



UNITED STATES AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION NETWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2020

This is a report of USAID member activities for the year 2020 highlighting accomplishments between June 1, 2019 – May 31, 2020. The year 2020 was highly unusual in that USAID members and their institutions nationwide pivoted all their services and operations to online beginning in March 2020. Members and their host institutions worked remotely from their office environments, during a large part of the reporting period, as a precaution against the COVID-19 pandemic that remained uncontrolled until the logistics of the vaccine administration were initiated in early 2021.

Member activities are highlighted under the USAID Action Plan Goals below. USAID members should be commended for continuing to attend to USAID business in spite of the disruptions caused by the health pandemic. USAID Executive Council members made adjustments to the *USAID Calendar of Events*, especially those that were most impacted by the travel restrictions and lockdowns associated with the pandemic. For example, a decision was made to host the USAID 2020 Virtual Conference, July 20-24, 2020 in place of the in-person conference program originally planned April 26-30, 2020 with Texas Tech University and Libraries as the host. Revised priorities in USAID activities and events continue to be made as the USAID members and their host institutions slowly return to normal operations.

Goal 1. Strengthen membership and increase participation in USAIN by members and other food and agricultural information professional.

a) During this period, the number of USAIN members was 245, up from 150 during the 2018/2019 period. The increase is a result of the dedicated work of the **Membership Committee** that is co-chaired by Stephanie Ritchie and Amy Shannon who oversaw the membership recruitment, retention, and renewal. Their recruitment strategies included re-engaging lapsed members, promoting USAIN to library schools with STEM programs, and implementing some outreach to 1890's Land Grant institutions and Tribal Colleges. They also employed strategies for welcoming and retaining members.

The Committee oversees the membership records management. They updated the calendar of recurring membership-related activities and compiled quarterly reports of membership rosters which were distributed to the USAIN Executive and others upon request for use in membership surveys or for use during the Executive Council elections. In July, prior to the USAIN conference registration, the Committee sent reminders for members to update their Interest Groups, Committee memberships and membership profiles.

The Committee began to compile a list of smaller, non-land grant and private institutions with agricultural degrees as targets for future recruitment outreach and marketing. In light of the transition of the USAIN 2020 Conference to online, the Committee is discussing alternative strategies for welcoming new members and first-time conference attendees.

b) In February 2019, the USAIN Executive conducted the **2020 Membership Survey**. This survey focused on the status of the digitization of historic and state agricultural collections as one way of promoting open access to scientific information and as a contribution to a more sustainable scholarly communication system. The survey also studied the professional engagement and activities of members beyond USAIN. Further, the survey sought information on the additional roles and functions that make up the duties of agriculture librarians.

c) The USAIN Executive Council decided to change the status of the **Website Committee** from a Special Projects Committee to a standing committee with a revised charge that focuses on performing quality reviews of the USAIN website's

information and functionality in support of committee and Interest Group(IG) member activities. A committee co-chair (Jessica Page) played an active role in the planning of the USAIN 2020 Virtual Conference that included developing the conference event and web pages and overseeing the conference registration. Ongoing activities performed by the Website Committee include working closely with the Executive Council, Communications, and Membership Committees to facilitate membership renewals and financial transactions.

d) Co-chaired by Dana Ingalls and Becky Miller, the **Professional Development Committee** prioritized several projects and created project teams from the eleven members serving on this committee. The Research Fellows Award project team oversaw the review process for the 2020 Research Fellows Award. After revising the timeline, application, and evaluation rubric, the committee made a call for applications to the membership and beyond. The team evaluated the applications and made their recommendations to the USAIN Executive Council in April 2020. Two winners, Hillary Fox and Tisha Mentnech were awarded the USAIN 2020 Research Fellows Award.

The Professional Development Committee co-sponsored (with the AgNIC Systematic Reviews Working Group) a webinar on Ceres2030 in September 2019. The Committee also sponsored another webinar, “Inner and Outer Resilience: Librarians as Agents of Change” on December 5, 2019. The webinar project team planned to host a webinar on systematic reviews. The communication/website project team from this Committee is working with the USAIN Website Committee on some updates to the USAIN website.

e) The **Communications Committee** was co-chaired by Patricia Hartman and Kristen Cooper. The committee facilitates communication in USAIN and with external audiences. This year the Committee focused on improving outreach within USAIN. Working with the administrator of the USAIN listserve, the committee identified members who had not yet joined the list encouraging them to subscribe. The committee worked with all USAIN members encouraging them to update their member profiles. The committee requested the inclusion of two questions on the annual membership survey. Responses to the survey showed an interest in reading a quarterly USAIN newsletter. Further, respondents expressed interest in hearing about special project updates, USAIN member accomplishments and updates from the National Agricultural Library.

f) The **Oral History Special Project Committee** was formed in 2019 at the request of USAIN Past-President Kristen Mastel and USAIN President, Claudine Jenda, in honor of the 30th anniversary of USAIN. The charge was to develop a strategy and process for soliciting, conducting, and archiving oral histories from current and past USAIN members.

