

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFICIENCIES IN  
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS:  
FREQUENCY OF USE AND ROLE  
IN CURRICULUM

By

SARAH DAWN SARGENT

Bachelor of Science

The Ohio State University


Columbus, Ohio

2001

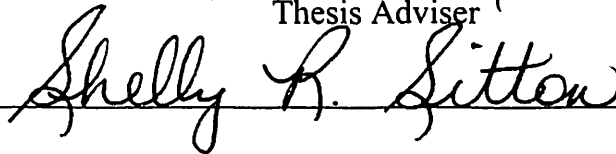
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
May, 2004

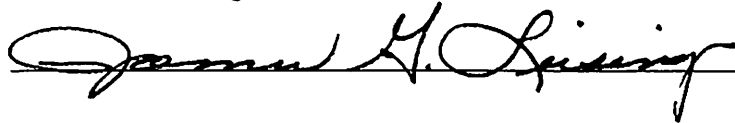
PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFICIENCIES IN  
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS:  
FREQUENCY OF USE AND  
ROLE IN CURRICULUM

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser





Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Just two years ago, I moved my life to a state I had never even visited. Oklahoma brought a change of pace and a change of scenery, but little did I know about the wonderful opportunities awaiting me in Cowboy Country. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have made my life in Stillwater, and my time at Oklahoma State, an awesome experience.

First, I wish to thank my committee members: Dr. Dwayne Cartmell, Dr. Shelly Sitton, and Dr. James Leising. This project was developed out of a genuine desire to improve the profession of agricultural communications, and I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of research that, although frustrating and demanding at times, will prove valuable in the future. I extend a special thanks to Dr. Cartmell for spending evenings away from his family and enduring phone calls during holiday weekend to answer the questions of a confused graduate student.

A thank you also goes to Carl Hamby-departmental computer guy-for putting the instrument online and maintaining the database.

I'd like to thank the many friends I've made on the fourth floor of Ag Hall. Some of you I've only known for a short time, but I can't imagine my life without you in it. My fondest memories include research conference trips, long lunch hours, softball games, golf outings, nights at the Copper Penny, and 'enlightening' conversations in the "Bull

Pen". I feel blessed to have been surrounded by such wonderful people, and I pray that you will remain a part of my life after we go our separate ways.

A thank you also goes to my Stillwater roommates: Javonne Soos, Chris Raines, Jon Ulmer and Megan McMichael. I appreciate your patience during times in which I was frustrated with life and sometimes impatient. I consider each one of you to be great friends, and my memories of Husband Street-especially times spent on the front porch-are happy ones.

Gina-my partner in crime-I thank you for your support during this project. I will fondly remember our times at The Hideaway, our late nights in Ag Hall, and our experiences with the copier. I wish you luck in Arizona, and I'm thankful that we were able to become friends through our experiences with this project.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family for their support and willingness to let me become the independent person I always wanted to be. You encouraged me to move 800 miles away because that's what I wanted to do. Thank you for letting me have wings, and for your love and patience during these last two years. Thank you for believing in me, praying for me, and teaching me that the most important thing in life is a firm foundation in Christ. I love you!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background and Setting .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	3
Significance of the Study .....	3
Objectives of the Study .....	3
Scope of the Study .....	4
Assumptions .....	4
Limitations of the Study .....	5
Definition of Terms .....	5
Organization of the Study .....	6
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	7
Background and Setting .....	7
History of Agricultural Communications .....	8
The Role of Agricultural Communicators .....	11
Agricultural Communications as a Profession .....	12
History of Public Relations .....	13
Public Relations as a Profession .....	15
Public Relations Curriculum .....	17
Curriculum History .....	18
Past Agricultural Communications Curriculum Studies .....	19
Theoretical Framework .....	20
Summary .....	21
III. METHODOLOGY .....	23
Institutional Review Board .....	23
Purpose of the Study .....	23
Objectives of the Study .....	24
Population .....	24
Research Design .....	25
Instrumentation .....	25
Procedures .....	27

Data Analysis .....	28
Chapter Summary .....	28
IV. FINDINGS.....	29
Purpose of the Study .....	29
Objectives of the Study.....	29
Population .....	30
Response Rate.....	30
Findings.....	31
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	77
Purpose of the Study .....	77
Objectives of the Study.....	77
Scope of the Study .....	78
Summary of Methods and Procedures .....	78
Conclusions.....	78
Recommendations.....	80
Implications.....	82
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	83
VII. APPENDICES.....	87
APPENDIX A - INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD.....	87
APPENDIX B - INSTRUMENTS.....	89
APPENDIX C – PANEL OF EXPERTS.....	104
APPENDIX D - FAXED INSTRUMENTS .....	105
APPENDIX E - INTRODUCTORY EMAIL.....	119
APPENDIX F - INVITATION E-MAILS.....	121
APPENDIX G - REMINDER E-MAILS .....	125

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Number of Years in Public Relations .....	32
2. Number of Full-time Jobs in Public Relations.....	33
3. Number of Agricultural Courses Completed .....	34
4. Types of Experiences in Agriculture .....	35
5. Agricultural Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Frequency of Use .....	37
6. Agricultural Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Type of Implementation.....	38
7. Agricultural Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Frequency of Use.....	39
8. Agricultural Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Type of Implementation .....	43
9. Agricultural Proficiencies Perceived as Not Important by 50% or More of respondents.....	47
10. Communications Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Frequency of Use .....	49
11. Communications Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Type of Implementation.....	54
12. Communications Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Frequency of Use.....	60
13. Communications Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Type of Implementation .....	63
14. Public Relations Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Frequency of Use .....	66

15. Public Relations Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 75% or More of Respondents by Type of Implementation.....	70
16. Public Relations Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Frequency of Use.....	74
17. Public Relations Proficiencies Perceived as Important by 50-74% of Respondents by Type of Implementation .....	75



## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Distribution of Respondents by Age.....	31
2. Level of Respondent's Agricultural Knowledge .....	34

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background and Setting

Determining what should be included in a university curricula is one of the hardest things a teacher faces. According to Layfield and Dobbins (2002), teachers are faced with the challenge of providing an adequate learning environment to prepare students for today's fast-paced world. Unlike general communications programs, agricultural communications is designed to produce graduates who know the best of both agriculture and communications (Evans & Bolick, 1982).

However, studies completed on the competencies in agricultural education have consistently found that teachers fail to change curriculum often enough and, more specifically, fail to use available technology (Edwards & Briars, 1999). One way to gain input on students' needs is to determine what employers find valuable in potential employees. "A critical factor in developing successful teachers is in correctly identifying their needs in highest demand" (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002, p. 46).

Law and Pepple (1990) define the role of an agricultural communicator as being someone prepared to reach a public who may have limited understanding of the food and fiber industry. An agriculturally literate society is imperative to making good decisions about policies regarding the agricultural industry. Therefore, well-educated,

agriculturally literate college graduates are vital to the development of agriculture in today's society.

The people who are involved in or understand agriculture are constantly decreasing, and agricultural educators need to prepare agriculturalists who can be effective communicators (Birkenholz & Craven, 1996).

According to Evans & Bolick (1982), agricultural communications/journalism programs were developed out of a need by experiment stations to disseminate research results to farm and non-farm audiences through various media. Specific skills and knowledge were required for the profession, and various universities began to add agricultural journalism curricula to their programs.

The first course in agricultural journalism was developed in 1905 by Iowa State College. The University of Wisconsin established the first department of agricultural journalism in 1908. During the 1960s, agricultural journalism experienced significant growth and by 1975 most programs defined themselves as agricultural communications rather than agricultural journalism (Weckman, Witham & Telg, 2000). Today, there are approximately 30 agricultural communications/journalism programs offered by land-grant institutions throughout the country (Doerfert & Cepica, 1991).

To make coursework applicable to graduates and employers, agricultural communications curriculum should be examined as technology and job requirements are constantly changing (Sprecker & Rudd, 1988).

Terry, et al. (1994) reported that one of the greatest strengths of the agricultural communications program is the flexibility of the curriculum, as the curriculum is intended to qualify graduates for a wide range of job opportunities.

One area of specialization offered by agricultural communications programs is public relations. Many students may pursue a career in public relations after graduating from agricultural communications programs. According to Bailey-Evans (1994), studies should be conducted to develop competency lists needed for specific specializations in agricultural communications.

#### Statement of the Problem

A comprehensive study has not been completed on university agricultural communications proficiencies since 1994. Beyond that, no studies have focused on how frequently those proficiencies are used in the workplace, or how they should be included in a university curricula. To revise university curricula in agricultural communications, the perceptions of today's agricultural communicator need to be assessed.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the public relations proficiencies in an agricultural communications curriculum perceived as important by professionals, how frequently professionals used those proficiencies, and how professionals perceived the proficiencies to be best integrated into an agricultural communications curriculum.

#### Significance of the Study

University agricultural communications professors will be able to use the findings from this study to provide input for curriculum revision in the area of public relations.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the demographic attributes of public relations professionals in agricultural communications.

2. To determine perceived important technical agriculture proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
3. To determine perceived important general communications proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
4. To determine perceived important specific public relations proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

#### Scope of the Study

This census study consisted of members of the following professional organizations:

Cooperative Communicators Association (n=288) and Agricultural Relations Council (n=85).

Members of these organizations are representative of agricultural public relations professionals throughout the United States.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions are made regarding this study:

1. The instrument used in the study elicited accurate responses from all participants.
2. The participants of the study answered the questions honestly and to the best of their abilities.

### Limitations of the Study

The author recognizes the following limitations:

1. Coverage bias may occur because some people do not have access to, or choose not to use, the Internet or e-mail.
2. According to Solomon (2001), Internet surveys have significantly lower response rates when compared to mailed surveys.
3. Competencies identified as irrelevant by the panel of experts may be relevant to members of the sample population.

### Definition of Terms

Agricultural Communications: Academic program involving a variety of communication specializations such as journalism, advertising, public relations, etc. (Bailey-Evans, 1994).

Communications: Any various professions involved with the transmission of information by various means such as print or broadcasting (Webster's Online Dictionary, 2003).

Curriculum: The total experiences planned for a school or students (Wiles & Bondi, 1998).

Proficiency: The state or quality of being proficient; competence (Webster's Online Dictionary, 2003).

Journalism: The collecting, writing, editing, and presenting of news or news articles in newspapers and magazines and in radio and television broadcasts (Webster's Online Dictionary, 2003).

Public Relations: An internal and external communication to inform or influence specific publics using writing, marketing, advertising, publicity, promotions, and special events (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, 2002).

### Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five sections: Introduction, review of the literature, methodology, findings and summary, conclusions and recommendations. The introduction section includes a study introduction, formal statement of the problem, purpose of the study, study objectives, definition of terms, and study significance. Included in the review of literature section is an introduction and discussion of literature relevant to the purpose of the study. The methodology section includes an introduction, a description of subjects and instruments, and the research design and procedures. Included in the findings section is an analysis of the data. The final section includes a review of the findings and suggested recommendations for university curriculum improvement and future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides brief histories of both agricultural communications and public relations, as well as providing a theoretical framework addressing the need for university curricula changes in agricultural communications.

#### Background and Setting

Since the dawn of time, or at least since the time when the first humans observed that if they placed grain into soil, added water and waited, a plant would grow, or observed animal husbandry in action, agriculture has been a part of the human experience (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000, p. 27).

Agriculture's role in society is changing. Many of today's rural communities are dominated by manufacturing or service jobs. Fewer family farms are in existence because of larger, corporate operations (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000). However, agriculture still plays a vital role in the nation's economy as one in six U.S. jobs stem from agriculture. Even non-farm states have a substantial portion of jobs in the food and fiber system (Schluter & Edmondson, 2000).

As the people who are involved in and understand agriculture decreases, agricultural educators need to prepare agriculturalists who can be effective communicators. A failure to explain and justify agricultural practices, such as animal welfare and food safety, can be traced back to poor communication and inability



explain today's production techniques to a misinformed public (Birkenholz & Craven, 1996).

## Agricultural Communications

### *History of agricultural communications*

The communication of information about agriculture can be traced back to the earliest of civilizations. Unearthed farm bulletins by archaeologist give instructions for farmers on how to sow crops and irrigate. This effort is much like the how-to information provided by Land-Grant colleges during the last 100 years, thus making U.S. agriculture the envy of the world (Cutlip, 1995).

Since colonial days, agricultural writing in our country has been influenced by the events that have had an impact on other industries and our population. Because agriculture is so important to our total welfare, every major influence has received timely coverage in general audience media as well as media directed at farmers (Burnett & Tucker, 1990).

According to Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker (2000), the early-to-mid-19<sup>th</sup> century showed the first mediated communication about agriculture. Prior to that time, most agricultural information was spread to farmers by word of mouth, and the majority of this information was from Europe. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, technological growth made printing cheaper and more reliable, and steam-driven, cylinder printing presses replaced hand-powered, flatbed presses.

Agricultural periodicals were established as rapidly as newspapers. Nearly every print shop published an almanac because farmers and gardeners planted and harvested by

phases of the moon. Early agricultural writers included explorers, printers, politicians, inventors, postmasters, and some farmers (Burnett & Tucker, 1990).

Burnett and Tucker (1990) list the following dates as some of the most important in the history of agricultural communications:

1748: *Essay on Field History*, started by Jared Eliot, was the first significant American treatise on agriculture.

1777: *The New Jersey Gazette* is credited as the first American newspaper to encourage articles on farming.

1819: April 2 is considered to be the real beginning of agricultural journalism in America. On this date the *American Farmer*, the first magazine to attain wide circulation, was published in Baltimore, Maryland and survived until 1897.

1862: The Morrill Land Grant College Act allowed every state 30,000 acres of public land for each senator and representative it was entitled to send to Congress. The land was to be sold to help finance a college of agricultural and mechanical arts in every state.

1877: *The Farm Journal* was established in Philadelphia by Wilmer Atkinson. The journal was the second general farm magazine to attain national circulation.

1905: The first course in agricultural journalism in the United States was taught at Iowa State University.

1908: University of Wisconsin established the first department of agricultural journalism in the United States.

1920: The first regular agricultural radio broadcasts were transmitted and included market reports.

1921: The first vocal broadcast was a weather report transmitted by the University of Wisconsin Experimental Station.

1990: The Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media listed agricultural media in the United States as including 102 agricultural newspapers, 440 magazines, 1024 radio stations, 803 FM stations and five television stations.

Between 1900 and 1930, land-grant colleges began generating a wealth of information, thus moving this country toward scientific agriculture (Kearl, 1983). As reported in Terry et al. (1994), the recognition of agricultural communications at the university level began with the development of extension programs in the early twentieth century. Agricultural journalism was added to university curricula out of a need to disseminate research results to agricultural entities. Specific skills and knowledge were required for the profession, and various universities began to add agricultural journalism curricula to their programs.

Iowa State University was the first to develop an agricultural journalism program in 1920. Iowa State offered eight classes in agricultural journalism/communications by 1911. By 1930, a four-year curriculum was offered to receive a degree of Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Journalism (Marvin, 1946).

During the 1960s, agricultural journalism experienced significant growth and by 1975 most programs defined themselves as agricultural communications rather than agricultural journalism (Weckman, Witham & Telg, 2000).

There are approximately 30 agricultural communications or journalism programs in land-grant institutions throughout the country (Doerfert & Cepica, 1991); two graduate

degree programs at the University of Florida and Oklahoma State University are available to students pursuing post-graduate education.

