

**Issue 26-04**

# **ACDC NEWS**

**April 2026**

## **“Artificial intelligence cannot replace the agricultural journalist”**

So predicted Addy Rossi, vice-president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists in the first 2026 issue of *IFAJ Newsletter*. He noted: “Every time a new technological tool appears, journalism receives its death certificate. It happened with radio, with television, with the internet, with social media... Today it’s Artificial Intelligence’s (AI) turn.”

Acknowledging the uses and potentials of AI, he suggested several things it cannot do. For example:

- AI doesn’t set foot in the fields.
- AI doesn’t understand the human context of agriculture.
- AI doesn’t ask uncomfortable questions.
- AI doesn’t build trust.
- AI assumes no responsibility.

“In the increasingly automated world, the value of the agricultural journalist doesn’t diminish; it becomes more evident.”

You can read “[Artificial intelligence cannot replace the agricultural journalist \(and that’s not good news for AI\)](#)” by open access.

## **Why we’re here**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual “Feeding the Economy” report from 35 U.S. food and agriculture groups reminds agricultural journalists and communicators of their vital role. For example:

- America’s food and agriculture industries remain cornerstones of the U.S. economy, generating more than \$10.4 trillion in economic value – representing nearly 20% of the overall national economy.

**Source:** Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, University Library, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, 61801 • **Phone:** 217-300-0029 • **Email:** [@library.illinois.edu](mailto:@library.illinois.edu) • **Website:** <https://www.library.illinois.edu/funkaces/acdc/> • **Bluesky:** [@illinoisacdc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@illinoisacdc.bsky.social)

- They support 48.7 million jobs across the U.S. economy, including nearly 24.3 million direct jobs in farming, manufacturing, processing, distribution, retail and foodservice.
- Food manufacturing remains the largest manufacturing sector in the United States.

Effective communicators are at the heart of this huge, complex enterprise.

You can read "[Feeding the Economy](#)" by open access.

### **Recognizing 48 years of service**

On May 1, agricultural communications friends at the University of Illinois will stand at attention and shout, "Well done!" We will be honoring associates at Rhea and Kaiser as they wind down business operations as a marketing communications agency in Naperville, Illinois.

"For 48 years, it has been our privilege to help brands across agriculture navigate complex markets and drive results that matter," explains CEO Stephanie Heusuk. Indeed, they have. And co-founder Steve Rhea carries special memories for us here at the University of Illinois where he prepared for his career. He was a pioneer student in a new agricultural communications major here during the early 1960s.

You can read "[25 years of Rhea & Kaiser: an agency leader reflects on a very, very humble beginning](#)" by open access.

### **How fresh produce suppliers address traceability**

We are adding to the ACDC collection a *British Food Journal* article about traceability as part of information management in the fruit supply chains of Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy. Researchers used in-depth interviews with key informants in the Italian fresh produce chain.

Findings are discussed in terms of different themes, including identification of three distinct types of supply chains:

- "Producer driven:" Small retailers selecting their suppliers on the basis of the price set at the wholesale fruit market.
- "Large retailer driven:" Large retailers setting the supply chain standards.

- “Ho.re.ca driven:” Hotels, restaurants and catering companies as driving actors.

You can read “[Traceability as part of competitive strategy in the fruit supply chain](#)” by open access.

### **Assuring safe food at traditional food markets**

A 2025 article in the *Journal of Virology* explores risks of spreading diseases associated with the trade of live animals and animal-derived products in traditional food markets and cultures around the world.

“This review lays the foundation for developing the evidence-based risk assessments and mitigation strategies needed to reduce zoonotic disease risk. Enhancing the safety and sustainability of traditional food markets through integrated One Health approaches will be crucial for balancing the cultural and economic importance of traditional food markets with the need for increased global health security.”

You can read “[Zoonotic disease risk at traditional food markets](#)” by open access.

### **Communicator events approaching**

Here are nearing events you may find helpful, including contact information you can use for details. We welcome suggestions or revisions for this calendar.

May 14-16, 2026

[Information for 2026 annual Equine Media Conference of American Horse Publications \(AHP\) in Lexington, Kentucky.](#)

May 31-June 2, 2026

[Information for CCA 2026 Institute of the Cooperative Communicators Association in Chattanooga, Tennessee.](#)

June 15-17, 2026

[Information for “Trailheads & trailblazers.” 2006 annual conference of the Association for Communication Excellence \(ACE\) in Billings, Montana.](#)

June 16-17, 2026

[Information for 2026 annual meeting of the Agricultural Relations Council \(ARC\) in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.](#)

July 19-21, 2026

[Information for “Authentic Intelligence,” the Ag Media Summit in St. Louis, Missouri.](#) Hosted by Agricultural Communicators Network and Livestock Publications Council, with support from the Ag Media Council.

November 18-20, 2026

[Information for Annual convention of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting \(NAFB\) in Kansas City, Missouri.](#)

### **When creativity may strike**

We close this issue of ACDC News with an encouraging thought from Helen Montgomery Archer in *Tales, Rhymes and Other Stuff*:

“You’re not necessarily a birdbrain if your thoughts take flight.”

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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 welcomed to follow us on Twitter [@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](mailto:acdc@library.illinois.edu)