



On the morning of Sunday, Aug. 5, the ACE Research and Academic Learning Community will host brief presentations and roundtable discussions on current research. The Learning Community, which focuses on professional development for faculty members and others involved in agricultural communication research and academic programs, invites you to browse through this listing and drop in to learn more about projects that interest you.

<b>Welcome and opening remarks</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Paper presentations – Group 1</b>	<b>8:15 a.m.</b>
<b>Break</b>	<b>9:15 a.m.</b>
<b>Paper presentations – Group 2</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Break</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Paper presentations – Group 3</b>	<b>10:45 a.m.</b>
<b>Poster session</b>	<b>12:00 p.m.</b>

*\* Each paper presentation in the group will be limited to 5 minutes. After each of the papers in the group is presented, there will be a time of interaction for attendees and authors to further discuss the papers presented. Attendees are welcome to attend the full session or select groups of paper presentations.*

### **Paper Abstracts - Group 1**

#### **The Communication Effectiveness of Scientist-Stakeholder Partnerships Addressing Agriculture and Natural Resources Issues: An Analysis of the Media Attention and Media Framing of the Florida Water and Climate Alliance**

*Shuyang Qu, Iowa State University*

*Tracy Irani, University of Florida*

Scientist-stakeholder partnerships are formed by scientists from academic institutions and industry representatives in an effort to address contingent science issues such as climate change, inform the public and influence public policies. Such organizations often lack efforts and expertise of communicating to the public and conducting outreach which are a crucial component to build a good reputation. This study selected [State] Water and Climate Alliance [XWCA] as an example of such organizations and explored its media attention and media framing to reveal the visibility and reputation of [XWCA] on media. Results showed very few media attention had been paid to [XWCA]. The framing analysis indicated the coverage of [XWCA] is mostly introductory and descriptive information of the organization from public

institutions, collaborators and funding agencies. Because neither substantial media attention nor content were found about [XWCA], it is necessary to increase media visibility and build reputation through strategic communication. To achieve that, we recommend scientist-stakeholder partnership organizations like [XWCA] to collaborate with agricultural communications professionals and academic researchers. Examples of helpful tasks include developing a strategic communication plan and conducting research about stakeholders' perception of communication and outreach to better assist with building reputation for these organizations.

#### **Why Websites Work: An Examination of Interdisciplinary Agricultural Center Websites**

*Ashley McLeod, University of Florida*

*Valerie McKee, University of Florida*

*Savannah Woodall, University of Florida*

*Brandon McKee, University of Florida*

*Joy Rumble, University of Florida*

This study examined the online content of interdisciplinary agricultural center webpages. Content

modification dates, mission statements, and content were determined through a content analysis. Many of the websites did not mention a modification date for the content, while many websites had outdated content mostly older than six months. More than two-thirds of the websites provided PDFs that visitor could download to learn more about topics, by many of the websites lacked any media element that was being coded. Additionally, many websites did not use multiple forms of media. More than half of the websites were coded as lacking any social media content or plugins, but out of the websites that did include social media content, Facebook was the most prevalent. The commonalities between the center's mission displayed on the website and the content theme were analyzed and chi-square tests provided the degree of association. A significant association existed and an alignment between communication strategies and missions of the centers was concluded, which is important when organizations communicate about agricultural science as indicated by previous literature. It is recommended that centers communicate via their websites in a timely manner and allow modification times to be seen to viewers to show their information is up-to-date. Website media content should also be diversified and communicators of these centers should explore the unique communication opportunities provided by social media. Future research should explore the target audience of interdisciplinary agricultural centers and should analyze the messages centers are using to communicate with those audiences.

