

About NACS

The National Agricultural Communications Symposium (NACS) is made up of university instructors and professional (primarily land-grant) agricultural communicators. The group meets in conjunction with the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) to present and hear research focused on issues related to agricultural and applied communication research, strategies, and practice. Targeting scholars and practitioners alike, the intent is to ensure that current scholarly work and practical field experience and expertise are strategically and purposefully bridged, challenging the field to address the most pressing needs of agricultural, the industry, and the consumers.

2019-2020 National Agricultural Communications Symposium (NACS) Officers

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

A Letter From Our

President

NACS is an annual conference planned and hosted by agricultural communications faculty, graduate students, and professionals from across the United States. Each year, we gather to discuss emerging issues in our field, learn about new teaching, research, and outreach techniques and technologies, and spend quality time with colleagues from around the nation.

While we're disappointed not to be able to share our research, network, and enjoy some Texas hospitality in person, we are excited to do all those things online. By registering for the symposium, you'll get to hear from some of the brightest minds in the agricultural communications field in our paper and poster sessions, chart a course forward in our business meeting, and hang out with your NACS compatriots during our informal hangout hours.

We're so glad y'all joined us, and we look forward to a productive (and fun!) NACS event!

Annie Specht

Associate Professor, The Ohio State University
2020-2021 NACS President

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday, February 2nd

1:00 p.m. 1:30 p.m.

Exploring the Communication Needs of Letcher County, Kentucky – Laura M. Fischer, Dan O'Hair, Madison Wallace, Xianlin Jin, & Jason Unrine – University of Kentucky

Informing a College of Agricultural and Environmental Science's Communication Efforts by Examining Research Collaborations – Kristin E. Gibson, Allison R. Fortner, Alexa J. Lamm, Allen J. Moore, & Madison C. Wilson – University of Georgia

Using Theory of Planned Behavior to Effectively Communicate with the Public about Water Resource Protection Behaviors – Kristin E. Gibson, Alexa J. Lamm, Kyle M. Woosnam, & D. Barry Croom – University of Georgia

Arguing For Argument's Sake? Exploring Public Conversations Around Climate Change on Twitter – Kennedy Mayfield-Smith, Alexa J. Lamm, Fallys Masambuka-Kanchewa, Abigail Borron, & Jessica Holt – University of Georgia

Question & Answer Session (15 minutes)

Break (15 minutes)

Poster Sessions

Hangout Session - *Snacks with NACS hosted by NACS Officers*

2:30 p.m. 2:45 p.m. 3:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.

Welcome, Introduction & Updates
Meeting link will be distributed before event.

Paper Session I, *Communicating Science and Natural Resources (9 minute presentations)*

Does Religiosity Take Precedence Over Sound Science? American Public Information Seeking Behaviors During the Coronavirus Pandemic – Fallys Masambuka-Kanchewa & Alexa J. Lamm – University of Georgia

Building Capacity for Citizen Science Communication of Water Quality Risks:

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Wednesday, February 3rd

1:00 p.m.

Is it Worth the RISP? Predicting COVID-19 Risk Information-Seeking Behaviors in Relation to Food Purchasing Concerns – Taylor K. Ruth, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Quisto Settle, Oklahoma State University; Joy N. Rumble, The Ohio State University

Visual Appeal: The Role of Visual Elements of Facebook Posts on Consumer Engagement and Willingness to Purchase – Lauri M. Baker, Anissa Zagonel, Olivia Doyle, Alena Poulin, University of Florida; Deanna Sumners, Virginia Tech; Cheryl R. Boyer, Kansas State University; & Hikaru H. Peterson, University of Minnesota

Assessment of Social Media Technical Support Efforts for Extension Educators – Mary A. Stokes, Shannon K. Allen, Carley C. Morrison, Marina D. Denny, & Mariah S. Morgan – Mississippi State University

Mobile Podcast Production: Two Examples of Educating and Engaging through Online Audio in Agriculture and Natural Resources (Professional Paper) – Jacqueline Aenlle, Whitney Stone, Peyton Beattie, & Jamie Loizzo – University of Florida

Question & Answer Session (15 minutes)

2:00 p.m. 2:10 p.m. 2:15 p.m. 3:00 p.m.

