An organization in Ireland called Agriaware helps to bridge the urban-rural gap, he said. It works closely with the Department of Education to teach children about the food industry and has helped restore the confidence of consumers in the Irish food industry, he said.

Pawlick (2001) wrote that the bridge from the agricultural industry to the public had not yet been built. That is partly because of a lack of interest or ignorance in the general public. However, agricultural media, he wrote, have done a further disservice to the public by not covering or by avoiding certain stories on controversial issues. In addition, respondents to a 1994 study said coverage of agriculture was too shallow and centered on events rather than on issues (Reisner & Walter, 1994). They also said that too few in-depth stories are written and that "general reporters do not understand farming and give urban readers an incorrect picture of farming life" (Reisner & Walter, 1994, p. 532). Agricultural publications also got a poor rating: "Both groups also agreed

that farm magazines take a pro-industry point of view; run too many 'successful farmer' stories and stories that serve advertiser interests, and fail to adequately investigate scandals" (Reisner & Walter, p. 532). The respondents agreed, "though not strongly, that magazines do not adequately cover environmental problems" (Reisner & Walter, p. 532). The study surveyed members of the American Agricultural Editors' Association and the National Association of Agricultural Journalists.

Professionalization

When the concept of agricultural journalism and agricultural communication was first developed, practitioners were not formally educated journalists; they gained skills through on-the-job training and apprenticeships (Boone et al., 2000). The birth of Cooperative Extension led to the hiring of information specialists at land-grant universities and then to the beginning of coursework in agricultural journalism. Early professors and lecturers came from the ranks of private-industry professional writers and editors (Tucker, Whaley, & Cano, 2003). Agricultural journalism education was established at some universities such as Texas A&M University prior to general journalism education (Starr & Evans, 2007). Agricultural journalism and agricultural communication programs still play an important role "in preparing professionals for a variety of communication careers in both the private and public sectors" (Tucker, Whaley, & Cano, p. 24).

Boone et al. (2000) differentiated agricultural journalism and agricultural communication this way: "Journalism refers to reporting and editing for journals, newspapers and broadcast media." In agricultural communication, "there tends to be a

blending of roles, especially between advertising and news-editorial with a bit of public relations thrown in" (p. 64).

Although literature was found on professional values and role conceptions, professionalization, and socio-demographic factors, none was found on personal values, political attitudes, and desires for self-realization, and none was found that tied the subjective values into the whole framework of Esser's model.

Institutional

The institutional sphere contains job profiles and professional careers; organizational structure, distribution of competencies in the newsroom; the influence of management and owners; editorial procedures and control, and the mechanics of socialization; and editorial technologies (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003).

Organizational Structure

Esser defined an organization as "the social, formal, and economic entity that employs media workers in order to produce media content" (1998, p 376) and defined the main goal of a media organization as "to deliver, within time and space limitations, the most acceptable product to the consumer in the most efficient manner" (p. 376).

Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can work in a variety of media and fields, including publications that focus strictly on an agricultural or rural audience; daily and weekly newspapers; radio and television broadcasting; Internet news and market information services; and agricultural marketing (Boone et al., 2000). Some cover agriculture at rural newspapers. Editorial processes were revealed in a survey of Arkansas daily newspaper editors who had extensive experience in agricultural

writing (Cartmell, Dyer, Birkenholz, & Sitton, 2003). Respondents said story selection was based on "local community interest, accuracy, source reliability, and timeliness, and their first source of information was local Cooperative Extension Service and county Extension agents" (Cartmell et al., p. 7). Further, vocational agriculture teachers were cited as sources of information, and the editors—who believed that readers' interests were similar to theirs—said the topics of greatest appeal were health, food safety, and environmental issues. In another study of agricultural communicators' choice of sources, Naile and Cartmell (2007) found that university faculty and staff, Cooperative Extension, and veterinarians were the three top choices for scientific information for livestock publications.

Editorial Control

Editorial control of agricultural stories was the focus of a study by Reisner and Walter (1994). They wrote that "agricultural journalists work in organizational contexts that constrain the kind of stories published" (p. 534). For example, "Newspapers have limited news space, which means that agricultural coverage must necessarily compete with other stories of the day" (Reisner & Walter, p. 534). The farm beat reporter can choose what stories to cover; however, coverage of agricultural issues will make the paper only if the beat reporter—or the general-interest reporter covering an agricultural story—and the editor recognize its news value (Reiser & Walter, p. 534). But farm publication writers are constrained more by advertisers who seek to punish a magazine or newspaper by buying less advertising than by competition from other types of stories (Reisner & Walter).

Management's influence on reporters and writers sometimes comes indirectly: In a study by Banning and Evans (2001), management exerted pressure by not paying for travel-related expenses. In 1988, 27% of the respondents reported that advertisers were allowed to pay all or part of their expenses when they attended events sponsored by that company. The number who reported that in 1998 was 55% (Banning and Evans).

Editorial Technologies

Rhoades (2004) studied some of the emerging editorial technologies. Thirty-four percent of the respondents to Rhoades' study of Internet use by agricultural magazines said they had staff dedicated to Web site development, and 60% did not have staff dedicated solely to Web site work. The majority (73.8%) of the respondents said they did not outsource their Web site development. How agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators use the Web depended on the type of organization they worked for. Commodity groups used it for advertising, public relations professionals used it to distribute news, and marketers used it to pitch new products (Townsend, 2003).

Professional Careers

A 2005 study of ACE members showed that respondents were satisfied with the job satisfaction facets "work," "supervision," and "coworkers," as measured by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI). But they were dissatisfied with the facets of "pay" and "opportunities for promotion" (McGovney, 2005).

In a study of companies that focused on agriculture (Doerfert, Akers, Davis, Compton, Irani, and Rutherford, 2004), respondents indicated a need for companies to

be responsive to changing market conditions. Further, to respond "rapid changes in the job market and work-related technologies," almost every worker would need more training (Doerfert et al., p. 33). Respondents to that study said at least one new position in their company would be suitable for an agricultural communication or an agricultural journalism graduate. Hiring patterns of the previous five years showed that employers hired marketing, advertising, writing, and sales positions most frequently (Doerfert et al., p. 33), and respondents encouraged their employees to earn their master's degrees in the aforementioned topics.

In the literature review, information was found on the influence of management and owners, organizational structure, editorial control, editorial technologies, and professional careers. None was found on job profiles, competency distribution in the newsroom, editorial procedures, or mechanics of socialization.

Contextual

The contextual sphere contains the journalism training system; legal, normative, and economic issues; the economic condition of the media market and competition; press law; the institution of the press and the regulations, codices, and standards of the profession; and unions and associations (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003).

Journalism Training System

Becker (2003) posed three questions: What larger forces of society affect journalism training and education? What are the effects of training and education on journalists and the larger society in which they work? And, does it really matter how journalists are educated?

The journalism education systems of the United States and other countries are somewhat different (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003); programs that focus strictly on agricultural journalism and agricultural communication are almost nonexistent any place but in North America (Pawlick, 2001). On the whole, "Literature looking at the forces that have led to the development of journalism education, its persistence, and variations in its forms is largely lacking" internationally (Becker, 2003, p. xii). Training worldwide for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators has been studied even less.

But journalists and communicators are still covering agriculture throughout the world. "We always felt we were preparing professional journalists," Evans said, and that preparation added value (Starr & Evans, 2007).

Agricultural communication and mass communication are similar in many ways (Boone et al.), and parallel skills are needed by practitioners of both. "Journalism refers to reporting and editing for journals, newspapers, and broadcast media. Communication is a broader term and contains entertainment, information, persuasion, and advocacy" (Boone et al., 2000, p. 102). What differs is the communicator's knowledge of technical subject matter. Boone et al. wrote that the agricultural communicator is expected to bring a level of specialized knowledge to the field that is typically not required of the mass communicator.

Rural news is often neglected in newspapers because of a lack of training "for journalists interested in covering the farm beat" (Pawlick, 2001, p. 6). There is an "absence in general journalism education of efforts to alert students to the importance of agriculture to *all* readers—including those who live in the city" (Pawlick, p. 6). Evans

(2004) said the "uniqueness and main contributions of [agricultural journalism and agricultural communication] professional study programs lie in helping students prepare to become skilled professional communicators—communicators who uniquely bring to their careers an understanding of, and interest in, agriculture, broadly defined" (p. 6). Boone et al. (2000) wrote that, for many years, employers have found it hard to recruit qualified applicants with expertise in both communication and agriculture. They often had only two options: hire someone with a background in agriculture and provide communication training or hire someone with an expertise in communication and hope they would pick up agricultural knowledge while on the job (Boone et al., 2000). But agricultural journalism is hard to pick up on the job, Pawlick (2001) said.

> Compared to, say, the police or sports beat, about which any competent urban journalist with basic professional skills already has some familiarity, and whose finer points can be learned on the job, the complexity of the farm beat can take years to master. It covers an entire way of life, one utterly foreign to city people. (Pawlick, p. 7)

Before the early 1900s, no agricultural journalism or agricultural communication degrees were offered. The first college course in agricultural journalism was offered by Iowa State College in 1905 (Boone et al., 2000).

Evans (2004) identified programs centered in journalism as one of the priorities of universities, saying that students would benefit from the journalistic perspective, even if they were going to go into public relations or another field.

> It emphasizes a diversity of viewpoints, balance of content, a questioning approach, and critical thinking. It helps students learn to distinguish between dissemination and indoctrination, and to separate fact from inference and judgment. It introduces a valuable set of ethics and values. (Evans, p. 4)

Tucker, Whaley, and Cano (2003) wrote that agricultural communication programs seemed to be on firm ground in the university setting. There was a demand for graduates, and enrollment was growing. Reisner (1990b) wrote that an ideal agricultural communication curriculum had several components: micro-level courses, such as writing, that allowed "students to combine agricultural subject matter with communications skills"; advanced micro-level courses that allow students to "work outside the classroom, often in professional settings, to gain practical experience in agricultural communications"; and macro-level courses "that deal with communications transfer among aggregate populations within agriculture" (p. 24). A fourth component, she wrote, was a professional orientation course, which taught such skills as how to write resumes, how to interview, and how to conduct job searches. A "solid collegiate experience with course work in the arts, sciences, and agriculture" was recommended by Boone et al. (2000, p. 66). Also, writing and editing were identified as the most important skills for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

> It is not enough to be interested in agriculture; an agricultural communicator must be able to use the appropriate words and language to tell a reader about a process or procedure; describe a breed or variety; or relate other information that is important to a reader, viewer, or listener. (Boone et. al., 2000, p. 67)

Reisner (1990a) recommended that agricultural journalism students have training focused specifically on issues that relate to that field, including "cross-cultural global perspectives, agricultural systems analysis, values and ethics in agriculture, public policy" and leadership (p. 15). "The lack of required in-depth courses in such areas is problematic in light of agricultural communicators' intimate involvement in communicating agricultural public policy about global and national issues in agriculture" (Reisner, 1990a, p. 15).

Bailey–Evans (1994) wrote that leaders of national agricultural communicators' organizations utilized "writing, editing, public relations, and public speaking skills to complete their work-related duties" (p. 91). She wrote that the "agricultural communications curriculum should be flexible and should allow students opportunity to specialize" (Bailey–Evans, p. 91).

A study of instructors, practitioners, and alumni of agricultural journalism and agricultural communication programs in Florida identified writing as the most valuable communication skill (Sprecker & Rudd, 1997). Knowledge of agriculture was believed to be less important than having good communication skills (Sprecker & Rudd, 1997). Respondents to a 2005 survey (Sitton, Cartmell, & Sargent) of agricultural public relations professionals said a familiarity with agriculture was of less importance than communication or public relations proficiencies of developing presentations and identifying markets, meeting deadlines, and knowing current events (Sitton et al.).

Agricultural communication students need critical-thinking skills (Boone et al., 2000). Bisdorf–Rhoades, Ricketts, Irani, Lundy, and Telg (2005) found that instructors

needed to continue to concentrate on critical-thinking skills of students. Kovach and Rosenthiel (2001) wrote that journalists needed to synthesize and verify. Journalists need to sift "out the rumor, innuendo, the insignificant, and the spin and concentrate on what is true and important about a story" (pp. 47–48). Coursework in science helps the agricultural journalist and agricultural communicator better explain issues such as food safety, water quality, and pesticide contamination to the public (Boone et al.). Project management, problem solving, and listening skills are also important (Boone et al). Most agricultural communicators will need to be able to understand economic concepts and issues and how these affect profitability at the farm level and in the food industry (Boone et al.). Glaser (2008) wrote that graduates may need business skills as well. A typical career path for a journalist might entail starting at a small newspaper and then moving up to a larger one. Now, that same reporter might start a blog or podcasting audio or video reports but also have to handle the editorial and bookkeeping side of the business.

More audiences and clientele are demanding multimedia, or information presented in print, broadcast, and electronic forms; the Internet is liberating journalism from geography, and globalization is making most companies, even communication companies, corporations without borders (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, p. 31). The Web "offers agricultural communicators a new medium to spread agricultural information, educate the non-agricultural sectors, and halt any agricultural misconceptions that may exist" (Townsend, 2003, p 1).

Quinn (2005) wrote, "Convergence is attractive to both media managers and practitioners because it satisfies consumer demands and lifestyles" (p. 30). On the other

hand, convergence is putting pressure on local outlets and could produce overworked reporters who have to generate print, broadcast, and online versions of the same story (Starr & Evans, 2007). However, it has created more opportunities for agricultural journalists to interact with their readers (Starr & Evans). In explaining *Feedstuffs* magazine's move to multimedia, Sarah Muirhead, editor and publisher (personal communication, October 28, 2006), said,

> Some folks don't care to read and would rather get their information in sound bites. It also has been a way for us to gain a competitive edge, and we are seeing a number of potential video projects come our way as a result, thus a new revenue stream. Additionally, convergence is providing us a way to reach out to consumers and deliver agriculture's message. It has been a great experience. It gives us a new reason and way to talk to people and to communicate their messages.