### *The role of agricultural communicators*

Agricultural communications graduates are taught to disseminate agricultural information to farm or non-farm audiences through various media (Terry, et al., 1994). The way in which an agricultural communicator disseminates information can be separated into four categories: print media, broadcast media, information services, and the Internet (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000).

According to Cooper and Bowen (1989):

The qualifications of agricultural communicators have evolved as technology and job requirements changed. Thirty years ago, farmers were still the primary audience of agricultural communicators. Now, however, agricultural communicators are trying to teach urban audiences, consumers, and the business world (p. 12).

Agricultural communicators have complex responsibilities that are affected by the type of employment and the person's education, interests, and level of expertise (Buck & Paulson, 1995). Agriculture is not an isolated field, but one which deals with society; therefore, agricultural communicators must have a broad understanding of all facets of life (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000).

An agricultural communicator's ultimate responsibility is reaching a public who may have little understanding of the food and fiber industry. Law and Pepple (1990) outlined two primary consequences of society having a poor understanding of agriculture:

The first concern is that an agriculturally literate citizenry is vital to the development of well thought out policies concerning critical issues affecting the food and fiber system. The second concern is with the need for a well-educated, agriculturally literate supply of high school and college graduates who are prepared to enter the food and fiber system (p. 10).

### *Agricultural communications as a profession*

Little literature exists on agricultural communications as a profession, yet many individuals choose careers in the field. The Agricultural Communicators in Education Organization reported a membership of more than 700 in 2003. Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker (2000) reported 10 professional organizations available to agricultural communicators.

According to the Oklahoma State University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (n.d.), available jobs with an agricultural communications degree include the following:

- Newspaper and magazine writing and editing
- Agriculture-related publications
- Photography
- Advertising and Sales
- Video and Television Production
- Broadcast Journalism
- Radio Production
- Public Relations

- Environmental Reporting
- Advanced degrees in law, business, education, or communications

Many agricultural communicator's will work for commodity organizations, agribusinesses, state and federal government agencies, or colleges and universities where they will serve as ambassadors for the organization rather than as an individual communicator (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000).

## Public Relations

### *History of public relations*

Public relations truly began when people began to live together in tribes where the survival of one person depended on others in the tribe. Civilization required communication, conciliation, consensus, and cooperation, which are fundamental functions of public relations (Cutlip, 1995).

The first public relations practitioners were those who publicized circuses, public spectacles, and theatrical events. World War I also produced many of the first public relations professionals who organized publicity on behalf of the United States (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, 2001).

In the twentieth century, public relations was employed by industries fighting negative perceptions. Textile mills, the steel industry, and the advertising business enhance their images through public relations. By mid-century, publicists and clients were mastering visual media tools in their public relations campaign, and by the late 1990s, companies saw public relations as a way to boost stock prices and share public opinions (Rose, 2003).

The first public relations theorist was Edward Bernay who, as a nephew of Sigmund Freud, drew many of his ideas from Freud's philosophies about the motives shaping human behavior (Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, 2001). Bernays developed the craft of public relations, and he is recognized as the man who fathered the science of spin (Tye, 1998). Referred to as the 'father of public relations,' Bernays was named one of the most influential Americans of the Century by *Life Magazine* (Rose, 2003).

Rose (2003) presents the following dates as significant in public relations history:

- 1987: General Electric develops a publicity department
- 1927: Arthur Page is appointed as AT&T's first vice president of public relations
- 1934: Successful 'Green Ball' campaign for Lucky Strike developed by Edward Bernays
- 1945: US government announces, with the help of a press release, that an American plane dropped a bomb on Hiroshima
- 1948: The Public Relations Society of America is founded
- 1960: Edward Bernays leads a massive advertising campaign to inform the public about the dangers of smoking
- 1982: Six people in a Chicago suburb die from cyanide poisoning after taking Tylenol, and a nightmare begins for McNeil labs and Johnson & Johnson
- 1989: The largest oil spill in history occurs as the Exxon Valdez runs aground in Prince William Sound
- 1993: Pepsi calls for direct and immediate action after a syringe is found in a can of Pepsi

1999: Public service campaign is launched by Anheuser-Busch against driving under the influence of alcohol

Today, there are more than 200 Public Relations Student Society of America chapters in colleges throughout the United States. The majority of public relations programs are located in journalism or mass communications departments, although they may be located in other schools such as speech, liberal arts, or business (PRSA, 2004).

#### *Public relations as a profession*

Public relations has become an increasingly important business during the past couple of decades with the explosion of press covering business and the rise of all-day-everyday news availability (Rose, 2003).

In 2000, public relations specialists held about 137,000 jobs. About six out of 10 professionals worked in service industries such as management and public relations firms, membership organizations, educational institutions, or health care organizations. Through 2010, the employment of public relations specialists is expected to increase at 36 percent or more above the average for all other occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

Public relations helps a complex society to reach mutual understanding between groups and organizations resulting in the ability to function effectively (PRSA, 2004). To reach a mutual understanding between the public and the organization or individual being represented, public relations professionals must specialize in influencing the attitudes of the public. According to Lesly (1991) there are eight phases of analysis and understanding of the factors influencing people's attitude toward an organization:



- Analyzing the general climate of attitudes and the relations of the organization to its universe
- Determining the attitude of any group toward the organization
- Analyzing the state of opinion
- Anticipating potential problems, needs or opportunities
- Formulating policy
- Planning means of improving the attitude of a group
- Carrying out planned activities

According to Lesly (1991), “professional communicators need to be aware of the issues that influence organizational performance, drive management thinking, and concern and interest employees” (p.225-226).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002) lists the following as typical duties of public relations specialists:

- Serve as advocates for businesses, non-profit organizations, health organizations, and other organizations while maintaining a positive relationship with the public
- Handle organizational functions including media, community, governmental, employee, and investor relations; serve as conflict mediator
- Inform general public, interest groups, and stockholders of an organization’s policies and procedures
- Prepare press releases and contact media who might broadcast or print material

- Conduct programs to maintain contact between organizational leaders and the public
- Keep the public informed about governmental policies, agencies, and officials
- Develop plans and policies with executives
- Handle advertising, sales, and promotion

### *Public relations curriculum*

Bernays believed that to be effective in public relations, one must have an understanding of sociology and psychology to understand why the public acts the way it acts and how it can be persuaded to act differently (Tye, 1998).

A typical student receiving a degree in public relations will have completed coursework in public relations principles and techniques, writing, visual communications, and research. Coursework in advertising, journalism, finance, and creative writing might also be included (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). Many public relations professionals start their careers as journalists as many graduates will seek out journalism jobs as a stepping stone to public relations (PRSA, 2004).

In agricultural communications, public relations is just one piece of the curriculum, and according to Terry et al. (1994) public relations could be split into three areas: campaign planning, problem solving, and personnel management. Akers, Vaughn & Lockaby (2001) suggested that today's public relations curriculum should also include the areas of marketing and advertising.

Terry et al. (1994) found the following competencies should be included in the public relations specialty area of the agricultural communications curriculum:

- Apply effective writing techniques
- Identify needs and traits of the audience
- Identify characteristics of the subject
- Describe basic principles of public relations
- Determine problems and methods used to solve them
- Solve public relations problems from case studies
- Work individually and in groups to solve public relations problems
- Apply administrative theories to personnel relations

### Curriculum

#### *Curriculum history*

Curriculum, as a specialized area of study, emerged from a growing need to organize and rationalize the changing forms of American education (Wiles & Bondi, 1998).

When colleges were first established they had very simple curriculum plans and planning procedures. Courses included traditional subjects, and when new disciplines were found they were simply added to the curriculum as courses or degree programs; and staff with expertise in the area were added (Smith & Clements, 1984).

Today, many institutions offer hundreds of degree programs and often suffer from an insufficient amount of faculty. Time constraints, an aversion to change, and money can keep institutions from making needed curricular changes. Academic institutions struggle to meet the needs of a changing world (Lunde, 1995).

*Past agricultural communications curriculum studies*

Separate studies completed in 1956 and 1957 revealed a lack of agreement among professionals regarding the ideal agricultural journalism curriculum as to the proper balance between the amount of formal agriculture training compared to the amount of training in journalism and communications (Evans & Bolick, 1982).

A 1982 study by Evans & Bolick (1982) revealed curricula geared to expose students to a wide variety of courses, as students could choose to specialize in an agricultural field such as animal science while following up with an option in communications, such as broadcast. The study revealed more communication oriented programs compared to earlier studies, as professionals indicated their primary goal was the preparation of professional communicators.

Kroupa & Evans (1976) surveyed agricultural communications professionals regarding the competencies appropriate for an agricultural communications curricula. Findings suggested the most appropriate curriculum was one requiring a large amount of agriculturally-related coursework with few specifically-required courses. Respondents were inconsistent in the specific communication skills they perceived to be critically important, suggesting the journalism/communication coursework available to students should be diverse.

A study conducted at The Ohio State University (Cooper & Bowen, 1989) surveyed agricultural communications graduates and their perceptions of the curriculum. The graduates perceived communication and journalism courses to be the most important when compared to agriculture or basic education courses.

Sprecker & Rudd (1998) interviewed agricultural communications professionals in Florida concerning the skills and knowledge that should be included in the University of Florida curriculum. Researchers concluded that communication skills were more important than agricultural knowledge, and writing was the most important competency for a graduate. Internships and interpersonal networking were also found to be important components to incorporate into the classroom.

### Theoretical Framework

To reinvent curriculum, one must answer a primary set of questions about what students should learn, and a secondary set of questions about how decisions about a particular program should be made and then implemented (Reid, 1999). According to Wiles & Bondi (1998), curriculum development begins with a set of questions that reveal value preferences which, in turn, undergird planning efforts and program evaluation. A curriculum developer is concerned with the design purpose, and clarification of that design is essential in producing an effective program.

According to Lunde (1995), changes in curriculum must come from agreement that new directions in society require students to master new skills or gain new knowledge. The critical question for curriculum developers is "Does the program serve the developed intentions?" (Wiles & Bondi, 1998).

When considering curriculum, employers can be helpful by sharing their perceptions of the society in which graduates will work. Employers can provide information on what skills graduates need to lead a fulfilling life in the cultural setting of the next century (Erven, 1987).

Changing technology and job requirements indicates a need to examine agricultural communications curricula to make it applicable to students and employers (Sprecker & Rudd, 1988).

Terry et al. (1994) reported one of the greatest strengths of the agricultural communications program is the flexibility of the curriculum, as the curriculum is intended to qualify graduates for a wide range of job opportunities.

A solid range of coursework in art, sciences, and agriculture should be included in the agricultural communications curriculum, while writing and editing skills are probably the most important regardless of the person's area of emphasis (Boone, Meisenbach & Tucker, 2000).

Because relatively few studies have examined courses taught in agricultural communications, administrators and faculty have few guidelines for developing new programs or comparing themselves to other programs (Reisner, 1990). The agricultural communications curriculum should be expanded and updated regularly to reflect technological advancements (Bailey-Evans, 1994).

Terry et al. (1994) suggested future studies be conducted to develop new competency lists for the specialized areas of agricultural communications.

### Summary

This chapter provided a summary of literature concerning the histories of agricultural communications and public relations and the roles of the professions in the workplace; it also provided an overview of the history and need for curriculum development.

Producing competent agricultural communicators into a society with limited agricultural knowledge is the goal of agricultural communications programs.

Agricultural communications is a unique discipline as it embodies many facets of communication and basic education coursework that is not offered in most journalism or communication programs.

Like all programs, the agricultural communications curriculum must be examined and catered to fit changing workplace demands. Industry professionals provide an accurate representation of what graduates will face in the workplace and their opinions should be included in the curriculum development process.

Public relations is one area of communications in which agricultural communications graduates may pursue employment. In an agricultural industry that often finds itself in the role of crisis communication, the job of public relations professionals as representatives of the industry is imperative to shaping society's view of the food and fiber system.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. Included in this section is a discussion of the research design, the population, the instruments used, the procedures, and the analysis of data.

##### Institutional Review Board

Prior to conducting research, permission was granted by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study. Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University require approval of all research studies before investigators may begin research. The IRB conducts this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research. This study received proper review and was assigned the number AG041 (Appendix A).

##### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the public relations proficiencies in an agricultural communications curriculum perceived as important by professionals, how frequently professionals used those proficiencies, and how professionals perceived the proficiencies to be best integrated into an agricultural communications curriculum.



### Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the demographic attributes of public relations professionals in agricultural communications.
2. To determine perceived important technical agriculture proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
3. To determine perceived important general communications proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
4. To determine perceived important specific public relations proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

### Population

To accomplish the purpose of this study, public relations professionals belonging to the public relations professional groups the Agricultural Relations Council (n=85) and the Cooperative Communicators Association (n=288) were purposefully selected. A total of 373 members were included in the original population. After pilot testing and eliminating bad e-mail addresses, 243 members were part of the final study. The only characteristic taken into consideration was membership in the organization. These

professionals are representative of public relations professionals in agricultural communications throughout the United States.

### Research Design

This was a descriptive study using an Internet questionnaire for data collection. According to Gay & Airasian (2003), descriptive research determines and describes the way things are. Non-parametric statistics were used. A census was conducted, thus findings from this study can only be generalized to the population.

### Instrumentation

The list of competencies developed by Terry, et al. (1994) were adapted for this study and placed in a Web-based format. The instrument (Appendix B) was divided into three parts. Questions in part one asked professionals whether or not a proficiency was important by answering yes or no; part two asked how often they used the proficiency: never, daily, weekly, monthly, or annually; and part three asked professionals how they thought the proficiency should be implemented in a university curricula: required, elective, workshop, internship or not at all.

Prior to the pilot study, a panel of experts comprised of eight agricultural communications and public relations professionals (Appendix C) reviewed the list of proficiencies to determine the content validity of the study. They indicated the majority of proficiencies to be appropriate for the study; a few proficiencies were eliminated from the list after review.

Because of the overwhelming length of the survey, a partial matrix-sampling technique was used, as matrix sampling is commonly used to control survey length and decrease the time required for individuals to respond (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2001).

The proficiencies were split into three sections: agriculture, communications and public relations. Participants were asked to answer five purposefully selected questions from two of the subject areas for a total of 10 questions. The third section included the total proficiency list in one of the three subject areas. Participants received one of three possible surveys (Appendix B). The matrixed questions allowed participants to answer a subset of questions from two of the proficiency lists. Since the questions were grouped into proficiency areas, the questions from the matrixed proficiency areas were conceptualized to the entire population (Edwards & Briars, 1999).

A reliability analysis was performed post-data collection on the frequency questions for each section of the instrument. Because the questions were scaled, a Cronbach's alpha was performed for each section. Reliability coefficient for the agriculture questions was 0.9354, reliability coefficient for the general communications questions was 0.9633, and reliability coefficient for the specific public relations questions was 0.9012. The remaining portions of the instrument are considered demographic data, and according to Dillman (2003), no reliability analysis was needed.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested for face validity and reliability using a random sample of the population. A random numbers table (Gay & Airasian 2003) was used to determine the pilot sample which included 80 participants. The pilot test, conducted from November 18, 2003, to December 3, 2003, revealed a problem with the structure and readability of the survey, as participants suggested including the heading multiple times throughout the instrument to prevent scrolling to the top of the page to look at answer options.