Break (5 minutes)

Paper Session II, *Consumers and the Media (9 minute presentations)* **Meeting link will be distributed before event.**

Business Meeting

Cell-Cultured and Alternative Meat: Monitoring Emerging Food Trends – Annie R. Specht, Abigail Sanders, Joy N. Rumble, & Emily B. Buck – The Ohio State University

Hangout Session - Ask Anything hosted by Lisa Lundy, Ricky Telg, & Taylor Ruth

Spreading Information Instead of COVID-19: Examining Public Communication Networks in the Early Stages of a Zoonotic Disease Pandemic – Lauri M. Baker, Shelli D. Rampold, Ashley McLeod-Morin, Angela B. Lindsey, Ricky W.

Graduate Student Hangout Session - Hosted by Jacqueline Aenlle

Paper Abstracts

Paper Session I: Communicating Science and Natural Resources

Does Religiosity Take Precedence Over Sound Science? American Public Information Seeking Behaviors During the Coronavirus Pandemic - Fallys Masambuka-Kanchewa, Alexa J. Lamm

The declaration of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, led to the development and delivery of a myriad public health messages aimed at minimizing the spread and impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, the uncertainty and threat posed by the virus led to increased religious activities such as prayer as individuals who believe in God and consider themselves as religious sought solace and guidance from God. Despite absence of concrete scientific information regarding the nature or spread of the virus, several messages have been delivered to the public using various channels and from various sources. However, the increased availability of information about the pandemic raises questions regarding the public's choice of online information sources during a pandemic and how they establish the credibility of such information. Using quantitative research methods, a convenience sample was collected through an online questionnaire that was administered to 1048 U.S. residents through Qualtrics panels while most states were under the shelter-in-place orders (May 2020). A researcher developed instrument using existing scales that were modified was used for data collection. The results indicated Facebook as the most used social media platform for accessing information about the COVID-19 pandemic. On average the respondents reported checking for credibility of the information they obtained. However, a relationship was observed between religiosity and checking credibility of the information from religious leaders and members of religious community over scientific sources.

Building Capacity for Citizen Science Communication of Water Quality Risks: Exploring the Communication Needs of Letcher County, Kentucky - Laura M. Fischer, Dan O'Hair, Madison Wallace, Xianlin Jin, Jason Unrine

For citizens living in remote, mountainous regions, access to clean drinking water is not a guarantee; rather, life entails an influx of boil water advisories and rising health concerns due to aging drinking water infrastructure and a historical reliance on mining and agricultural industries. Citizens situated along the Eastern Coal Field region of Kentucky, currently receive risk information regarding water quality through a self-selected system; however, disparities in scientific literacy and communication channels among citizens may cause information to be inaccessible and inhibit the at-risk population from making informed, health protective decisions. Twenty-four one-on-one interviews were conducted with community stakeholders to gage perceptions, attitudes, and preferred communication techniques regarding water quality information. The interviewer, a community member themselves, engaged in semi-structured interviews with participants gathered through snowball sampling. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Open and axial coding was utilized to conduct a constant comparative analysis of the data for emergent themes. The researchers found that community members prefer water quality messages that provide straight-to-the-point information with visuals such as charts or maps included; inform the public of severity and exposure to any health risk; and tell people what to do when exposed to the risk.

Paper Abstracts

Informing a College of Agricultural and Environmental Science's Communication Efforts by Examining Research Collaborations - Kristin E. Gibson, Allison R. Fortner, Alexa J. Lamm, Allen J. Moore, Madison C. Wilson

Agriculturalists and environmentalists must navigate numerous complex challenges as the global population continues to increase and environmental resources are depleted. Unfortunately, the surface level polarization between environmentalists and agriculturalists causes the two groups to be at odds with one another in the public eye when, in reality, the groups share many common values that benefit both groups. The purpose of this study was to identify research within a college of agricultural and environmental sciences taking a holistic approach so that communication efforts coming from the college can encompass both perspectives. The following research objective guided the study: Conduct a meta-synthesis of college of agricultural and environmental sciences publications at a land-grant university to determine where environmentally-focused and agriculturally-focused research overlaps. The meta-synthesis revealed 212 codes overlapping agricultural and environmental themes as compared to the 4,235 total number of codes found in the initial thematic analysis. The most overlap occurred in the nexus between environmental themes and society's role in agricultural and environmental sciences. There were also 85 overlapping codes in the advances in plant sciences theme. Environmental overlap within advances in animal science and advances in food science and safety were minimal.