### **Comparison of Extension Personnel and Supervisor Perceptions of Communications**

#### **Activities**

*Brittany Bowman, Oklahoma State University*

*Quisto Settle, Oklahoma State University*

*Elizabeth Gregory North, Mississippi State University*

*Keri Collins Lewis, Mississippi State University*

Extension is often called the "best-kept secret," having low awareness with the public but high satisfaction with clientele. Extension services across the country have faced budget cuts, forcing a need for the organization to re-evaluate its activities, including how it communicates with its stakeholders. While Extension personnel are the ones who will do most of the communicating, their supervisors impact the personnel's actions, which means it is important to assess both groups. A survey was conducted with Extension personnel in [state] and their supervisors assessing engagement in communications activities and perceptions of those activities, as well as personnel's preference professional development activities. Personnel reported higher use and perceptions

of comfort and importance of more traditional communications activities (e.g., making a speech and taking photos) than media-related communications activities (e.g., writing a news release and being interviewed for TV) and social media-related activities (e.g., managing a Twitter account and creating Snapchat posts). Supervisors perceived individual communications activities as less important overall than personnel did. Personnel preferred professional development activities that were hands-on or showing the activities first-hand (e.g., demonstrations and field days). Future research was recommended in a case study format to study specific relationships, as well as addressing more specific aspects of use, such as degree of use. Qualitative research and expanding to other states was also recommended to understand the issue more deeply. It was recommended for Extension's communications specialists to provide professional development for communications activities that have high reported importance but low use and comfort among personnel.

### **Seeking out science: A look at producer information sources for climate-science information**

*Cassie Wandersee, Kansas State University*

*Lauri Baker, Kansas State University*

*Peter Tomlinson, Kansas State University*

*Wes Wise, Kansas State University*

Climate change has had a significant impact on many industries and regions on a global level. Agriculture is one of the top industries impacted by climate change, threatening the global food supply and the livelihood of agricultural producers. While climate change is acknowledged by scientists and researchers, many members of the public, including producers, still doubt it is occurring. This study examines agricultural producers' preferred sources of climate and climate change information and their past experiences with perceived risk, experienced hazard, and perceived benefits of climate change. Uses and gratifications theory is used to explore the relationship between past experiences and preferred information sources. Findings suggest that producers most often use regional agricultural publications and University publications. Examination of past experiences and perceived risk revealed significant differences in use of media sources. Agricultural communicators should consider the preferred media source of audience segments they are addressing and their information-seeking preferences for the source.

## Paper Abstracts - Group 2

### **The Effect of Emphasizing Credibility Elements and the Role of Source Gender on Perceptions of Source Credibility**

*Ariana Bigham, Texas Tech University*

*Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University*

*Nan Li, Texas Tech University*

*Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University*

Agricultural technology continues to evolve to meet the demands of a growing world, but previous advancements in agricultural technology have been met with resistance. Improved science communication efforts can assist in bridging the gap between expert and lay opinion to improve reception of scientific information. Using the framework of the heuristic model of persuasion, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of emphasizing elements of source credibility – trustworthiness and expertise – and the gender of the source on perceptions of source credibility. A sample of 122 undergraduate students were exposed to one of the four possible developed message treatments. Data collection took place in a laboratory setting using an online instrument that had a randomly-assigned stimulus research design. The results indicated the treatment conditions had higher mean scores for source credibility than the control. Further inferential analysis, however, showed the differences to be non-significant. One significant finding showed the gender of the source can influence perceptions of credibility. This suggests merit in using female sources when presenting scientific information to the Millennial population. While choosing credible sources to present information is important, more research is needed regarding the effect of emphasizing various credibility components and the role of source gender on perceptions of source credibility.

### **Collegiate Millennials' Perceptions of Locally Produced Beef**

*Shelby Oesterreicher, University of Florida*

*Lisa Lundy, University of Florida*

*Joy Rumble, University of Florida*

*Ricky Telg, University of Florida*

Millennial consumers are the next generation of decision makers and consumers. A knowledge and communication gap exists between cattle producers and consumers this knowledge seeking generation. This study focused on collegiate millennials' perceptions of locally produced beef. The research design was qualitative in nature using focus groups.