Saunders, Akers, Haygood, and Lawver (2003) wrote, "Convenience is making the Internet a popular way of disseminating information, and agricultural news is no exception" (p. 1).

Rhoades (2004) recommended that educators teach students to be Webmasters and to have a variety of software programs. In Rhoades' study, agricultural magazine editors expressed a desire to receive "Extension, government, and public relations news in an electronic format as they continue to use the Internet more for news gathering and dissemination" (2004, p. 72).

Providing information and storytelling in more than one type of technology creates new opportunities, but even experienced agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators have to learn new skills to keep up with ever-changing technology (Sprecker & Rudd, 1997). Gordon (2003, ¶99) recommended, "Journalists in the 21st century will need a flexible mindset and the ability to adjust to change."

> At a minimum, all journalists will need to develop a basic understanding of the unique capabilities of the different communications media. Increasingly, their employers are going to deliver content to multiple platforms or collaborate with other companies to do so. (Gordon, 2003, ¶99)

Universities and colleges will have to train graduates who can practice more than one set of communication skills (Gordon, 2003). "The journalist who best understands the unique capabilities of multiple media will be the one who is most successful" (Gordon, ¶101).

Roberts of the University of Guelph, Canada, asked members of IFAJ at its annual Congress what skills were needed in graduates. Answers included writing, taking photographs, public speaking, critical thinking, having interpretive skills, listening, and communicating. They also needed to be detail-oriented and curious (*IFAJ News*, January 2005).

Unions and Associations

Professional associations and organizations are important to agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. Markey (personal communication, March 6, 2008), said IFAJ provides global networks for members. Members need their own association, he wrote, because "agricultural journalists are unique; they work in a different environment to the mainstream hack." Members are offered professional development or education for those already working in that field through its newsletter, Web site, awards programs, and World Congress, Markey said. IFAJ also offers its members international press credentials, he said.

In a 1995 survey by members of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, Agricultural Communicators in Education, Agricultural Relations Council, Cooperative Communicators Association, National Association of Agricultural Journalists, and the National Association of Farm Broadcasting, "direct application to a respondent's job was cited often as the reason why a particular organization was the most valuable" (Buck & Paulson, p. 11). In a 2000 survey, 84% of the respondents cited networking as the key reason they joined Agricultural Communicators in Education (now the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources); 87% said they joined ACE for professional development, and 47% indicated that ACE was meeting their needs in that regard. Things that make ACE more relevant than other organizations to them, respondents said, were (1) regional meetings with a professional skill theme, (2) specialty skill workshops open to groups beyond ACE, (3) more special-interest group interaction, (4) more collaboration with other organizations,

and (5) more promotion of communication and technology (issues) (Donnellan & Snowden, 2000). Respondents to a survey of Livestock Publications Council, American Agricultural Editors' Association, and the American Business Media's AgriCouncil members expressed satisfaction with opportunities to learn new skills and hone existing skills at meetings (West, Akers, Davis, Doerfert, Fraze, & Burris, 2007). Of the respondents, 20% said they did not attend professional development conferences on a regular basis (West et al.). Schedule conflicts, location, and the expense of attendance were the main reasons for being unable to attend professional development events, respondents said (West et al., p. 118). West et al. recommended that agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations continue to offer professional development, be aware of possible conflicts when scheduling events, and provide more centralized locations for professional development.

Even though members express satisfaction, Hans Siemes (2005) said membership of young journalists is declining in half of the member organizations surveyed in an International Federation of Agricultural Journalists study. This is particularly true in the middle-European countries and in Spain, South Africa, Canada, and Sweden. But overall membership numbers had declined by about 6.5%, due to fewer farmers and media outlets, and journalists being pulled away to other careers *(IFAJ News*, December 2005).

Economic Condition of the Media Market and Competition

Market competition for agricultural publications is included in the contextual spheres. General agricultural publications compete with each other for advertising

dollars, as do publications that are published under an umbrella organization—such as those that promote a specific commodity (Stuhlfaut, 2005, p. 22).

> External competition with other media for advertising revenues exists, as farm advertisers also use television, radio, outdoor, direct mail, and the Internet. These media are secondary, however, due to the limited budgets of farm advertisers, the magazines' ability to define and provide markets, and the technical nature of farm products that requires more explanation than broadcast commercials allow. (Stuhlfaut, p. 22)

Literature on journalism training and educational systems, the institution of the press and its regulations, codices, and standards of the profession, associations, and economic issues and conditions of the market were found. But no research could be found on the legal and normative areas as they pertain to agricultural journalism and agricultural communication specifically. No contextual research tied to Esser's model was found.

Societal

The societal sphere contains freedom of the press, press history, press-state relations, press self-conception of role in society, journalistic traditions in regards to objectivity and partisanship, investigative reporting, and political culture and social-political environments (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). Frölich and Holtz–Bacha (2003) wrote that the factors in the societal sphere, or a country's culture and historical background, had the most influence on journalism education. Another powerful influence is the economic factors and structure of media outlets. The ongoing

commercialization of the media in Europe is having a tremendous impact on the work of journalists and subsequently journalism education.

Freedom of the Press

Torsten Buhl, president of the Danish Guild of Agricultural Journalists, the oldest organization of agricultural journalists, wrote, "One of the vital ingredients in any democracy is a free press" (2005, p. 7). Reg Weiss, former IFAJ regional vice president and veteran South African journalist, said, "Too many African countries are still desperately in need of a free press that can act as a change agent for economic and human development" (Weiss, 2005, p. 3).

Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators must meet the same ethical standards—such as identifying sources and accuracy and not plagiarizing—as other journalists and communicators. And like their colleagues, they have been accused of breaching those standards. Ethical standards of farm magazines have been criticized by farm writers, farm organization leaders, and farmers because the magazines cannot serve their readers satisfactorily if they are catering to advertiser demands (Reisner & Hays, 1989). Further, producers rely heavily on the magazines for unbiased production information, and publications that are not unbiased harm readers' trust. In general, farm magazine writers and agricultural writers at newspapers reported more concerns with advertising pressure than did their counterparts on other beats (Reisner & Hays).

Journalistic Traditions in Regard to Objectivity and Partisanship

Pressure from advertisers was cited as the single most frequently listed ethical concern in a nationwide study of agricultural journalists, overriding other ethical

concerns (Reisner & Hays, 1991). “Some of the respondents considered agricultural communicators’ willingness to compromise their ethics a global threat to the entire profession, negatively affecting the communicators who strove to maintain their objectivity” (Reisner & Hays, 1989, p. 44).

Respondents in a 1988 study by Banning and Evans said they believed agricultural publications were catering to advertisers. That had increased by 16% when a similar study was conducted in 1998. Also, writers believed that they had “heavy pressure” from advertisers (Banning & Evans, 2001, p. 28). “The 10-year comparison suggests that advertisers are becoming more aggressive in requesting editorial space and that writers see agricultural publications increasingly catering to advertisers” (Banning & Evans, p. 33).

Concern exists that some agricultural journalists are bowing to the interests of advertisers and becoming “a kept press” (Starr & Evans, 2007). The special-interest publications that are arising, such as magazines that serve only one animal breed, are creating pressure for the agricultural journalist who works with independent media, Evans said (Starr & Evans). These journalists may feel pressure not to offend advertisers, he said (Starr & Evans). Concern exists that media are losing their independence and that advertisers have more of a voice than readers and listeners (Starr & Evans). Ethical issues are such of a concern to agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators that the American Agricultural Editors’ Association established a standing committee and new ethics guidelines in 2006 (Simon, 2006). Editors are to

a. Maintain honesty, integrity, accuracy, thoroughness, and fairness in the reporting and editing of articles, headlines, and graphics;
b. Avoid all conflicts of interest as well as any appearances of such conflicts;
c. Maintain an appropriate professional distance from the direct preparation of special advertising sections or other advertisements. (American Agricultural Editors' Association, 2006)

Editors are advised, "Selection of editorial topics, treatment of issues, interpretation, and other editorial decisions must not be determined by advertisers, advertising agencies, or the advertising departments of publications" (AAEA, 2006).

The Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences likewise established a Statement of Organizational Values. "Honesty, integrity, accuracy, and fairness in our relationships with clients and colleagues" are among the values listed (Association for Communication Excellence, 2006).

Not being objective may weaken journalists' work. To some people, objectivity may mean being free of bias. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) defined objectivity as developing "a consistent method of testing information—a transparent approach to evidence—precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work" (p. 72). While a background in agriculture is considered helpful by agricultural journalists and general journalists, some agricultural journalists feel that they and their peers may be too close to the organization they cover (Reisner, 1991). One-third of the American Agricultural Editors' Association members said they were too

close to their sources (Reisner & Hays, 1989). And a study of stories on the Internet showed that agricultural reporters used personal opinions when writing about agriculture, and they were writing with more positive than negative bias toward agriculture (Saunders, Akers, Haygood, & Lawver, 2003, p. 7).

Another concern for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators—which to some extent can be associated with ethics—is convergence. Convergence, especially in ownership, is becoming more common in agricultural media. More and more agricultural publications are being published by corporations that are putting out several different magazines, some of which may not cover agriculture (Stuhlfaut, 2005). Consolidation allows publishers to spread production costs over all of their publications, but it is leaving fewer—and larger—publishers of independent agricultural magazines and papers. Many publications are becoming more specialized in their editorial emphasis, but they also have smaller subscriber numbers and are more reliant on advertiser revenue (Banning & Evans, 2001). Therefore, advertiser pressure may increase.

Self-conception of Role in Society

The role of an agricultural journalist or agricultural communicator is to communicate information. To do so, he or she is likely to be a gatekeeper. They may filter information before it is released (Boone et al, 2000). For the purpose of this study, research was found on the media theories of gatekeeping and agenda-setting (influencing audiences by which stories are chosen); however, most of the research was undertaken with the general journalists and not agricultural journalists and agricultural

communicators. One study found that many livestock publications preferred information from university faculty and staff, Cooperative Extension, veterinarians, and U.S. Department of Agriculture staff. The sources were selected by more than 80% of the editors as trusted for scientific information (Cartmell & Naile, 2007).

Investigative Reporting

On the investigative reporting aspect of the societal sphere, Pawlick (2001) wrote that investigative media coverage of agriculture and rural areas was diminishing in North America, the former Soviet Union, and Africa. Major environmental, economic, political, and socio-cultural stories were underreported or not covered at all, he wrote.

Information was found on the societal sphere as it relates to freedom of the press, press history, the agricultural journalists' and agricultural communicators' role in society, journalistic traditions relating to objectivity and partisanship, and investigative reporting. However, none was found on political culture and social-political environments. None was found on the societal role of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators to Esser's model.

Objectives

This study sought to fill some of the gaps in agricultural journalism and agricultural communication research and in Esser's model. The objectives of the study were to

1. Determine the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors influencing the jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

2. Determine whether the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors differ between (a) United States' agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators and (b) international agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
3. To determine whether the societal, institutional, contextual, and societal factors are different between (a) United States' agricultural journalism and agricultural communication associations and (b) international agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations.
4. To develop a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the basic methodology used in applying Esser's (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) model of the spheres of influence on agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. Esser's original work applies the model to general journalists but does not address journalists and communicators within a specific context area. The research design, survey testing, and data collection are in this chapter. It also contains how validity and reliability were established.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors influencing the jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
2. To determine whether the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors differ between (a) agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in the United States and (b) international agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
3. To determine if the societal, institutional, contextual, and societal factors are different between (a) United States' agricultural journalism and agricultural communication associations and (b) international agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations.
4. To develop a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools.

Methods

A researcher-designed, descriptive, Web-based survey (Appendix B) was developed based on Esser's model (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). The survey contained four sections to represent the spheres of Esser's model: societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective. The literature review was conducted by searching the databases of the Texas A&M University Sterling Evans Library and the Agricultural Communication Documentation Center to locate pertinent journal articles and books; by interviews with leaders in agricultural journalism and agricultural communication; and by retrieving pertinent articles from Poynter Online, *IFAJ News,* and *The Byline* from the American Agricultural Editors' Association. The literature review was limited to agricultural journalism and agricultural communication research in North America. Little research on agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators outside North America could be found due to (a) researcher language limitations, and/or (b) few studies exist.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) defined descriptive as "determining *what is*" (p. 290). This descriptive study attempted to determine "what is" in agricultural journalism and agricultural communication at a particular time. Based on the "what is," a model of education for those agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators who work internationally was developed. Data were collected to describe the respondents, factors affecting jobs, and perceptions of current issues related to education.

Some of the survey questions were reworded from the American Journalist survey, conducted by the Indiana University School of Journalism and sponsored by the

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (Poynter, 2003). Other questions were developed to extract as much information as possible about each of Esser's spheres of influence. Questions about the spheres used Likert-type 5-point scales. General demographic data and information about issues important to agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators were collected. A five-person panel from the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University was used to evaluate the validity of the instrument; that committee helped to develop the questionnaire and reword some questions that were ambiguous or too complicated. Questions progressed from fairly easy to more difficult to answer, and personal data was requested at the conclusion, as recommended by Dillman (2000). There was only moderate reliability for the study. In the questions about the subjective sphere, Cronbach's alpha was .70 with 17 questions; institutional, .76, with 19 questions; contextual, .78, with 16 questions; and societal, .78, with 12 questions.

Content analysis was used to categorize responses to open-ended questions. The researcher read through respondents' answers and selected categories. These categories were reviewed by committee members and revised with their input. Answers were grouped into categories.

