

Issue 24-03

ACDC

March 2024

“Shattered papers and ‘ghosts’ without local news”

We are adding to the ACDC collection a revealing 2023 report by Al Cross about “what has happened to hundreds of newspapers that once covered small cities, towns and rural areas across America.”

Cross is director emeritus at the Institute for Rural Journalism, University of Kentucky. “They’ve become ‘ghost papers,’ he observed, “with either no local journalists remaining on staff or so few that the paper’s ability to provide critical news and information to residents in that community has been severely curtailed.”

His report documents this erosion during the past two decades. As well, he identifies new business models emerging in some small and mid-sized communities.

You can read “[Rural mirages: Shattered papers and ‘ghosts’ without local news](#)” by open access.

Effect of photographic style on trust in social media messaging

A 2023 article in *First Monday* journal explored the effect of photo aesthetics on trust and interest in social media accounts. Author Jennifer Golbeck surveyed 3,255 online respondents about dog care, using various styles of photographs.

“Subjects reported significantly higher trust in and more interest in following accounts that posted well-composed, well-lit, more professional photos as compared with accounts with more casual photos.”

You can read “[Photo aesthetics as a factor in trust and interest assessments](#)” by open access.

Comparing Australian public and farmer views

A 2024 issue of *Ecological Economics* includes an article about comparative rural-urban views on agricultural land use and management practices in Australia.

Results of a survey identified three dimensions for attention:

- Issues related to animal welfare, greenhouse gas emissions and food safety
- Issues related to use of farm inputs
- Issues related to use of socially valuable assets for private profits

You can read “[Comparing Australian public and farmer views on agricultural land use and management practices for sustainability](#)” by open access.

Thanks for a new book featuring *Irish Farmers Journal*

Sincere thanks to Claire McCormack for providing a copy of *Irish Farmers Journal: A History* to the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center and University of Illinois Library. You may recall that Claire was the first Visiting Global Agricultural Journalist late last year here at the University of Illinois. She is a researcher in media work and agriculture at the School of Agriculture and Food Science at University College Dublin.

This new 280-page book traces a 76-year history of the biggest-selling farming publication across the islands of Ireland and Britain. Co-authors Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse have “told the story of a newspaper that is rooted in the evolution of Irish agriculture and a much wider societal transformation, with all that this means for the lives of the readers.”

We in ACDC know the rarity and value of such in-depth research about journalism and communications related to food and agriculture. As the authors noted, *Irish Farmers Journal* has both chronicled change and shaped it. \

Promoting agricultural conservation on Facebook

A 2023 article in *Sustainability Science* provides insight on that timely challenge. Using Facebook ads, the research team tested farmer response to message themes related to four identities: Business, Hero, Science, and Steward. Findings suggested:

- Ads framed to address Business as a farmer identity were the most effective in obtaining farmer clicks
- However, ads using the Science or Steward frames engaged women most effectively
- Among younger respondents, the Hero ads received fewer clicks compared to the Business or Science ads

By open access, you can read “[Promoting agricultural conservation on Facebook](#)” in this article.

Communicator events approaching

Here are event plans you may find helpful, with contact information you can use for details. We welcome suggestions or revisions for this calendar.

April 22-25, 2024. “Looking back, focusing forward.” Conference of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

Information: <https://www.aiaee.org/2024-Conference>

April 24-26, 2024. “Bright Horizons.” Conference of the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) in Kansas City, Missouri. Information:

https://www.nama.org/bright_horizons.html

April 29-May 1, 2024. Annual meeting of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) in Lake Las Vegas, Nevada.

Information: <https://www.toca.org/toca-events>

May 16-18, 2024. “Return to horse country,” conference of American Horse Publications (AHP) in Lexington, Kentucky. Information:

<https://www.americanhorsepubs.org/2024-ahp-equine-media-conference/>

June 2-4, 2024. “Center of Communication.” Cooperative Communicators Association (CCA) Institute in Des Moines, Iowa. Information: <https://www.communicators.coop/professional-development/cca-institute/>

June 18-20, 2024. Annual meeting of the Agricultural Relations Council (ARC) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Information: <https://www.agrelationscouncil.org/agricultural-relations-council-annual-meeting/>

June 18-23, 2024. Conference of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) in Toronto, Canada. Information: https://www.iswne.org/annual_conferences/june-18-23-2024-conference---toronto-canada/article_1faf8c14-95bf-11e9-b994-7fbdafce6984.html

June 20-24, 2024. “Communication and global human rights.” Annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA) in Gold Coast, Australia. Information: <https://www.icahdq.org/mpage/ica24/>

June 23-25, 2024. “Big ideas start here.” Annual conference of the Association of Communication Excellence (ACE) in Salt Lake City, Utah. Information: <https://aceweb.org/ace-conference/>

What should we do?

We close this issue of *ACDC News* with a senior Irish farmer’s view about going into the European Economic Community (EEC) during the early 1970s. It was reported in *Irish Farmers Journal: A History* (page 110) and perhaps reflects a broader, cautionary perspective on outcomes of decisions in life.

“Whatever we do, we will be sorry.”

ACDC is a deep and open resource for you, so please feel free to invite our help as you search for information, local to global. You are welcome 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 valued international collection. We welcome them in hard copy (sent to Ag Comm Documentation Center, 510 ACES Library, 1101 S. Goodwin Avenue, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801) – or in electronic format sent to acdc@library.illinois.edu