Participants associated the beef industry and beef products with the environment, management practices, treatment of animals, human health concerns, retail, experience with the beef industry, experience with beef, and transparency. Results of this study showed participants had minimal knowledge of the industry and

relatively negative perceptions of the industry and beef products. Participants were skeptical of communication materials promotion beef and expressed particular distrust toward video messages. Participants revealed a knowledge and communication gap between producers and consumers.

### **A Sentiment and Content Analysis of Twitter Content Regarding Antibiotic Use in Livestock**

*Garrett Steede, Texas Tech University*

*Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University*

*Nan Li, Texas Tech University*

*Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University*

*Sherice Gearhart, Texas Tech University*

On January 1, 2017, the final rule of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) was put into place requiring antibiotics approved for both humans and animals to be discontinued for growth promotion. This change was brought on by the role growth promoters in livestock production play in the development of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance increases the costs associated with health care by increasing the length of stays in the hospital and requiring more intensive medical care for patients. The purpose of this study was to explore sentiment and characteristics of social media content and the characteristics of the key influencers whose opinions had the greatest amount of reach on social media in regard to antibiotic use in livestock and antibiotic resistance. Nuvi, a social media monitoring program, provided sentiment for each tweet and coded 64.8% of the content (n = 129) as negative compared to the 38.2% (n = 76) humans coded as negative. The contrast between human coders and Nuvi indicates there could be discrepancies between how Nuvi codes content and the way a human might interpret the content. No key influencer discussed antibiotic use in livestock positively. Findings suggest agricultural communicators should not rely completely on the output from sentiment analysis

programs to evaluate how the public discusses issues related to agriculture, particularly controversial issues. Further, agricultural communications practitioners should prioritize monitoring the content shared by key influencers in an effort to better understand the content being shared by the most influential users. Recommendations for future research are provided.

### **Genetic Modification, Factory Farms, and ALF: A Focus Group Study of the Netflix Original Film Okja**

*Garrett Steede, Texas Tech University*

*Kelsi Opat, Texas Tech University*

*Leah Curren, Texas Tech University*

*Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University*

Okja is a fictional Netflix original film that was released in 2017. Okja features a “super pig” that is owned by the large, agricultural company Mirando Corporation. Okja is raised by a young girl, Mija, and her grandfather in the South Korean mountains. The film climaxes when Mija and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) narrowly save Okja and a smuggled piglet from the slaughter process. The purpose of this study was to understand how college students responded to the film. The viewers of this film included students who were majoring in a field within the agricultural college (COA) at [University] as well as students who were majoring in a field outside of agriculture (NCOA). Emergent themes from this focus group study identified the film as overdramatized and that the film misrepresented food production. Previous

knowledge and experiences impacted how viewers perceived the film with COA students indicating that Okja was portrayed more like a pet than as a food animal. Both COA and NCOA students indicated that their food purchasing decisions would not be affected by viewing the film. Findings suggested that entertainment films may not be an effective method for changing public opinion of agriculture and food production. Transparency in agriculture through real-life and real-time activities in a documentary style may serve a greater role in improving public opinion of food and agricultural production practices and industries. Findings from this study serve as an indicator of the role entertainment films play in swaying public opinion of food and agriculture.

### **Paper Abstracts - Group 3**

#### **Blue Bell’s Facebook Posts and Responses During the 2015 Listeria Crisis: A Case Study**

*Kelsi Opat, Texas Tech University*

*Hayley Magness, Texas Tech University*

*Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University*

Blue Bell Creameries faced an unprecedented situation when it pulled all of its products during a Listeria outbreak in 2015. Despite a very public crisis that resulted in three deaths, Blue Bell survived the disaster and maintained a large and loyal customer base. A content analysis of the Blue Bell Ice Cream Facebook page was conducted to evaluate Blue Bell’s public communications, and its followers’ reactions, during this time. Results indicated that Blue Bell primarily posted messages that included recall and restocking information, thankfulness to stakeholders, and details about improvements to food safety during the crisis. These messages created a sense of transparency, which can increase customer’s trust and brand loyalty. Their consumers largely responded with comments containing overwhelming loyalty themes as well as questions and “thank yous.” Recommendations for agri-food companies include operating transparently before, during, and after a crisis. Organizations should also avoid publishing messages that include attacks, denial, scapegoating, or excuses during a crisis.