### *Data collection*

During the data collection process, participants had difficulty accessing the instrument with the provided URL. The instrument was located on an inadequate server, and the researcher regrets that the error may have negatively affected the response rate. Respondents who were unable to access the instrument online had the opportunity to request a faxed version of the document (Appendix D). Completed faxes were not compared with submitted online surveys, as the researcher submitted completed faxed surveys online and had no way of identifying which surveys were faxed and which were completed online.

### *Procedures*

Quantitative data were used to determine the perceived knowledge and skills desired of agricultural communications graduates in the area of public relations by professionals. The URL for the Web-based survey was distributed via e-mail to the population. The researcher followed the method for Web-based, dual-method data collection presented by Dillman (2000). Participants received an introductory e-mail (Appendix E) preparing them for the forthcoming survey on February 10, 2004. Three days later, participants received an e-mail (Appendix F) containing instructions, contact information of the researcher, and a URL link to the survey. Participants received three reminder e-mails (Appendix G), one week apart, during a 30-day collection period beginning February 13, 2004, and ending March 14, 2004.

Non-response error was accounted for by comparing early to late respondents. Respondents who completed the survey during the first week of data collection were compared to respondents who completed the survey during the final week of data

collection. Selected items between early and late respondents were compared, and no differences were found; thus, findings were concluded to be generalizable to the whole population.

### Data Analysis

After participants completed the survey, data were stored in a database. After data collection was complete, the database was converted to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows version 11.0 (2001) for analysis.

### Chapter Summary

A study identifying the proficiencies desired of agricultural communications graduates by agricultural communications professionals in public relations was conducted in winter 2003/2004. Public relations professionals in the Agricultural Relations Council and the Cooperative Communicators Association were selected to participate in the census study. The instrument was developed and formatted for the Web. Data were analyzed using SPSS 11.0 (2001).

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

Represented in this chapter are findings as related to the research objectives. The findings are organized by objective. This chapter outlines the purpose, objectives, and population of the study.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the public relations proficiencies in an agricultural communications curriculum perceived as important by professionals, how frequently professionals used those proficiencies, and how professionals perceived the proficiencies to be best integrated into an agricultural communications curriculum.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the demographic attributes of public relations professionals in agricultural communications.
2. To determine perceived important technical agriculture proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
3. To determine perceived important general communications proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

4. To determine perceived important specific public relations proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

#### Population

To accomplish the purpose of this study, public relations professionals belonging to the Agricultural Relations Council (n=85) and the Cooperative Communicators Association (n=288) were purposefully selected. A total of 373 members were included in the original population. After pilot testing and eliminating bad e-mail addresses, 243 members were part of the final study. The only characteristic taken into consideration was membership in the organization. These professionals are representative of public relations professionals in agricultural communications throughout the United States.

#### Response Rate

Data were collected from February 13, 2004, to March 14, 2004. A total of 279 Agricultural Relations Council and Cooperative Communicators Association members were sent the online questionnaire. Thirty-six e-mails were invalid and not included in the population, thus reducing the number of possible respondents to 243. Seventy responses were collected for a response rate of 29%. All responses were useable and included in the study.

## Findings

### *Findings Related to Demographic Attributes*

The first objective was to determine the demographic attributes of public relations professionals in agricultural communications.

A majority of respondents (66%) were female as compared to male (34%).

Respondents were asked to indicate their age range (Figure 1). The largest percentage of professionals were 46-55 years old (35.7%). Professionals varied in age range as those 18-25 accounted for 4.7% of respondents, 56-65 accounted for 7.1% of respondents, and no respondents were more than 66 years of age.



*Figure 1.* Distribution of respondents by age

Professionals were asked to indicate the degrees they hold. Sixty-three (90%) professionals (90%) held at least a bachelor's degree, and 17 (24%) held a master's degree. One respondent held doctoral degree, and three respondents (4.3%) did not hold a degree.



### Public relations experience

Participants indicated the number of years they have worked in public relations (Table 1). A majority of respondents (58.6%) were professionals with extensive work experience having worked 13 or more years in public relations. Five respondents (7.1%) indicated having worked 4-6 or 10-12 years in public relations; eleven respondents (15.7%) had worked 7-9 years included 11 (15.7%) respondents; and seven professionals (10.0%) worked 1-3 years in public relations.

Table 1

#### *Number of years in public relations*

Demographic	(n=70)	<i>f</i>
1-3		7
4-6		5
7-9		11
10-12		5
13 or more		41
NR		1

*Note.* NR=no response

Table 2 displays a summary of the number of full-time jobs professionals have held in public relations. The number of professionals having held two or three jobs represented 38 (54.3%) of respondents and over half the population (54.3%). Only 15.7% of respondents indicated holding five or more positions in their career. Twelve professionals (17.1%) held one job in the career; and seven respondents (10.0%) held four public relations positions.

Table 2

*Number of full-time jobs in public relations*

Demographic	(n=70)	<i>f</i>
1		12
2		23
3		15
4		7
5 or more		11
NR		2

*Note.* NR=no response

### Agricultural knowledge

Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge level of the agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources industry (Figure 2). A majority of respondents felt confident in their agricultural knowledge, as two-thirds of respondents (75.7%) perceived having a somewhat high or high knowledge level. Only a small percentage of professionals (7.2%) perceived to have only a low or somewhat low knowledge of agriculture. Those who perceived their agricultural knowledge as average included 11 (15.7%) professionals.

Professionals were asked to indicate how many courses they had completed in agriculture (Table 3). Twenty-nine respondents (41.4%) reported completing 10 or more courses. Twenty-six respondents (37.1%) had completed no agricultural coursework. Four respondents (5.7%) had completed 1-3 or 7-9 agricultural courses; and five respondents (7.1%) completed 4-5 courses in agriculture.

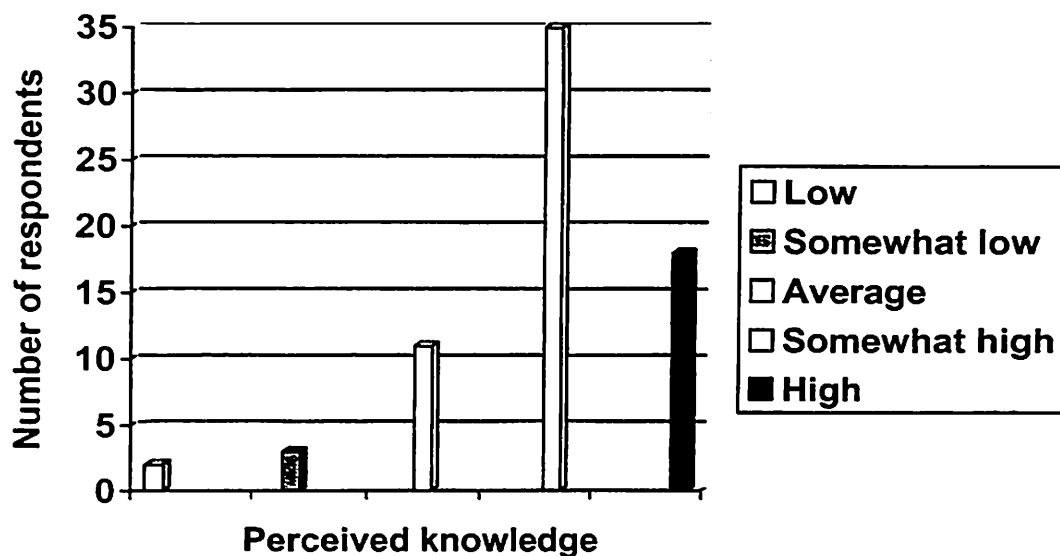


Figure 2. Level of respondent's agricultural knowledge

Table 3

*Number of agricultural courses completed*

Demographic	(n=70)	<i>f</i>
None		26
1-3		4
4-6		5
7-9		4
10 or more		29
NR		2

Note. NR=no response

Professionals were asked to choose their experiences in agriculture (Table 4); respondents had the option of picking more than one experience. Forty-seven respondents (67.1%) had paid work experience in agriculture by working for an agricultural business. Forty-one respondents (58.6%) had hands-on agricultural experience by either living or working on a farm. Eight participants (11.4%) have

owned a farm (11.4%) and six participants (8.6%) have owned a business related to agriculture.

Table 4

*Types of experiences in agriculture*

Demographic	(n=70)	<i>f</i>	Order
Work(ed) for ag business		47	1
Paid work experience		46	2
Live(d) in rural area		46	2
Live(d) on farm		41	3
Work(ed) on farm		41	3
College coursework		36	4
Work(ed) in rural area		33	5
Extension workshops		29	6
Unpaid work experience		28	7
High school coursework		21	8
Own(ed) farm		8	9
Own(ed) ag business		6	10
None		3	11

*Findings Related to Technical Agriculture Proficiencies*

Objective 2 of this study was to determine the technical agriculture proficiencies public relations professionals perceived to be important, how often they used those proficiencies, and how they think the proficiency should be taught. First, participants were asked if the proficiency was important by choosing yes or no. Second, they were asked how frequently they use the proficiency: daily, weekly, monthly, annually, or never. Finally, respondents were asked how the proficiency should be included in curriculum: required course, elective course, workshop, internship or not at all.

Five proficiencies were perceived as important by at least 75% of respondents. A majority of respondents, 50-74%, agreed that 31 of the proficiencies were important, and 21 proficiencies were deemed not important by at least 50% of respondents.

Table 5 displays a summary of the technical agriculture proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of the respondents and their frequency of use. A majority of respondents reported using the proficiencies on a weekly or monthly basis, but rarely on a daily basis. The ability to discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture had both the highest rank of importance (90.5%), and one-third of respondents (33.3%) reported using the proficiency on a weekly or monthly basis. The ability to identify governmental regulatory agencies related to agribusiness was used by one-third of respondents (33.3%) on a weekly basis; and the ability to identify government programs that support agricultural business was used by 38.1% of respondents on a monthly basis.

Table 5

*Agricultural proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiency	<u>Frequency of use</u>					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR
Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture	19.0	33.3	33.3	4.8	0.0	9.5
Interpret charts, graphs and maps to make specific decisions related to business	14.3	23.8	28.6	4.8	14.3	14.3
Define conservation	4.8	28.6	28.6	23.8	4.8	9.5
Identify governmental regulatory agencies related to agribusiness	9.5	14.3	14.3	33.3	23.8	4.8
Identify current government programs that support agricultural business	4.8	14.3	38.1	23.8	4.8	14.3

*Note.* D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

Described in Table 6 are the technical agriculture proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents and how those proficiencies should be included in an agricultural communications curriculum. The majority of respondents perceived the proficiencies should be implemented in the curriculum as an elective course. The ability to interpret charts, graphs and maps was recommended to be taught as a required course by more than half of respondents (52.4%). A small percentage of professionals indicated that defining conservation (4.8%), discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture (4.8%), and identify governmental regulatory agencies related to agribusiness (9.5%) should not be included in curriculum.

Table 6

*Agricultural proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	<u>How to teach</u>					
	R%	E%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture	9.5	28.6	42.9	14.3	4.8	0.0
Define conservation	33.3	42.9	9.5	0.0	4.8	9.5
Identify governmental regulatory agencies related to agribusiness	0.0	14.3	23.8	52.4	9.5	0.0
Identify current government programs that support agricultural business	14.3	19.0	47.6	14.3	0.0	4.8
Interpret charts, graphs and maps to make specific decisions related to business	52.4	28.6	4.8	0.0	0.0	14.3

*Note.* R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

Table 7 describes technical agriculture proficiencies perceived as important by 50-75% of respondents and their frequency of use. A majority of professionals indicated using these proficiencies on a monthly or annual basis. Many respondents reported no use of many of the proficiencies. Those proficiencies with the most use by professionals were not necessarily those that received the highest importance ranking. For example, list the purposes of governmental farm agencies was ranked important by 71.4% of professionals, however, one-third (33.3%) of respondents reported no use of this proficiency. Almost half of participants (42.9%) reported never having to define precision farming. Preparing a budget (42.9%) and describing major world food and fiber crops and where they were produced graphically and explain their intended

Table 7

*Agricultural proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiency	Frequency of use					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR%
Summarize the economic and management roles of producing agricultural animals	9.5	19.0	23.8	19.0	19.0	9.5
Describe the effects of agriculture upon erosion and the introduction of chemical compounds in the environment	14.3	14.3	19.0	19.0	19.0	14.3
Prepare a budget	19.0	9.5	9.5	42.9	5.8	14.3
Report on the impact of biotechnology in agricultural animals	19.0	19.0	23.8	9.5	19.0	9.5
List the purposes of governmental farm agencies	4.8	14.3	19.0	14.3	33.3	14.3
Describe the purpose of and rationale for farm programs	0.0	19.0	38.1	14.3	19.0	9.5
Discuss the factors that stimulate and inhibit economic growth	9.5	19.0	4.8	38.1	19.0	9.5
Describe major world food and fiber crops including where they were produced geographically and explain their intended uses	0.0	4.8	28.6	42.9	14.3	9.5
Discuss the characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries	9.5	19.0	23.8	19.0	19.0	9.5
Analyze the public perception of plant and animal issues	14.3	23.8	9.5	19.0	19.0	14.3



Table 7 (continued)

Determine the impact of biotechnology on the world food production systems	9.5	4.8	9.5	38.1	23.8	14.3
Explain the impact of governmental policy on the production and marketing of various commodities	19.0	14.3	14.3	19.0	19.0	14.3
Identify career opportunities in production agriculture	4.8	19.0	23.8	14.3	23.8	14.3
Analyze the economic impact of production agriculture on the economy	14.3	0.0	9.5	33.3	28.6	14.3
Discuss the definition and types of agribusiness marketing	19.0	14.3	9.5	23.8	23.8	9.5
Evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy in foreign markets	0.0	19.0	23.8	23.8	23.8	9.5
Define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions	9.5	9.5	9.5	33.3	28.6	9.5
Demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development	9.5	14.3	19.0	23.8	23.8	9.5
Describe soil principles including fertility and water management	4.8	14.3	14.3	28.6	23.8	14.3
Discuss the ways that humans impact the ecosystem and methods of making it stable	4.8	19.0	14.3	33.3	14.3	14.3
Discuss environmental/global issues such a global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues	9.5	0.0	28.6	23.8	23.8	14.3
Define ecology and related terms	9.5	19.0	4.8	33.3	19.0	14.3

Table 7 (continued)

Describe the basics of food classification, modern processing and quality/safety control	4.8	14.3	19.0	14.3	33.3	14.3
Define and explain budget, cost, credit and tax and how they relate to agribusiness	4.8	14.3	9.5	23.8	28.6	19.0
Identify the types of tillage methods used in crop production	0.0	19.0	19.0	9.5	38.1	14.3
Explain the ethical and cultural concerns of biotechnology in agricultural processing	9.5	19.0	23.8	4.8	33.3	9.5
Recognize what DNA and clones mean	9.5	4.8	23.8	19.0	33.3	9.5
Define precision farming	4.8	14.3	4.8	23.8	42.9	9.5
Know water issues	4.8	9.5	23.8	23.8	28.6	9.5
Understand urban agriculture	0.0	14.3	23.8	28.6	19.0	14.3
Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms	14.3	14.3	28.6	4.8	28.6	9.5

*Note.* D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

uses (42.9%) were used on an annual basis by the highest percentage of respondents. The ability to summarize the economic and management roles of producing agricultural animals; report on the impact of biotechnology on agricultural animals; discuss the characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries; identify career opportunities in production agriculture; and evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy on foreign markets were used on a monthly basis by 23.8% of professionals. Those proficiencies never used by more than 20% of professionals included the following: list the purpose of governmental farm agencies (33.3%); determine the impact of biotechnology on the world food production systems (23.8%); identify career opportunities in agriculture (23.8%); analyze the impact of production agriculture on the economy (28.6%); describe soil principles including fertility and water management (23.8%); define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions (28.6%); and discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues (23.8%).

