

Use of Internet and social media levels out in advanced economies

However, it continues to rise in emerging and developing economies. Those are among trends observed in research reported during June by the Pew Research Center.

- Internet use in 17 advanced economies surveyed remained high and relatively flat between 2015-16 (86%) and 2017-18 (87%)
- Internet use in 19 emerging and developing economies increased steadily between 2013-14 (42%) and 2017-18 (64%).
- Social media use in emerging and developing markets (53% in 2017) is “fast approaching levels seen in more advanced economies” (60% in 2017).
- Smartphone ownership grew from 24% in 2013-14 to 42% in 2017-18 in emerging and developing economies. It continued at 72% in the advanced economies between 2015-16 and 2017-18.
- “Despite growing internet use and smartphone ownership, the world remains digitally divided,” both within and across countries.

You can read the report [here](#).

Why nearly one-half of U.S. consumers are avoiding GMO foods

A 2018 national online survey identified human health as the main concern (85%) behind consumer decisions to avoid GMO foods. Other concerns involved environment (43%), animal health (36%), and agriculture/farming (34%).

These and other findings come from a study reported by the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation:

<https://www.foodinsight.org/consumer-research-USDA-GMO-labeling>

When information is accurate, but not true: a call for local journalism

Krista Kapralos of the *Global Press Journal* pushed that point in a recent article in *Nieman Reports*. She emphasized that when you speak the local language and understand local customs the information you gather is filtered in a culturally appropriate way.

“For many research and news agencies, the process of gathering data results in a continual confrontation between Western assumptions and non-Western cultures. While that really makes the truth less convenient to find, there is a huge potential payoff for those who seek it in context: a meaningful negotiation between equal partners who can respectfully create systems to help determine what is true.”

You can read the article [here](#).

Update on how U. S. farmers view and manage risk

Economist Stephanie Rosch of the Economic Research Service, USDA, recently presented the update. Her report involved a 2014 nationally-representative sample of nearly 30,000 farm households. Among the findings:

- Approximately 24% of responding farmers were risk averse, 41% were risk neutral, and 35% were risk seeking.
- Willingness to accept risk was dispersed around the country.
- Compared to risk-seeking farmers, risk-averse farmers were more likely to be full owners, less likely to rent-in land, farmed smaller operations, shared responsibilities with fewer cooperators, had lower farm and household incomes, and maintained higher levels of working capital. They also were less likely to diversify production, use contract production, invest in crop insurance, and invest in savings.

Researcher Rosch suggested that the findings may be useful in understanding how changes in federal risk management programs may impact farmers' decisions about participating.

You can read the research report [here](#).

How farmers prefer to learn about new farm practices

A 2018 research report identified Extension fact sheets and short seminars as formats farmers in Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota said they prefer for learning new farm practices. Webinars, day-long workshops, and farm tours ranked considerably lower.

You can read this research poster [here](#).

Can PR win against “fake news”?

Sarah Hill of Paulsen (agricultural marketing communications firm based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota) raised that question in a recent commentary. She conceded that public relations fights an uphill battle of being not as provocative. Citing a multi-million-tweet analysis, she reported that falsehoods were 70 percent more likely to be shared and spread faster on Twitter than true stories.”

However, ethics matter, she emphasized. “They may seem touchy-feely, but earning trust and respect for our companies and clients hinges on telling the truth and acting with integrity – always.” She also cited evidence from editors that the press release remains the most trusted form of communication from PR professionals.

You can read the commentary [here](#).

Communicator events approaching

September 20-22, 2018

“The changing face(s) of agriculture.” Annual conference of the Canadian Farm Writers Federation (CFWF) in Winnipeg, Manitoba Province, Canada.

Information: <http://www.cfwf18.ca>

October 1, 2018

Deadline for full research papers to be submitted for presentation at the 2019 National Agricultural Communications Symposium (NACS) in Montgomery, Alabama, January 31 – February 6, 2019.

Information: <https://sites.google.com/a/extension.org/saasagcomm/home>

October 3-7, 2018

Annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists in Flint, Michigan, site of the most serious drinking water crisis in modern U.S. history.

Information: <https://www.sej.org/calendar/sejs-28th-annual-conference-flint-mi-oct-3-7-2018>

October 12-16, 2018

“ScienceWriters2018.” Meeting of the National Association of Science Writers in Washington, D.C. Information: <https://www.nasw.org/events/sciencewriters2018>

October 19, 2018

Deadline for (a) research and innovative posters and (b) proposals for professional development sessions at the 2019 National Agricultural Communications Symposium, Montgomery, Alabama, January 31 - February 6, 2019.

Information: <https://sites.google.com/a/extension.org/saasagcomm/home>

November 7-9, 2018

“75 Years Strong.” Annual convention of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB), Kansas City, Missouri. Information: <http://nafb.com>

How earth speaks to heaven

We close this issue of ACDC News with an unusual communications perspective from Rabindranath Tagore, quoted in the *Book of Green Quotations*:

“Trees are the earth’s endless effort to speak to the listening heaven.”

Best wishes and good searching

Please pass along your reactions, suggestions and ideas. Feel free to invite our help as you search for information. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter [@ACDCUIUC](https://twitter.com/ACDCUIUC). And please suggest (or send) agricultural communications documents we might add to this unique and valuable collection. We welcome them in hard copy (sent to Ag Comm Documentation Center, Room 510, 1101 S. Goodwin Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801) or in electronic format sent to docctr@library.illinois.edu