

2013 PROGRESS REPORT



Agricultural Communications Documentation Center

ACES Funk Family Library, University of Illinois

2013 Progress Report

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS DOCUMENTATION CENTER

ADMINISTRATIVE

Staffing and Operations

Staffing in the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center expanded through special projects during 2013 and closed the year looking to further change.

- Prof. Joyce Wright served as ACDC Director through December when she entered retirement from the University of Illinois Library faculty. She served the Library for nearly 29 years, including three years with the Center.
- Orientation activities began during late 2013 for Prof. Lura Joseph, who is appointed to replace Professor Wright as Director of the Center.
- Graduate assistant Stephanie Pitts-Noggle completed her master's degree program, then continued part-time in the Center as she entered doctoral studies.
- Amanda Marolf, a student in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, joined the Center staff during August as quarter-time graduate assistant.
- Olivia Harris, in the junior year of her Agricultural Communications study program, continued during the spring and fall semesters as hourly student assistant.
- Matt Harrington, a graduate of the Library School, joined the Center staff on a temporary, part-time basis to work on a new, funded research project.

Volunteer associates continued to play a valuable role in the resources and services of the Center. They identified relevant literature from throughout the world, assisted in project development, offered counsel and provided contacts. Those who contributed during 2013 included Prof. Katie Abrams, serving in the faculty of the Journalism and Technical Communication Department at Colorado State University; Devi Annamali, bio-chemistry scholar at Sloan Kettering Hospital, New York City; Liz Harfull, associate for the Asia-Pacific Region, based in South Australia; Jim Evans, emeritus professor of agricultural communications, University of Illinois; Steve Shenton, emeritus professor of communications and journalism, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Karlie Elliott Bowman, editor of IFAJ News, newsletter of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists; Paul Hixson, associate for information and communication technology; and Pat Allen, librarian of the Funk ACES Library. Professor Shenton passed away during June.

System Development

BibLeaves is the web-based bibliographic system used by ACDC. It was developed by the University of Illinois Library Information Technology unit (IT), and rolled out in 2012. It can display citations in numerous formats, and permits the user to email or text chosen citations. The Library Information Technology unit is

working on enhancements which should be ready for testing in summer 2014. Welcomed improvements will include the ability to limit by journal article publication year, and for journal article publication years to appear in search results. ACDC staff will be testing the improvements in summer 2014. The staff and volunteers also use a new web-based tool within the BibLeaves system for data entry of citations. Collaboration with Library IT has greatly improved ACDC's efficiency in adding materials and serving users.

Throughout 2013, ACDC staff continued to make improvements to the website. Center staff wrote, edited, redesigned, and published several subpages to make the website more informative and dynamic. The new website has a greater emphasis on visuals and interactivity including subpages such as Frequently Asked Questions, Contribute Materials, Oral Histories, Gateway to Useful Links, IFAJ Members' Guide, and Personal Search Help.

Further, Olivia and Stephanie reviewed and updated hyperlinks in the "Gateway to Useful Links" section of the ACDC website. This page now has a new, cleaner, interactive layout, and it identifies 55 professional organizations of agricultural journalists and communicators in countries throughout the world. It is believed to be the largest such gateway of its kind.

Strategic Planning and Action

The Center continued to position itself as a special resource for the academic program in Agricultural Communications, an innovative dual program of the College of Media and the College of ACES. This is viewed as an important and promising strategic relationship. Collaboration with Professor Katie Abrams, agricultural communications faculty member, supported our outreach with students in the program. Potentials for strengthening collaboration between ACDC and the academic program expanded further during late 2013 with the addition of two new agricultural communications faculty members. They include Prof. Lulu Rodriguez, new Director of the Agricultural Communications Program, and new Lecturer Samantha Koon.

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

Document Collection

The ACDC Collection consisted of approximately 39,210 documents at the close of 2013. In the 2013 calendar year, 1,204 new references were added to Bibleaves (meeting the goal of adding at least 100 documents per month), and 3,182 records were modified and improved. Resources in the collection represent agricultural-related communication in more than 170 countries.