Described in Table 8 are agricultural proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of professionals and how those proficiencies should be included in the agricultural communications curriculum. Respondents indicated that the majority of these proficiencies should be taught as a required course. Many also indicated the proficiency could be adequately taught in an elective course. These proficiencies were deemed important by less than 75% of professionals, however, a greater number of respondents indicated these proficiencies should be included in a required, rather than an elective course when compared to those proficiencies receiving a greater percentage of importance. More than half of professionals thought the ability to prepare a budget

Table 8

*Agricultural proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	<u>Frequency of use</u>					
	R%	F%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Discuss the definition and types of agribusiness marketing	47.6	33.3	9.5	0.0	0.0	9.5
Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture	14.3	66.7	9.5	0.0	0.0	9.5
Describe the purpose of and rationale for farm programs	19.0	57.1	14.3	0.0	0.0	9.5
Evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy in foreign markets	14.3	52.4	19.0	4.8	0.0	9.5
Discuss the factors that stimulate and inhibit economic growth	33.3	52.4	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5
Define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions	9.5	57.1	14.3	4.8	4.8	9.5
Describe major world food and fiber crops including where they were produced geographically and explain their intended uses	23.8	42.9	19.0	0.0	4.8	9.5
Demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development	19.0	57.1	9.5	0.0	4.8	9.5
Describe soil principles including fertility and water management	19.0	52.4	14.3	0.0	4.8	9.5
Discuss the characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries	9.5	66.7	14.3	0.0	0.0	9.5

Table 8 (continued)

Report on the impact of biotechnology in agricultural animals	23.8	57.1	4.8	0.0	0.0	14.3
Analyze the public perception of plant and animal issues	38.1	28.6	19.0	4.8	0.0	9.5
Summarize the economic and management roles of producing agricultural animals	19.0	66.7	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5
Discuss the ways that humans impact the ecosystem and methods of making it stable	33.3	28.6	14.3	4.8	9.5	9.5
Discuss environmental/global issues such a global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues	23.8	28.6	19.0	4.8	14.3	9.5
Describe the effects of agriculture upon erosion and the introduction of chemical compounds in the environment	38.1	33.3	14.3	0.0	4.8	9.5
Define ecology and related terms	33.3	28.6	19.0	4.8	4.8	9.5
Describe the basics of food classification, modern processing and quality/safety control	23.8	52.4	4.8	4.8	4.8	9.5
Define and explain budget, cost, credit and tax and how they relate to agribusiness	28.6	47.6	9.5	0.0	4.8	9.5
Prepare a budget	57.1	28.6	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5
List the purposes of governmental farm agencies	57.1	28.6	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5
Identify the types of tillage methods used in crop production	14.3	52.4	14.3	0.0	4.8	14.3

Table 8 (continued)

Determine the impact of biotechnology on the world food production systems	19.0	38.1	28.6	0.0	0.0	14.3
Explain the impact of governmental policy on the production and marketing of various commodities	33.3	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5
Identify career opportunities in production agriculture	42.9	42.9	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5
Analyze the economic impact of production agriculture on the economy	14.3	23.8	33.3	9.5	4.8	14.3
Explain the ethical and cultural concerns of biotechnology in agricultural processing	47.6	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5
Recognize what DNA and clones mean	38.1	33.3	4.8	9.5	4.8	9.5
Define precision farming	38.1	33.3	9.5	9.5	0.0	9.5
Know water issues	33.3	28.6	9.5	14.3	4.8	9.5
Understand urban agriculture	14.3	57.1	4.8	4.8	9.5	9.5
Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms	38.1	47.6	4.8	0.0	0.0	9.5

*Note.* R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

(57.1%) and list the purpose of governmental farm agencies (57.1%) should be included in a required course. Likewise, almost half of respondents (47.6%) thought the ability to explain the ethical and cultural concerns of biotechnology in agricultural processing and discuss the types of agribusiness marketing (47.6%) should be required in curriculum. More than half of respondents indicated the following proficiencies should be included in an elective course: Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture (66.7%); describe the purpose and rationale for farm programs (57.1%); evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy in foreign markets (52.4%); discuss the factors that inhibit economic growth (52.4%); define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions (57.1%); demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development (57.1%); describe soil principles including fertility and water management (52.4%); discuss the characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries (66.7%); report on the impact of biotechnology in agricultural animals (57.1%) and understand urban agriculture (57.1%). A small percentage of respondents indicated never using the following proficiencies: Define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions (4.8%); describe major world food and fiber crops including where they were produced geographically, and explain their intended uses (4.8%); demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development (4.8%); describe soil principles including fertility and water management (4.8%); discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues (14.3%), and understand urban agriculture (9.5%).

Proficiencies perceived as not important by 50% or more of respondents are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

*Agricultural proficiencies perceived as not important by 50% or more of respondents*

---

Proficiency

---

Describe marketing theories related to price, grading, elasticity, etc.

Apply the concept of indifference curves, supply/demand, and production functions

Explain opportunity cost

Demonstrate the proper procedures for administering animal health products

Evaluate livestock for profitable production traits

Identify the types of wholesale and retail cuts of beef

Explain the methods for proper disposal and handling of animal waste

Explain how the selection of hybrid and certified seed affects performance and profitability

Identify major genetic characteristics of animal breeds and examine their uses in the animal's breeding systems and scientific principles

Demonstrate safe and humane animal handling techniques

Identify and compare the operation of equipment and facilities involved with livestock for optimum production efficiency

Use observational techniques to identify healthy, quality plants; explain photosynthesis

Explain lawn and turf maintenance; know specific insect pests

Identify fruits and nuts by common name; identify vegetables by common name

Identify floriculture crops including houseplants by common name

Explain the importance of quality assurance of food and fiber products

Explain the concepts of food sanitation and safety; define phenotype and genotype

---



### *Findings Related to General Communication Competencies*

Objective 3 of this study was to determine the general communications proficiencies public relations professionals perceived to be important, how often they used those proficiencies, and how they think the proficiency should be included in an agricultural communications curriculum. First, participants were asked if the proficiency was important by choosing yes or no. Second, they were asked how frequently they use the proficiency: daily, weekly, monthly, annually, or never. Finally, respondents were asked how the proficiency should be taught: required course, elective course, workshop, internship or not at all.

Fifty-one proficiencies were perceived as important by at least 75% of respondents. Sixteen proficiencies were perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents, and no proficiencies were deemed unimportant 50% or more respondents.

Table 10 describes communication proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of professionals and how frequently they are used by professionals. A majority of respondents used these proficiencies on a daily basis. More than 80% of respondents used the following proficiencies on a daily basis: Navigate Internet and send and receive e-mail (86.2%), work under pressure (82.8%), perform basic word processing (86.2%), and apply human relations skills (82.8%). The ability to write speeches using effective formats and formulas, and the ability to customize a speech for a specific audience were not used on a daily basis (0%), but they were frequently used on a monthly basis according to more than 40% of respondents.

Table 10

*Communications proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiency	Frequency of use					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR%
Write using appropriate style (i.e. AP, VPI)	69.0	17.2	6.9	3.4	0.0	3.4
Describe the principles of journalism clearly and concisely	24.1	37.9	17.2	10.3	6.9	3.4
Apply writing and reporting skills in a 'real world' situation	69.0	24.1	3.4	0.0	0.0	3.4
Interview a source of information for a news article	13.8	48.3	31.0	0.0	3.4	3.4
Edit the work of others; accurately proofread a document	55.2	24.1	13.8	0.0	3.4	3.4
Use correct editing marks and symbols	51.7	20.7	10.3	3.4	6.9	6.9
Critique and correct layout and design of publications	41.4	27.6	27.6	0.0	0.0	3.4
Discuss ethical standards existing in the field of journalism	0.0	17.2	31.0	27.6	17.2	6.9
Determine ethical solutions to problems	24.1	13.8	27.6	24.1	0.0	10.3
Describe the ways in which news and other information is disseminated to the public	34.5	20.7	24.1	6.9	6.9	6.9
Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences	41.4	13.8	24.1	10.3	0.0	10.3

Table 10 (continued)

Customize a speech for a specific audience	0.0	6.9	44.8	34.5	3.4	10.3
Apply effective speaking techniques	27.6	27.6	20.7	3.4	10.3	10.3
Use the voice to maintain the interest of the audience	27.6	24.1	13.8	13.8	10.3	10.3
Use a variety of inflection, tone and volume	31.0	27.6	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3
Use appropriate hand and facial expressions	27.6	27.6	10.3	6.9	13.8	13.8
Describe the impact of agriculture upon all Americans	20.7	17.2	34.5	17.2	0.0	10.3
Describe the agricultural community in the United States	10.3	34.5	20.7	20.7	3.4	10.3
Use a variety of means including print, radio and video to inform the public	37.9	24.1	13.8	6.9	3.4	13.8
Write features about agricultural topics	3.4	27.6	37.9	13.8	6.9	10.3
Describe the purpose of agricultural communications	24.1	10.3	13.8	31.0	6.9	13.8
Apply agricultural communications techniques and skills	62.1	0.0	6.9	6.9	6.9	17.2
Gain experience in the applications of agricultural communications theories in the workplace	44.8	6.9	24.1	3.4	3.4	17.2
Demonstrate the characteristics of responsibility and credibility	75.9	0.0	3.4	3.4	0.0	17.2
Write speeches using effective formats and formulas	0.0	3.4	41.4	34.5	13.8	6.9

Table 10 (continued)

Model proficiency in time management and organization	75.9	3.4	3.4	3.4	0.0	13.8
Navigate Internet; send and receive e-mail	86.2	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.3
Transfer and download information through a network	79.3	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8
Use graphics effectively to increase understanding	62.1	17.2	13.8	0.0	0.0	6.9
Apply human relations skills	82.8	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	13.8
Resolve conflicts	51.7	6.9	20.7	3.4	6.9	10.3
Write a quality thank you note	20.7	10.3	44.8	6.9	0.0	17.2
Identify and fix barriers to effective communication	34.5	31.0	13.8	6.9	3.4	10.3
Interview for employment	10.3	0.0	6.9	62.1	10.3	10.3
Work in a team activity	69.0	3.4	3.4	6.9	0.0	17.2
Work under pressure	82.8	3.4	0.0	3.4	0.0	10.3
Correctly report facts	79.3	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.3
Understand government systems and how they affect agriculture	24.1	31.0	10.3	17.2	0.0	17.2
Cite sources	34.5	20.7	27.6	0.0	0.0	17.2
Gather and synthesize information	62.1	10.3	6.9	3.4	0.0	

Table 10 (continued)

Perform basic work processing	86.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8
Converse knowledgeably on different areas in agriculture	48.3	13.8	10.3	10.3	3.4	13.8
Determine whether a topic would be best covered in a new article or a feature article	10.3	41.4	20.7	6.9	6.9	13.8
Create a résumé	6.9	0.0	10.3	58.6	10.3	13.8
Identify bias in media stories	31.0	17.2	20.7	10.3	3.4	17.2
Write for Internet	20.7	24.1	27.6	3.4	6.9	17.2
Discuss the importance of belonging to a professional organization	13.8	10.3	31.0	20.7	3.4	20.7
Interpret statistics	17.2	37.9	13.8	13.8	0.0	17.2
Use an Associated Press Stylebook	41.4	24.1	10.3	3.4	0.0	20.7
Apply common sense logic to an economic trend analysis	13.8	27.6	24.1	6.9	10.3	17.2
Analyze and interpret technical data	17.2	37.9	10.3	6.9	6.9	20.7

*Note.* D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

accurately proofread a document (55.2%); use correct editing marks and symbols (51.7%); apply agricultural communications techniques and skills (62.1%); demonstrate the characteristics of responsibility and credibility (75.9%); model proficiency in time management and organization (75.9%); transfer and download information through a network (79.3%); use graphics effectively to increase understanding (62.1%); resolve conflicts (51.7%); work in a team activity (69%); correctly report facts (79.3%); and gather and synthesize information (62.1%). Proficiencies used most frequently on a monthly basis included the following: Discuss ethical standards existing in the field of journalism (31%); write speeches using effective formats and formulas (41.4%); customize a speech for a specific audience (44.8%); describe the impact of agriculture on all Americans (34.5%); write features about agricultural topics (37.9%); and write a quality thank you note (44.8%). Proficiencies used most frequently on a weekly basis include the following: Interview a source of information for a news article (48.3%); describe the agricultural community in the United States (34.5%); and understand government systems and how they affect agriculture (31%).