#### **A Farm Newspaper Capitulates to Advertiser Pressure: Determinants of Readers’ Attitudes toward the Firing of an Editorial Cartoonist**

*Lulu Rodriguez, University of Illinois*

*Supathida Kulpavaropas, University of Illinois*

On April 2016, the weekly Farm News cut its ties with veteran freelancer Rick Friday who drew a cartoon that called attention to how much the CEOs of large agricultural corporations are paid. This study examines the determinants of people’s attitude toward Mr.

Friday’s firing. Using data gathered from a national survey of newspaper readers, the study traced the antecedents of this attitude. The results show that those in agricultural states tended to have more favorable attitudes toward Big Ag and to perceive the editorial cartoon and the firing incident as more relevant to them. Attitude toward Big Ag and the perceived relationship between Big Ag advertisers and the farm press were the two variables that showed a significant influence on people’s attitude toward Mr. Friday’s firing. However, the perceived relevance of the editorial cartoon and the firing incident had no bearing on people’s attitude toward the incident. Implications of the findings on the relationship between farm newspapers and the agribusinesses that advertise in them are discussed.

#### **Analyzing Media Coverage of Agricultural Health and Safety Issues**

*Lisa Lundy, University of Florida*

*Tiffany Rogers-Randolph, University of Florida*

*Angela Lindsey, University of Florida*

*Clay Hurdle, University of Florida*

*Heather Ryan, University of Florida*

*Ricky Telg, University of Florida*

*Tracy Irani, University of Florida*

Farming, by the very nature of the occupation, is riddled with uncertainty. The risks associated with the agriculture industry are just as diverse as the industry itself. For all risks, one challenge is the development and dissemination of safety communication materials tailored for diverse audiences. Valkenburg, Semetko, and Vreese (1999) examined common frames used in news media. Their analysis pointed to four commonly used news frames: conflict, human interest, responsibility and economic consequences. The purpose of this study was to describe the agricultural and health safety issues discussed in [State] news media during the

year 2016, discussing the prominence of the frames outlined by Valkenburg et al. (1999). In this study, the most prominent frame was the human interest frame, followed by responsibility, economic consequences, and conflict. Frames carry a great deal of weight in shaping individuals' opinions, attitudes, and actions towards agriculturally based messages; therefore it is essential for agricultural communicators to understand the framing of agricultural health and safety issues. Acknowledging the frames used in the reporting of agricultural issues allows agricultural communicators to enter into informed interactions with media outlets and better prepare the resources they provide to them. These framing analyses also provide agricultural communicators with a solid foundation on which to best position and frame their messaging on behalf of the industry. Further research is recommended to examine frames from an audience perspective and to investigate the impact of human interest frames in the presentation of agricultural news articles.

### **Picturesque vs. Reality: Influence of Messages on Attitudes toward Livestock Care and Use**

*Joy Rumble, University of Florida*

*Tiffany Rogers-Randolph, University of Florida*

*Emily Buck, The Ohio State University*

The livestock industry has repeatedly struggled to effectively communicate livestock care and handling practices in order to promote awareness and acceptance. Many consumers still hold on to the historic picturesque view of production agriculture instead of the modern reality. It is necessary for the industry to identify how much is too much to tell or show consumers. Therefore, this study sought to understand the influence of two communication treatments on attitudes toward livestock care and use. Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) served as the theoretical framework for this study. A sample of 1,049 respondents was obtained through nonprobability sampling. To fulfill the purpose of this study, the development of an online survey was informed by ELM and measured prior beliefs, personal involvement, and knowledge. An experimental treatment, consistent with persuasive communication within ELM, presented respondents with one of two images of cage-free egg laying housing and accompanying text. One image could be described as "historically picturesque" and the other as "modern reality." Attitude toward livestock care and use was measured after exposure to one of the images. Respondents held favorable prior beliefs, demonstrated neutral involvement, and answered three or less knowledge questions correctly. Respondents exposed to the modern reality treatment displayed slightly lower attitudes than those exposed to the historically picturesque treatment. The results indicated that both

prior beliefs and image exposure had a significant impact on attitude, while personal involvement was not found to be significant.