Project committee members made up of David Kruger, Noel Kopriva, and Suzanne Stapleton (Chair), started planning this project in the Summer 2019. The committee expanded to eight members by August 2019. Based on existing oral history collections and guidelines, the committee developed procedures for the project including interview questions, permission agreements, copy transcription services, transcript approval forms, transcription templates, narrators/interviewees, and interviewers. Suzanne and David provided interviewing training sessions for committee members.

Eight interviews were conducted and completed as follows:

Leslie Delserone (Narrator) / Suzanne Stapleton (Interviewer)
Eileen Herring (Narrator) / Leyla Cabugos (Interviewer)
Amy Paster (Narrator) / Leslie Delserone (Interviewer)
Netta Cox (Narrator) / Suzanne Stapleton (Interviewer)
Nancy Eaton (Narrator) / Suzanne Stapleton (Interviewer)
Julie Kelly (Narrator) / Leslie Delserone (Interviewer)
Andrea Powell (Narrator) / Anne Hedrich (Interviewer)
Mary Ochs (Narrator) / Suzanne Stapleton (Interviewer)

Stephanie Ritchie created a webpage for the Oral History Special Project as a USAIN Initiative at <https://usain.org/oralhistory>

Completed transcripts and associated documents are posted at the Cornell e-Commons at <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/70485>

The committee recommends that additional interviews be conducted to continue to capture USAIN's history as reflected in the experiences of its members and affiliates. The committee has started to plan a list of recommended "phase II" narrators when the project resumes.

g) Co-chaired by Emily Lin and Michael Esman, the **Preservation and Digital Library (PDL) Committee** identified three areas of focus this year: facilitating HathiTrust release of agricultural publications, overseeing the management of digital assets from Project Ceres work, and developing a comprehensive inventory of the status of USAIN digital and preservation projects.

To share experiences and facilitate HathiTrust release of agricultural publications, the PDL committee co-sponsored with AgNIC a webinar *Making the Case for Open Agriculture in HathiTrust*, July 10, 2019 with Michael Cook (Cornell University), Emily Lin (University of California, Merced), Dr. Robert McGeachin (Texas A&M), Suzi Teghtmeyer (Michigan State University as panelists.

Working on Project Ceres, the subcommittee completed the review and selection of projects for the year and has notified Amy Wood of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). The selected projects are:

- Auburn University - Expanding Access to Alabama's Grey Literature - Tier 1 - \$2,875
- North Carolina State University - Digitization of Publications of the North Carolina Agricultural Research Service and the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences - Tier 2 - \$11,294
- Virginia Tech University - Inventory and Digitizing of "Annual narrative & statistical reports from state offices and county agents. Virginia, 1908-196u." (Annual Narrative Reports) - \$12,000
- Washington State University - Digitizing the Washington State College Historic Extension Publications - Tier 2 - \$11,173

The PDL Committee has also started to plan and set up procedures for collecting, ingestion, and archiving of past Project Ceres for possible deposit in Cornell e-Commons repository.

The PDL committee co-chairs Emily Lin and Michael Esman met with the USAIN Executive Council in September 2019 to present an overview of the status of the digitization and preservation of agricultural publications including NEH-funded and Project CERES projects. In discussions with the Executive, the committee sought strategies for proactively encouraging state/land grant libraries to digitize agricultural publications from their states.

Following these discussions, the PDL submitted questions to be included in the 2019 USAIN Membership Survey regarding 1) institutional capacity for

digitization, 2) existence of a state bibliography or inventory of agricultural publications, and 3) institutional priorities and needs.

Responses to this survey were discussed during a PDL Panel Discussion at the USAIN 2020 Virtual Conference. The survey revealed USAIN libraries, with the expertise and technological infrastructure and other needed resources to support digitization, that are open to assisting those libraries who want their state agricultural publications digitized but lack the resources to undertake a digitization project. (See Appendix 1). With this strategy, there is the hope that all agriculture libraries in USAIN could conceivably get their collections digitized.

h) The **USAIN Honors and Awards Committee** was chaired by Jessica Page who in turn worked with four committee members. This committee is active during conference years and is responsible for managing all special recognition programs that include the conference scholarships, honorary membership, service to the profession award, and new this year, the Scholarship for USAIN Conference by Librarians Representing HBCUs.