Table 11 describes general communications proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents and how those proficiencies should be included in an agricultural communications curriculum. A majority of professionals indicated these proficiencies should be included in required coursework. A small percentage of participants reported these proficiencies as being taught most effectively in a workshop or internship experience. Proficiencies perceived by respondents as being most effectively taught in an elective course included the following: Use appropriate hand and facial expressions (41.4%), use a variety of inflection, tone and volume (41.4%), customize a

Table 11

*Communications proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	<u>How to teach</u>					
	R%	E%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Write using appropriate style (i.e. AP, VPI)	79.3	10.3	6.9	0.0	0.0	3.4
Describe the principles of journalism clearly and concisely	58.6	31.0	3.4	0.0	3.4	3.4
Apply writing and reporting skills in a 'real world' situation	72.4	10.3	0.0	13.8	0.0	3.4
Interview a source of information for a news article	69.0	10.3	6.9	10.3	0.0	3.4
Edit the work of others; accurately proofread a document	72.4	17.2	3.4	3.4	0.0	3.4
Use correct editing marks and symbols	62.1	10.3	17.2	0.0	6.9	3.4
Critique and correct layout and design of publications	44.8	27.6	20.7	3.4	0.0	3.4
Discuss ethical standards existing in the field of journalism	37.9	27.6	20.7	0.0	6.9	6.9
Determine ethical solutions to problems	41.4	31.0	20.7	0.0	0.0	6.9
Describe the ways in which news and other information is disseminated to the public	51.7	24.1	10.3	3.4	3.4	6.9

Table 11 (continued)

Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences	48.3	31.0	10.3	3.4	0.0	6.9
Write speeches using effective formats and formulas	20.7	62.1	6.9	0.0	3.4	6.9
Customize a speech for a specific audience	13.8	62.1	13.8	0.0	3.4	6.9
Apply effective speaking techniques	48.3	31.0	10.3	0.0	3.4	6.9
Use the voice to maintain the interest of the audience	34.5	34.5	20.7	0.0	3.4	6.9
Use a variety of inflection, tone and volume	27.6	41.4	20.7	0.0	3.4	6.9
Use appropriate hand and facial expressions	27.6	41.4	20.7	0.0	3.4	6.9
Describe the impact of agriculture upon all Americans	44.8	34.5	10.3	0.0	3.4	6.9
Describe the agricultural community in the United States	41.4	31.0	17.2	0.0	0.0	10.3
Use a variety of means including print, radio and video to inform the public	55.2	17.2	13.8	3.4	0.0	10.3
Write features about agricultural topics	55.2	17.2	10.3	6.9	0.0	10.3
Describe the purpose of agricultural communications	48.3	10.3	24.1	6.9	3.4	6.9
Apply agricultural communications techniques and skills	55.2	10.3	10.3	10.3	6.9	6.9



Table 11 (continued)

Gain experience in the applications of agricultural communications theories in the workplace	10.3	17.2	3.4	58.6	3.4	6.9
Demonstrate the characteristics of responsibility and credibility	58.6	0.0	13.8	20.7	0.0	6.9
Model proficiency in time management and organization	44.8	10.3	10.3	27.6	0.0	6.9
Navigate Internet; send and receive e-mail	72.4	3.4	3.4	6.9	6.9	0.0
Transfer and download information through a network	69.0	6.9	3.4	6.9	3.4	10.3
Use graphics effectively to increase understanding	55.2	31.0	3.4	3.4	0.0	6.9
Apply human relations skills	51.7	10.3	13.8	13.8	0.0	10.3
Resolve conflicts	34.5	20.7	24.1	6.9	3.4	10.3
Write a quality thank you note	20.7	31.0	17.2	10.3	6.9	13.8
Identify and fix barriers to effective communication	48.3	20.7	13.8	6.9	0.0	10.3
Interview for employment	27.6	24.1	34.5	3.4	0.0	10.3
Work in a team activity	62.1	10.3	6.9	10.3	0.0	10.3
Work under pressure	48.3	10.3	13.8	17.2	0.0	10.3
Correctly report facts	82.8	3.4	0.0	3.4	0.0	10.3

Table 11 (continued)

Understand government systems and how they affect agriculture	41.4	34.5	10.3	3.4	0.0	10.3
Cite sources	79.3	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8
Gather and synthesize information	55.2	20.7	6.9	3.4	0.0	13.8
Perform basic work processing	79.3	3.4	0.0	3.4	3.4	10.3
Converse knowledgeably on different areas in agriculture	37.9	37.9	10.3	3.4	0.0	10.3
Determine whether a topic would be best covered in a new article or a feature article	51.7	31.0	3.4	0.0	3.4	10.3
Create a résumé	31.0	10.3	44.8	3.4	0.0	10.3
Identify bias in media stories	44.8	17.2	13.8	6.9	3.4	13.8
Write for Internet	51.7	27.6	0.0	3.4	6.9	10.3
Discuss the importance of belonging to a professional organization	17.2	20.7	41.4	6.9	3.4	10.3
Interpret statistics	51.7	17.2	13.8	3.4	3.4	10.3
Use an Associated Press Stylebook	72.4	3.4	6.9	0.0	3.4	13.8
Apply common sense logic to an economic trend analysis	37.9	24.1	13.8	3.4	6.9	13.8
Analyze and interpret technical data	37.9	27.6	10.3	6.9	6.9	10.3

Note. R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

speech for a specific audience (62.1%), and write speeches using effective formats and formulas (62.1%). The highest percentage of professionals thought the following proficiencies should be included in a required course: Write using appropriate style (79.3%); describe the principles of journalism clearly and concisely (58.6%); apply writing and reporting skills in a real world situation (72.4%); interview a source of information for a news article (69%); edit the work of others and proofread a document (72.4%); critique and edit the layout and design of publications (44.8%); discuss ethical standards existing in the field of journalism (37.9%); determine ethical solutions to problems (41.4%); describe the ways in which news and other information is disseminated to the public (51.7%); compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences (48.3%); apply effective speaking techniques (48.3%); describe the impact of agriculture on all Americans (44.8%); describe the agricultural community in the United States (41.4%); use a variety of means including print, radio and video to inform the public (55.2%); write features about agricultural topics (55.2%); describe the purpose of agricultural communications (48.3%); apply agricultural communications techniques and skills (55.2%); demonstrate the characteristics of responsibility and credibility (58.6%); model proficiency in time management and organization (44.8%); navigate Internet and send and receive e-mail (72.4%); transfer and download information through a network (69%); use graphics effectively to increase understanding (55.2%); apply human relations skills (51.7%); resolve conflicts (34.5%); identify and fix barriers to communication (48.3%); work in a team activity (62.1%); work under pressure (48.3%); correctly report facts (82.8%); understand systems and how they affect agriculture (41.4%); cite sources (79.3%); gather

and synthesize information (55.2%); perform basic word processing (79.3%); determine whether a topic would be best covered in a news article or a feature article (51.7%); identify bias in news stories (44.8%); write for Internet (51.7%); interpret statistics (51.7%); use an associated press stylebook (72.4%); apply common sense logic to an economic trend analysis (37.9%) and analyze and interpret technical data (37.9%). Three proficiencies were indicated as being included most effectively in a workshop: Interview for employment (34.5%); create a résumé (44.8%) and discuss the importance of belonging to a professional organization (41.4%).

Indicated in Table 12 are general communications proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of professionals. The proficiencies in this category are most often used on a monthly and annual basis according to professionals. More than half of respondents (51.7%) described using ethical challenges faced by reporters on a monthly basis. Almost half of participants (44.8%) discuss legal problems facing journalists, broadcasters and advertisers and select appropriate topics in speech writing annually. The following proficiencies are most often used on a monthly basis: Describe ethical challenges faced by reporters (51.7%); describe common dilemmas faced by journalists (37.9%); discuss and define communications regulations, fairness doctrine, libel, privacy and commercial speech (31%); select appropriate topics in speech writing (44.8%); use creative skills to develop introductions to effectively engage an audience in a speech (48.3%); assess the level of agricultural literacy in the United States (24.1%), and create media program formats (31%). Those proficiencies used most frequently on a weekly basis included the following: Discuss the Freedom of Information Act (31%);

Table 12

*Communications proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiency	Frequency of use					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR%
Describe ethical challenges faced by reporters	6.9	10.3	51.7	10.3	17.2	3.4
Describe common dilemmas faced by journalists	3.4	3.4	37.9	31.0	13.8	10.3
Discuss legal problems facing journalists, broadcasters and advertisers	3.4	10.3	13.8	44.8	20.7	6.9
Discuss and define communications regulations, fairness doctrine, libel, privacy and commercial speech	0.0	6.9	31.0	44.8	10.3	6.9
Select appropriate topics in speech writing	0.0	10.3	44.8	17.2	17.2	10.3
Use creative skills to develop introductions to effectively engage an audience in a speech	0.0	3.4	48.3	31.0	3.4	10.3
Assess the level of agricultural literacy in the United States	6.9	17.2	24.1	20.7	17.2	13.8
Describe the role agriculture plays in international relations	10.3	13.8	20.7	20.7	17.2	17.2
Discuss the cultural impact of agricultural trade	6.9	10.3	20.7	20.7	27.6	13.8
List the barriers that exist when communicating agricultural information in international situations	10.3	20.7	24.1	27.6	82.8	17.2

Table 12 (continued)

Contrast the uniqueness of agricultural communications to other disciplines	13.8	3.4	24.1	24.1	13.8	20.7
Create media program formats	10.3	20.7	31.0	13.8	10.3	13.8
Evaluate the performance of co-workers	20.7	6.9	10.3	31.0	17.2	13.8
Discuss the Freedom of Information Act	20.7	31.0	24.1	3.4	10.3	10.3
Demonstrate sales skills	20.7	27.6	20.7	6.9	13.8	10.3
Interpret the basics of the commodities market	20.7	44.8	17.2	0.0	6.9	10.3

*Note.* D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

demonstrate sales skills (27.6%), and interpret the basics of the commodity market (44.8%). Proficiencies never used by professionals included the following: Discuss the impact of agricultural trade (27.6%) and list the barriers that exist when communicating agricultural information in international situations (82.8%).

How to include general communications proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of professionals in an agricultural communications curriculum is included in Table 13. A majority of respondents indicated these proficiencies should be taught in an elective course. The ability to evaluate the performance of co-workers should be taught in a workshop experience according to the highest percentage (27.6%) of respondents. Almost half of professionals (48.3%) indicated that the ability to discuss the Freedom of Information Act should be included during an internship experience. The following proficiencies should be included in a required course according to professionals: Describe ethical challenges faced by reporters (41.4%); contrast the uniqueness of agricultural communications to other disciplines (34.5%) and create media program formats (34.5%). Indicated as being best implemented in a elective course included the following proficiencies: Describe common dilemmas faced by journalists (37.9%); discuss legal problems facing journalists, broadcasters and advertisers (48.3%); discuss and define communications regulations, fairness doctrine, libel, privacy and commercial speech (37.9%); select appropriate topics in speech writing (41.4%); use creative skills to develop introductions to effectively engage an audience in speech (65.5%); assess the level of agricultural literacy in the United States (34.5%); describe the role agriculture

Table 13

*Communications proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	R%	E%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Describe ethical challenges faced by reporters	41.4	27.6	20.7	0.0	6.9	3.4
Describe common dilemmas faced by journalists	17.2	37.9	27.6	0.0	10.3	6.9
Discuss legal problems facing journalists, broadcasters and advertisers	17.2	48.3	24.1	0.0	3.4	6.9
Discuss and define communications regulations, fairness doctrine, libel, privacy and commercial speech	24.1	37.9	27.6	0.0	3.4	6.9
Select appropriate topics in speech writing	20.7	41.4	27.6	0.0	3.4	6.9
Use creative skills to develop introductions to effectively engage an audience in a speech	13.8	65.5	10.3	0.0	3.4	6.9
Assess the level of agricultural literacy in the United States	20.7	34.5	27.6	0.0	6.9	10.3
Describe the role agriculture plays in international relations	20.7	41.4	13.8	3.4	10.3	10.3
Discuss the cultural impact of agricultural trade	20.7	34.5	13.8	10.3	10.3	10.3
List the barriers that exist when communicating agricultural information in international situations	17.2	27.6	20.7	10.3	13.8	10.3
Contrast the uniqueness of agricultural communications to other disciplines	34.5	17.2	24.1	3.4	10.3	10.3



Table 13 (continued)

Create media program formats	34.5	27.6	24.1	6.9	0.0	6.9
Evaluate the performance of co-workers	20.7	24.1	27.6	3.4	10.3	13.8
Discuss the Freedom of Information Act	0.0	3.4	3.4	48.3	27.6	17.2
Demonstrate sales skills	24.1	24.1	13.8	0.0	17.2	20.7
Interpret the basics of the commodities market	3.4	31.0	20.7	13.8	13.8	17.2

*Note.* R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

plays in international relations (41.4%); discuss the impact of agricultural trade (34.5%); list the barriers that exist when communicating agricultural information in international situations (27.6%), and interpret the basics of the commodities market (31%).

#### *Findings Related to Specific Public Relations Proficiencies*

Objective 4 of this study was to determine the specific public relations proficiencies professionals perceived to be important, how often they used those proficiencies, and how they thought the proficiency should be implemented into an agricultural communications curriculum. First, participants were asked if the proficiency was important by choosing yes or no. Second, they were asked how frequently they use the proficiency: daily, weekly, monthly, annually, or never. Finally, respondents were asked how the proficiency should be taught: required course, elective course, workshop, internship or not at all.

Thirty-eight proficiencies were perceived to be important by 75% or more of respondents, five proficiencies were perceived to be important to 50-74% of professionals, and two proficiencies were perceived to be important by less than half of the population.

Table 14 describes specific public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents and how frequently professionals use those proficiencies. A majority of respondents used these proficiencies on a daily basis. Ninety percent or more of the professionals used the following proficiencies daily: Meet deadlines, handle multiple priorities simultaneously, and work under pressure (95%), apply effective writing techniques (95%); identify target markets (90%); and develop presentations (90%).

Table 14

*Public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiency	<u>Frequency of use</u>					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR%
Apply effective writing techniques	95.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Determine problems and methods used to solve them	65.0	10.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Possess business knowledge related to operations and finance	50.0	25.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Table 18 (continued)						
Design and communicate a marketing plan	20.0	15.0	15.0	40.0	5.0	5.0
Publicize events	10.0	35.0	35.0	15.0	0.0	5.0
Understanding of barriers to communication	50.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	0.0	5.0
Ability to manage finances	35.0	25.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Apply strategic thinking skills	65.0	25.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Provide effective PR counsel to CEO	20.0	30.0	25.0	10.0	5.0	10.0
Apply basic PR principles	52.6	21.1	21.1	5.3	0.0	5.0
Work individually and in groups to solve PR problems	45.0	25.0	0.0	10.0	5.0	15.0

Table 14 (continued)

Work with others in a team	70.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	15.0
Develop presentations	90.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Identify target markets	90.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Know multi-media alternatives	35.0	35.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	10.0
Design promotional materials	10.0	25.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	5.0
Promote programs	20.0	45.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Review communication prepared by others	45.0	30.0	15.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
Design and publish a newsletter	0.00	20.0	65.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Meet deadlines, handle multiple priorities simultaneously, and work under pressure	95.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Ability to listen to others and understand others' points of view in an unbiased manner	70.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Apply analytical skills	70.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Apply creative conceptualization	55.0	15.0	20.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Know program evaluation skills	20.0	5.0	40.0	25.0	5.0	5.0
Demonstrate news sensibility	55.0	30.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0

Table 14 (continued)

Ability to successfully 'pitch' a news story	25.0	25.0	35.0	10.0	0.0	5.0
Maintain knowledge of current events	75.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Knowledge and understanding of corporate policies	30.0	30.0	20.0	5.0	5.0	10.0
Ability to manage stakeholders	60.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Counsel, coach and supervise team of employees	35.0	15.0	20.0	10.0	5.0	15.0
Conduct benchmarking for marketing activities	10.0	10.0	25.0	45.0	5.0	5.0
Prepare others for media interviews and presentations	10.0	20.0	30.0	25.0	5.0	10.0
Demonstrate crisis communication skills and understanding of crisis phases	20.0	15.0	30.0	30.0	0.0	5.0
Use consulting and negotiation skills	50.0	10.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	10.0
Solve PR problems from practical case studies	15.0	25.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Coordinate requests for speakers and trainers	0.0	15.0	30.0	40.0	10.0	5.0
Understand and apply research methods	15.0	10.0	40.0	15.0	10.0	10.0
Knowledge of communication models	25.0	5.0	25.0	25.0	10.0	10.0

Note. D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

Forty percent or more of respondents reported using the following proficiencies annually: Coordinate requests for speakers and trainers (40%), conduct benchmarking for marketing activities (45%), and design and communicate a marketing plan (40%). Proficiencies with the highest percentage of use by professionals on a monthly basis included the following: Design promotional materials (30%); design and publish a newsletter (65%); know program evaluation skills (40%); ability to successfully pitch a news story (35%); prepare others for media interviews and presentations (30%) and understand and apply research methods (40%). Professionals indicated the following proficiencies as used by 50-90% of respondents on a daily basis: Determine problems and methods used to solve them (65%); possess business knowledge related to operations and finance (50%); understanding of barriers to communication (50%); apply strategic thinking skills (65%); apply basic PR principles (52.6%); work with others in a team (70%); ability to listen to others' points of view in an unbiased manner (70%); apply analytical skills (70%); apply creative conceptualization (55%); demonstrate news sensibility (55%); maintain knowledge of current events (75%); ability to manage stakeholders (60%), and use consulting and negotiation skills (50%).