Members of four organizations were chosen to be included in the survey. The organizations were the Association for Communications Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE); the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ); American Agricultural Editors' Association (AAEA); and the North American Agricultural Journalists (NAAJ). The Web-based survey was

confidential, with respondents identified only by association; respondents accessed the survey with a password unique to their association.

Various means of survey administration were considered. But an e-mail survey was impossible because e-mail addresses of association members could not be obtained. The costs of a mail-in survey or telephone sampling would have been too high because of the survey's international focus (Dillman, 2000). A Web-based survey was chosen because of its low cost (compared with paper and telephone), rapid turnaround, quick response rates, and "wider distribution, even to international audiences" (Parsons, 2007, p. 24). Higher response rates in some cases and storage of responses in the provider's database were two more reasons to do a Web-based survey (Marra & Bogue, 2006). Also, no interviewers were needed (Alvarez & VanBeselaere, 2005).

An online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, was used (Marra & Bogue, 2006) and a convenience sample taken. It was not believed that using a Web-based survey would limit the number of respondents very much. Web-based surveys are not recommended for use with some audiences but do work well for members of groups that have access to the Web (Parsons, 2007). It was believed that this would be the best tool for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. About 20% of the world's population uses the Internet (Internet World Stats, 2007), and a study by Rhoades showed that 71% of the respondents to a survey of agricultural publications had a Web site associated with their publication (Rhoades, 2004). Rhoades wrote, "The Internet has become a major factor in most media newsrooms over the last decade" (p. xi). Therefore, it was inferred

that many of the members of these associations would have Web access and would be able to complete the survey.

Two grants—one from the AAEA and one from the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications—allowed the researcher to attend the IFAJ meeting in Hamar, Norway, in August 2006. During that meeting, the purpose of the survey was explained and a postcard with the URL and password for the Web-based survey (Appendix A) were distributed. If International Federation of Agricultural Journalists members wanted to fill out the survey at the meeting, they were given a copy. Those members who did not—or those who were not at the meeting—were given the opportunity through notice of the survey being online. A reminder was published in the online IFAJ newsletter in August 2006 (http://www.ifaj.org/news/agcomm_study.htm).

Face-to-face meetings with the ACE, AAEA, and NAAJ members were not held; contact was strictly through e-mail messages. It was believed that the IFAJ membership contained many agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators who either had not been contacted at all or infrequently by university researchers in the United States, so personal contact was important to encourage participation.

The first e-mail message was sent to 585 members of ACE special-interest groups in August 2006 via its listserv (Appendix A), and a reminder e-mail was sent a month later. The AAEA and NAAJ were contacted about the survey in an e-mail message to their membership in September 2006, which coincided with the reminder e-mail for ACE. Reminder e-mails were sent a month later in October in accordance with Dillman's Tailored Design method (Dillman, 2000). Since the membership lists are

closed to the public, e-mails were sent to ACE, AAEA, and NAAJ membership by officers of each association. Although follow-up reminders are recommended (Dillman), "response rates may not be appreciably affected by larger numbers of reminder notices, and in fact, a slight decrease among those receiving the largest number of reminders has been observed" (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000, p. 831). It was possible that some people took the survey twice, but not likely since the survey's origins were clearly identified. Early and late respondents were defined by the waves of responses based on prompts or reminders. Responses were compared on the primary variables of interest (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). No significant difference was found, and results therefore could be generalized to the entire sample (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers).

All data analysis was conducted using SPSS 14®. For analysis, mean scores were calculated and used to compare the respondents and the spheres of influence. Demographic data, courses taken, and learning preferences were ranked by percentages. Since the questions about the most important skills and the most important issues for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators were open-ended, eight categories for each question were coded to represent a discrete variable that was relevant to the research objectives (Gall et al., 2003). The sum of weighted ranks for each category was calculated to determine the most important skills and issues for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

Population

Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators affiliated with the IFAJ, AAEA, and NAAJ represented the international group. IFAJ was founded in Paris in

1956. Writers, editors, photographers, videographers, and marketers make up its membership, which is by country not by individuals (IFAJ, 2006). AAEA began meeting informally in about 1916 (Harvey & Swegle, 1996), and its members are agricultural editors, writers, photographers, and journalism students (AAEA, 2008). The NAAJ was formed in 1953. Its members are newspaper farm writers and editors (Hendee, 2003, p. v). Because of an agreement between the respective parties, AAEA and NAAJ members are automatically given membership in IFAJ.

ACE was formed when land-grant agricultural editors met for the first time in 1913. The membership of ACE includes writers, editors, photographers, graphic designers, videographers, electronic media producers, marketing and public relations practitioners, researchers, Web developers, database programmers, distance education specialists, educators, and managers (ACE, 2006). Its members are employed at universities, governmental agencies, and research organizations in the public sector and at private companies. Its members join special-interest groups within the organization that tailor professional development to their needs.

A review of membership revealed that most of its members' jobs are based at universities in the United States; therefore, ACE was chosen to represent the domestic group. Nine ACE special-interest groups were surveyed: electronic media, graphic design, information technology, international, leadership and management, media relations, photography, publishing, and writing. Members who are involved solely in marketing activities with their organization were excluded because the purpose of this study was to ascertain the training of those who explain agriculture to readers and

viewers. However, since ACE members are allowed to belong to more than one special interest group, some marketing specialists may have answered the survey.

The convenience sample (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) represented most of the major professional organizations of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

Limitations

Known limitations to the study were

- The survey was in English. Some agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators without a command of English might not have completed it or misinterpreted some questions.
- Very little research about agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in countries outside of North America could be found. Researcher language limitations restricted the search for research conducted outside of the United States.
- Some respondents might have had concerns about filling out a survey through a third-party system (SurveyMonkey) (Marra & Bogue, 2006) and not have taken it.
- Respondents' technical capabilities may have led to errors (Dillman, 2000, & Parsons, 2007).
- Respondents might have been confused as to the definitions of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators, even though those terms were defined at the beginning of the study.

- The survey was cross-sectional, which means that it measured factors, demographics, and issues at only one point. It did not measure cause and effect (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).
- The survey used a convenience sample. Therefore the findings may not be representative beyond the time of the survey (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).
- The researcher had to depend on associations and organizations to send the survey on their e-mail listservs, resulting in notices being sent out at different times. The exact number of members could not be obtained for each association and therefore cannot be reported in this research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study investigated the factors affecting agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators affiliated with international and domestic associations. Esser proposed a model of spheres of influence for journalists, on which this study was based.

Using the model, Esser and others studied the interdependent factors that influence the work of journalists. In this study, the model was applied to agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. The four spheres of Esser's model—subjective, contextual, societal, and institutional—served as a framework for studying the literature about agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators and developing the survey instrument.

For the purposes of the survey, agricultural journalism and agricultural communication were defined by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker (2000), "Journalism refers to reporting and editing for journals, newspapers and broadcast media. Communication, a broader term, includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy" (p. 102).

The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors influencing the jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.
2. To determine if the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors are different between (a) United States' agricultural journalists and agricultural

communicators, and (b) international agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

3. To determine if the societal, institutional, contextual, and societal factors are different between (a) United States' agricultural journalism and agricultural communication associations and (b) international agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations.

4. To develop a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools.

A survey of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators from four organizations—the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, the American Agricultural Editors' Association, the North American Agricultural Journalists, and the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences—was conducted. Questions relating to the spheres, demographics, and current issues of importance were asked.

Two-hundred and fifty-six responses were received. Of these respondents, 136 were members of ACE, 36 were members of IFAJ, 70 were from AAEA, and 13 were from NAAJ. Table 1 describes the demographics about respondents. Slightly more than half of the respondents were male (54.9%, $f = 101$), and 91.5% ($f = 127$) were more than 40 years old. The United States was the country of residence for 71.9% ($f = 184$) of the respondents. Most respondents considered themselves agricultural communicators (83.9%, $f = 184$).

Respondents were more likely to have studied journalism or communication (43.1%, $f = 75$) than agricultural journalism or agricultural communication (22.4%, $f = 39$). A total of 42.6% ($f = 81$) of the respondents had earned a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education; 34.2% ($f = 65$) had earned a master's degree. Most of the respondents (82.2%, $f = 148$) had attended a public university, and 70% ($f = 133$) had completed some type of professional work experience as part of their training. Nearly half (49.4%, $f = 90$) had 20 or more years of work experience; however, 28.6% ($f = 52$) said they had had 9 years or less. Tests were run to see if there was a correlation between age and years of work experience; there was none.

A total of 34.4% ($f = 95$) of the respondents believed they were somewhat prepared and 25.4% ($f = 60$) said they were very prepared by their university experiences for careers in agricultural journalism. A total of 37.1% ($f = 99$) said they were somewhat prepared, and 23.4% ($f = 65$) said they were very prepared for their careers in agricultural communication.

To try to determine how much of agricultural journalists' and agricultural communicators' jobs focused on agriculture, participants were asked how much of their news was agriculturally related. Almost a third (29.5%, $f = 73$) said 100% of their news was agriculturally related.

To try to determine whether publications were general or specific, participants were asked whether their subscriber lists were paid. Specific-audience publications (whether by commodity or interest) are generally included as part of a membership fee of an organization. General-interest publications are available to anyone for a paid

subscription fee. A total of 14.1% (f = 36) said their subscriber list was not paid, suggesting that they still worked for a general-interest publication. A total of 37.1% (n = 95) indicated that they did not work for a publication

Table 1

Demographic and Educational Data (N = 256)

Variable		f[a]	P[b]
Sex			
	Male	101	54.9
	Female	83	45.1
Country			
	USA	184	71.9
	Canada	8	3.1
	Australia	6	2.4
	Other	26	22.6
Job			
	Agricultural Communicator	184	83.3
	Agricultural Journalist	37	16.7
Age			
	80–89	9	5.1
	70–79	27	15.3
	60–69	38	21.6
	50–59	54	30.7
	40–49	33	18.8
	30–39	10	5.7
	20–29	3	1.7
	10–19	1	.6
Field of study			
	Journalism/communication	75	43.1
	Agricultural journalism/communication	39	22.4
	Other agriculture	24	13.8
	Economics/political science	13	7.5
	English	10	5.7
	Languages/cultural studies	7	4.0
	Consumer and family sciences	3	1.7
	Other	3	1.7

Table 1

Continued

Variable	f[a]	P[b]
Training		
Bachelor's degree	81	42.6
Master's degree	65	34.2
Doctoral degree	26	13.7
Associate's degree	5	2.6
Technical school degree	3	1.6
On-the-job training/apprenticeship	3	1.6
High school/trade school	3	0.5
Other	4	2.1
Post-secondary institution		
Public	148	82.2
Private	17	9.4
Combined public/private	15	8.3
Professional work experience as part of training		
Yes	133	70.0
No	57	30.0
Work experience		
9 years or less	52	28.6
20-29 years	49	26.9
10-19 years	40	22.0
30-39 years	30	16.5
40-49 years	9	4.9
50-59 years	2	1.1
Prepared for career in agricultural journalism?		
Yes, somewhat prepared	65	34.0
Yes, very prepared	88	46.1
No, somewhat unprepared	23	12.0
No, I was not prepared	15	7.8
Prepared for career in agricultural communication?		
Yes, somewhat prepared	60	31.3
Yes, very prepared	95	49.5
No, somewhat unprepared	22	11.5
No, I was not prepared	15	7.8
Agricultural journalism training is:		
Improving	84	43.8
Neither improving or declining	76	39.6
Declining	32	16.7

Table 1

Continued

Variable	f^a	P^b
Agricultural communication training is:		
Improving	87	45.5
Neither improving nor declining	81	42.4
Declining	23	12.0
Professional work experience as part of education		
Yes	133	70
No	57	30
Percentage of news agriculturally related		
100%	73	45.6
90-99.9%	29	18.1
80-89%	13	8.1
70-79%	10	6.3
50-59%	6	3.8
60-69%	4	3.0
40-49%	4	3.0
30-39%	3	2.0
20-29%	3	2.0
10-19%	2	1.3
0-9%	10	6.3
Subscriber list paid		
Yes	36	2.7
No, our list is controlled	21	12.7
No	11	6.6
I don't work for a publication	95	57.2
Agricultural journalists registered in your country?		
Yes	3	1.8
No	168	98.2
Agricultural communicators registered in your country?		
Yes	2	1.2
No	168	98.8
Radio or television broadcast organization, listeners pay a subscription		
Yes	1	0.7
No	8	5.8
I don't work for radio or television broadcast organization	130	93.5

Note. [a]Total for each variable may be less than 256 because of missing data.
[b]Total for each percentage may not be 100 because of rounding.

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents said they were agricultural communicators, no matter their place of residence or organizational membership.

Table 2

Job Title Compared to Residence and Organizational Membership

	Agricultural journalist	Agricultural communicator
United States	16	165
Not United States	21	19
International organization	46	72
Domestic organization	1	112

Table 3 addresses Objective 1, which was to determine societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors that influence jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. In the survey, questions were designed to determine the influence of spheres. Table 3 describes the relationship between jobs of respondents and the spheres of influence. There is a relationship between the jobs that agricultural communicators do and the societal sphere. Other relationships were found between the societal and subjective spheres of influences.

Table 3

Relationships between Jobs and Spheres of Influence (N=256[a])

	Job code	Subjective mean	Societal mean
Job code	1	.063	-.127*
			.038
			195
Subjective mean		1	.330**
			.000
			195
Societal mean			1
Institutional mean			
Contextual mean			

Note. Job Code of 0=agricultural journalist and 1=agricultural communicator
[a]*N* may be less than 256 because of missing data
*$p < 0.05$

Objective 2 compared the respondents' means for the spheres of influence and place of residence (United States vs. not United States). Table 4 and Table 5 show that little difference exists between the place of residence and the spheres.