The committee developed the description of the awards and the respective criteria, then posted announcements to USAIN-L and professional listserves that included 50 accredited Library and Information Science (LIS) programs, and to library deans of 1890 Land Grant Universities with agriculture programs.

Following a careful review of applications, the following individuals were selected:

Student Conference Scholarship

Laura Rey (Texas A&M University)

New to the Profession Conference Scholarship

Hillary Fox (North Carolina State University) and
Jennifer Kirk (Utah State University)

Scholarship for USAIN Conference for Librarians Representing HBCUs

Kimberly Gay (Prairie View A&M University (part of TAMU))

Honorary Membership Award

No nominations

Service to the Profession Award

Jeanne Pfander (University of Arizona)

Special Achievement Award
Mary Ochs (Cornell University)

- i) Conference Related Programs:** USAIN members belonging to various committees and IG's were actively engaged this year in sponsoring and hosting programs at the USAIN 2020 Virtual Conference.

Co-convened by Marianne S. Bracke and Melanie Gardner, the Rural and Social Issues Interest Group responded to a call to sponsor a speaker at the USAIN 2020 Conference. They invited Dr. Oak Park of Texas Tech University who agreed to speak about current research on food deserts and nutrition in rural communities.

Co-convenors of the Collection Management Interest Group, Emily MacKenzie and Jodee Kuden sponsored a panel presentation on collection analysis projects with Stephanie Mary Ritchie and Gwen Short as panelists. This was a topic of great interest to USAIN members as revealed by a poll that the co-chairs conducted.

Co-convenors of the Technology Trends Interest Group, Luti Salisbury and Mylene Pinard, sponsored a conference program that highlighted three lightning talks on technology-related topics.

Goal 2: Advocate for public policy, legislation, and institutions which support agricultural research and information communities.

The USAIN Executive Council continued to attend joint meetings and virtual conference/calls involving the leadership of the National Agricultural Library (Scott Hansom, Jill James, Paul Wester) and USAIN (Kristen Mastel, Claudine Jenda, Jessica Page and Megan Kocher) and AgNIC (Necia Parker-Gibson, Carolyn Jackson, and Stephanie Ritchie).

These meetings culminate in a joint NAL-USAIN-AgNIC meeting that is held annually. Because of the pandemic, a virtual NAL-USAIN-AgNIC joint meeting was held on November 30, 2020 instead where the three organizations shared their priorities, accomplishments, and updates on works in progress, in a continued effort at identifying areas of cooperation and collaboration.

Goal 3: Provide educational and professional development opportunities for members and others

The main training event for USAIN members this year was the USAIN 2020 Virtual Conference, hosted by Texas Tech University and Libraries from July 20-24, 2020 with the theme ‘Smart Agriculture in the Era of Climate Change.’ Planning for the in-person conference that was co-chaired by Jack Becker and Innocent Awasom with local arrangements chair Len Markham, started in 2018 after Texas Tech was selected as the conference host. When faced with the pandemic in March 2020, planning for the virtual conference commenced co-chaired by Jessica Page and Kristen Mastel. The conference was attended by 124 participants. It featured a variety of programs such as keynote and featured speakers, contributed research papers, panel presentations, posters, and a pre/post conference program on systematic reviews. For social events, the conference scheduled in virtual break sessions for informal networking as well as a virtual tour of Frog Pond Farm with Llamas and other farm animals.

For a related training opportunity under AgNIC and the USAIN’s Legislative and Government Relations Committee, USAIN members had the opportunity of attending a virtual workshop “Big Data Promises and Obstacles: Agricultural Data Ownership and Privacy” on June 24, 2020.

For the year, the Legislative and Government Relations Committee co-chaired by Leslie Delserone and Florian Diekmann focused on planning a panel discussion regarding agricultural data privacy and farmers’ rights. The idea of the collection and use of agricultural data generated by agricultural producers was initially proposed by Danielle Walker (Purdue University). A presentation on a similar topic was also in the planning stages by Cyndy Parr (National Agricultural Library) and the MidWest Big Data Hub. These approaches evolved into a day-long, invitation only virtual workshop that was held on June 24, 2020.

Organizational Business

The USAIN Executive Council and the Budget Committee, chaired by USAIN Treasurer Valrie Minson made the following business decisions:

- Survey Monkey – The USAIN Treasurer will explore survey tool options. Currently USAIN utilizes Survey Monkey, but at \$350/year it might be advantageous to look at other tools and pricing, for example Qualtrics.
- Wild Apricot - USAIN has switched the payment system over to Wild Apricot payments resulting in higher website charges (budget line 534), but less merchant/Paypal fees (budget line 567).
- USAIN 2019 Budget - The budget was updated for the 2019 year. There was a budget surplus of \$2,232.01 in 2019. A surplus is expected in a conference year, but it is noteworthy that this is at least the fourth consecutive year in which USAIN has made a profit. The 2019 budget experienced lower expenses than projected. This is in part because USAIN has changed business managers and credit card payment processors, resulting in lower fees for both as well as reducing or eliminating the cost of office supplies.
- USAIN 2020 Budget -The committee added an extra budget line item (571) for an HBCU/Underrepresented Scholarship at \$2000. The committee continued funding for the research grant pilot at \$2000 and the Project CERES cost share pilot at \$5000. The Preservation and Digital Library project funding (\$1000) was considered a 2019 one-time expense.