Table 15 describes the specific public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of professionals and how those proficiencies should be included in an agricultural communications curriculum. A majority of respondents thought these proficiencies should be included in a required course. Ninety percent of professionals thought the following proficiencies should be required: Apply effective writing techniques (90%), work with others in a team (90%), and work individually and

Table 15

*Public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 75% or more of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	<u>How to teach</u>					
	R%	E%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Apply effective writing techniques	90.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Possess business knowledge related to operations and finance	45.0	35.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Determine problems and methods used to solve them	50.0	30.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Design and communicate a marketing plan	68.4	21.1	10.5	0.0	0.0	5.0
Publicize events	30.0	35.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	5.0
Understand of barriers to communications	65.0	5.0	20.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Ability to manage finances	45.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Apply strategic thinking skills	55.0	15.0	5.0	20.0	0.0	5.0
Provide effective PR counsel to CEO	35.0	25.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	5.0
Apply basic PR principles	75.0	10.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Work individually and in groups to solve PR problems	90.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Work with others in a team	90.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0

Table 15 (continued)

Develop presentations	65.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Identify target markets	50.0	35.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Know multi-media alternatives	60.0	30.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Design promotional materials	30.0	45.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Promote programs	35.0	35.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	10.0
Review communication prepared by others	45.0	25.0	10.0	5.0	10.0	5.0
Design and publish a newsletter	40.0	35.0	15.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
Meet deadlines, handle multiple priorities simultaneously, and work under pressure	55.0	0.0	5.0	35.0	0.0	5.0
Ability to listen to others and understand others' points of view in an unbiased manner	45.0	5.0	20.0	25.0	0.0	5.0
Apply analytical skills	35.0	25.0	10.0	25.0	0.0	5.0
Apply creative conceptualization	35.0	25.0	20.0	15.0	0.0	5.0
Know program evaluation skills	30.0	35.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Demonstrate news sensibility	60.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	5.0



Table 15 (continued)

Ability to successfully 'pitch' a news story	50.0	25.0	5.0	15.0	0.0	5.0
Maintain knowledge of current events	50.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.0
Knowledge and understanding of corporate policies	15.0	20.0	15.0	30.0	10.0	10.0
Ability to manage stakeholders	40.0	25.0	5.0	15.0	5.0	10.0
Counsel, coach and supervise team of employees	30.0	25.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	10.0
Conduct benchmarking for marketing activities	40.0	35.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Prepare others for media interviews and presentations	30.0	20.0	35.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Demonstrate crisis communication skill and understanding of crisis phases	55.0	25.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Use consulting and negotiation skills	40.0	25.0	20.0	0.0	5.0	10.0
Solve PR problems from practical case studies	20.0	25.0	40.0	5.0	0.0	10.0
Coordinate requests for speakers and trainers	10.0	35.0	35.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
Understand and apply research methods	30.0	30.0	15.0	5.0	10.0	10.0
Knowledge of communication models	50.0	15.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	15.0

*Note.* R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

in groups to solve PR problems (90%). Forty percent of participants indicated solving public relations problems from practical case studies should be included in a workshop. Proficiencies indicated as being most effectively included in a required course by 50-90% of respondents included the following: Determine problems and methods used to solve them (50%); design and communicate a marketing plan (68.4%); understanding of barriers to communication (65%); apply strategic thinking skills (55%); apply basic PR principles (75%); develop presentations (65%); identify target markets (50%); know multi-media alternatives (60%); meet deadlines, handle multiple priorities simultaneously, and work under pressure (55%); demonstrate news sensibility (60%); ability to successfully pitch a news story (50%); maintain knowledge of current events (50%); demonstrate crisis communication skills and understanding of crisis phases (55%), and knowledge of communication models (50%). The following proficiencies were indicated as being most effectively included in an elective course: Publicize events (35%); design promotional materials (45%), and know program evaluation skills (35%).

Described in Table 16 are specific public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents and how frequently professionals use those proficiencies. Respondents indicated using these proficiencies on a monthly or annual basis most frequently. A quarter of respondents (25%) reported developing recruitment materials, writing policy papers, or applying administrative theory to personnel decisions as never being a part of their job. More than 30% of respondents do create flyers on a weekly or monthly basis.

Table 16

*Public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by frequency of use*

Proficiencies	Frequency of use					
	D%	W%	M%	A%	N%	NR%
Create flyers	5.0	30.0	35.0	20.0	5.0	5.0
Develop internal communications plans regarding policies, promotions and assignments	30.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	30.0	10.0
Develop recruitment materials	0.0	5.0	25.0	30.0	25.0	15.0
Write policy papers	0.0	5.0	25.0	30.0	25.0	15.0
Apply administrative theory to personnel decisions	25.0	15.0	5.0	15.0	25.0	15.0

*Note.* D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, A=annually, N=not at all, NR=no response.

How to implement specific public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents into an agricultural communications curriculum is described in Table 17. Over half of professionals indicated the following proficiencies should be included in an elective course: Develop internal communications plans regarding policies, promotions and assignments (50%), apply administrative theories to personnel decisions, and develop recruitment materials (55%). No proficiencies were indicated as being necessary for a required course.

The following proficiencies were indicated as not important by 50% or more of respondents:

1. Apply the case method of problem solving
2. Understand state grant guidelines for program services

Table 17

*Public relations proficiencies perceived as important by 50-74% of respondents by type of implementation*

Proficiency	<u>How to teach</u>					
	R%	E%	W%	I%	N%	NR%
Create flyers	15.0	35.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	15.0
Develop internal communications plans regarding policies, promotions and assignments	10.0	50.0	20.0	5.0	10.0	5.0
Develop recruitment materials	5.0	55.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
Write policy papers	25.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	15.0
Apply administrative theories to personnel decisions	5.0	55.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	10.0

*Note.* R=required, E=elective, W=workshop, I=internship, N=not at all, NR=no response.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review and summary of the study and develop conclusions, implications, and recommendations based on the findings presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter I provided an introduction to this study. Little research has been conducted to determine the skills and knowledge employer's want from agricultural communications graduates; this study focused on the public relations area of the agricultural communications curriculum. Public relations professionals working in agricultural communications were surveyed to determine what proficiencies they thought should be included in a university curricula, how often they use those proficiencies, and how those proficiencies should be taught. This research provides a framework for curricula reassessment and change in agricultural communications.

Chapter II provided a literature review for the study. From the earliest of civilizations, the communication of information about agriculture was present. Extensions programs in the early twentieth century were the beginning of agricultural communications at the university level. Today, there are approximately 30 agricultural communications/journalism programs throughout the United States. Earlier studies in agricultural communications have expressed the need for continual curriculum revision by identifying the important proficiencies for the profession.

Included in Chapter III was an outline of the research methodology. A Web-based survey was developed, and the Dillman (2001) dual-method for Web-based surveying was used. A census was conducted on members of the Cooperative Communicators Association and the Agricultural Relations Council. Excluding bad e-mail addresses, 243 professionals were surveyed, and a 29% response rate was achieved.

Chapter IV included an analysis of data. Findings related to objectives addressing agriculture, communications and public relations proficiencies were presented.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the public relations proficiencies in an agricultural communications curriculum perceived as important by professionals, how frequently professionals used those proficiencies, and how professionals perceived the proficiencies to be best integrated into an agricultural communications curriculum.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the demographic attributes of public relations professionals working in agricultural communications.
2. To determine important technical agriculture proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.
3. To determine important general communications proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

4. To determine important specific public relations proficiencies, how frequently those proficiencies are used, and how those proficiencies should be taught in an undergraduate agricultural communications curriculum according to agricultural communications public relations professionals.

#### Scope of the Study

This census study consisted of members of the following professional organizations: Cooperative Communicators Association (n=288) and Agricultural Relations Council (n=85). Members of these organizations are representative of agricultural public relations professionals throughout the United States.

#### Summary of Methods and Procedures

Quantitative data were collected using an online instrument developed by the researcher. A list of competencies developed by Terry, et al. (1994) were adapted for the study. The data collection process was based on Dillman's (2000) method for Web-based surveying. A census of members of the Cooperative Communicators Association and the Agricultural Relations Council was conducted resulting in 70 responses for a 29% response rate. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and explain data. Data were analyzed using SPSS 11.0 for Windows (SPSS, 2001).

#### Conclusions

##### *Conclusions related to objective 1*

The typical public relations professional working in agricultural communications can be described as the following: female; 46-55 years old; has worked 13 or more years in public relations; held two positions in public relations; perceived their knowledge of

agriculture to be high; completed 10 or more courses in agriculture; and worked for an agricultural business.

*Conclusions related to objective 2*

1. Technical agriculture proficiencies were perceived as less important when compared to proficiencies in communications and public relations, as 21 proficiencies were eliminated from the list.
2. Agricultural proficiencies perceived to be most important and used most frequently encompass broad issues concerning government and legislative policies.
3. The majority of professionals perceived they do not use agricultural proficiencies on a daily or weekly basis, as the most frequent use was reported as monthly.
4. Agricultural proficiencies used on a monthly basis should be included in an elective course as indicated by respondents.

*Conclusions related to objective 3*

1. General communication proficiencies were perceived as more important by professionals when compared to specific public relations and technical agriculture proficiencies, as no proficiencies were determined as unimportant by respondents.
2. The majority of respondents used these proficiencies on a daily or weekly basis.
3. Computer, human relations, and time management skills were among the most important proficiencies.
4. A majority of professionals thought the proficiencies should be included in a required course.



5. Proficiencies dealing with international communication were indicated as never being used by a majority of respondents.

#### *Conclusions for objective 4*

1. Specific public relations proficiencies were perceived as more important than technical agriculture proficiencies by respondents.
2. A majority of respondents indicated use of the proficiencies on a daily basis.
3. Professionals perceived the proficiencies they use on a daily or weekly basis should be included in a required course.
4. Applying effective writing techniques, meeting deadlines, developing presentations, and identifying target markets were among the most frequently used proficiencies.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Agricultural communications students interested in public relations should focus their study on writing, presentation and human relations skills. When considering what to include in a public relations curriculum in agricultural communications, coursework in writing, editing, and presentation skills should be required; coursework offering more technical agricultural knowledge should be offered as elective hours.
2. Students should have an understanding of agricultural issues that are most important to the non-agricultural public and be able to intelligently speak about those issues. The ability to define conservation and discuss the impact of government and legislative policy are examples of issues students should be knowledgeable about.

3. The ability to work in a team environment, multi-task, and meet deadlines were important attributes, thus inferring to the pressures public relations professionals face daily. To prepare students for the deadline pressures they will face in the work place, educators should stay strict to assignment deadlines.
4. Coursework in finance and basic business principles should be included as required coursework in agricultural communications curricula.

#### Recommendations for Conducting an Online Instrument

1. The instrument should be user-friendly and relatively short, taking no more than 10 minutes to complete, as respondents may become frustrated and lose interest in completing the instrument to the best of their ability if they become frustrated with instrument length.
2. Participants should be given an identification number to avoid responses from individuals outside of the chosen population; this will also keep respondents from receiving reminder e-mails, as they will be identified as having already completed the survey.
3. The instrument should be housed on a server adequate to the amount of traffic it will be receiving, as multiple respondents should be able to complete the survey at the same time without receiving an error message.
4. Respondents should have the option to 'save for later' if they want to complete the survey at their own pace.
5. A dual-method of snail mail and e-mail may result in a greater response rate (Schonlau, Fricker and Elliot, 2002).

### Recommendations for Future Research

1. A study that breaks down the proficiencies into constructs and looks at specific areas more closely should be completed.
2. The coursework in agricultural communications programs throughout the country should be examined to see if course requirements reflect the findings of this study.
3. Research accumulated from these studies should be used to develop a curriculum model for the public relations part of the agricultural communications curriculum.

### Implications

Prior to this study, research on agricultural communications proficiencies had not been conducted since 1994. This research found that the majority of proficiencies in the areas of communications and public relations are still relevant to today's agricultural communication's public relations professionals, while many of the agricultural proficiencies were eliminated or determined as less important than in the past. After reading this study, one might ask: Why agricultural communications? The goal of the agricultural communications program is producing students with a broad knowledge base in communications and agriculture. Students should have an understanding of agricultural issues and be able to use that knowledge in the workplace.

Public relations professionals in agricultural communications are in need of agricultural communications graduates with a broad range of knowledge and skills who can handle the pressures of a career in public relations. The research presented in this study is one step in improving, maintaining, and developing a quality agricultural communications curriculum in public relations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akers, C., Vaughn, P., Lockaby, J. (2001). *High school agricultural communications competencies: A national delphi study*. Lubbock TX: Texas Tech University Press.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A. (2001). *Introduction to research in education*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Wadsworth Publishing.
- Bailey-Evans, F. (1994). *Enhancing the agricultural communications curriculum: A national Delphi study*. Texas Tech: Lubbock. Unpublished master's thesis.
- Birkenholz, B. & Craven, J. (1996). Agricultural communication: Bridging the gap. *Magazine of Agricultural Education*, 68(9), 10-11.
- Boone, K., Meisenbach, T., Tucker, M. (2000). *Agricultural communications: Changes and challenges*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.
- Buck, C.A. & Paulson, C.E. (1995). Characteristics, educational preparation, and membership in professional organizations of agricultural communicators. *Journal of Applied Communications*, (79)2, 1-12.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002). *Occupational outlook handbook*. Retrieved February 23, 2004, from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos086.htm>.
- Burnett, C. & Tucker, M (1990). *Writing for agriculture*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kenall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (n.d). *Agricultural communications* [Brochure]. Oklahoma State University: Author.

- Cooper, B.E. & Bowen, B. (1989). Agricultural communications curriculum: Perceptions of Ohio State graduates. *Ace Quarterly*, (73) 2, 11-16.
- Cutlip, S.M. (1995). *Public relations history: From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The antecedents*. New Jersey: Hillsdale.
- Doerfert, D. & Cepica, M. (1991). *The current status of agricultural/journalism programs in the United States*. Center for Technology Transfer, Texas Tech University.
- Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: John Wiles and Sons Inc.
- Erven, B.L. (1987). Reforming curricula: Challenge and change for agricultural economists. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 69.
- Edwards, M.C., & Briars, G.E. (1999). Assessing the in-service needs of entry-phase agriculture teachers in Texas: A discrepancy model versus direct assessment. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 40(3), 40-43.
- Evans, J.F. & Bolick, J.G. (1982). Today's curricula in agricultural journalism and communications. *Ace Quarterly*, (65)1, 29-38.
- Gay, L.R. & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.
- Kearl, B. (1983). The past and future of agricultural communications. Part I: A look at the past. *Agricultural Communicator's in Education*, (66) 4, 1-7.
- Law, D.A. & Pepple, J.D. (1990). A state plan for agricultural literacy. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. 62(8), 10-13.

