Collaboration and Cooperation Among Libraries, Cooperative Extension, and Agricultural Experiment Stations in Land-Grant Universities: The Results of a 2004-2005 Survey

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June 10, 2005
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Forward

This report is the result of several surveys involving land-grant libraries, Cooperative Extension programs, and Agricultural Experiment Stations that were conducted in 2004 and early 2005. Leading up to the surveys were a number of meetings held to discuss the implications and opportunities presented by similar initiatives for delivering agriculture-related information and educational content through the Web, particularly the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC) and eXtension, as well as CYFERnet and the Plant Management Network. Specifically, the University of Arizona facilitated a meeting of library directors, Cooperative Extension directors, and College of Agriculture administrators in conjunction with the February 2004 National Extension Directors meeting held in Phoenix, Arizona. Interest in participating in the discussion by non-attending library deans and directors led to other sessions held at the May 2004 Association for Research Libraries (ARL) meeting in Tucson, Arizona, and at the June 2004 American Library Association (ALA) conference in Orlando, Florida. One of the recommendations resulting from these meetings was to conduct a benchmark survey to inventory and document current library, Cooperative Extension, and Agricultural Experiment Station collaborations and cooperation.

To this end, Carla Stoffle, Dean of Libraries, University of Arizona, and Jim Christenson, Cooperative Extension Director, University of Arizona, co-sponsored a preliminary survey that was sent out by email in September 2004 to ARL library deans and directors and to Cooperative Extension directors (see Appendix C). The results were compiled into a preliminary report [http://usain.org/library_extensioncollab/collaborations.html] and made available to the broader Planning Group for a Leadership Council for Agricultural Information and Outreach, which also was created as a result of a recommendation from the previous meetings. The Planning Group convened at a meeting organized by Mississippi State University Library in November 2004 and further recommended that a Best Practices Task Force be organized to broaden the survey to include all land-grant libraries as well as Agricultural Experiment Stations. With the assistance again of Carla Stoffle and Jim Christenson, but also with the help of Colin Kaltenbach, Vice Dean and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Arizona, and H. Michael Harrington, Executive Director, Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (WAAESD), who coordinated with the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), a second survey was conducted. This report is a compilation of the responses received as a result of all of the surveys.

It is the hope of the Best Practices Task Force that the information gained through the surveys and presented here will provide new impetus for building stronger and more extensive internal and external collaborations among land-grant groups and institutions. In a time when the service and outreach functions of the unique land-grant mission are under pressure from a variety of economic and organizational stresses, it is worth noting that many in the library, extension, and agricultural research communities are already working together to the benefit of all. New technologies are providing significant opportunities for further developing these collaborations and for implementing innovative information and educational systems. We hope this report will provide a blueprint for expanding on the work already begun and for encouraging many more institutions to join in this exciting venture.
Finally, the Best Practices Task Force wants to express their sincere appreciation to the following people for their leadership in this effort and for creating a new opportunity for increased collaboration and cooperation among the land-grant community in the future:

Carla Stoffle, Dean of Libraries and the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona
Jim Christenson, Cooperative Extension Director, University of Arizona
Deborah Young, Associate Cooperative Extension Director, University of Arizona
Cliff Haka, Director of Libraries, Michigan State University
Peter Young, Director, National Agricultural Library
Executive Summary

The first survey was sent to the 31 Association for Research Libraries (ARL) land-grant library deans and directors. That group submitted 13 responses. The second mailing was sent to three groups, adding Cooperative Extension units and Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES) to the library survey. A National Agricultural Library (NAL) maintained mailing list was used to contact 154 land-grant and other cooperating institution’s library directors and agricultural librarians representing 103 institutions. The listserv for Cooperative Extension Directors/Administrators and Associate Directors provided the means to contact 119 members of that group and, similarly, a list maintained by the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) was used to contact 58 Agricultural Experiment Station directors and 18 research directors from 1890 land-grant institutions. These mailings resulted in an additional 11 responses from ARL land-grant libraries and 24 responses from other land-grant status libraries bringing the total to 49 library responses with a response rate of 46 percent. ARL library responses were higher at a more than 77 percent return. The Extension responses numbered 22 or an 18 percent response rate, while the Agricultural Experiment Stations responding numbered 23 with a 30 percent return.