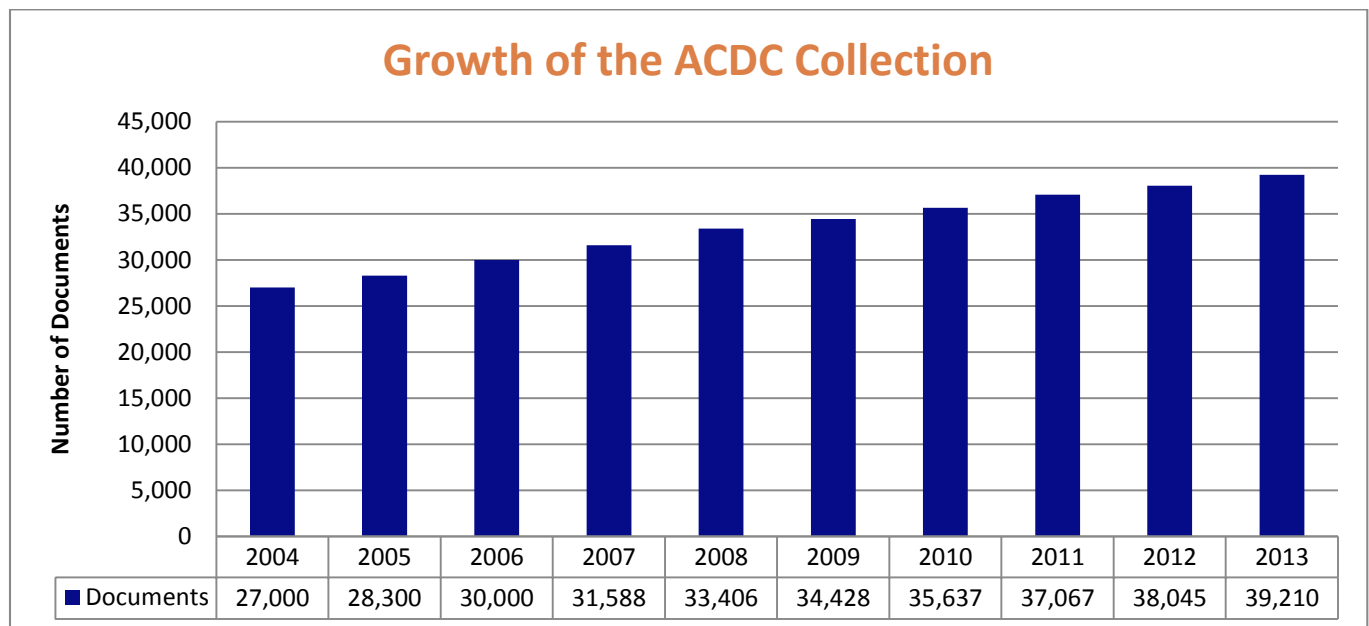
During 2013, Amanda Marolf processed the John Harvey Collection of Volume 1 Number 1 issues of agricultural periodicals, which he had contributed during the previous year. This remarkable collection of premiere, anniversary and other special issues totals 1,476 and also includes a number of original photos and AAEA memorabilia. They represent innovation, creativity and change in agricultural publishing during the past 140 years in the United States. The Conservation and Preservation Department of the Library provided valuable support for this project.

Professor Wright finished processing the Kerry J. Byrnes Collection, adding more than 280 documents to the ACDC collection. These deal with communications and social aspects of agricultural and rural development. Dr. Byrnes is agricultural development officer of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. Agency for International Development. For decades, he has supported economic and social development of countries, globally. These valuable materials include theses, dissertations, journal articles, special reports, conference proceedings, manuals and other documents. They can now be identified through the BibLeaves search system.