Using Theory of Planned Behavior to Effectively Communicate with the Public about Water Resource Protection Behaviors – Kristin E. Gibson, Alexa J. Lamm, Kyle M. Woosnam, & D. Barry Croom – University of Georgia

Freshwater resources are being rapidly depleted by unsustainable human activities in many regions of the world, including the United States, causing concern for water security. Information-only water conservation campaigns have resulted in minimal environmental behavior changes. If individuals were targeted with appropriate information, public engagement in water conservation may increase. Political affiliation and ideology may play a role in grouping individuals based on their engagement in water conservation as individuals who are politically conservative or belong to the Republican Party are not as concerned about the environment as individuals who are politically liberal or belong to the Democratic Party. The purpose of the study was to determine if political affiliation and ideology moderated TPB variables related to water conservation. The survey included demographic, semantic differential (attitude), multiple-choice (political affiliation), and Likert-type questions (political ideology, PBC, SN, intent to engage). Non-probability opt-in sampling techniques were used to acquire respondents via Qualtrics and weighted accordingly. Data were collected from 1,049 U.S. residents. The results from a multiple linear regression model revealed attitude, SNs, PBC, political ideology, and political affiliation significantly predicted a respondents' intent to engage in water conservation. Attitude, SNs, PBC, and a very liberal political ideology significantly predicted a positive relationship with intent to engage in water conservation.

Paper Abstracts

Arguing for Argument's Sake? Exploring Public Conversations Around Climate Change on Twitter - Kennedy Mayfield-Smith, Alexa J. Lamm, Fallys Masambuka-Kanchewa, Abigail Borron, Jessica Holt

Mobile device advancements and partnerships have changed how audiences view news media and the sources we rely upon to obtain information. Twitter specifically has become a news media platform for some based on its effectiveness in facilitating information flow and triggering reorganization as it provides a platform for collaboration and coordination. Despite widespread acceptance of the threat climate change poses by the scientific community, it is still a topic of

contention on social media. Climate conversations are typically approached with an “us versus them” mindset with “us” being used as representation of the communities to which audiences belong. Argument schemes represent common arguments and special context arguments, in this case scientific argumentation. Walton’s argument from ignorance was used as a framework for the study. The argument states that if there has been a thorough search through the knowledge base then concrete proof of a fact would exist. For the current study, a qualitative content analysis of Twitter posts utilizing a search of the keywords “climate change” was completed from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019 on the social media analysis software Meltwater. Ten tweets from Twitter accounts with high reach and greater than or equal to 10 replies were selected for analysis. Results indicated social events, political events and scientific discoveries were the main triggers for climate conversations on Twitter. While the primary tweets were typically positive, public comments were most often negative with arguments seen in regard to climate change mitigation and the political influence of environmental policies currently represented in media.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Paper Abstracts

Paper Session II: Consumers and the Media

Cell-Cultured and Alternative Meat: Monitoring Emerging Food Trends - Annie R. Specht, Abigail Sanders, Joy N. Rumble, Emily B. Buck

Cell-cultured meat and plant-based meat alternatives (PBMA) are increasingly seen as nutritional substitutes for vegetarians, vegans, and omnivores alike. PBMA have been part of the human diet for centuries, but cell-cultured meat is an emerging technology that could impact the livestock industry when it reaches consumers. To investigate consumer perceptions of cell-cultured and alternative meat, the research team used Meltwater Explore to aggregate and analyze online

conversations around this topic. We used a conceptual framework of the issues life cycle and framing theory to compare conversation themes around cell-cultured meat and PBMAAs and to create a timeline of media exposure to identify potential triggering events that spurred those conversations. Themes for PBMAAs clustered around sustainability and human health, while themes varied widely for cell-cultured meat, indicating that cell-cultured meat is less cemented in the public consciousness. PBMAAs generated more media exposure than cell-cultured meat, with conversation triggered by product innovations, economic updates, and business partnerships, while the cell-cultured meat conversation was largely triggered by reports of potential impacts, controversy, and conspiracy theories. We identified PBMAAs as a dormant issue and cell-cultured meat as a potential or emerging issue.

Spreading Information Instead of COVID-19: Examining Public Communication Networks in the Early Stages of a Zoonotic Disease Pandemic - Lauri M. Baker, Shelli D. Rampold, Ashley McLeod-Morin, Angela Lindsey, Ricky W. Telg, Meredith Oglesby

Zoonotic disease outbreaks have been on the rise in recent years with the COVID-19 pandemic being the worst in recent history. The spread of both accurate and inaccurate information happened quickly in the early stages of the disease, and understanding how this occurred is important to prepare for communication of future zoonotic disease outbreaks. The purpose of this study was to understand the American public's information seeking and sharing behaviors during the early stages of the COVID-19 global pandemic and was guided by the following research objectives: (1) identify passive sources/ channels of information; (2) identify active sources/channels of information; and (3) describe how frequently and across which channels/sources the U.S. public shared information about COVID-19 in the early stages of the pandemic. Results indicated people first found information about COVID-19 from personal communication, but turned to national and international organizations if they were to actively seek information. Scientists and universities were some of the least sought after and shared sources of information. The sources shared most were from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Implications from this research are a need for communicators to use grassroots communication efforts during a crisis, to actively share information early during a crisis, and collaboration between passive and active sources of information.