Survey results generally fell into two major categories: (1) formal library-extension-AES collaborations and (2) types of services libraries provide to Cooperative Extension and the Experiment Stations. The most significant collaborations were found in the activities of the Agricultural Network Information Center (AgNIC), and in the preservation and archiving of agricultural materials. Library services provided to other units included offering access to electronic resources from remote locations, conducting library orientations and trainings, and providing reference assistance. Many institutions also mentioned a wide variety of future cooperative plans such as the development of digital repositories for extension and other agriculture-related materials. Some of the more innovative plans included library involvement in sending a mobile technology service out to rural areas and providing instruction through teleconferencing.
Collaboration and Cooperation Among Libraries, Cooperative Extension, and Agricultural Experiment Stations in Land-Grant Universities: The Results of a 2004-05 Survey

Summary of Results by Type of Involvement

Collaborations

AgNIC (Agriculture Network Information Center)

The AgNIC Consortium provides subject matter coverage via the Web. Each site provides textual resources, links, and reference services. Many of the institutions that responded to the survey are AgNIC partners, however, many AgNIC partners did not respond to this survey or are not land-grant institutions. Some of these sites are joint efforts of the respective library and Extension Services. A full listing of all AgNIC partners and their subjects can be found at www.agnic.org.

Perhaps the most ambitious of the AgNIC sites is the Western Ranglands Partnership. The Rangelands West site was listed by the University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, North Dakota State University, University of Hawaii and the University of Nevada, Reno. This comprehensive treatment of the subject includes librarians and Extension personnel from 18 states.

Michigan State University was an early member of AgNIC and is responsible for the subject areas of: asparagus, maple syrup, bedding plants, blueberries and cherries. Turfgrass as a collaborative subject area with Pennsylvania State University. The MSU AgNIC server is housed and maintained by MSU Extension (MSUE). The MSU Library (MSUL) provides e-mail reference services for the subjects of concentration. Both parties contribute to the update and maintenance of the site itself.

New Mexico State University hosts and maintains the AgNIC site on chile peppers. The University of Hawaii provides information and services through the Traditional Pacific Island Crops site. In addition to turfgrass, Pennsylvania State University provides a Home Gardening site and is developing one related to Youth Development. Aquaculture (AquaNIC), Corn, Soybeans and Agricultural Communications are the subjects of AgNIC sites maintained by the University of Illinois. North Dakota State University hosts a Flax site.

Preservation and Archives

Approximately eight states are involved in preservation and archiving projects. Examples include expanding archives of historical documents related to agriculture; scanning/digitizing Extension and historical publications; participation in the National Preservation Program for Agricultural Literature; archiving Extension publications; providing access to back-files of journals. The University of Nevada, Reno Library is scanning and putting online full-text of Nevada agricultural publications, beginning with
the Bulletin of the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station, 1888-1963. Michigan State University Library and Extension are involved in a scanning project of current and historical MSU Extension publications. The Florida Libraries are digitizing older IFAS materials for the Florida Agricultural History and Rural Life website.

**Joint Meetings/Representatives**

Six universities indicated that they assign representatives on formal committees to advise the library, and/or that the library makes formal appointments of staff to serve on Extension committees. Michigan State University library has a representative on the Extension technology advisory committee. North Carolina State University library deputy director serves as an *ex officio* member of the Extension Operations Council. In one county the University of Florida librarian chairs the Extension Advisory Council. Cornell’s Mann Library has formed an Extension Advisory Group to advise the library, and the library provides content management guidance to the Extension web development team.