Thirty-one historic documents were processed into the ACDC collection through a contribution from Eldon Fredericks, emeritus faculty member, Purdue University. Most are part of the National Project in Agricultural Communications during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Several other contributed collections of agricultural communications documents remain to be reviewed and made identifiable in the ACDC search system. Among those to be reviewed are records of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, which were processed recently into the University Archives. Also, a 60-year collection of farm readership studies and opinion surveys from Farm Progress Companies remains to be processed.

Olivia Harris completed an in-depth box review of the entire ACDC collection. This included identifying documents that were in need of preservation measures and ensuring the collection was present and accounted for. A review of the collection at this level has not been completed since the collection was started.



Serving Users

Online Usage: During 2013, the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center remained a popular source of information for agricultural communicators, scholars, students and other users. For example, the ACDC website ranked #2 among 152,000 websites identified through a Google search on "agricultural

communications" in early 2014. The website of the Agricultural Communications Program at the University of Illinois ranked #1. During the 2013 calendar year, visits to the ACDC website originated in at least 59 different countries.

ACDC News: Seventeen issues of the e-newsletter, ACDC News, were posted on the website during 2013. By highlighting some of the literature being added to the collection, nearly twice a month it alerted more than 1,000 readers to agricultural communications research, methods, events and issues throughout the world. A few of more than 100 items highlighted during 2012 included:

- Africa's first farmer video-audio website
- Agricultural data more important than ever
- Food marketers among those making the biggest branding mistakes
- Careers increasing in agricultural journalism
- Fresh ideas for teaching agricultural communications
- Reporting about science in quick-tempered times
- Integrating local and scientific agricultural knowledge
- Where is (rural) watchdog journalism today?
- Rural libraries on a solid foundation
- How consumers view nanofood

A two-part series by Stephanie Pitts-Noggle was among the special features of ACDC News during 2013. The series described use of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) to identify information readily lost in the ephemeral online world. She offered examples of how users of ACDC can use DOIs to help locate material in the ACDC collection and elsewhere online.

Partnership with International Federation of Agricultural Journalists: ACDC Associate Karlie Elliott Bowman continued to edit the monthly e-newsletter, IFAJ News, during 2013. Also, through the arrangement that ACDC established during the previous year, Professor Emeritus Henry Gerlach provided German translation for those monthly issues. The newsletter arrangement shifted during late 2013 as IFAJ restructured administrative operations. Publication of the newsletter shifted from monthly to every two months.

In cooperation with IFAJ leaders, ACDC personnel also carried out a variety of other services in support of the professional development mission of IFAJ. For example, they conducted literature searches involving the role, nature and potentials of agricultural journalism. Another special search for IFAJ involved identifying study programs in Europe that feature agricultural journalism and communications.

The Center also continued to serve IFAJ by providing information to members on an individual basis, announcing IFAJ activities and new professional development articles through the ACDC newsletter, and featuring a special section, "IFAJ Members' Guide," on the ACDC home page.

Visiting Scholars and Professionals: Seven agricultural communications scholars and professionals from various parts of the nation visited the Center during 2013. The visiting academics included researchers from Oklahoma State University during January and Purdue University during June. Professionals who conferred

or worked in the Center included two award-winning agricultural reporters, a communications specialist from the National Farm Medicine Center, the chief executive officer of the Illinois Soybean Association and the proprietor of an agricultural communications research firm.

Special Searches, Requests, and Contacts: Associates in the Center provided individual services in response to a broad range of questions and requests from dozens of persons throughout the world. Following are a few of the topics involved in those requests during 2013, including requests from countries abroad:

- How farmers make decisions about new technologies and methods
- Readability of agricultural and extension information (from India)
- Printed form of agricultural advertisements (from Ireland)
- Overview of the agricultural media industry in the U.S.
- Role and prospects of agricultural journalism (from Turkey, UK, Switzerland)
- Rural radio – interviewing and writing methods
- Trends and outlook for curricula in agricultural communications
- Relationship between agricultural communications and science communications
- Media coverage of contamination of livestock feed with a chemical (1978 document)
- Framework for communicating effectively with farmers about conservation
- Information for a book tracking country music in Chicago from the 1920s to date
- Participatory theater for agricultural extension (from Timor Leste)
- Communicating with consumers about food safety
- Aspects of agricultural journalism coverage (doctoral candidate in Japan)
- Online resources for reporting agricultural information
- Graduate study opportunities in rural communications (from Nigeria and Portugal)
- Farmer-led approaches to extension (from Kenya)

Partnership with AgNIC: The University of Illinois continued to serve as national "center of excellence" in agricultural communications as a partner in the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC) of the National Agriculture Library. ACDC serves as the portal for information about agricultural communications within this worldwide online agricultural information system.

Expanded Oral History Resource: During 2013, ACDC provided an expanded online presence for the Agricultural Communication Oral History Project that is supported by the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE). This project, led by Natalie Federer, Purdue University, takes steps to capture and share historical perspectives, experiences, and memories of those working within the agricultural communications community. Three oral history podcasts were added to the Oral History section of the ACDC website during 2013. They feature the life and career of K. Robert Kern. More oral histories are in production.

Other Outreach Efforts: Professor Wright provided orientation for new ACES faculty members. Stephanie gave a presentation at a Funk ACES Library reference meeting about the services of ACDC. Professor Evans assisted with AGCM classes and provided agricultural communications students with career development information in the field of agricultural communications.

Other Scholarly Contributions

UMASH Research Project: Center associates collaborated with those at the National Farm Medicine Center in proposing a pilot project to lay the groundwork for expanded and innovative communications about occupational safety in farming and agriculture. This proposal was submitted during March to the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) and gained approval:

"Laying a new foundation for engaging agricultural media gatekeepers in covering agricultural safety and health"

It features (a) a review of literature about this topic, (b) a comparative content analysis of safety articles published in three high-risk industries – agriculture, mining and transportation, (c) a survey among agricultural journalists and (d) a survey among university faculty members who teach courses in agricultural journalism and communications. Professor Wright served as principal investigator during 2013 with project team members Amanda Marolf, Matt Harrington and Jim Evans of ACDC, as well as Scott Heiberger, communications specialist in the National Farm Medicine Center. The project continues into mid-2014.

Development of Academic Programs in Agricultural Communications: The ACDC collection and ACES Library served as primary resource for an article that Jim Evans co-authored with Prof. Dwayne Cartmell of Oklahoma State University for a special centennial issue of the Journal of Applied Communications. It was published during late 2013:

"Understanding whence we came: role of the Association for Communication Excellence in the development of agricultural communications during the past century – and future implications."

Encouragement from Users and Reviewers

Following are some of the responses ACDC staff members received during 2013:

"Many, many thanks for finding this! It's a huge help and I'm immensely grateful!"

"So much information, as always." (Cambodia)

"Best wishes to you and your important Center." (Australia)

"I'm impressed with the scope and scale of this global resource for students, academics and industry professionals. Congratulations to all involved...." (Ohio)

"Thank you very much for tracking that down for me. I really appreciate it and all you do." (Florida)

"I'm amazed that you found it!! This paper stumped me." (Illinois)

"Thanks a million!" (Oklahoma)

"I can't imagine tackling this work without the compilation of documents at ACDC. It's literally the perfect resource for this project." (Illinois)

"Many thanks for your kind attention, and help. Best Regards from Turkey."

"This is very helpful information." (Switzerland)

"We definitely appreciate the ongoing efforts of the ACDC." (Idaho)

"Thanks for the relationship." (Africa)

"This is wonderful! I am very grateful to hear this from you and in such a short time."
(Finland)

"Somehow, every item in this newsletter punched one of my buttons. Excellent material."
(Canada)

"I'll keep up with your blog to catch the best tips and tricks in the business!" (Iowa)