- Layfield, K & Dobbins, T. (2002). Inservice needs and perceived competencies of South Carolina agricultural educators. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 43(4).
- Lesly (1991). *Public relations and communications*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.).  
New York: AMACON.
- Lunde, J.P. (1995). *Reshaping curricula: Revitalization programs at three land-grant universities*. Massachusetts: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Marvin, K.R. (1946). *Agricultural journalism in Iowa: A century of farming in Iowa, 1846-1946*. Ames, IA: The Iowa State College Press.
- Public Relations Society of America. (2004). *The public relations profession: About public relations*. Retrieved February 18, 2004, from:  
[http://www.prsa.org/\\_Resources/Profession/index.asp?ident=prof1](http://www.prsa.org/_Resources/Profession/index.asp?ident=prof1)
- Reid, W.A. (1999). *Curriculum as institution and practice*. New Jersey:  
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Reisner, A. (1990). Course work offered in agricultural communications programs. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 74(1).
- Rose, M. M. (2003). *Public relations industry timeline*. Retrieved April 28, 2003,  
from: <http://www.public-relations-online.net/history.htm>
- Schluter, G. & Edmondson, W. (2000). Where is agriculture important?  
*Rural Conditions and Trends*, (10)2.
- Schonlau, M., Fricker, R., Elliot, M. (2002). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica: RAND.
- Smith, A. & Clements, C. (1984). *Meeting the changing needs: Undergraduate curriculum and instruction*. New York: Associated Faculty Press, Inc.

Solomon, David J. (2001). *Conducting Web-based surveys*. Eric Digest, ED458291.

Retrieved May 2, 2003, from:

<http://w...fastweb?getdoc+ericdb2+ericdb+1057917+1+wAAA+%28>

[Internet%26surveys%2.htm](http://w...fastweb?getdoc+ericdb2+ericdb+1057917+1+wAAA+%28)

Sprecker, K. & Rudd, R. (1998). Opinions of practitioners concerning curricular Requirements of agricultural communications students at the University of Florida. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 82(1).

SPSS 11.0. (2001). *SPSS 11.0 for windows* [Computer Program] Chicago: SPSS Inc.

Terry, R., Jr., Vaughn, P., Vernon, J.S., Lockaby, J., Bailey-Evans, F., & Rehrman, M. (1994). *Enhancing the agricultural communications curriculum-A vision for the future*. Lubbock TX: Texas Tech University Press.

Tye, L. (1998). *The father of spin: Edward L. Bernays and the birth of public relations*. New York: Crown Publishers Inc.

Webster's Online Dictionary. (2003). Retrieved May 2, 2003, from

<http://www.websters.com>.

Weckman, R., Witham, D., Telg, R. (2000). Southern agricultural communications undergraduate programs: A survey. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 84,(4).

Wiles, J. & Bondi, J. (1998). *Curriculum development: A guide to practice. Fifth edition*. Upper Saddle River: New Jersey.

Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia (2001). *Public relations*. Retrieved February 18, 2004, from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_Relations#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Relations#History).

APPENDIX A  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD



Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/31/2004

Date: Friday, August 01, 2003

IRB Application No. AG041

Proposal Title: AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES IN  
AGRICULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Sarah D. Sargent  
437 Ag  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Dwayne Canfield  
435 Ag Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI:

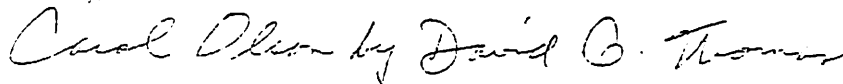
Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B  
INSTRUMENTS



## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

**Demographics** (Please answer as indicated.)

1. What is your gender? [Click Here](#)
2. What is your age? [Click Here](#)
3. How many years have you been in PR? [Click Here](#)
4. How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position.) [Click Here](#)
5. What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc.) (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? [Click Here](#)
7. List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. [Click Here](#)
8. What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ none
  - ☐ paid work experience
  - ☐ unpaid work experience
  - ☐ live(d) in a rural area
  - ☐ live(d) on a farm
  - ☐ own(ed) a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) in a rural area
  - ☐ work(ed) on a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) for an agricultural business
  - ☐ own(ed) an agricultural business
  - ☐ high school agriculture course
  - ☐ college agriculture course
  - ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Important							Proficiencies				
Yes	No										
Yes	No										
Yes	No										
Yes	No										
Yes	No										

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.





Yes No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

[Save](#) [Reset Form](#)



## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

### Demographics (Please answer as indicated.)

1. What is your gender? [Click Here](#)
2. What is your age? [Click Here](#)
3. How many years have you been in PR? [Click Here](#)
4. How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position) [Click Here](#)
5. What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc.) (major): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major): \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? [Click Here](#)
7. List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. [Click Here](#)
8. What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ none
  - ☐ paid work experience
  - ☐ unpaid work experience
  - ☐ live(d) in a rural area
  - ☐ live(d) on a farm
  - ☐ owned a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) in a rural area
  - ☐ work(ed) on a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) for an agricultural business
  - ☐ own(ed) an agricultural business
  - ☐ high school agriculture course
  - ☐ college agriculture course
  - ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of communications. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies				
Yes	No							Required	Effective	Workshop	Internship
							Write features about agricultural topics.				
							Describe the purpose of agricultural communications.				
							Identify and fix barriers to effective communication.				
							Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences.				
							Apply effective speaking techniques.				

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
Important											Not at All
Yes	No						Apply effective writing techniques.				
Yes	No						Apply basic public relations principles				
Yes	No						Demonstrate crisis communications skills and understanding of crisis phases.				
Yes	No						Ability to meet deadlines, handle multiple simultaneously and work under pressure.				
Yes	No						Ability to manage stakeholders.				

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
Important											Not at All
Yes	No						Discuss the definition and types of agribusiness marketing.				
Yes	No						Describe marketing theories related to price, grading, elasticity, etc.				
Yes	No						Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture.				
Yes	No						Describe the purpose of and rationale for farm programs.				
Yes	No						Evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy in foreign markets.				
Yes	No						Discuss the factors that stimulate and inhibit economic growth.				
Yes	No						Define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions.				
Yes	No						Apply the concepts of indifference curves, supply/demand, and production functions.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
Important											Not at All
Yes	No						Describe major world food and fiber crops including where they were produced geographically and explain their intended uses.				
Yes	No						Demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development.				
Yes	No						Describe soil principles including fertility and water management.				
Yes	No						Discuss characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries.				
Yes	No						Report on the impact of biotechnology in agricultural animals.				
Yes	No						Analyze the public perception of plant and animal food issues.				
Yes	No						Summarize the economic and management roles of producing agricultural animals.				
Yes	No						Define conservation.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
Important											Not at All



Yes	No	Discuss the ways that humans impact the ecosystem and methods of making it stable.
Yes	No	Discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues.
Yes	No	Describe the effects of agriculture upon erosion and the introduction of chemical compounds in the environment.
Yes	No	Define ecology and related terms.
Yes	No	Describe the basics of food classification, modern processing and quality/safety control.
Yes	No	Define and explain budget, cost, credit and tax and how they relate to agribusiness.
Yes	No	Explain opportunity cost.
Yes	No	Prepare a budget.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies				
Important							Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Identify governmental regulatory agencies related to agribusiness.				
Yes	No						Identify current government programs that support agricultural business.				
Yes	No						List the purposes of governmental farm agencies.				
Yes	No						Identify feedstuffs available to livestock enterprises and describe their nutritional values.				
Yes	No						Interpret charts, graphs and maps to make specific decisions related to business.				
Yes	No						Demonstrate the proper procedures for administering animal health products.				
Yes	No						Evaluate livestock for profitable production traits.				
Yes	No						Identify the types of wholesale and retail cuts of meat.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies				
Important							Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Explain the methods for proper handling and disposal of animal waste.				
Yes	No						Explain how the selection of hybrid and certified seed affects performance and profitability.				
Yes	No						Identify the types of tillage methods used in crop production.				
Yes	No						Determine the impact of biotechnology on the world food production systems.				
Yes	No						Explain the impact of governmental policy on the production and marketing of various commodities.				
Yes	No						Identify career opportunities in production agriculture.				
Yes	No						Identify major genetic characteristics of animal breeds and examine their uses in the animal's breeding systems and scientific principles.				
Yes	No						Demonstrate safe and humane animal handling techniques.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies				
Important							Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Identify and compare the operation of equipment and facilities involved with livestock for optimum production efficiency.				
Yes	No						Analyze the economic impact of production agriculture on the economy.				

Yes	No	Use observational techniques to identify healthy, quality plants.
Yes	No	Explain the process of photosynthesis.
Yes	No	Explain lawn and turf maintenance.
Yes	No	Identify fruits and nuts by common name.
Yes	No	Identify vegetables and herb by common name.
Yes	No	Identify floriculture crops including houseplants by common name.
Yes	No	Explain the importance of quality assurance of food and fiber products.

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Effective	Workshop	Internship	Start at All
Yes	No						Explain the concepts of food sanitation and safety.					
Yes	No						Explain the ethical and cultural concerns of biotechnology in agricultural processing.					
Yes	No						Recognize what DNA and clones mean.					
Yes	No						Define precision farming.					
Yes	No						Define phenotype and genotype.					
Yes	No						Know water issues.					
Yes	No						Know specific insect pests.					
Yes	No						Understand urban agriculture.					
Yes	No						Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms.					

Important	Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No					Other: _____					
Yes	No					Other: _____					
Yes	No					Other: _____					
Yes	No					Other: _____					
Yes	No					Other: _____					



## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

Demographics (Please answer as indicated.)

1. What is your gender? [Click Here](#)
2. What is your age? [Click Here](#)
3. How many years have you been in PR? [Click Here](#)
4. How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position) [Click Here](#)
5. What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc.) (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? [Click Here](#)
7. List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. [Click Here](#)
8. What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ none
  - ☐ paid work experience
  - ☐ unpaid work experience
  - ☐ lived in a rural area
  - ☐ lived on a farm
  - ☐ owned a farm
  - ☐ worked in a rural area
  - ☐ worked on a farm
  - ☐ worked for an agricultural business
  - ☐ owned an agricultural business
  - ☐ high school agriculture course
  - ☐ college agriculture course
  - ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use						How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture.					
Yes	No						Analyze the public perception of plant and animal food issues.					
Yes	No						Determine the impact of biotechnology on world production systems.					
Yes	No						Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms.					
Yes	No						Discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues.					

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of communications. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
											Not at All
Yes	No						Write features about agricultural topics.				
Yes	No						Describe the purpose of agricultural communications.				
Yes	No						Identify and fix barriers to effective communication.				
Yes	No						Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences.				
Yes	No						Apply effective speaking techniques.				

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
											Not at All
Yes	No						Apply effective writing techniques.				
Yes	No						Apply basic public relations principles.				
Yes	No						Determine problems and methods used to solve them.				
Yes	No						Solve public relations problems from practical case studies.				
Yes	No						Work individually and within groups to solve public relations problems.				
Yes	No						Apply administrative theories to personnel relations.				
Yes	No						Possess business knowledge related to operations and finance.				
Yes	No						Apply the case method of problem solving.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
											Not at All
Yes	No						Work with others in a team.				
Yes	No						Counsel, coach and supervise teams of employees.				
Yes	No						Design and communicate a marketing plan.				
Yes	No						Conduct benchmarking for marketing activities.				
Yes	No						Develop presentations.				
Yes	No						Identify target markets.				
Yes	No						Develop recruitment materials.				
Yes	No						Know multi-media alternatives.				

		Frequency of Use					How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship
											Not at All



Yes	No			Provide effective PR counsel to CEO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No			Understand and apply research methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Frequency of Use					How to Include					
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Important												
Yes	No						Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No						Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No						Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No						Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No						Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**APPENDIX C**  
**PANEL OF EXPERTS**

## PANEL OF EXPERTS

Natalea Watkins  
Assistant Vice-President News Bureau and Communications Service  
Oklahoma State University

Gina Noble  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Journalism and Broadcast  
Oklahoma State University

Kendra Stanek  
Communications Specialist  
Oklahoma Central Rural Electric Cooperative

Ron Wilkerson  
Director of Communications and Marketing  
Oklahoma Career and Technology Center

Sam Knipp  
Director of Cooperative Communication and Public Relations  
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Federation

Houston Hunt  
Account Executive  
Jordan Associates Advertising

Dr. Dwayne Cartmell  
Assistant Professor, Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Shelly Sitton  
Assistant Professor, Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University



APPENDIX D  
FAX INSTRUMENTS



## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

**Demographics** (Please answer as indicated.)

1. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. What is your age? ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ ≥66
3. How many years have you been in PR? ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10-12 ☐ ≥13
4. How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ ≥5
5. What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc.) (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? ☐ low ☐ somewhat low ☐ average ☐ somewhat high ☐ high
7. List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. ☐ none ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ ≥10
8. What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ none
  - ☐ paid work experience
  - ☐ unpaid work experience
  - ☐ live(d) in a rural area
  - ☐ live(d) on a farm
  - ☐ own(ed) a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) in a rural area
  - ☐ work(ed) on a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) for an agricultural business
  - ☐ own(ed) an agricultural business
  - ☐ high school agriculture course
  - ☐ college agriculture course
  - ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the Importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important	Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Analyze the public perception of plant and animal food issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Determine the impact of biotechnology on world production systems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of communications. To the LEFT, designate the Importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Write features about agricultural topics.					
Yes	No						Describe the purpose of agricultural communications.					
Yes	No						Identify and fix barriers to effective communication.					
Yes	No						Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences.					
Yes	No						Apply effective speaking techniques.					

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Apply effective writing techniques.					
Yes	No						Apply basic public relations principles.					
Yes	No						Determine problems and methods used to solve them.					
Yes	No						Solve public relations problems from practical case studies.					
Yes	No						Work individually and within groups to solve public relations problems.					
Yes	No						Apply administrative theories to personnel relations.					
Yes	No						Possess business knowledge related to operations and finance.					
Yes	No						Apply the case method of problem solving.					

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Work with others in a team.					
Yes	No						Counsel, coach and supervise teams of employees.					
Yes	No						Design and communicate a marketing plan.					
Yes	No						Conduct benchmarking for marketing activities.					
Yes	No						Develop presentations.					
Yes	No						Identify target markets.					
Yes	No						Develop recruitment materials.					
Yes	No						Know multi-media alternatives.					

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Design promotional materials.					