Table 4

Comparison of Spheres by Residence (United States vs. Not United States) ($N = 256$)

Sphere	Residence	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*d*
Subjective	Not United States	40	3.70	.36	.03
	United States	181	3.69	.34	
Institutional	Not United States	36	2.94	.40	.19
	United States	156	3.01	.37	
Contextual	Not United States	36	3.16	.55	.47
	United States	158	2.97	.37	
Societal	Not United States	36	3.77	.39	.12
	United States	160	3.72	.42	

Table 5

Comparison of Spheres by Residence (United States vs. Not United States) ANOVA

		SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Subjective	Between groups	.01	1	.01	.05	.83
	Within groups	26.00	219	.12		
Societal	Between groups	.07	1	.07	.42	.52
	Within groups	33.80	194	.17		
Institutional	Between groups	.21	1	.21	1.47	.23
	Within groups	27.21	190	.14		
Contextual	Between groups	.10	1	1.03	6.23	.01
	Within groups	31.73	192	.17		

Note. $p < 0.05$

Objective 3 compared the means of members of the international associations (International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, American Agricultural Editors' Association, and North American Agricultural Journalists) and the domestic organization (Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences). Results are shown in Table 6 and Table 7. The difference between international and domestic organization members in the societal sphere resulted in a medium effect size ($d = .39$)

Table 6

Relationship between Spheres and International vs. Domestic Organizations

Sphere	Organization	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*d*
Subjective	International	197	3.71	.33	.12
	Domestic	114	3.67	.36	
Societal	International	99	3.81	.43	.39
	Domestic	97	3.65	.39	
Institutional	International	98	3.01	.41	.00
	Domestic	94	3.01	.35	
Contextual	International	98	3.06	.43	.27
	Domestic	96	2.95	.39	

Table 7

Relationship between Spheres and International vs. Domestic Organizations ANOVA

Sphere	Organization	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Subjective mean	Between groups	.068	1	.07	.57	.45
	Within groups	25.99	219	.12		
Societal mean	Between groups	1.191	1	1.19	7.07*	.01
	Within groups	32.68	194	.17		
Institutional mean	Between groups	.000	1	.00	.00	.96
	Within groups	27.43	190	.14		
Contextual mean	Between groups	.662	1	.66	3.96	.05
	Within groups	32.10	192	.17		

Note. $p < 0.05$

The purpose of Objective 4 was to develop a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools. Tables 7–14 report the skills, issues, job responsibilities, and continuing education that respondents indicated were important.

In an open-ended question, respondents ordered the three skills that new agricultural journalists would need most. The answers were put into eight categories and coded using content analysis to represent a discrete variable relevant to the research objectives (Gall et al., 2003). The sum of weighted ranks was computed to determine overall importance. Table 8 shows that personal attributes such as caring, listening, being able to learn new information, and having empathy were listed as the most important skills that an agricultural journalist should have. Writing skills ranked second, and communication skills, such as using new technology, ranked third.

Respondents ranked the three skills that new agricultural communicators would need most (Table 9), and again, the sum of weighted ranks was used. Respondents ranked communication skills as the most important; personal attributes ranked second and journalistic skills ranked third.

Table 8

Most Important Skills for Agricultural Journalists

Most important skills for agricultural journalists	1	2	3	Sum of weighted ranks	Overall importance
Personal skills and attributes[a]	39	30	43	780	1
Writing[b]	43	23	16	601	2
Communication[c]	16	31	41	591	3
Journalistic[d]	21	21	10	375	4
Cultural[e]	20	13	13	329	5
Critical thinking[f]	9	19	12	277	6
Other knowledge[g]	9	18	12	270	7
Agricultural knowledge[h]	9	7	7	163	8

Note. [a]Personal skills and attributes include ability to listen and learn new information easily; adaptability, creativity, curiosity, ethics, honesty, humility, tact, flexibility, and open-mindedness; people, social, interpersonal, and speaking skills; non-judgmental approach; and being a team player. [b]Writing includes writing and writing/reporting skills. [c]Communication includes editing, photography, visual, graphic arts, technical, marketing, computer, digital recording, and media use skills; and ability to find the correct market or audience. [d]Journalistic includes reporting and interviewing skills; and being accurate, objective, and able to research stories. [e]Cultural includes cultural ethics, international, and language skills; overseas experience; openness to and understanding other cultures. [f]Critical thinking includes critical thinking skills; analytical ability; ability to understand complex subjects and translate science to common terms; and discerning the real issue. [g]Other knowledge includes ability to conduct research; knowledge of trade policy; and understanding national politics, business and economics. [h]Agricultural knowledge includes understanding agriculture and agricultural and trade policy, and having an agricultural background.

Table 9

Most Important Skills for Agricultural Communicators

Most important skills for agricultural communicators	1	2	3	Sum of weighted ranks	Overall importance
Communication[c]	30	34	41	724	1
Personal attributes[a]	36	49	10	691	2
Journalistic[d]	10	10	43	408	3
Writing[b]	26	8	16	360	4
Cultural[e]	21	12	12	324	5
Critical thinking[f]	10	10	13	228	6
Agricultural knowledge[h]	9	6	12	186	7
Other knowledge[g]	7	10	7	168	8

Note. [a]Personal skills and attributes includes ability to listen and learn new information easily; adaptability, creativity, curiosity, ethics, honesty, humility, tact, flexibility, and open-mindedness; people, social, interpersonal, and speaking skills; non-judgmental approach; and being a team player. [b]Writing includes writing and writing/reporting skills. [c]Communication includes editing, photography, visual, graphic arts, technical, marketing, computer, digital recording, and media use skills; and ability to find the correct market or audience. [d]Journalistic includes reporting and interviewing skills; and being accurate, objective, and able to research stories. [e]Cultural includes cultural ethics, international, and language skills; overseas experience; openness to and understanding of other cultures. [f]Critical thinking includes critical thinking skills; analytical ability; ability to understand complex subjects and translate science to common terms; and discerning the real issue. [g]Other knowledge includes ability to conduct research; knowledge of trade policy; and understanding national politics, business and economics. [h]Agricultural knowledge includes understanding agriculture and agricultural and trade policy, and having an agricultural background.

Respondents ranked what they thought would be the three most important issues in 2020 that agricultural journalists should be trained to handle (Table 10). Answers were separated into eight categories, and the sum of weighted ranks was computed for each category. The respondents indicated that agricultural technology and development was the most important issue. Economic issues ranked second, and journalistic issues such as ethics, pressure from management, and crisis communication ranked third.

Table 10

Important Issues for Agricultural Journalists

Important issues for agricultural journalists	1	2	3	Sum of weighted ranks	Overall Importance
Ag. technology and development[a]	29	31	29	623	1
Economic[b]	25	20	22	472	2
Journalistic[c]	18	18	21	396	3
Food production/safety[d]	25	11	10	337	4
Environment/climate change[e]	18	16	11	322	5
Ag. terrorism/biosecurity[f]	16	15	4	257	6
Globalization/animal welfare[g]	6	15	12	225	7
Consumer[h]	7	7	11	171	8

Note. [a]Agricultural technology and development includes biotechnology, changing farming practices, continuing specialization within agriculture, genetically engineered crops, technological advances in machinery and computerization, renewable fuels, nutraceuticals, and nanotechnology. [b]Economic includes economics, trade policy, international economic balance, world trade negotiations, trade regulations, U.S. farm subsidies, migrant labor, and world politics and economies. [c]Journalistic includes ability to speak, covering news vs. coverage of an event, writing/reporting skills, ethics, media convergence, multimedia, new electronic media and software, civic journalism, ability to publish independent stories, objectivity despite corporate influence, ability to work with people, cultural differences, crisis communication, and curiosity. [d]Food production/safety includes food production, hunger and famine, traceability, food safety, sustainability, input costs, and diminishing number of farmers. [e]Environment/climate change includes environment, climate change, water quality and quantity, global warming, environmental protection and conservation, environmental impact of agriculture. [f] Agricultural terrorism/biosecurity includes agriterrorism, bioterrorism, biosecurity, zoonotic diseases, pandemics, and health and diseases. [g]Globalization/animal welfare includes globalization and animal welfare. [h]Consumer issues includes consumer concerns and demands, public fear and understanding of agriculture and science, urbanization, rural and urban balance, rural issues and development, and higher food prices.

Respondents ranked the three most important issues in 2020 that agricultural communicators should be trained to handle. Agricultural technology and development ranked as the most important, journalistic issues ranked second, and economic issues ranked third (Table 11).

Table 11

Important Issues for Agricultural Communicators

Important issues for agricultural communicators	1	2	3	Sum of weighted ranks	Overall Importance
Ag. tech. and development[a]	23	25	25	509	1
Journalistic[c]	26	19	23	479	2
Economics[b]	22	15	20	401	3
Globalization/animal welfare[g]	13	13	11	261	4
Environment/climate change[e]	8	14	9	216	5
Food production/food safety[d]	13	9	6	203	6
Ag. terrorism/biosecurity[f]	13	7	3	171	7
Consumer [h]	6	12	6	168	8

Note. [a]Agricultural technology and development includes biotechnology, changing farming practices, continuing specialization within agriculture, genetically engineered crops, technological advances in machinery and computerization, renewable fuels, nutraceuticals, and nanotechnology. [b]Economic includes economics, trade policy, international economic balance, world trade negotiations, trade regulations, U.S. farm subsidies, migrant labor, and world politics and economies. [c]Journalistic includes ability to speak, covering news vs. coverage of an event, editing/reporting skills, ethics, media convergence, multimedia, new electronic media and software, civic journalism, ability to publish independent stories, objectivity despite corporate influence, ability to work with people, cultural differences, crisis communication, and curiosity. [d]Food production/safety includes food production, hunger and famine, traceability, food safety, sustainability, input costs, and diminishing number of farmers. [e]Environment/climate change includes environment, climate change, water quality and quantity, global warming, environmental protection and conservation, environmental impact of agriculture. [f] Agricultural terrorism/biosecurity includes agriterrorism, bioterrorism, biosecurity, zoonotic diseases, pandemics, and health and diseases. [g]Globalization/animal welfare includes globalization and animal welfare. [h]Consumer issues includes consumer concerns and demands, public fear and understanding of agriculture and science, urbanization, rural and urban balance, rural issues and development, and higher food prices.

To ascertain the respondents' most important job responsibilities, answers to the open-ended questions were coded into nine categories and the sum of weighted ranks computed. Respondents listed their most important job responsibilities (Table 12) as print and broadcast writing, reporting, research, production, and photography. Their second most important job responsibilities were management, administration, project coordination, and planning; and their third most important job responsibilities were communication with clientele and internal and external audiences, and public relations.

Table 12

Most Important Job Responsibilities

Most important job responsibilities	1	2	3	Sum of weighted ranks	Overall Importance
Print and broadcast writing, reporting, research, production, photography, design	85	76	53	460	1
Management, administration, project coordination, planning	51	35	26	249	2
Communication with clientele, internal and external audiences, public relations	13	29	45	142	3
Teaching	6	7	10	42	4
Computer, information technology	3	8	7	32	5
Fiscal management	1	2	7	14	6
Retired	4			12	7
Freelance	3			9	8
Agriculture	1	2	1	8	9

Respondents were given a list of six skills and asked which they had learned in the past five years to keep up with technological changes in the agricultural journalism and agricultural communication industries (Table 13). Word-processing software was the top choice ($f = 122$). Graphic design ranked second ($f = 105$) and electronic editing techniques ranked third ($f = 100$).

Table 13

Skills Learned in the Past Five Years ($N = 256$)

Skill	*f*	*P*
Word processing software	122	47.7
Graphic design	105	41.0
Electronic editing techniques	100	39.0
Digital recording equipment	60	23.4
Audio editing software	28	10.9
Video editing software	28	10.9

Note. [a]Total for frequencies are more than 256 because respondents could answer more than once.
[b]Total for each percentage may be more than 100 because respondents could answer more than once.

Respondents ranked their preference of a continuing education learning environment from a list of 11 responses (Table 14). The three most frequent responses were professional organization annual meetings ($f = 149$), on-site workshops hosted by professional organizations ($f = 148$), and trade journals or publications ($f = 138$).

Table 14

Preferred Learning Environments for Continuing Education (N = 256)

Continuing Education Type	*f*	*P*
Professional organization annual meetings	149	58.2
On-site workshops hosted by professional organizations	148	57.8
Trade journals or publications	138	53.9
University-sponsored courses or continuing education classes	100	39.1
On-line, self-paced activities	78	30.5
Self-taught with tutorials or books	78	30.5
Listservs	60	23.4
Schools designed specifically for working journalists	54	21.1
On-line/Internet conferences	48	18.8
For-profit company-sponsored courses/activities	37	14.5
Teleconferences	36	14.1

Note. [a]Total for variables are more than 256 because respondents could answer more than once.
[b]Total for each percentage may be more than 100 because respondents could answer more than once.

Respondents listed courses they had taken as part of their educational preparation that helped in their careers in agricultural journalism or agricultural communication (Table 15). The three most frequent answers were print journalism (f = 143), English (f = 135), and liberal arts such as language, history, or psychology (f = 119).

Table 15

Educational Courses Completed ($N = 256$)

Course	*f*	*P*
Print journalism	143	55.9
English	135	52.7
Liberal arts (language, history, psychology)	119	46.4
Biological sciences	106	41.4
Public relations	93	36.3
Humanities	87	34
Civics or political science	83	32.4
Agricultural economics	78	30.5
Marketing	69	27
Graphic design	67	26.2
Earth sciences	67	26.2
Animal science	65	25.4
Broadcast journalism	63	24.6
Crop agriculture	61	23.8
Chemistry	60	23.4
Radio	47	18.4
Food science	46	18
Electronic media	40	15.6
Television	40	15.6
Agricultural education	40	15.6
Horticulture	40	15.6
Extension education	35	13.7
Physics	31	12.1

Note. [a]Total for variables are more than 256 because respondents could answer more than once.
[b]Total for each percentage is more than 100 because respondents could answer more than once. question.