Paper Abstracts

Is it Worth the RISP? Predicting COVID-19 Risk Information-Seeking Behaviors in Relation to Food Purchasing Concerns - Taylor K. Ruth, Quisto Settle, Joy N. Rumble

COVID-19 has drastically altered the way consumers shop for food as they adhere to recommendations for social distancing. However, as social distancing restrictions are lifted, consumers will have to make their own choices related to the pandemic. The public is divided across political parties in their assessment of the severity of COVID-19 and have to filter through misinformation related to the pandemic to make informed choices. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the influences on [State] consumers' risk information-seeking behaviors about COVID-19 within the context of risk perceptions while shopping for food. The Risk Information Seek and Processing (RISP) model and cultural cognition provided the framework for this study. An online instrument was distributed to [State] consumers to collect quantitative data (n = 410). Respondents reported they were only slightly concerned while making food purchases and they possessed moderately high knowledge about COVID-19. They also reported needing moderately high knowledge to make judgments about the issue. Additionally, the respondents engaged more often in

systematic processing of COVID-19 information compared to heuristic processing, but neither agreed nor disagreed they engaged in active information-seeking behaviors. The final hierarchical regression model could account for 59% of the variance in information seeking behaviors, indicating the appropriate use of RISP and cultural cognition in this study. The findings from this research provide agricultural communicators and Extension educators guidance for creating and researching risk communication during a pandemic in relation to food-purchasing behaviors.

Visual Appeal: The Role of Visual Elements of Facebook Posts on Consumer Engagement and Willingness to Purchase - Lauri M. Baker, Anissa Zagonel, Olivia Doyle, Alena Poulin, Deanna Sumners, Cheryl R. Boyer, Hikaru H. Peterson

Online social media marketing can be used by small and medium agriculture and horticulture based businesses to directly market products to consumers and grow their businesses. To provide recommendations on how to effectively draw consumer's attention and convert that attention into purchasing intent, this study applied the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of persuasion to determine potential correlation between visual attention to various aspects of a business's post on Facebook, potential central processing as a result, and the viewer's likelihood of engagement and intent to purchase. Survey participants were shown potential Facebook posts for businesses selling three types of products — sweet bell peppers, petunias, and apples. For each product, three images were used that focused on people, product, or place. These images were paired with three different types of messages — lifestyle, promotional, and educational. The study utilized heat maps to determine what components of sample Facebook marketing posts drew visual attention. Likert-scale questions were used to determine the correlation, if any, between the image and message pairing presented, levels of engagement, and likelihood of purchase. Analysis revealed significant correlations between interest in the like button and intent to online purchase, and between the business logo and like button and intent to purchase in a physical horticultural business. Linear regression modelling showed that the impacts of these factors while statistically significant, explained only a small percent of variance in engagement and likelihood to purchase. It is likely other factors not explored in this study had a greater impact on engagement and purchasing intent.

Paper Abstracts

Assessment of Social Media Technical Support Efforts for Extension Educators - Mary A. Stokes, Shannon K. Allen, Carley C. Morrison, Marina D. Denny, Mariah S. Morgan

University Extension educators are responsible for completing outreach efforts such as disseminating educational content, announcing events, and highlighting programmatic impacts. Working towards these goals can be a tiring and difficult task. Traditionally reaching these goals have been completed through in-person programs/workshops, paper media, radio, etc. In today's world, we have seen a huge surge in the use of social media. With the help of social media, Extension educators could disseminate information easier and faster to larger groups in their community. Social media is a huge part of our modern-day world. Nearly everyone, professional and non-professional, use social media on a daily basis. Extension educators face several barriers when using social media such as creating profiles, creating relevant content, and finding the time to complete those tasks. This study further discusses those barriers and technical support efforts that can be done to assist Extension educators using social media, specifically within the platform Facebook.