Yes	No						Promote programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Publicize events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Create flyers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Coordinate requests for speakers and trainers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Prepare others for media interviews and presentations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Review communication prepared by others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Develop internal communications plans regarding policies, promotions and assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Write policy papers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Design and publish a newsletter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand state grant guidelines for program services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to meet deadlines, handle multiple priorities simultaneously and work under pressure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Demonstrate crisis communication skills and understanding of crisis phases.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to listen to others and understand other's points of view in an unbiased manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply analytical skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply creative conceptualization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Know program evaluation skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Use consulting and negotiation skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Knowledge of communication models.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understanding of barriers to communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to manage finances.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply strategic thinking skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Demonstrate news sensibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to successfully 'pitch' a news story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maintain knowledge of current events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Knowledge and understanding of corporate policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to manage stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Provide effective PR counsel to CEO.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Yes	No						Understand and apply research methods					
		Frequency of Use					How to Include					
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Other: _____					
Yes	No						Other: _____					
Yes	No						Other: _____					
Yes	No						Other: _____					
Yes	No						Other: _____					

[Submit](#) | [Reset Form](#)



## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

### Demographics (Please answer as indicated)

- 1 What is your gender? ☐ male ☐ female
- 2 What is your age? ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ ≥66
- 3 How many years have you been in PR? ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10-12 ☐ ≥13
- 4 How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ ≥5
- 5 What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc) (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major) \_\_\_\_\_

- 6 How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? ☐ low ☐ somewhat low ☐ average ☐ somewhat high ☐ high

- 7 List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. ☐ none ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ ≥10

- 8 What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)

- ☐ none
- ☐ paid work experience
- ☐ unpaid work experience
- ☐ live(d) in a rural area
- ☐ live(d) on a farm
- ☐ own(ed) a farm
- ☐ work(ed) in a rural area
- ☐ work(ed) on a farm
- ☐ work(ed) for an agricultural business
- ☐ own(ed) an agricultural business
- ☐ high school agriculture course
- ☐ college agriculture course
- ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
- ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of communications. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important	Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Write features about agricultural topics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Describe the purpose of agricultural communications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identify and fix barriers to effective communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply effective speaking techniques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Apply effective writing techniques.					
Yes	No						Apply basic public relations principles.					
Yes	No						Demonstrate crisis communications skills and understanding of crisis phases.					
Yes	No						Ability to meet deadlines, handle multiple simultaneously and work under pressure.					
Yes	No						Ability to manage stakeholders					

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Discuss the definition and types of agribusiness' marketing					
Yes	No						Describe marketing theories related to price, grading, elasticity, etc.					
Yes	No						Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture.					
Yes	No						Describe the purpose of and rationale for farm programs.					
Yes	No						Evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. agricultural policy in foreign markets.					
Yes	No						Discuss the factors that stimulate and inhibit economic growth.					
Yes	No						Define and compare the sources of credit for agricultural institutions.					
Yes	No						Apply the concepts of indifference curves, supply/demand, and production functions.					

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Describe major world food and fiber crops including where they were produced geographically and explain their intended uses.					
Yes	No						Demonstrate an understanding of plant growth and development.					
Yes	No						Describe soil principles including fertility and water management.					
Yes	No						Discuss characteristics unique to animal products and their related industries.					
Yes	No						Report on the impact of biotechnology in agricultural animals.					
Yes	No						Analyze the public perception of plant and animal food issues.					
Yes	No						Summarize the economic and management roles of producing agricultural animals.					
Yes	No						Define conservation.					

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No						Discuss the ways that humans impact the ecosystem and methods of making it stable.					

Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Explain the process of photosynthesis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Explain lawn and turf maintenance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identify fruits and nuts by common name.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identify vegetables and herb by common name.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identify floriculture crops including houseplants by common name.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Explain the importance of quality assurance of food and fiber products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Explain the concepts of food sanitation and safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Explain the ethical and cultural concerns of biotechnology in agricultural processing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Recognize what DNA and clones mean.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Define precision farming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Define phenotype and genotype.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Know water issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Know specific insect pests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand urban agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





## Agricultural Communications Curriculum Proficiencies

**Demographics** (Please answer as indicated.)

1. What is your gender? ☐ male ☐ female
2. What is your age? ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ ≥66
3. How many years have you been in PR? ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10-12 ☐ ≥13
4. How many different full-time PR jobs have you had in your career? (including current position.) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ ≥5
5. What college or university degrees have you earned? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ None
  - ☐ Associate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Bachelors (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Masters (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Education Specialist (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Professional (J.D., etc.) (major) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Doctorate (major) \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you rate your level of knowledge about the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industry? ☐ low ☐ somewhat low ☐ average ☐ somewhat high ☐ high
7. List the approximate number of college courses in agriculture you have completed. ☐ none ☐ 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ ≥10
8. What types of experiences have you had in agriculture? (Mark all that apply.)
  - ☐ none
  - ☐ paid work experience
  - ☐ unpaid work experience
  - ☐ live(d) in a rural area
  - ☐ live(d) on a farm
  - ☐ own(ed) a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) in a rural area
  - ☐ work(ed) on a farm
  - ☐ work(ed) for an agricultural business
  - ☐ own(ed) an agricultural business
  - ☐ high school agriculture course
  - ☐ college agriculture course
  - ☐ extension workshops in agriculture
  - ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of agriculture. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include					
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All	
Important													
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss the impact of government and legislative policy upon agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Analyze the public perception of plant and animal food issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Determine the impact of biotechnology on world production systems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand the impacts and controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss environmental/global issues such as global warming and desertification and the relationship of agriculture with those issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of public relations. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply effective writing techniques.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply basic public relations principles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Demonstrate crisis communications skills and understanding of crisis phases.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to meet deadlines, handle multiple simultaneously and work under pressure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ability to manage stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below is a list of proficiencies in the area of communications. To the LEFT, designate the importance of the proficiency and how frequently you use the proficiency in your professional area.

To the RIGHT, indicate how the proficiency should be included in the ideal agricultural communications curriculum.

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Write using appropriate style (i.e. AP, VPI).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Describe the principles of journalism clearly and concisely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply reporting and writing skills in a "real world" situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Describe ethical challenges faced by reporters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Interview a source of information for a news article.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Edit the work of others; accurately proofread a document.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Use correct editing marks and symbols.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Critique and correct layout and design of publications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Describe common dilemmas faced by journalists.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss ethical standards existing in the field of journalism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Determine ethical solutions to problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Describe the ways in which news and other information is disseminated to the public.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Compare the effectiveness of various dissemination systems for different messages and audiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss legal problems facing journalists, broadcasters and advertisers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss and define communications regulations, fairness doctrine, libel, privacy and commercial speech.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Select appropriate topics in speech writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Important		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include				
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All

Yes	No						Write speeches using effective formats and formulas.						
Yes	No						Use creative skills to develop introductions to effectively engage an audience in a speech.						
Yes	No						Customize a speech for a specific audience.						
Yes	No						Apply effective speaking techniques.						
Yes	No						Use the voice to maintain the interest of the audience.						
Yes	No						Use a variety of inflection, tone and volume.						
Yes	No						Use appropriate hand and facial expressions.						
Yes	No						Describe the impact of agriculture upon all Americans.						
		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include					
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All	
Yes	No						Describe the agricultural community in the United States.						
Yes	No						Assess the level of agricultural literacy in the United States.						
Yes	No						Use a variety of means including print, radio and video to inform the public.						
Yes	No						Write features about agricultural topics.						
Yes	No						Describe the role agriculture plays in international relations.						
Yes	No						Discuss the cultural impact of agricultural trade.						
Yes	No						List the barriers that exist when communicating agricultural information in international situations.						
Yes	No						Contrast the uniqueness of agricultural communications to other types of communications.						
		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include					
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All	
Yes	No						Describe the purpose of agricultural communications.						
Yes	No						Apply agricultural communications techniques and skills.						
Yes	No						Gain experience in the applications of agricultural communications theories in the workplace.						
Yes	No						Demonstrate the characteristics of responsibility and credibility.						
Yes	No						Model proficiency in time management and organization.						
Yes	No						Create media program formats.						
Yes	No						Navigate Internet; send and receive e-mail.						
Yes	No						Transfer and download information through a network.						
		Frequency of Use					Proficiencies	How to Include					
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never		Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All	
Yes	No						Use graphics effectively to increase understanding.						
Yes	No						Apply human relations skills.						
Yes	No						Resolve conflicts.						

Yes	No						Evaluate the performance of co-workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Write a quality thank you note.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Identify and fix barriers to effective communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Interview for employment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Work in a team activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No						Work under pressure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use						How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Correctly report facts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Understand government systems and how they affect agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Cite sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Gather and synthesize information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perform basic word processing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Converse knowledgeably on different areas in agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Determine whether a topic would be best covered in a news article or a feature article.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Create a resume.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identify bias in media stories.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use						How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Write for the Internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss Freedom of Information Act.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Demonstrate sales skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Discuss the importance of belonging to a professional organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Interpret statistics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Use an Associated Press Stylebook.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Interpret the basics of the commodities market.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Apply common sense logic to an economic trend analysis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Analyze and apply technical data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

		Frequency of Use						How to Include				
Important		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Never	Proficiencies	Required	Elective	Workshop	Internship	Not at All
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX E  
INTRODUCTORY E-MAIL

Dear Agricultural Communicator:

We need your help! The faculty members at Oklahoma State University have been working to better identify skills necessary for agricultural communications graduates who pursue jobs in writing and editing. However, it has become evident that there is limited research that gets to the heart of those necessary skills. Therefore, we will be conducting a Web-based study looking at the proficiencies necessary for agricultural communications graduates in the areas of writing and editing.

Within the next couple of days you will be receiving a note at this same e-mail address containing a link to a brief survey (10-15 minutes). We would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few moments to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact myself or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-3690.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Without your assistance it would be impossible to acquire this valuable information.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent  
Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University  
sargesd@okstate.edu

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
dcart@okstate.edu

APPENDIX F  
INVITATION E-MAILS



Dear Agricultural Communicator:

I need your help! You have knowledge about the skills necessary for an agricultural communicator to be successful in today's technological age. Your views are crucial in helping agricultural communications and journalism educators to design curriculum to prepare future agricultural communicators. You are one of a limited number of agricultural communications professionals selected to participate in this study.

The primary purpose of this study is to define what disciplines and proficiencies should be included in a model curriculum for agricultural communications and to determine if classroom experiences can prepare students for real-world experiences. In addition, for each proficiency identified, this study will identify whether the proficiency should be taught as a required course, as an elective, as a workshop through a professional organization or not at all. Your opinions are important as only a select number of agricultural communications professionals were chosen for this study.

This survey will only take approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. Please respond to the questions in terms of your views and current situation. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially.

The survey is provided online and can be accessed by clicking the link below:

<http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr.htm>

If you have trouble accessing the online version, please e-mail me [atsargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:atsargesd@okstate.edu), and I will FAX a copy of the instrument for your completion. Your immediate response is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this online questionnaire. Without your assistance it would be impossible to acquire this valuable information. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461. For additional information regarding human participation in research, contact the Oklahoma State University Campus Institutional Review Board Office at 405-744-5700.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University  
[sargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:sargesd@okstate.edu)

Dear Agricultural Communicator:

I need your help! You have knowledge about the skills necessary for an agricultural communicator to be successful in today's technological age. Your views are crucial in helping agricultural communications and journalism educators to design curriculum to prepare future agricultural communicators. You are one of a limited number of agricultural communications professionals selected to participate in this study.

The primary purpose of this study is to define what disciplines and proficiencies should be included in a model curriculum for agricultural communications and to determine if classroom experiences can prepare students for real-world experiences. In addition, for each proficiency identified, this study will identify whether the proficiency should be taught as a required course, as an elective, as a workshop through a professional organization or not at all. Your opinions are important as only a select number of agricultural communications professionals were chosen for this study.

This survey will only take approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. Please respond to the questions in terms of your views and current situation. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially.

The survey is provided online and can be accessed by clicking the link below:

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_comm.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_comm.htm)

If you have trouble accessing the online version, please e-mail me [atsargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:atsargesd@okstate.edu), and I will FAX a copy of the instrument for your completion. Your immediate response is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this online questionnaire. Without your assistance it would be impossible to acquire this valuable information. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461. For additional information regarding human participation in research, contact the Oklahoma State University Campus Institutional Review Board Office at 405-744-5700.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University  
[sargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:sargesd@okstate.edu)

Dear Agricultural Communicator:

I need your help! You have knowledge about the skills necessary for an agricultural communicator to be successful in today's technological age. Your views are crucial in helping agricultural communications and journalism educators to design curriculum to prepare future agricultural communicators. You are one of a limited number of agricultural communications professionals selected to participate in this study.

The primary purpose of this study is to define what disciplines and proficiencies should be included in a model curriculum for agricultural communications and to determine if classroom experiences can prepare students for real-world experiences. In addition, for each proficiency identified, this study will identify whether the proficiency should be taught as a required course, as an elective, as a workshop through a professional organization or not at all. Your opinions are important as only a select number of agricultural communications professionals were chosen for this study.

This survey will only take approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. Please respond to the questions in terms of your views and current situation. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially.

The survey is provided online and can be accessed by clicking the link below:

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_ag.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_ag.htm)

If you have trouble accessing the online version, please e-mail me [atsargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:atsargesd@okstate.edu), and I will FAX a copy of the instrument for your completion. Your immediate response is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this online questionnaire. Without your assistance it would be impossible to acquire this valuable information. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461. For additional information regarding human participation in research, contact the Oklahoma State University Campus Institutional Review Board Office at 405-744-5700.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University  
[sargesd@okstate.edu](mailto:sargesd@okstate.edu)

APPENDIX G  
REMINDER E-MAILS

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

Last Friday you received an e-mail from Oklahoma State University asking for your participation in a research study regarding competencies in the area of agricultural communications. If you have not completed the survey, please take 10-15 minutes to fill it out. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via fax. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! For questions regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

<http://ccox.pr.okstate.edu/surveys/pr.htm>

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

Last Friday you received an e-mail from Oklahoma State University asking for your participation in a research study regarding competencies in the area of agricultural communications. If you have not completed the survey, please take 10-15 minutes to fill it out. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via fax. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! For questions regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_ag.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_ag.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

Last Friday you received an e-mail from Oklahoma State University asking for your participation in a research study regarding competencies in the area of agricultural communications. If you have not completed the survey, please take 10-15 minutes to fill it out. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via fax. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! For questions regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pr.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_cm.htm](http://ccox.pr.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_cm.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is just a reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_ag.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_ag.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu



Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is just a reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pr.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_cm.htm](http://ccox.pr.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_cm.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is just a reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

<http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr.htm>

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is a final reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. We will be collecting all responses through Sunday, March 14. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_cm.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_cm.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is a final reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. We will be collecting all responses through Sunday, March 14. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

[http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr\\_ag.htm](http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr_ag.htm)

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

Dear Agricultural Communications Professional:

This is a final reminder regarding the e-mail you received concerning AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCIES from Oklahoma State University. It is extremely important to the success of this study that you complete the online survey. We will be collecting all responses through Sunday, March 14. Your responses will be valuable in shaping future agricultural communications curriculum. You will find a link to the survey below. If you are unable to open the survey using the provided link, please e-mail ginarose78@hotmail.com, and I will be happy to send a survey to you via FAX. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation! If you have problems submitting your responses or for questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 405-744-5133 or Dr. Dwayne Cartmell at 405-744-0461.

<http://ccox.pt.okstate.edu/surveys/pr.htm>

Sincerely,

Sarah Sargent, Graduate Student  
Oklahoma State University

Dwayne Cartmell, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communications  
Oklahoma State University  
(405) 744-0461  
dcart@okstate.edu

VITA ①

Sarah Dawn Sargent

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFICIENCIES IN AGRICULTURAL  
COMMUNICATIONS: FREQUENCY OF USE AND ROLE IN CURRICULUM

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Bradford, Ohio, on January 22, 1980, the daughter of  
Dennis and Debra Sargent.

Education: Graduated from Bradford High School , Bradford, Ohio, in May  
1998; attended the Czech Agricultural University, June-July, 2001;  
received Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Communications  
from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, in December 2001;  
completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree in  
Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University in May, 2004.

Experience: Raised in Bradford, Ohio; employed at Autumn Rose Horse Farm as  
barn assistant; employed at Oklahoma State University as a temporary  
office assistant; employed at Oklahoma State University as a graduate  
teaching assistant, Department of Agricultural Education,  
Communications and 4-H Youth Development, 2002-2003.

Professional Memberships: National Association of Leadership Educators;  
Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow; Agricultural Education  
Graduate Student Association.