At the Ohio State University, Extension has a representative on the Task Force on the Library of the Future. At the University of Tennessee, Extension participates in the Libraries’ liaison program by appointing a number of representatives who advise on library issues. In addition the Associate Dean of Extension is a member of the Library Advisory Committee, which recommends gift fund expenditures.

Several universities indicate that their library assigns a liaison to work with Extension. The role of this person(s) includes providing training, displays at Extension conferences, responding to requests, and updates on new services.

Two examples of libraries and Extension holding joint meetings include an annual meeting hosted by the University of Arizona for the Western Rangelands AgNIC Partnership that involves 18 Western states, and participation in eXtension meetings.

**Information Sharing and Joint Marketing**

There are many examples of university libraries, Extension, and Experiment Stations working together to make information more accessible both internally and externally. At Cornell the library staff contributes a column to the Extension electronic newsletter, and a column in the library’s magazine is geared to Extension staff. The Louisiana State University Library put all Extension agents on their list serve to receive information and library resource updates for use in their educational programs. Colorado State University summarized their external effort by stating, “Our aim is to find ways to cooperatively distribute information broadly to communities.” North Carolina State University is the lead server site which makes resources available to residents of the state.

Seven states indicated that they work on joint marketing efforts. Some examples include: Mann Library at Cornell uses their Extension Advisory Group to identify marketing opportunities; Michigan State University works to jointly promote the research, teaching, and outreach missions; Texas Cooperative Extension is aggressively marketing online library resources; the University of Nevada, Reno is working to coordinate and promote research done in the Tahoe Basin; the University of Tennessee library is working with the
Experiment Station marketing office staff to promote library services to the citizens of Tennessee.

**Collaborative Information Technology Training**

Three libraries are involved with Extension in information technology training. The University of Arizona science librarian developed a metadata training program for the Western Rangelands Partnership. The Lincoln University (Jefferson City) library and Cooperative Extension have worked together to provide training in the use of computers, word processing, email and MedLinePlus to senior citizens. The librarians at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln) work with their Experiment Station personnel give joint training.

**Distance Learning Programs**

The University of Tennessee libraries provide document delivery by registering Extension faculty and staff as distance learners, and also are assisting with development of distance education courses for Extension agents. In January 2005 the University of Florida libraries started participating in a new distance learning program for Extension agents and agriculture teachers. They also offer reference service and document delivery to distance learners.

**County Public Libraries, and Extension Programs**

Three universities mentioned involvement between Cooperative Extension and county public libraries. The University of Nevada, Reno has worked with community libraries to make available both print and electronic Extension publications. At the University of Florida, a survey of County Extension Directors revealed 16 collaborations between the public libraries and Extension. This collaboration usually took the form of delivering Extension programming in library facilities, but also included making printed and online materials available to the public, generating shared reading lists, and a librarian chairing the Extension Advisory Council.

In Minnesota, due to a recent downsizing of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the regional Extension centers were reconfigured. This has led to a diminished presence of Extension among rural communities. Concerns about this loss of service led the University Libraries to advance the idea for developing a community-based partnership between Extension and local public libraries to enable communication and programming within local communities. Library staff involved in MINITEX (a state-funded organization for resource sharing, librarian development, content licensing, and library cooperation) have worked with Extension to develop a pilot effort in one region, exploring the role public libraries can play in disseminating Extension information and providing a vehicle for community outreach.
Extension Funding Support for the Library

The Vice President and Executive Director of 1890 Research and Extension at South Carolina State University has provided funding to the Library for acquisition of selected periodicals for Extension personnel and to support development of an e-classroom in the Library.