Mobile Podcast Production: Two Examples of Educating and Engaging through Online Audio in Agriculture and Natural Resources - Jacquelline Aenlle, Whitney Stone, Peyton Beattie, Jamie Loizzo

The purpose of the following professional paper is to provide a framework to guide agricultural communicators to develop cost-effective mobile podcasts. The paper provides two examples of podcast development and application in agriculture and natural resources: 1) a project-based learning (PjBL) college course designed to teach students to create their own educational audio content to be posted to the Streaming Science platform, and 2) a graduate student applying 21st century science communication skills beyond the classroom to create and launch the From Urban to Ag podcast. Students enrolled in the podcasting course successfully produced two podcasts during their enrollment in each offering of the course. From 2015-2019 Streaming Science podcast episodes have had 2,675 plays in more than 50 countries, with its majority of listeners in the U.S. From Urban to Ag has received over 1,200 plays across tracks in the past 2.5 months and has welcomed interviewees from four states. Producing podcasts in a PjBL undergraduate course can allow students to increase their confidence in learning new technology and interviewing scientists. Podcasts can cover an array of topics with varying goals and missions. Organizations can use podcasts to cover trending topics, highlight their employees, or share meeting reports. Future plans for both podcast examples presented include pursuing grant funding to enhance the quality of their platforms, grow engagement, and make equipment even more affordable.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Poster Presentations

Posters will be presented in the order they appear below.

Group 1: Communicating Science

Exploring Geographic Differences in Mainstream News Source Use During COVID-19 Allison R. Fortner, Kristin E. Gibson, Alexa J. Lamm, University of Georgia

The Dimensions of the Organization-Public Relationship of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ashley McLeod-Morin, Lauri M. Baker, Lisa Lundy, Angela B. Lindsey, Ricky Telg, University of Florida

A Communications Perspective: Impacts of COVID-19 on Americans' Food Purchasing Habits and Food Safety Behaviors

Michaela Kandzer, Ricky Telg, Lauri M. Baker, Lisa Lundy, University of Florida

Examining the Impact of Critical Thinking Style, News Sources, and Social Media Engagement on Beliefs of the Origin of COVID-19

Catherine E. Dobbins, Kristin E. Gibson, Dr. Alexa J. Lamm, University of Georgia

An Opportunity or Risk? Scientists' Use of Social Media as Avenues for Science

Communication Jean Parrella, Taniya Koswatta, Holli R. Leggette, McKenna Bush, Texas A&M University

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Poster Presentations

Posters will be presented in the order they appear below.

Group 2: Media and Messages

College Students Food Waste: Messages and Message Channels

Afiya De Sormeaux, Lisa K. Lundy, Jamie Loizzo, Sebastian Galindo, Angela B. Lindsey, University of Florida

Exploring College of Agriculture Students' Media Literacy

Abigail Durheim, Taylor Ruth, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Cara Lawson, Oregon State University

Mothers' Knowledge and Trust of Celebrities and Social Media Influencers Who Communicate About Food

Linnea Langusch, Quisto Settle, Audrey E. H. King, Texas A&M University; Taylor Ruth, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Joy N. Rumble, The Ohio State University

The (Right) Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Comparing the Engagement Rate Between Stock and Natural Photos

Anissa M. Zagonel, Jarred A. Shellhouse, Lauri M. Baker, University of Florida; Hikaru H. Peterson, University of Minnesota; Cheryl R. Boyer, Kansas State University

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Poster Presentations

Posters will be presented in the order they appear below.

Group 3: Technology, Training, and Innovations

Sometimes It's Just Easier to Say It: Using VideoAsk to Collect Video and Audio

Qualitative Responses

Kevin W. Kent, Whitney A. Stone, University of Florida

Jamming in the Classroom: Engaging Generation Z Students through Collaborative, Digital Tools

Madison L Wallace, Laura Fischer, University of Kentucky

Labs and Landscapes: Using 360° Photography for Educational and Social Media Outreach

Whitney Stone, Oliva Doyle, Jamie Loizzo, University of Florida

Preparing Agricultural Leaders: Postsecondary Agriculture Students' Perceived Importance and Development of Professional Skills

Jean Parrella, Texas A&M University; Christi Esquivel, Blinn College; McKenna Bush, Theresa Pesl Murphrey, Holli R. Leggette, Emma Stogsdill, Texas A&M University

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM

Notes

Meet the Host Committee

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) conducts and disseminates objective interdisciplinary research and educational programs to increase public understanding of and engagement in agricultural and natural resources issues. To better connect agricultural communications faculty, graduate students, and professionals from across the United States, the PIE Center facilitated the NACS 2021 event. Members of the committee include:

Ricky Telg

Director, UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education

Ashley McLeod-Morin

Media Coordinator, UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education

Phillip Stokes

Education Coordinator, UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education

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Michaela Kandzer

Graduate Assistant, University of Florida



**Center for
Public Issues Education**

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