The purpose of Objective 4 was to develop a model by which agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators can be educated in universities or training schools. Based on the ranks and perceptions, a model for educating agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators was developed. The model is as follows: If agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators would:

- Take courses in print journalism, English, liberal arts, biological sciences, and public relations,
- Gain proficiency in the skills of word processing, graphic design, electronic editing, digital recording equipment, audio editing, and video editing,
- Develop the needed proficiencies and skills of personal attributes, writing, communication, journalistic, and cultural for agricultural journalists,
- Develop the needed proficiencies and skills of communication, personal attributes, journalistic, writing, and cultural for agricultural communicators,
- Use the continuing education methods of professional organization workshops, on-site workshops organized by professional organizations, and read trade journals or publications.

That would allow agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators to perform the job functions of

- Print and broadcast writing reporting, research, production, photography, design,
- Management, administration, project coordination, planning, and
- Communication with clientele, internal and external audiences, and public relations.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will discuss and draw conclusions from the data collected from the study of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

Half of the respondents to this study were male (54.9%, $f = 101$), and 91.5% ($f = 161$) were more than 40 years old. The findings were similar to the Buck and Paulson study (1995), but they differed slightly from those of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists' (IFAJ) study (2005) since the IFAJ responses indicated more females than males. Respondents were drawn from groups similar to the Buck and Paulson study, and the IFAJ was added to this study.

Half (50.6%, $f = 92$) of the respondents in this study had fewer than 19 years of work experience. The United States was the country of residence for 71.9% ($f = 184$) of the respondents.

Most respondents considered themselves agricultural communicators (83.9%, $f = 184$). In interpreting the data, it is important to keep in mind that most of the respondents were from the Association for Communication Excellence in Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Life Sciences, whose members are from the United States and who tend to be in agricultural communication-type positions. Therefore, the number of respondents who called themselves agricultural communicators was higher in the domestic organization (ACE) than any other. This could be due, in part, to the history of ACE; it was organized for land-grant communicators. But, a high proportion of the respondents (61%, $f = 72$) from the international associations and organizations (IFAJ,

American Agricultural Editors' Association [AAEA], and North American Agricultural Journalists [NAAJ]) called themselves agricultural communicators (Table 2). In the IFAJ study (*IFAJ News,* 2005), most respondents called themselves agricultural journalists even though they had many agricultural communicator-type duties in their jobs. With the changes in news in general and agricultural news specifically, is there a new definition of agricultural journalism or agricultural communication? Should that definition be expanded? Should some other term be used? Or do agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators see a shift in their job duties? In the open comment section (Appendix C), one respondent said, "The lines have blurred people and you can't continue to put people in the same tired old categories" (Appendix C, p. 97). Some commentators referred to their past experience as agricultural journalists but said that the definitions put them in the category of agricultural communicators.

Based on reported ages, it might be inferred that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are an aging population, with very few younger colleagues coming up through the ranks. That could pose serious problems for these professions in the future. Or it could mean that the younger generation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are joining other associations and organizations and did not respond to this survey; younger agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators don't tend to join organizations; or that people tend to join these organizations once established in their careers. In the IFAJ survey (*IFAJ News,* 2005), Hans Siemes, who chaired the survey committee, said in half of the IFAJ member organizations, or

chapters, the number of younger journalists was declining. But he also said numbers of all ages had declined by 6.5% (*IFAJ News)*.

The respondents in this study were well educated: 42.6% ($f = 81$) of the respondents had earned a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, and 34.2% ($f = 65$) had earned a master's degree. There was little difference in this regard between this study and the 1994 Bailey–Evans study, the 1995 Buck and Paulson study, and the 2005 IFAJ study.

An anomaly revealed itself regarding work experience. Half (49.4%, $f = 90$) of the respondents had 20 or more years of work experience; however, 28.6% ($f = 52$) said they had had 9 years or less work experience. On the one hand, this means that a half of the workforce had considerable experience; on the other hand, more than a quarter had 9 or fewer years of work experience. This was a little different than the Buck and Paulson study (1995), when 38.9% had more than 20 years of work experience and 35.6% had 9 or fewer years of experience. This widening of the middle-range gap of workers could indicate several things:

- Transfers of a number of workers to agricultural journalism and agricultural communication from other careers;
- A change in title from agricultural journalist to agricultural communicator or vice versa from that study (if respondents participated in both studies);
- An altered title because of the definition this study gave them;
- Different groups surveyed from previous research.

Even though respondents used the term agricultural communicator when referring to themselves, many of their primary job responsibilities were still journalistic in nature: print and broadcast writing, reporting, research, production, photography, design. In the Buck and Paulson study (1995), reporting was listed as the primary job responsibility (19.2%), public relations was the second most common job responsibility (16.9%), and editing was the third most common job responsibility (16.2%).

Respondents indicated that universities and colleges were doing a good job of preparing their graduates for careers. One-third (34.4%, $f = 95$) of the respondents said they believed they were somewhat prepared, and 25.4% ($f = 60$) said they were very prepared by their university experiences for careers in agricultural journalism. A total of 37.1% ($f = 99$) said they were somewhat prepared, and 23.4% ($f = 65$) said they were very prepared for their careers in agricultural communication. Few of the respondents said they were not prepared for their careers. This suggests that universities are doing a good job of preparing future agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

Agriculture was still the focus of much of the work that respondents did. Nearly half (49.5%, $f = 125$) reported that 70% or more of their news was still agriculturally related; 3.9% ($f = 10$) reported that they worked for organizations where less than 10% of the news was agriculturally related.

The purpose of Objective 1 was to determine if societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors influenced the jobs of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. There was a relationship when means (from questions 5-8 in the survey) were compared between the jobs that agricultural journalists and agricultural

communicators do and the societal sphere. In other words, agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators appeared to be more influenced by the components of the societal sphere, which are freedom of the press; press history; press-state relations; press self-conception of role in society; journalistic traditions in regards to objectivity and partisanship; investigative reporting; and political culture and social-political environments (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) than any other sphere. The survey indicated that the societal sphere had more of an influence on agricultural communicators than on agricultural journalists.

There was a relationship between the societal sphere and subjective sphere. Esser (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) defines the subjective sphere as containing personal values and political attitudes; the desire for self-realization; professional values and role conceptions; professionalization (a trade emerging into a profession); and socio-demographics and biographical factors. This data indicates that the job that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do could be affected by all of the factors in the societal sphere.

The purpose of Objective 2 was to determine if the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors were different between respondents in the United States and those who did not live in the United States. Means (of questions 5-8) were compared and an analysis of variance run; little difference existed between the place of residence and the spheres. This means that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators are the same, generally, wherever they are, in relation to the spheres. The contextual sphere had a lower significance than the other spheres. This sphere contains

the journalism training system; legal, normative, and economic issues; the economic condition of the media market and competition; press law; the institution of the press and the regulations, codices, and standards of the profession; and unions and associations (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). The lower significance of the contextual sphere could be explained by forces outside the control of the agricultural journalist and agricultural communicator. For instance, the journalistic educational systems of the United States and other countries are vastly different (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003), and legal (laws) and economic issues are different between countries. Universities and training systems may want to familiarize students with these issues in order to prepare global agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

The purpose of Objective 3 was to determine if the societal, institutional, contextual, and subjective factors were different between members of (a) agricultural journalism and agricultural communicator organizations in the United States, and (b) international agricultural journalism and agricultural communicator organizations. To do so, the means and ANOVA (of questions 5-8) of the spheres of influence were compared by membership in international (IFAJ, AAEA, and NAAJ) and domestic (ACE) organizations. The differences between international and domestic organization members in the societal sphere resulted in a medium effect size (d = .39). A medium effect size means that the difference between the two organizations is not great, but it is still statistically significant. If one examines the membership composition of these organizations and the definition of the societal sphere, this finding makes sense. In the past, the membership of the international associations and organizations primarily has

been that of working journalists, according to the definition by Boone et al. (2000). The membership of the domestic organization is primarily made up of agricultural communicators. Freedom of the press; press history; press-state relations; press self-conception of role in society; journalistic traditions in regard to objectivity and partisanship; investigative reporting; and political culture and social-political environments (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003) may mean more to agricultural journalists than agricultural communicators.

There was a minor effect size—or a lower statistical significance—for the contextual sphere and place of residence. The contextual sphere contains the journalism training system; legal, normative, and economic issues; the economic condition of the media market and competition; press law; the institution of the press and the regulations, codices, and standards of the profession; and unions and associations (as cited in Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). When the membership backgrounds of the organizations are considered, this minor effect size makes sense. Most of the membership of ACE is from the United States. However, the members of the other three groups are from the United States and other countries. The journalistic educational systems of the United States and other countries are vastly different (Frölich & Holtz–Bacha, 2003). There may be enough of a difference in the training systems of the United States and the rest of the world to have an influence on the job that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do. Also, there are differences between market conditions and the legal systems of countries. In answer to one of Becker's (2004) questions: It does seem to matter how journalists are educated.

This study indicates that two of the spheres of Esser's model—the societal and contextual—do have an influence on the jobs that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do. Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators should keep this in mind. However, more research should be done in order to determine the full extent of influence that all of the spheres may play.

The easiest way to examine the skills that respondents considered most important for new agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators (Table 16) is to look at how respondents ranked the skills. The top skills for agricultural journalists were personal attributes ($f = 780$), writing ($f = 601$), and communication ($f = 591$). A major break in the sum of weighted ranks occurs at journalistic skills ($f = 375$). The top skills for agricultural communicators were communication ($f = 724$) and personal attributes ($f = 691$), before a significant break in the numbers for the sum of the weighted ranks to journalistic ($f = 408$) and writing ($f = 360$). The skills complement what the literature showed: writing, editing, public relations, and public speaking, critical thinking, and listening skills were needed for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators (Reisner, 1990a & 1990b; Bailey–Evans, 1994; Sprecker & Rudd, 1997; Boone et al., 2000; Bisdorf et al., 2005; & *IFAJ News,* December 2005).

The differences in these top skill rankings could be explained by educational training versus on-the-job training of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. For instance, respondents may have believed that agricultural journalists had acquired journalistic skills in college, so they did not need to acquire any more. But they may have believed that agricultural communicators—who may have taken an

educational curriculum heavy with public relations—may not have acquired as many journalistic skills. In addition, respondents may have believed they did not acquire personal attributes in their educational training, but that these attributes and skills were needed on the job. Respondents may not have thought that agricultural knowledge was important to their jobs or taken for granted that college graduates would have that knowledge, explaining its low ranking for both groups.

Table 16

Most Important Skills for Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators (*N* = 256)

Agricultural Journalist	Rank	Agricultural Communicator
Personal attributes	1	Communication
Writing	2	Personal attributes
Communication	3	Journalistic
Journalistic	4	Writing
Cultural	5	Cultural
Critical thinking	6	Critical thinking
Other knowledge	7	Agricultural knowledge
Agricultural knowledge	8	Other knowledge

Note. [a]Personal skills and attributes includes ability to listen and learn new information easily; adaptability, creativity, curiosity, ethics, honesty, humility, tact, flexibility, and open-mindedness; people, social, interpersonal, and speaking skills; non-judgmental approach; and being a team player. [b]Writing includes writing and writing/reporting skills. [c]Communication includes editing, photography, visual, graphic arts, technical, marketing, computer, digital recording, and media use skills; and ability to find the correct market or audience. [d]Journalistic includes reporting and interviewing skills; and being accurate, objective, and able to research stories. [e]Cultural includes cultural ethics, international, and language skills; overseas experience; openness to and understanding other cultures. [f]Critical thinking includes critical thinking skills; analytical ability; ability to understand complex subjects and translate science to common terms; and discerning the real issue. [g]Other knowledge includes ability to conduct research; knowledge of trade policy; and understanding national politics, business and economics. [h]Agricultural knowledge includes understanding agriculture and agricultural and trade policy, and having an agricultural background.

Respondents ranked the three issues they believed would be most important in 2020 for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators (Table 17). The two lists were similar. Respondents said the top issue for both agricultural journalists and

agricultural communicators in 2020 would be agricultural technology development. This category included topics such as biotechnology. The issue that received the lowest ranking in both groups was consumer issues such as consumers' likes and dislikes and demands. Journalistic issues included ethics and pressure from management.

Table 17

Most Important Issues for Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators in 2020 ($N = 256$)

Agricultural Journalist	Rank	Agricultural Communicator
Agricultural tech. and development	1	Agricultural tech. and development
Economics	2	Journalistic
Journalistic	3	Economics
Food production/food safety	4	Globalization/animal welfare
Environment/climate change	5	Environment/climate change
Agricultural terrorism/biosecurity	6	Food production/food safety
Globalization/animal welfare	7	Agricultural terrorism/biosecurity
Consumer issues	8	Consumer issues

Note. [a]Agricultural technology and development includes biotechnology, changing farming practices, continuing specialization within agriculture, genetically engineered crops, technological advances in machinery and computerization, renewable fuels, nutraceuticals, and nanotechnology. [b]Economic includes economics, trade policy, international economic balance, world trade negotiations, trade regulations, U.S. farm subsidies, migrant labor, and world politics and economies. [c]Journalistic includes ability to speak, covering news vs. coverage of an event, writing/reporting skills, ethics, media convergence, multimedia, new electronic media and software, civic journalism, ability to publish independent stories, objectivity despite corporate influence, ability to work with people, cultural differences, crisis communication, and curiosity. [d]Food production/safety includes food production, hunger and famine, traceability, food safety, sustainability, input costs, and diminishing number of farmers. [e]Environment/climate change includes environment, climate change, water quality and quantity, global warming, environmental protection and conservation, environmental impact of agriculture. [f]Agricultural terrorism/biosecurity includes agriterrorism, bioterrorism, biosecurity, zoonotic diseases, pandemics, and health and diseases. [g]Globalization/animal welfare includes globalization and animal welfare. [h]Consumer issues includes consumer concerns and demands, public fear and understanding of agriculture and science, urbanization, rural and urban balance, rural issues and development, and higher food prices.