Library Services

Library Services to Remote Locations

The majority of the fifteen institutions who responded to this question offer the same services to remote locations as they do at the home location. This would include online and in-person training sessions; access to databases; inter-library loan privileges; document delivery. Colorado State University provides face-to-face training for all new staff at their semi-annual New Staff Orientation program. North Dakota State University offers on-campus, off-campus, and out-of-state access to the library online catalog, online databases, and electronic journals; free document delivery for out-of-state Extension staff; reference services; basic and advanced instruction and seminars for Extension staff; and cataloging and retention of archives of Extension publications. The University of Idaho has instructional centers around the State and has been improving library service to all off-campus users through the use of electronic materials and services.

Library Orientation and Training Site Visits

Fifteen of the respondents provide library orientations and/or training in a variety of ways. The global focus of these sessions is access to library/information resources. Several libraries (5) make their training available on-site either in Extension offices or at other sites in the state. The University of Kentucky offers general and specific workshops via the Extension In-Service program. The agents and staff receive credit which in turn enters into their merit review. At the University of Tennessee teleconferencing is used as a training vehicle and they also teach seminars and workshops for their Extensions’ winter sessions. Training is given at the Extension new staff orientations by Colorado State, Cornell, and Wyoming. Lincoln University librarians work with their agents on MedLinePlus and the agents in-turn teach the database to senior citizens in the state.

Reference Assistance

Reference assistance was explicitly cited or could be inferred as being provided by 19 respondents. Extension and Experiment Station faculty and staff are considered to be entitled to the same library resources and services available to on-campus faculty. References services are provided to Extension and other offices through email, phone or live chat.

A number of libraries indicated that a university user ID or IP address was required to access library resource. Extension staff who are not paid by the university may pose a problem for libraries. Often these county paid employees have the same informational and
reference needs as university paid staff but lack a university network ID. Dealing with this issue was cited by at least two institutions.

Some libraries provided information that may be unique to their state or situation. Michigan State University provides 800 number service so county offices can access library services toll free. The Ohio State University Experiment Station has had a separate library for more than 100 years. The University of Hawaii at Manoa Library has the additional complication of dealing not only with off campus staff but with other universities that are widely dispersed across the Pacific Ocean.

Information Technology Assistance

There does not appear to be a great deal of information technology sharing or assistance within the institutions that responded to the survey. The Mann Library at Cornell is assisting Extension with a web site redesign. The University of Connecticut Extension web presence is hosted by a library server and the Library provides some IT support as well as training for the faculty in WebCT. The University of Kentucky also offers training for Extension faculty in computer applications, while the University of Missouri gives technical assistance for remote users who experience problems with accessing library resources.

One of the more extensive IT relationships appears to be at Michigan State University. The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) at MSU, through its Extension Service, not only cooperates with the MSU Library but also hosts a second copy of the National Agricultural Library Thesaurus. The CANR servers also host the logs for the MSU Library and Distance Learning operations. In return, the library provides email and other technology reference services for Extension employees. A library information center will be developed that will run as a sub-portal under the new CANR portal system.

Michigan State University Extension has been a contributor/consultant for MSU Library participation in the National Preservation Program for Agricultural Literature. This preservation project is funded by NEH, directed by Cornell University’s Mann Library and developed by USAIN and NAL. This historical bibliography documenting Michigan’s agricultural and rural heritage is hosted by MSUE AgNIC@MSU server.

Library Provides Access to Extension Collection

Seven land-grant libraries stated they provided access to Extension publications. In the case of New Mexico State University, Cooperative Extension deposits all Extension publications with the Library for the University Archives as well as the circulating collection. At Colorado State University, the Libraries are working with both Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station to develop a repository for all Extension publications in electronic format including historical documents related to agriculture in Colorado, particularly on water development. Similarly, the University of Nevada, Reno Library is scanning and putting online full-text of Nevada agricultural publications, beginning with the Bulletin of the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station, 1888-1963. To make both older and more contemporary Extension publications available, the University of
Tennessee Libraries have worked closely together and there is now an on-going depository program for current Extension publications.

