



**The Agriculture Network Information Center Initiative:  
Using Technology and Partnerships to Link People to the Information They Need  
[<http://agnic.org>]**

***What is AgNIC now?*** A Web gateway providing immediate access to a cross-section of evaluated agricultural, food, and environmental information and resources, and to a distributed network of subject experts.

***What is the Vision for AgNIC?*** A “one-stop-shopping” portal utilizing the most advanced information technologies to deliver reliable, value-added, and broad agricultural information, full-text resources, primary data, and learning /decision-making tools to users in the U.S. and throughout the world.

***Who is AgNIC?*** Currently 42 institutions and organizations including the National Agricultural Library, land-grant university libraries, Cooperative Extension units, and other institutions, centers, and organizations in the U.S., Canada, Latin America, and Europe.

***When did AgNIC begin?*** The concept was first discussed at meetings sponsored by the National Agricultural Library in 1994 which involved participation from land-grant universities as well as USDA and NSF officials. AgNIC became operational in 1995.

***How does AgNIC work?*** As a voluntary and democratic “alliance” using a “centers-of -excellence” approach whereby each partnering institution takes responsibility for developing Web site(s) based on topic(s) in which they have expertise and specialized resources. The AgNIC home page links to these Web sites and offers both keyword searching and individual site browsing functions.

***What is the Technology behind AgNIC?*** The AgNIC Alliance has implemented guidelines [e.g. controlled vocabulary, metadata standards, and database structure] that facilitate the exchange of digital information within a distributed system. New applications include a calendar of events as well as discussion boards, news items, collaborative work space, and the ability to handle multi-media formats and multiple languages.

***How is AgNIC currently funded?*** NAL provides a small amount of support to operate the AgNIC Secretariat and to Cornell University to advance the system’s technical foundation. Partners provide their own operating expenses primarily as a cost-share. Competitive grants are regularly pursued by partners.

***What are the issues AgNIC faces for the future?*** To obtain stable core funding to develop and maintain server and user applications and to provide incentives for membership; to expand coverage of content areas; and to provide a richer variety of content within the topics covered.

***What are the Benefits of AgNIC for the USDA and for the Public?*** Currently, AgNIC offers fast, anytime access to reliable agriculture-related information and subject specialists at no cost to the user. In the future, AgNIC will provide a broad range of tools to facilitate learning and decision-making.

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