Respondents listed their three most important job responsibilities, and when the sum of the weighted ranks was computed, many of the respondents ranked print and broadcast writing, reporting, research, production, photography, and design as the most

important group of job responsibilities. The second most important group was management, administration, project coordination, and planning, but that came after a major break in the weighted rank numbers, from 460 to 249. That indicates that many agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in these organizations still have duties in keeping with traditional definitions of agricultural journalism and agricultural communication.

Respondents to this study reported that the most important skill they learned in the previous five years to keep up with technological changes was word processing software. Graphic design was the second most frequent answer in this study, and electronic editing techniques was the third.

Respondents said they preferred learning through professional organization meetings and on-site workshops, from trade journals or publications, and through university-sponsored courses. This shows that members value the continuing education provided by their respective organizations and that these organizations should continue to provide that education.

The results of this study suggest several areas for continuing research:

a. The membership of these four organizations tended to be in their 50s and above; this indicates an aging population. The reasons may vary. Younger agricultural journalists and communicators may find other organizations more relevant or more suited to their needs, they may not answer surveys, or the numbers may be declining in all associations. The IFAJ survey (2005) indicated that younger journalists are not

joining organizations and that the numbers are declining in organization. The possibilities should be explored through qualitative interviews.

b. The membership of other associations and organizations of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators could be surveyed to assess the influence of Esser's spheres. This would allow comparison to this study and more definitely assess whether the spheres have an influence and what that influence is.

c. Membership of other agricultural journalism and agricultural communication organizations should be surveyed to see if the educational needs and the preferred learning environments are similar. This would allow for better planning of educational meetings and continuing education by organizations and other entities.

d. Most of the respondents in this study were from the United States. Further studies should be carried out to see if the influence of spheres is the same when the study is carried out in other countries. This would allow comparison of the spheres and help determine the influence of educational systems of other countries.

e. Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators listed personal attributes and skills as the most important for agricultural journalists and the second highest skill for agricultural communicators. One suggestion is that universities and colleges consider screening applicants for agricultural journalism or agricultural communications programs for these attributes. They may want to add or augment courses that focus on leadership, people skills, and basic communication skills, and urge students to participate in extracurricular activities that help build these attributes.

Practicing agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators may want to augment their continuing education with courses on personal attributes.

f. Since more than a quarter of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators in this study had 9 years or less experience, qualitative studies should be carried out to explore the reasons. Respondents may have been in other careers before coming into agricultural journalism and agricultural communication. A study such as this could explore if agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators changed careers or just changed titles. The lines are being blurred between agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators, and new skills are needed all of the time. Universities and training centers and professional organizations need to work alongside industry professionals to best shape the profession, and studies like this could help educational institutions and employers plan for the future.

g. Since respondents viewed cultural capabilities as the fifth most important skill for agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators, educational institutions should continue offering or begin offering international exchange of students. This would allow students to build more of those skills. In addition, practicing agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators should join international communication organizations to learn more about their colleagues and learn new ideas in order to better carry out their jobs on an international basis.

h. Agricultural technology and development, economics, and journalistic skills (including ethics) should be among the topics covered by professional organizations and

educational institutions since these were the most important issues as indicated by respondents.

j. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) wrote that journalists did not operate in a vacuum; it's not believed that agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators do either. Agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators should keep that in mind and recognize that intrinsic and external forces do have an influence on the content they produce.

A difficulty in conducting this research was having to depend on organizations and associations to send e-mail messages on their listservs. It is understood why privacy of members is protected by organizations; however, there is less assurance of research accuracy when the e-mail messages are not sent out by the researcher. Also, the researcher was not able to determine denominators and response rates. The research was limited in the number of organizations surveyed; a recommendation would be to include more in the research to get more extensive findings.

This study contributes to research in agricultural journalism and communication because it encompasses a global perspective by including respondents outside North America.

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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186
1500 Research Parkway, Suite B-150

979.458.1467
FAX 979.862.3176
http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu

Institutional Biosafety Committee | Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee | Institutional Review Board

DATE: 31-Jul-2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: CHENAULT, EDITH
TAMU-AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION(00006)

FROM: Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Initial Review

Protocol Number:	2006-0439
Title:	Educational Training and Background of International Agricultural Journalists
Review Category:	Exempt from IRB Review

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and no further review is required. However, any amendment or modification to the protocol must be reported to the IRB and reviewed before being implemented to ensure the protocol still meets the criteria for exemption.

This determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:
(http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm)

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Provisions:

107 Scoates Hall
TAMU 2116
College Station, TX 77843-2116

Dear IFAJ member:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It should only require approximately 10 minutes, but will contribute to years of impact. Attached you will find a printed copy of the survey that may be returned to Edith Chenault during the conference.

If you prefer, an electronic copy of the survey may be accessed at
http://www.aged.tamu.edu/survey/agabroad

The password for IFAJ members is IFAJ.

I truly appreciate that you are willing to share your expertise as a component of my doctoral dissertation. Results of this research will be shared through agricultural journalism and agricultural communications research conferences, as well as through professional organization newsletters.

Sincerely,
Edith A. Chenault

Information Form

The purpose of this study is to evaluate preparation of agricultural journalists/communicators for work in an international marketplace. Your responses will be used to develop information that will help prepare future agricultural journalists/communicators.

This study consists of completing an online survey. Your responses are confidential, will be recorded in a secure database, and your name or identifiable information will not be used in any form resulting from this study. There will be approximately 200 participants in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There are no risks or benefits for your participation in this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067, or through e-mail (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

Additional question or concerns may be address to Edith Chenault via e-mail (e-chenault@tamu.edu) or phone at 011-979-845-2886.

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications
107 Scoates Hall, TAMU 2116
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-2116
011-979-862-3003
www.aged.tamu.edu

Is the future of agricultural journalism or agricultural communications important to you?

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications
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Is the future of agricultural journalism or agricultural communications important to you?

As an IFAJ member, you are recognized for your professional abilities and expertise. I am seeking your thoughts on the preparation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. The results of this study will be used to develop a model of training and preparation for agricultural journalism and agricultural communications.

I am an agricultural communications professional at Texas A&M University. This survey is a final component of the requirements for my doctoral degree program. Your assistance is greatly appreciated and valued. I will be reporting the results of this survey at agricultural journalism and agricultural communications research conferences.

The survey can be completed in paper form or online and only requires about ten minutes of your time.

The online survey is at http://www.aged.tamu.edu/survey/agabroad
To protect your confidentiality, the survey is password protected. Your password is IFAJ.

I am looking forward to sharing the results of this study with the members of IFAJ.

Thank you for your participation in this study.
Edith A. Chenault

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Thank you for your participation in this study.
Edith A. Chenault

International Federation of Agricultural Journalists

News from the world of Agriculture Journalism

HOME
ABOUT
GLOBAL CONTACTS
IFAJ NEWS
CONGRESSES
HOW TO JOIN
LINKS
WRITING CONTEST
PHOTO CONTEST
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participate in a new Ag Communicator study

As an IFAJ member, you are recognized for your professional abilities and expertise. I am seeking your thoughts on the preparation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators. The results of this study will be used to develop a model of training and preparation for agricultural journalism and agricultural communications.

I am an agricultural communications professional at Texas A&M University. This survey is a final component of the requirements for my doctoral degree program. Your assistance is greatly appreciated and valued. I will be reporting the results of this survey at agricultural journalism and agricultural communications research conferences.

The survey can be completed online at http://www.aged.tamu.edu/survey/agabroad . To protect your confidentiality, the survey is password protected. Your password is IFAJ.

I am looking forward to sharing the results of the study with the members of IFAJ. If you have any questions, you may contact me at e-chenault1@tamu.edu or 979-845-2886 (international code 00 + 1)

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Edith A. Chenault, IFAJ member, USA

TOP

Edith Chenault - Ag Communications Survey

From: "Ag Editors"
To: , "Betsy Maixner" , "Kenna Rathai" , "David Harding" , , "Laurie Potter" , , , "Urban Lehner" , , , , , , , "Merlo, Catherine" , , "Brooke Byrd" , , , "DELONG, MICA M [AG/1000]" , ,
Date: 9/25/2006 11:49 AM
Subject: Ag Communications Survey

Dear AAEA member:

I am conducting a survey to evaluate preparation of agricultural journalists/communicators for working internationally. Your responses will be used to develop information that will help prepare future agricultural journalists and communicators. I am sending out the survey as part of the requirements for my doctoral work.

Your expertise is valuable and will have an impact for years to come. Results of this research will be shared through agricultural journalism and agricultural communications research conferences, as well as through professional organization newsletters.

This study consists of completing an online survey. Your responses are confidential, will be recorded in a secure database, and your identifiable information will not be used in any reports resulting from this study.

The electronic version of the survey may be accessed at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=31352558204 . Your password is AAEA (please use all capital letters. The password is case-sensitive). If you have already filled out the survey through IFAJ, your assistance is greatly appreciated and you do not have to complete it again.

If you have questions, you may contact me at e-chenault1@tamu.edu .

Sincerely yours,
Edith Chenault

Dear Ms. Chenault,

You have Hampton Press's permission to use this figure in your dissertation. As the book is several years old we no longer have the production files for it. If you have not been able to reach Dr. Esser for a better copy, then you will have to scan the current one in the printed volume.

Below the figure please include after the citation:?Reprinted with the permission of Hampton Press.

Sincerely,
Barbara Bernstein

-----Original Message-----
From: Edith Chenault <EChenault@cvm.tamu.edu>
To: hamptonpr1@aol.com
Sent: Mon, 5 May 2008 10:47 am
Subject: Permission to use graphic, need help as quickly as possible

I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M University, and I would like to use a graphic from Journalism Education in Europe and North America (2003), edited by Romy Frolich and Christina Holtz-Bacha, in my dissertation. The graphic I have in mind is Frank Esser's spheres of influence for journalists. I would like to know if and how we could reproduce that graphic for my dissertation. I tried to get in touch with Dr. Esser, to no avail.

If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 979-845-9287, or echenault@cvm.tamu.edu , or my chair, Dr. Tracy Rutherford, 979-458-2744, rutherford@tamu.edu .

Thanks,
Edith Chenault

Dear Ms. Chenault,
You have Hampton Press's permission to use this figure in your dissertation. As the book is several years old we no longer have the production files for it. If you have not been able to reach Dr. Esser for a better copy, then you will have to scan the current one in the printed volume.
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Thanks,
Edith Chenault

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

Welcome

* 1. The purpose of this study is to evaluate preparation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators for working international. You have been selected to participate because of your involvement in an international agricultural journalism or agricultural communications organization. Your participation is vital to the development of information that will help prepare future agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

This study consists of completing an online survey. Your responses are confidential, will be recorded in a secure database, and your name or identifiable information will not be used in any reports resulting from this study. There will be approximately 200 participants in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There are no risks or benefits for your participation in this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at 011-979-458-4067, or through e-mail (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

Additional question or concerns may be address to Edith Chenault at 011- 979-845-2886 or by e-mail, e-chenault@tamu.edu.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all of my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

study.

I understand that if I want a copy of this consent form, I may use my Internet browser to print a copy.

- ◯ I would like to continue with the survey.
- ◯ I prefer not to participate.

Individual Concepts

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for magazines, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 2. What is your home country?**

*** 3. What is your professional title?**

4. What product(s) does your employer produce?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

5. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalists are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism training is less important than on-the-job experience.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Training in agricultural communications is less important than on-the-job training.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of coverage of agricultural issues by agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of work (writing, photography, videography, editing, etc.) of agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural journalists are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by helping society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communicators are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International experience is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

not need continual training opportunities in their field.					
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
International experience is necessary for agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators do not need continual training opportunities in their field.	○	○	○	○	○
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○

Social & Organizational

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

6. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists do a high-quality job of analyzing complex issues.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of agricultural journalists practice investigative reporting when needed.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to	○	○	○	○	○

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.					
In general, agricultural journalism has a positive reputation in society.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	○	○	○	○	○
In general, agricultural communications has a positive reputation in society.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communications has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's culture.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by political parties.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by governments.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's people.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

7. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Owners should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Subscribers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Advertisers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Readers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Viewers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Readers of agricultural publications are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Viewers of agricultural broadcasts are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage more thorough.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage better.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Job descriptions in agricultural journalism should be fluid to adapt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

to changing technology.					
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to management.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to owners.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
Profit should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing audience size should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
The Internet has increased the quality of story coverage in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Job descriptions in agricultural communications should be fluid to adapt to changing technology.	○	○	○	○	○

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

8. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Unions are positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental regulation is positive for agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do a good job of self-regulation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Unions are positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Internships or on-the-job training are important in preparing agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural communicators for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural journalist.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists are noted for their objectivity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of professional ethics is important for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

professional ethics is important for agricultural communicators.					
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural communicator.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists have a standard code of ethics.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators have a standard code of ethics.	○	○	○	○	○

Preparing Future Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 9. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural journalism?**

- ○ Yes, I was very prepared
- ○ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ○ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ○ No, I was not prepared

*** 10. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural communications?**

- ○ Yes, I was very prepared
- ○ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ○ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ○ No, I was not prepared

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

* **11. What new skills have you learned in the past five years to keep up with technological changes in the agricultural journalism and agricultural communications industries? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] Word processing software
- [ ] Audio editing software
- [ ] Video editing software
- [ ] Digital recording equipment
- [ ] Graphic design software
- [ ] Electronic editing techniques

12. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural journalist needs to enter into an international agricultural journalism career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

13. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural communicator needs to enter into an international agricultural communications career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

14. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural journalists should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

15. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural communicators should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

*** 16. How do you prefer to continue learning about your field? Choose all that apply.**

- ☐ On-site workshops hosted by professional organizations
- ☐ Professional organization annual meetings
- ☐ On-line, self-paced activities
- ☐ On-line/Internet conferences
- ☐ Teleconferences
- ☐ Listservs
- ☐ I prefer to learn on my own (using tutorials or books)
- ☐ University sponsored courses or continuing education classes
- ☐ Schools designed specifically for working journalists (i.e. Poynter Institute in the United States)
- ☐ Reading trade journals/publications
- ☐ For-profit company sponsored courses/activities

Demographics

The following questions will provide the researcher with general information about the respondents.