At their request, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System’s videotape collection was moved to the Auburn University Library and new materials continue to be added. Extension photograph collections also are being made available through the Library’s website. In addition, Extension prepares indexing records and full-text html and PDF files of Extension publications which are then added to the Library’s online catalog. Likewise, the University of Florida Libraries’ online catalog provides links to all the University of Florida’s Institute for Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS) current electronic publications and also acts as an archive for older Cooperative Extension publications. The Libraries also create MARC records for online Extension publications. At the University of Minnesota, the Libraries also create catalog records for Extension publications and load the records into the OCLC database which are scanned by the National Agricultural Library for inclusion in the AGRICOLA database.

Future Plans

Institutional Repositories/Digital Archive of Extension Materials

Many university libraries and Extension services are exploring ways to make Extension materials more readily available. For example, the Dean of Libraries and the Director of Extension at Colorado State University are interested in working together on the eXtension initiative and in delivery of more Extension information through the web in general. At Oklahoma State University, the Library and Cooperative Extension are planning to collaborate when development of an institutional repository begins in earnest. The University of Connecticut Library is also working on a plan to help with the digital publication of selected Extension materials, and discussions are taking place between the Libraries and Cooperative Extension at the University of Minnesota for organizing and hosting a full-text database of the state’s Extension publications.

At Oregon State University, the Libraries have worked with Cooperative Extension on several proposals including one to digitize and make available water-related information, and the University of California, Berkeley Library is planning to catalog and provide access to the electronic publications produced by the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The University of Tennessee Libraries are hoping to include Extension publications in the Digital Library Center as it is further developed in the future, and Texas A & M Libraries are expecting to become an archive for Texas Cooperative Extension electronic publications. Looking at how to better manage research information produced by the University in general, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln Libraries are planning to implement an institutional repository system in the future.

Other Plans (remote access, etc.)

This category contains the plans that do not quite fit anywhere else. These are mostly future plans that are going to be dependent on funding. Examples include The Institute of American Indian Arts hopes to extend library services from a distance. Oregon State University hopes to fund a book mobile type idea that would provide access to technology
instead of books in rural areas. The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities plans on using teleconferencing or the Internet for instruction sessions. The University of New Hampshire would like to get direct links to library resources for Extension staff in the field. Washington State University has discussed the possibility of librarians assisting with answering information requests that come into Extension agents to free-up the agents to answer the questions that need their expert assistance and have the libraries partner with Extension to create databases that are of particular interest to consumers.
### Appendix A – Institutional Responses by Unit

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Appendix B

Institutions by Type of Involvement including examples

Collaborations

AgNIC (Agriculture Network Information Center)
- AgNIC (http://www.agnic.org,) is a voluntary alliance of the National Agricultural Library (NAL), land-grant universities and other agricultural organizations, in cooperation with citizen groups and government agencies. AgNIC focuses on providing agricultural information in electronic format over the World Wide Web via the Internet. There are currently over 35 partners.

Michigan State University
New Mexico State University
North Dakota State University
Pennsylvania State University
University of Arizona
University of Hawaii
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
University of Nevada, Reno

Preservation and Archives
- Expanding archives of historical documents related to agriculture
- Scanning/digitizing Extension and historical publications
- Participation in the National Preservation Program for Agricultural Literature
- Archiving Extension publications

Cornell University
Colorado State University
Michigan State University
New Mexico State University
University of Arizona
University of Florida
University of Nevada, Reno
University of Tennessee

Joint Meetings/Representatives
- Libraries providing content management guidance to Extension web development teams
- Assigning a library liaison to work with Extension and an Extension liaison to work with libraries
- Holding joint meetings between libraries and Extension

Cornell University
Michigan State University
North Carolina State University
Ohio State University
University of Florida
University of Tennessee
Information Sharing and Joint Marketing
- Libraries contributing to Extension newsletters and Extension contributing to library newsletters
- Extension and libraries working jointly to promote research, teaching, and outreach
Colorado State University
Cornell University
Louisiana State University
Michigan State University
North Carolina State
Texas Cooperative Extension
University of Nevada, Reno
University of Tennessee

