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ACDC NEWS

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Imagine growing fresh food in space

A recent news report in *The Packer* introduced the Mars Lunar Greenhouse Prototype Project at the Controlled Environment Agriculture Center, University of Arizona. Director Murat Kacira explained in a webinar what it takes to grow fresh produce in space.

“Space agriculture systems not only need to provide for the dietary needs of astronauts, but also their psychological well-being,” Kacira emphasized. Nutrition, menu fatigue, behavior health and systems resiliency become important, as well as education and training. Especially with our young generation, “we need a variety of skill sets, and controlled environment agriculture is one of them.”

You can read “[What it takes to grow produce in space](#)” by open access.

Shedding light on a silent epidemic in agriculture

A recent article in *The Packer* explains that agriculture has the fourth-highest suicide rate by industry, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sixty percent of U.S. farmers meet the accepted medical criteria for depression.

Two documentaries are shedding light on the challenges of a rural mental health crisis. “Muckville” and “Out of the Shadows” follow the lives of farmers “grappling with overwhelming stress – and the courage it takes to talk about it.”

You can read “[A silent epidemic: Confronting mental health in U.S. agriculture](#)” by open access.

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Should cows graze? UK farmers view the ethics of it

This 2024 article in *Sociologia Ruralis* featured a relational approach to understanding farmer views of the practice in the United Kingdom. About 20 percent of dairy farms in the UK house cows all year around. Among the findings:

- In terms of animal welfare, participants were reluctant to see a distinction between farms that graze and those that do not.
- They valued the positive affective experience of grazing their cows on their own farm.

You can read “[Should cows graze? A relational approach to understanding farmer perspectives on the ethics of grazing and indoor dairy systems](#)” by open access.

Local news media not covering what’s local for rural residents?

Evidence of “yes” – and signs of a rural-urban gap -- appeared in a 2019 report of findings we are adding to the ACDC collection from the Pew Research Center. Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults surveyed in urban areas said local news media mostly cover where you live, compared with only 41 percent of rural residents. Such findings arouse concern among many journalism watchers who follow trends and effects of newsroom staffing cutbacks and media consolidation.

You can read “[For many rural residents in U.S., local news media mostly don’t cover the area where they live](#)” by open access.

Spotting a rural-urban divide in Europe

The divide appeared in recently-reported results of a 2020 Eurobarometer survey. A 2024 issue of *Political Studies* included survey findings that involved 24,328 individuals living in 27 European Union member states. Findings identified place of residence (urban, peri-urban, and rural) as a “significant predictor of attitudes for almost all dimensions of agricultural policy.”

“The differences are most striking for environmental and climate-related aspects of agricultural policy, as well as for its goal of generating growth and jobs in rural areas. From this, we conclude there is a rural-urban divide involving agricultural policy, which policymakers should be aware of and attempt to address.”

You can read “[Europeans’ attitudes toward the goals of agricultural policy: A case of rural-urban divide](#)?” by open access.

Communicator events approaching

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

October 15-18, 2025

“Unlocking the agricultural potential in the cradle of mankind.” International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) Congress in Nairobi, Kenya. Hosted by Kenya Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture (MESHA). Information: <https://www.ifaj.org/ifaj-congress2025-kenya/46175/>

October 19-22, 2025

Annual meeting of the Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA) in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Information: <https://www.nasda.org/about-nasda/affiliates/communication-officers-of-state-departments-of-agriculture-cosda/>

November 7-9, 2025

ScienceWriters2025 in Chicago, Illinois, at the Marriott Chicago O’Hare. Hosted by the National Association of Science Writers and the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. Information: <https://www.nasw.org>

November 19-21, 2025

National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) convention in Kansas City, Missouri, at the Westin Crown Center. Information: <https://nafb.com/events/nafb-convention-0>

Ah, the wonders of deadlines

We close this issue of *ACDC News* with a thought from Douglas Adams:

“I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.”

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 X [@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 Agricultural Communications 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