### **So, you think you can lead: Analyzing opinion leaders in relation to genetically modified foods**

*Levy Randolph, University of Florida*

*Joy Rumble, University of Florida*

*Hannah Carter, University of Florida*

Controversial issues in agriculture arise, and it falls on opinion leaders to disseminate information to their networks and the public. Agriculturalists are often blamed for not taken consumers' concerns into consideration. This study sought to add to previous research by identifying the current perceptions of [state] agricultural leaders toward GM food, what percentage of them identify as opinion leaders with respect to GM food, and what they identify as sources of information regarding GM food. Through an online survey, the trust and attitudes towards GM foods and science, of agricultural leaders who participated in the [ag leadership group], were measured as well as their sources and channels of information. By identifying opinion leaders and helping them understand how to create and disseminate effective agricultural messages, agricultural educators and communicators can reach consumers and reduce the current knowledge gap more successfully. The results of this study confirm previous literature which states that both "what one knows" and "who one knows" impacts the level of influence an opinion leader may have with their peers. Agricultural educators should work with both agricultural opinion leaders and communicators to identify current consumer perceptions and how to address any differences or concerns that arise in interactions.

## **Research Posters**

### **An Application of Project-Based Learning: Creating Award Recipient Highlight Videos for a College Honors Banquet**

Sinclair Dobelbower, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University

### **Students in Charge: Empowering Students to Take Over a Department Snapchat Account**

Kassie Waller, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University

### **Dinner is Served: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Home Delivery Meal Kits**

Kassie Waller, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University

### **Using Basecamp in an Agricultural Communications Block Course Structure**

Lindsay Kennedy, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University  
Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Gibson, Texas Tech University

### **Adobe Creative Cloud: Creating Opportunities for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants**

Tiffany Rogers-Randolph, University of Florida  
Lisa Lundy, University of Florida

### **Consumers' Use of Disclosure Methods to Identify Bioengineered Food Ingredients**

Corryn LaRue, Utah State University  
Kelsey Hall, Utah State University

### **Using Instagram Hashtags to Promote Agricultural Communications Students' Photography**

Kayla Jennings, Texas Tech University  
Lindsay Kennedy, Texas Tech University  
Cindy Akers, Texas Tech University

### **Getting Exposure: Students' Perceived Skill Improvement in Two Photography Course Formats**

Lindsay Kennedy, Texas Tech University  
Cindy Akers, Texas Tech University  
Kayla Jennings, Texas Tech University  
Adrian Smith, Texas Tech University

### **A Content Analysis of Gluten-Free Diet Coverage in Major U.S. Newspapers**

Diane Meyer, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Meyers, Texas Tech University  
Nan Li, Texas Tech University  
Courtney Gibson, Texas Tech University

### **Conversations about climate: Communicating climate change to cattle producers**

Cassie Wandersee, Kansas State University  
Ricky Telg, University of Florida  
Saqib Mukhtar, University of Florida  
David Smith, Texas A&M University  
Lisa Lundy, University of Florida

### **Communication Strategies and Household Food Waste in Florida**

Afiya De Sormeaux, University of Florida  
Joy Rumble, University of Florida  
Angela Lindsey, University of Florida

### **Newspaper Coverage of the 2017 BPI vs. ABC "Pink Slime" Trial**

Bryce White, Texas Tech University  
Paul Montgomery, Texas Tech University  
Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University