Collaborative Information Technology Training
- Experiment station personnel and librarians providing joint training
- Libraries and Cooperative Extension working together to provide computer training
Lincoln University, Jefferson City
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Distance Learning Programs
- Libraries participating in preparing distance learning courses and degree programs for agriculture teachers and Extension agents
- Librarians providing distance learners with subject guides, email reference, and reference chat
University of Florida
University of Tennessee

County Public Library-Extension Programs
- Community libraries working with Cooperative Extension to provide access to Extension publications
- Delivering Extension programming in library facilities
University of Florida
University of Minnesota
University of Nevada, Reno

Collection Development (funding support)
- Libraries providing funding for acquisition of selected periodicals for Extension personnel
South Carolina State University

Library Services

Library Services to Remote Locations
- Libraries providing online and in-person training sessions, access to databases, inter-library loan privileges, reference and document delivery services to Extension personnel located throughout the state
Library Orientation and Training/ Site Visits
- On-site training sessions offered in Extension offices and at other sites in the state
- General and specific workshops offered at In-service programs
- New Extension staff orientations

Reference Assistance (Selected)
- Libraries providing reference assistance in-person, phone, email, or live chat
University of Kentucky Libraries
University of Missouri, Columbia, Library
University of Tennessee Libraries

Information Technology Assistance
- Libraries assisting Extension with web site redesign and providing IT support
- Libraries hosting Extension web sites
- Note: The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources/Cooperative Extension at MSU provides IT assistance to the Libraries as part of library-Extension cooperative programs
Cornell University
Michigan State University
University of Connecticut
University of Florida
University of Kentucky
University of Missouri, Columbia
University of Nevada, Reno

Library Maintains Extension Collection
- Libraries providing access to Extension publications and developing repositories for Extension publications in electronic format
- Libraries scanning and putting online full-text of agricultural publications
- Extension preparing indexing records and full-text html and PDF files of Extension publications which are added to library online catalogs
Auburn University
Colorado State University
New Mexico State University
University of Florida
University of Minnesota
University of Nevada, Reno
University of Tennessee

Future Plans

Institutional Repositories/Digital Archive of Extension Materials
- Making more Extension information available through the web
- Extension and libraries working together to build institutional repositories
- Digital publication of Extension materials
Colorado State University
Oklahoma State University
Oregon State University
Texas A & M University
University of California, Berkeley
University of Connecticut
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
University of Tennessee
Other Plans (remote access, etc.)

- Development of a technology-mobile similar to a book-mobile
- Use of teleconferencing for instruction sessions

Institute of American Indian Arts
New Mexico State University
Oregon State University
University of California, Berkeley
University of Minnesota
University of New Hampshire
Washington State University
Appendix C – Copy of a Survey Letter

Dear Library and Extension Directors,

As some of you may remember, a preliminary survey of library and extension collaborations was sent out last spring to ARL library deans and directors. The summary results of that first round provided some very interesting examples of trends in this area and, also, presented some useful models for building these types of collaborations. If you would like a copy of that initial report, please let us know.

This round, the survey is being sent out to all land-grant universities, and both library and extension directors are being asked for their help. The final result will be a compilation of all responses into a report which we will make available to you by next spring. In addition, we plan to present an overview of the results at various meetings.

Below is the brief questionnaire. We would appreciate receiving your response by November 15, 2004.

Thank you,

Carla Stoffle, Dean of Libraries and Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona

Jim Christenson, Associate Dean and Director of Cooperative Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Arizona

Library-Extension Collaboration Questionnaire

1. Are there any collaborations right now or planned for the future between the library and extension? What's the nature of the collaboration?

2. Have there been efforts or interest expressed on your campus regarding these types of collaborations? If so, please describe them.