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

17. What year were you born?

18. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

*** 19. What is the highest level of professional training you completed?**

- ◯ High School degree
- ◯ Trade school degree/certificate
- ◯ Technical school degree
- ◯ On-the-job training/apprenticeship
- ◯ University associate degree
- ◯ University bachelor's degree
- ◯ Unversity master's degree
- ◯ University doctorate
- ◯ Other

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

20. If you received a university degree, what was your major field of study?

21. If you attended a post-secondary institution, was it public or private?

- ◯ Public (more than 50% funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Private (not funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Combined public and private

22. What classes did you take as part of your educational preparation that have helped in your career in agricultural journalism or agricultural communications? Please choose all that apply.

- ☐ Print journalism
- ☐ Broadcast journalism
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Electronic Media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ English
- ☐ Liberal Arts (language, history, psychology)
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Civics or Political Science
- ☐ Biological sciences
- ☐ Earth sciences
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Crop agriculture
- ☐ Horticulture
- ☐ Agricultural economics
- ☐ Animal sciences
- ☐ Food science
- ☐ Agricultural Education
- ☐ Extension Education

ACE International Agricultural Journalist & Agricultural Communicator

*** 23. Did you complete professional work experience as part of your education?**

◯ Yes ◯ No

24. How long have you been employed as an agricultural journalist or an agricultural communicator?

25. What are your three most important job responsibilities?

1.
2.
3.

26. What percentage of the news your organization covers is agriculturally-related?

27. If you work for a publication, is your subscriber list paid?

◯ Yes
◯ No, our list is controlled
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a publication

28. If you work for a radio or television broadcast organization, do your listeners or viewers pay for a subscription?

◯ Yes
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a radio or television organization

29. In your country must agricultural journalists be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

30. In your country must agricultural communicators be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

*** 31. Complete the following statement, agricultural journalism training in my country is _____.**

☐ Improving
☐ Neither improving nor declining
☐ Declining

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*** 32. Complete the following statement, agricultural communications training in my country is _____.**

- [ ] Improving
- [ ] Neither improving nor declining
- [ ] Declining

Close

Thank you for completing this survey. Results from this study will be submitted for publication and presentation at national and international agricultural journalism and agricultural communications conferences.

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Individual Concepts

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for magazines, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

*** 1. What is your home country?**

*** 2. What is your professional title?**

3. What product(s) does your employer produce?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalists are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism training is less important than on-the-job experience.	○	○	○	○	○
Training in agricultural communications is less important than on-the-job training.	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of coverage of agricultural issues by agricultural journalists has improved.	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of work (writing, photography, videography, editing, etc.) of agricultural journalists has improved.	○	○	○	○	○
In general, agricultural journalists are satisfied in their careers.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect	○	○	○	○	○

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members of society.					
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by helping society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communicators are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International experience is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do not need continual training opportunities in their field.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International experience is necessary for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators do not need continual training opportunities in their field.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Social & Organizational

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

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5. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do a high-quality job of analyzing complex issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The majority of agricultural journalists practice investigative reporting when needed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural journalism has a positive reputation in society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communications has a positive reputation in society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communications has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's culture.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by political parties.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by governments.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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should be defined by a country's people.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○

6. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Owners should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
Subscribers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Advertisers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Readers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Viewers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Readers of agricultural publications are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	○	○	○	○	○
Viewers of agricultural broadcasts are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	○	○	○	○	○
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage more thorough.	○	○	○	○	○
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example,	○	○	○	○	○

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print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage better.					
Job descriptions in agricultural journalism should be fluid to adapt to changing technology.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to management.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to owners.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
Profit should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing audience size should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
The Internet has increased the quality of story coverage in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Job descriptions in agricultural communications should be fluid to adapt to changing technology.	○	○	○	○	○

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7. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Unions are positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental regulation is positive for agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do a good job of self-regulation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Unions are positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Internships or on-the-job training are important in preparing agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural communicators for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural journalist.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists are noted for their objectivity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of professional ethics is important for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

professional ethics is important for agricultural communicators.					
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural communicator.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Preparing Future Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

*** 8. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural journalism?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

*** 9. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural communications?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

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*** 10. What new skills have you learned in the past five years to keep up with technological changes in the agricultural journalism and agricultural communications industries? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] Word processing software
- [ ] Audio editing software
- [ ] Video editing software
- [ ] Digital recording equipment
- [ ] Graphic design software
- [ ] Electronic editing techniques

11. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural journalist needs to enter into an international agricultural journalism career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

12. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural communicator needs to enter into an international agricultural communications career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

13. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural journalists should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

14. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural communicators should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

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*** 15. How do you prefer to continue learning about your field? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] On-site workshops hosted by professional organizations
- [ ] Professional organization annual meetings
- [ ] On-line, self-paced activities
- [ ] On-line/Internet conferences
- [ ] Teleconferences
- [ ] Listservs
- [ ] I prefer to learn on my own (using tutorials or books)
- [ ] University sponsored courses or continuing education classes
- [ ] Schools designed specifically for working journalists (i.e. Poynter Institute in the United States)
- [ ] Reading trade journals/publications
- [ ] For-profit company sponsored courses/activities

Demographics

The following questions will provide the researcher with general information about the respondents.

16. What year were you born?

17. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

*** 18. What is the highest level of professional training you completed?**

- ◯ High School degree
- ◯ Trade school degree/certificate
- ◯ Technical school degree
- ◯ On-the-job training/apprenticeship
- ◯ University associate degree
- ◯ University bachelor's degree
- ◯ Unversity master's degree
- ◯ University doctorate
- ◯ Other

19. If you received a university degree, what was your major field of study?

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20. If you attended a post-secondary institution, was it public or private?

- ◯ Public (more than 50% funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Private (not funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Combined public and private

21. What classes did you take as part of your educational preparation that have helped in your career in agricultural journalism or agricultural communications? Please choose all that apply.

- ☐ Print journalism
- ☐ Broadcast journalism
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Electronic Media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ English
- ☐ Liberal Arts (language, history, psychology)
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Civics or Political Science
- ☐ Biological sciences
- ☐ Earth sciences
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Crop agriculture
- ☐ Horticulture
- ☐ Agricultural economics
- ☐ Animal sciences
- ☐ Food science
- ☐ Agricultural Education
- ☐ Extension Education

*** 22. Did you complete professional work experience as part of your education?**

◯ Yes ◯ No

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23. How long have you been employed as an agricultural journalist or an agricultural communicator?

24. What are your three most important job responsibilities?

1.
2.
3.

25. What percentage of the news your organization covers is agriculturally-related?

26. If you work for a publication, is your subscriber list paid?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No, our list is controlled
- ◯ No
- ◯ I don't work for a publication

27. If you work for a radio or television broadcast organization, do your listeners or viewers pay for a subscription?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ I don't work for a radio or television organization

28. In your country must agricultural journalists be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

29. In your country must agricultural communicators be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

*** 30. Complete the following statement, agricultural journalism training in my country is _____.**

- ☐ Improving
- ☐ Neither improving nor declining
- ☐ Declining

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*** 31. Complete the following statement, agricultural communications training in my country is _____.**

- [ ] Improving
- [ ] Neither improving nor declining
- [ ] Declining

Close

Thank you for completing this survey. Results from this study will be submitted for publication and presentation at national and international agricultural journalism and agricultural communications conferences.

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Welcome

* 1. The purpose of this study is to evaluate preparation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators for working internationally. You have been selected to participate because of your involvement in an international agricultural journalism or agricultural communications organization. Your participation is vital to the development of information that will help prepare future agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

This study consists of completing an online survey. Your responses are confidential, will be recorded in a secure database, and your name or identifiable information will not be used in any reports resulting from this study. There will be approximately 200 participants in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There are no risks or benefits for your participation in this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at 011-979-458-4067, or through e-mail (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

Additional question or concerns may be address to Edith Chenault at 011- 979-845-2886 or by e-mail, e-chenault@tamu.edu.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all of my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this

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study.

I understand that if I want a copy of this consent form, I may use my Internet browser to print a copy.

◯ I would like to continue with the survey.

◯ I prefer not to participate.

Individual Concepts

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for magazines, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 2. What is your home country?**

*** 3. What is your professional title?**

4. What product(s) does your employer produce?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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5. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalists are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism training is less important than on-the-job experience.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Training in agricultural communications is less important than on-the-job training.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of coverage of agricultural issues by agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of work (writing, photography, videography, editing, etc.) of agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural journalists are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by helping society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communicators are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International experience is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

not need continual training opportunities in their field.					
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
International experience is necessary for agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators do not need continual training opportunities in their field.	○	○	○	○	○
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○

Social & Organizational

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

6. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists do a high-quality job of analyzing complex issues.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of agricultural journalists practice investigative reporting when needed.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to	○	○	○	○	○

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farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.					
In general, agricultural journalism has a positive reputation in society.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	○	○	○	○	○
In general, agricultural communications has a positive reputation in society.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communications has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's culture.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by political parties.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by governments.	○	○	○	○	○
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's people.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators should be self-regulated.	○	○	○	○	○

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7. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Owners should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Subscribers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Advertisers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Readers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Viewers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Readers of agricultural publications are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Viewers of agricultural broadcasts are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage more thorough.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage better.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Job descriptions in agricultural journalism should be fluid to adapt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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to changing technology.					
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to management.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to owners.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Profit should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Increasing audience size should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Internet has increased the quality of story coverage in agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Job descriptions in agricultural communications should be fluid to adapt to changing technology.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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8. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Unions are positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental regulation is positive for agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do a good job of self-regulation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Unions are positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Internships or on-the-job training are important in preparing agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural communicators for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural journalist.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists are noted for their objectivity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of professional ethics is important for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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professional ethics is important for agricultural communicators.					
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural communicator.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Preparing Future Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 9. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural journalism?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

*** 10. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural communications?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

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* **11. What new skills have you learned in the past five years to keep up with technological changes in the agricultural journalism and agricultural communications industries? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] Word processing software
- [ ] Audio editing software
- [ ] Video editing software
- [ ] Digital recording equipment
- [ ] Graphic design software
- [ ] Electronic editing techniques

12. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural journalist needs to enter into an international agricultural journalism career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

13. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural communicator needs to enter into an international agricultural communications career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

14. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural journalists should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

15. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural communicators should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

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*** 16. How do you prefer to continue learning about your field? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] On-site workshops hosted by professional organizations
- [ ] Professional organization annual meetings
- [ ] On-line, self-paced activities
- [ ] On-line/Internet conferences
- [ ] Teleconferences
- [ ] Listservs
- [ ] I prefer to learn on my own (using tutorials or books)
- [ ] University sponsored courses or continuing education classes
- [ ] Schools designed specifically for working journalists (i.e. Poynter Institute in the United States)
- [ ] Reading trade journals/publications
- [ ] For-profit company sponsored courses/activities

Demographics

The following questions will provide the researcher with general information about the respondents.

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

17. What year were you born?

18. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

*** 19. What is the highest level of professional training you completed?**

- ◯ High School degree
- ◯ Trade school degree/certificate
- ◯ Technical school degree
- ◯ On-the-job training/apprenticeship
- ◯ University associate degree
- ◯ University bachelor's degree
- ◯ Unversity master's degree
- ◯ University doctorate
- ◯ Other

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20. If you received a university degree, what was your major field of study?

21. If you attended a post-secondary institution, was it public or private?

- ◯ Public (more than 50% funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Private (not funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Combined public and private

22. What classes did you take as part of your educational preparation that have helped in your career in agricultural journalism or agricultural communications? Please choose all that apply.

- ☐ Print journalism
- ☐ Broadcast journalism
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Electronic Media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ English
- ☐ Liberal Arts (language, history, psychology)
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Civics or Political Science
- ☐ Biological sciences
- ☐ Earth sciences
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Crop agriculture
- ☐ Horticulture
- ☐ Agricultural economics
- ☐ Animal sciences
- ☐ Food science
- ☐ Agricultural Education
- ☐ Extension Education

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* **23. Did you complete professional work experience as part of your education?**

◯ Yes ◯ No

24. How long have you been employed as an agricultural journalist or an agricultural communicator?

25. What are your three most important job responsibilities?

1.
2.
3.

26. What percentage of the news your organization covers is agriculturally-related?

27. If you work for a publication, is your subscriber list paid?

◯ Yes
◯ No, our list is controlled
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a publication

28. If you work for a radio or television broadcast organization, do your listeners or viewers pay for a subscription?

◯ Yes
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a radio or television organization

29. In your country must agricultural journalists be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

30. In your country must agricultural communicators be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

* **31. Complete the following statement, agricultural journalism training in my country is _____.**

☐ Improving
☐ Neither improving nor declining
☐ Declining

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*** 32. Complete the following statement, agricultural communications training in my country is _____.**

- [ ] Improving
- [ ] Neither improving nor declining
- [ ] Declining

Close

Thank you for completing this survey. Results from this study will be submitted for publication and presentation at national and international agricultural journalism and agricultural communications conferences.