Additional adjustments, after the September meeting: The President's Contingency Fund was increased by \$2,000 to accommodate the cost associated with the oral history project. In future years, the Executive Council should discuss increasing from \$350 to \$400 the fund (536) utilized for the Survey Subscription due to increased costs if alternative software is not identified.

- Banking - Based on previous year's Budget Committee recommendations, all Huntington Bank accounts were closed and the CD/Money Market accounts transferred over to TIAA Business Banking.

USAIN Executive Council, 2019-2020

President, Claudine Jenda (2019-2020)

President-Elect, Jessica Page (2019-2022)

Past-President, Kristen Mastel (2019-2020)

Treasurer, Valrie Minson (2019-2021)

Secretary, Cristina Caminita (2019-2020)

Director, Megan Kocher (2019-2021)

Director, Stephanie Ritchie (2019-2021)

Director, Suzanne Stapleton (2019-2021)

Appendix 1. Inventory of Agricultural Publications Preservation, Microfilming, and Digitization in USAIN Libraries

State	Institution	NEH Participation	Bibliography in eCommons	CERES funding
Alabama	Auburn University Libraries	Phase 1	Y	2013
Arizona	U. of Arizona – has digitized over 900 titles	Phase 2 and 6	Y	
Arkansas	U. of Arkansas	Phase 2 and 3	N	2015, 2016, 2018, 2019
California	U. of California - digitized all state level serials	Phase 1 and 2	N	
Colorado	Colorado State University	Phase 5 and 6	Y	2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
Connecticut	U. of Connecticut	Phase 1	N	
Florida	U. of Florida	Phase 1 and 2	Y	2014, 2015, 2017
Georgia	U. of Georgia	Phase 4	N	
Hawaii	U. of Hawaii at Manoa - has done everything they had	Phase 2	Y	
Illinois	U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Phase 4	Y	
Iowa	Iowa State University	Phase 2 and 3	Y	2015

Kansas	Kansas State University	Phase 3	Y	2013, 2014, 2015
Kentucky	U. of Kentucky	Phase 6 Bib only	N	
Maryland	U. of Maryland	Phase 5 and 6	Y	2019
Michigan	Michigan State University	Phase 3 and 4	N	2013, 2016, 2019
Minnesota	U. of Minnesota	Phase 2 and 3	N	2013, 2014, 2015
Montana	Montana State University	Phase 2	N	2019
Nebraska	U. of Nebraska at Lincoln	Phase 1 and 2	Y	2013, 2019
New Mexico	New Mexico State University	Phase 3	N	2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
New York	Cornell University	Phase 1	N	2018, 2019
North Carolina	North Carolina State University	Phase 3 and 4	Y	2017
North Dakota	North Dakota State University	Phase 3	N	2013
Ohio	Ohio State University	Phase 4	Y	2013
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University	Phase 5	Y	
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania State University	Phase 1	Y	
South Dakota	South Dakota State University	Phase 6 bib only	Y	2016, 2019
Texas	Texas A&M University	Phase 1 and 2	Y	
Washington	U. of Washington and Washington State	Phase 5	Y	2013, 2014
Wisconsin	U. of Wisconsin-Madison	Phase 1	N	2013

Non-NEH Participants in Project CERES (Tier 1?)

State	Institution	CERES funding
Idaho	University of Idaho	2013
Indiana	Purdue University	2013, 2014
Louisiana	Louisiana State University	2014
Mississippi	Mississippi State University	2013
Missouri	University of Missouri-Columbia	2013, 2015
Tennessee	University of Tennessee	2017, 2018
West Virginia	West Virginia University	2014
Wyoming	University of Wyoming	2014
INTERNATIONAL	Dalhousie University, Canada	2013

States without participation

State	USAIN Member	AgNIC Member
Alaska		
Delaware		
Maine	University of Maine	
Massachusetts		
Nevada		
New Hampshire		
New Jersey		
Oregon		
Rhode Island		
South Carolina		
Utah		
Vermont		University of Vermont
Virginia		

Respectively submitted, May 27, 2021

Claudine Jenda

USAID Past-President, 2019-2020