33. Please provide any additional comments you would like to share with the researchers.

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Welcome

* 1. The purpose of this study is to evaluate preparation of agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators for working internationally. You have been selected to participate because of your involvement in an international agricultural journalism or agricultural communications organization. Your participation is vital to the development of information that will help prepare future agricultural journalists and agricultural communicators.

This study consists of completing an online survey. Your responses are confidential, will be recorded in a secure database, and your name or identifiable information will not be used in any reports resulting from this study. There will be approximately 200 participants in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There are no risks or benefits for your participation in this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia M. Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice President for Research at 011-979-458-4067, or through e-mail (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

Additional question or concerns may be address to Edith Chenault at 011- 979-845-2886 or by e-mail, e-chenault@tamu.edu.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all of my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this

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study.

I understand that if I want a copy of this consent form, I may use my Internet browser to print a copy.

- ◯ I would like to continue with the survey.
- ◯ I prefer not to participate.

Individual Concepts

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for magazines, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 2. What is your home country?**

*** 3. What is your professional title?**

4. What product(s) does your employer produce?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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5. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalists are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators are more effective if they have an agriculture background.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism training is less important than on-the-job experience.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Training in agricultural communications is less important than on-the-job training.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of coverage of agricultural issues by agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The quality of work (writing, photography, videography, editing, etc.) of agricultural journalists has improved.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural journalists are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by increasing the knowledge of issues that affect members of society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by monetary rewards.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be motivated by helping society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communicators are satisfied in their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International experience is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

not need continual training opportunities in their field.					
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
International experience is necessary for agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators do not need continual training opportunities in their field.	○	○	○	○	○
Membership in professional organizations benefits agricultural communicators.	○	○	○	○	○

Social & Organizational

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

6. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists do a high-quality job of analyzing complex issues.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of agricultural journalists practice investigative reporting when needed.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalism makes a positive contribution to farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to the general public's knowledge of pertinent issues.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators make a positive contribution to	○	○	○	○	○

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farmers' and ranchers' knowledge of pertinent issues.					
In general, agricultural journalism has a positive reputation in society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalism has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, agricultural communications has a positive reputation in society.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communications has a positive reputation among farmers and ranchers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's culture.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by political parties.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by governments.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Freedom of the press should be defined by a country's people.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists should be self-regulated.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators should be self-regulated.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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7. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Owners should have autonomy in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural journalists should have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
Agricultural communicators have autonomy in making editorial decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
Subscribers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Advertisers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Readers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Viewers should play a large role in the editorial decisions in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Readers of agricultural publications are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	○	○	○	○	○
Viewers of agricultural broadcasts are looking to be entertained rather than informed.	○	○	○	○	○
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage more thorough.	○	○	○	○	○
Covering agricultural journalism stories in more media (for example, print, radio and television versions of a story) will make the coverage better.	○	○	○	○	○
Job descriptions in agricultural journalism should be fluid to adapt	○	○	○	○	○

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to changing technology.					
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to management.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to owners.	○	○	○	○	○
Producing agricultural journalism of high quality is important to agricultural journalists.	○	○	○	○	○
Profit should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing audience size should be an important factor in determining what stories should be covered in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
The Internet has increased the quality of story coverage in agricultural journalism.	○	○	○	○	○
Job descriptions in agricultural communications should be fluid to adapt to changing technology.	○	○	○	○	○

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8. For each of the following statements, indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Unions are positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental regulation is positive for agricultural journalism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists do a good job of self-regulation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Unions are positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governmental licensing or registration is positive for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Internships or on-the-job training are important in preparing agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural journalists for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A university degree is necessary to prepare agricultural communicators for their careers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A background in agriculture is necessary for agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural journalist.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists are noted for their objectivity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of professional ethics is important for agricultural journalists.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Professional ethics are practiced by the majority of agricultural communicators.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A strong understanding of	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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professional ethics is important for agricultural communicators.					
Continually learning about one's field is necessary for an agricultural communicator.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural journalists have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Agricultural communicators have a standard code of ethics.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Preparing Future Agricultural Journalists and Agricultural Communicators

For the purposes of this survey journalism and communications are defined by function as written by Boone, Meisenbach, and Tucker in 2000. Agricultural journalism refers to "the reporting and editing for journals, newspaper and broadcast media." Agricultural communication is "a broader term and includes entertainment, information, persuasion and advocacy."

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

*** 9. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural journalism?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

*** 10. Do you believe you were adequately prepared for a career in agricultural communications?**

- ◯ Yes, I was very prepared
- ◯ Yes, I was somewhat prepared
- ◯ No, I was somewhat unprepared
- ◯ No, I was not prepared

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*** 11. What new skills have you learned in the past five years to keep up with technological changes in the agricultural journalism and agricultural communications industries? Choose all that apply.**

- [ ] Word processing software
- [ ] Audio editing software
- [ ] Video editing software
- [ ] Digital recording equipment
- [ ] Graphic design software
- [ ] Electronic editing techniques

12. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural journalist needs to enter into an international agricultural journalism career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

13. What are the three most important skills that a new agricultural communicator needs to enter into an international agricultural communications career?

Most important skill
Second most important skill
Third most important skill

14. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural journalists should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

15. What will the three most important issues be in 2020 that agricultural communicators should be trained to handle?

1.
2.
3.

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*** 16. How do you prefer to continue learning about your field? Choose all that apply.**

- ☐ On-site workshops hosted by professional organizations
- ☐ Professional organization annual meetings
- ☐ On-line, self-paced activities
- ☐ On-line/Internet conferences
- ☐ Teleconferences
- ☐ Listservs
- ☐ I prefer to learn on my own (using tutorials or books)
- ☐ University sponsored courses or continuing education classes
- ☐ Schools designed specifically for working journalists (i.e. Poynter Institute in the United States)
- ☐ Reading trade journals/publications
- ☐ For-profit company sponsored courses/activities

Demographics

The following questions will provide the researcher with general information about the respondents.

All questions marked with * require an answer to continue to the next page.

17. What year were you born?

18. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

*** 19. What is the highest level of professional training you completed?**

- ◯ High School degree
- ◯ Trade school degree/certificate
- ◯ Technical school degree
- ◯ On-the-job training/apprenticeship
- ◯ University associate degree
- ◯ University bachelor's degree
- ◯ Unversity master's degree
- ◯ University doctorate
- ◯ Other

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20. If you received a university degree, what was your major field of study?

21. If you attended a post-secondary institution, was it public or private?

- ◯ Public (more than 50% funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Private (not funded by state or government monies)
- ◯ Combined public and private

22. What classes did you take as part of your educational preparation that have helped in your career in agricultural journalism or agricultural communications? Please choose all that apply.

- ☐ Print journalism
- ☐ Broadcast journalism
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Electronic Media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ English
- ☐ Liberal Arts (language, history, psychology)
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Civics or Political Science
- ☐ Biological sciences
- ☐ Earth sciences
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Crop agriculture
- ☐ Horticulture
- ☐ Agricultural economics
- ☐ Animal sciences
- ☐ Food science
- ☐ Agricultural Education
- ☐ Extension Education

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* **23. Did you complete professional work experience as part of your education?**

◯ Yes ◯ No

24. How long have you been employed as an agricultural journalist or an agricultural communicator?

25. What are your three most important job responsibilities?

1.
2.
3.

26. What percentage of the news your organization covers is agriculturally-related?

27. If you work for a publication, is your subscriber list paid?

◯ Yes
◯ No, our list is controlled
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a publication

28. If you work for a radio or television broadcast organization, do your listeners or viewers pay for a subscription?

◯ Yes
◯ No
◯ I don't work for a radio or television organization

29. In your country must agricultural journalists be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

30. In your country must agricultural communicators be registered?

◯ Yes ◯ No

* **31. Complete the following statement, agricultural journalism training in my country is _____.**

☐ Improving
☐ Neither improving nor declining
☐ Declining

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*** 32. Complete the following statement, agricultural communications training in my country is _____.**

- [ ] Improving
- [ ] Neither improving nor declining
- [ ] Declining

Close

Thank you for completing this survey. Results from this study will be submitted for publication and presentation at national and international agricultural journalism and agricultural communications conferences.

33. Please provide any additional comments you would like to share with the researchers.

APPENDIX C

COMMENTS FROM SURVEYS

The following comments were submitted on the online survey. Some responses are truncated based on the maximum character count of 45 words.

My belief is part of the problem in modern journalism is the reliance now on specialized communication, marketing and public-relations people in every industry and level of government. Their assistance and views are almost always compromised by the larg

Agricultural journalism quality remains high in my country but the ethics and editorial independence of agricultural magazines is on the decline.

The question on profit as a driver for choosing coverage was a bit confusing. Helping readers/viewers figure out how to make a profit is paramount in our missions as ag journalists and communicators -- no question about it. If you were seeking thoughts

I was trained and had long experience (25 years) in general journalism long before I entered the world of ag journalism. Learning agriculture has helped me be a better journalist, more focused on what the reader needs than what I can do.

Re Q 27 Our circulation is a blend of controlled and paid. On Quality, our best stuff is better than it ever was. Our average stuff is probably 70% to 80% as good as our average stuff was 15 years ago. Reason, web chews up so many more resources that

I was an ag journalist and worked for ag publications for 25 years. I've been in communications for the last 8. Most of my answers are based on my ag publication experience, but your survey design will put my answers in the 'opinions of communicators'

I grew up on a hobby farm and my father was an ag professor, so I learned about ag by milking cows and hanging around university labs and research fields. My experience includes working for a farm magazine, a major ag equipment company, and for more than

Questions on the first section were poorly worded, for example, they were asking about opinions of owners or managers - of what? Magazines, newspapers, farm owners, international organizations???

No time, have a deadline to meet :-)

A broad understanding of cultures and diversity will be required to write knowledgeably about food and fiber issues in a global economy.

I'm in the odd situation of being a full-time mechanic at a John Deere dealership, along with being a contributing editor and columnist for a major farm magazine (Farm Journal). So my day-job is the basis and background for my editorial job. This may

It took a very long time for the survey pages to load, which means taking this survey took quite a bit longer than it should have. I would think this would drastically affect your response ratio.

Your definitions make me believe your results will be pretty well meaningless. The lines have blurred people and you can't continue to put people in the same tired old categories. You're using 2000 definitions? Come on.

Agricultural editors today, are overworked...consequently, the products have suffered. Staffs are smaller, expectations and demands are higher. Management and ownership doesn't seem to make the connection of quality takes time and talent. Electronic

From: "Rutherford, Tracy" <TRutherford@aged.tamu.edu>
To: <mlberkland@fbx.com>
Date: 8/25/2006 8:45 AM
Subject: RE: Survey from ACE

CC: "Chenault, Edith" <e-chenault1@tamu.edu>
Melva,

Thanks for your comments. Based on the amount of data that Edith was collecting and the model she is using for her dissertation, we choose to exclude the additional comments section. However, I believe that your comments are valid and I am glad that you have provided them. It will definitely help in strengthening the future uses of this survey.

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey.
Tracy

Tracy A. Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications
Agricultural Communications & Journalism
125 Scoates Hall, TAMU 2116
College Station, TX 77843-2116
979-458-2744/979-845-6296

-----Original Message-----
From: mlberkland@fbx.com [mailto:mlberkland@fbx.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2006 12:25 PM
To: Rutherford, Tracy
Subject: Survey from ACE

Hello Tracy,

I've just submitted my survey. I have some comments that I'd like to send
to the researcher, so will you please forward this to her. (And send a copy to me, so that I have her email address.) If I had written directly to the researcher, I'd have copied you.

Thank you,
Melva L. Berkland, Ph. D.
Extension communication speicalist, retired
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

Dear Researcher,
I desperately wanted to write some comments as I went along, but was provided no open end questions that would have allowed me to do so. Without such, it's like one-way communication. I gave you a lot of my time
and ideas and would have appreciated the courtesy for opportunity/ies to provide some input other than by checking boxes; even if you didn't analyze such, you may have gleaned from responses that would have provided
fodder for the articles you will write after analyzing the data.

I received four copies of the survey, through my ACE SIGs. I will only fill out one survey. I presume if someone were to fill it out more than once, you would have a way of only using one of their surveys. Is that correct? I also presume that no one would fill it out more than one time because it took so long (more than one half hour for me); you did make it
easy to mark the many questions.

Why did a few response boxes show up in blue?

Also the list of questions only allowed me to indicate courses taken in formal education. Continuing education and experience also are ways of learning. (You certainly acknowledged those forms of non-formal education
in your line of questions via "ag experience or farm experience" and the list of the ways that allowed me to indicate how I like to learn, such as
conference, etc.) You might have asked if respondents had non-formal education in selected areas. From me you would have learned, for example,
that I do have knowledge of the ag topic you mention via experience and continuing education because I grew up on a farm; I own a farm; I have learned-by doing while editing more than 700 publications for youth, adult
volunteers and staff associated with 4-H; and I have chosen to participate
in many forms of continuing education. I love to learn.

Also I enjoyed thinking about the ideas you presented. I was amazed at my
spontaneous answer "decision making" as my main responsibility. I was not
a unit head, but had much autonomy as a communication specialist. Editors
and writers make decisions all the time, for example on what to include in
an article or publication, how to "play" the story, how to use my time, etc. I aimed to make those decisions responsibility.

Thanks for listening; I'll let you get back to studying now. Go girl!! I'm
looking forward to reading your articles -- you'll have material for several -- in the ACE JAC.

Sincerely and respectfully,
Melva L. Berkland

VITA

Name:	Edith Anne Chenault
Address:	4458 TAMU, College Station, TX 78843-4458
E-mail address:	echenault@cvm.tamu.edu
Education:	B.S., Agricultural Journalism, Texas A&M University, 1978
	M.Ed., Education, Sul Ross State University, 1990
	Ph.D., Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University, 2008