

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC AND
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION



Q4/2014 Report



kglobal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this quarter, kglobal continued to bolster our traditional and digital media efforts, support the National Impact Database Committee in anticipation of the Database's public launch in early 2015, and highlight our two themes - Health and Nutrition and Water Security. We also began message testing around our themes, which includes conducting focus groups around the country and issuing a national survey.

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TRADITIONAL MEDIA

We pitched and placed numerous land-grant universities stories at the local and national level. **These efforts resulted in over 500 national and local media hits and almost 150 million impressions** (measured by circulation numbers and website traffic).

These stories highlighted Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension efforts by individual land-grant universities and institutions in designated districts as well as regional, multistate research projects. We issued regular national press releases that showcased the importance of the land-grant university system, land-grant university research, and extension. Throughout the quarter, we pitched stories to influential members of the media and engaged with them over social media. By doing so, we cultivated better relationships with members of the media and increased general awareness of AgIsAmerica and the land-grant university system.

Next quarter, we will maintain our aggressive traditional media strategy. Specifically, we aim to achieve more local story placements, continue to increase reporter engagement and awareness of AgIsAmerica and the land-grant university system via story pitches and social media engagement, and continue to demonstrate how individual land-grant universities are part of a larger network.

DIGITAL MEDIA

We positioned our efforts to increase engagement across all AgIsAmerica digital platforms, including our website, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. **By doing so, we increased website traffic by 52%, Twitter engagement by 102%, Facebook reach by 7%, and overall social media engagement by 81%.**

We used the AgIsAmerica website to provide a unified voice for the land-grant system and highlight our themes of Health and Nutrition and Water



Security. We continued to execute an enhanced social media strategy with refined, targeted copy and engagement *with intent* to have these messages resonate with a larger segment of the media, congressional staff, constituents, land-grant universities, and the general public. Audience segmentation tactics were used to target demographics and share content.

Our strategy emphasized identifying and recruiting a larger amount of influential followers most likely to engage with our content. Next quarter, we will continue to increase website traffic as well as followers, fans, and subscribers to our social media platforms. We will do so by continuing our targeting strategies and increasing our direct engagement with online influencers.

NATIONAL IMPACT DATABASE

In addition to our digital and traditional media efforts, we continued executing our marketing plan for the National Impact Database and its host website, the Land-Grant Impacts website. **Working with the National Impact Database committee, we finalized drafts of national and university-specific press release templates, provided a recommended 2015 launch date based upon the congressional calendar, and designed and drafted language a one-page, informational document about the Database and the website for communicators.**

Last quarter, we had a kickoff call with the committee and presented supporting documents regarding pitch language, website user experience (UX), and website search engine optimization (SEO) for committee review. All of our resources for the website and Database are designed to help establish a coordinated voice between the individual universities and the committee. In addition, these documents will help participating universities reach both their internal (i.e. university staff) and external audiences (i.e. Members of Congress and members of the media).

MESSAGE TESTING

In order to better incorporate Health and Nutrition and Water Security into the AgIsAmerica campaign, kglobal conducted message testing around our themes by conducting focus groups around the country and creating a national survey. At the onset of Q1 2015, we will compile our data and analysis into a comprehensive report.

We conducted a focus group in every region and identified common notions about our themes that will impact future engagement tactics and thematic messaging. In the North Central region, we met with state



university alumni in Chicago. In the Northeast region, we met with current students at the University of Maryland at College Park as well as former Capitol Hill staffers and interns at our offices in Washington, DC. In the Southern region, we met with state university alumni in Atlanta. In the Western region, we met with state university alumni in San Francisco.

During our focus group, we asked the participants targeted questions related to health, nutrition, water security, media engagement, and the land-grant system. We will use their feedback to construct a national survey, working with YouGov, a third party vendor, to issue it. We will incorporate the qualitative and quantitative data from the focus groups and the survey into our comprehensive report to be issued in early Q1 2015.



I. INTRODUCTION

This report contains global activities over the past quarter as broken down into four categories:

- Traditional Media
- Digital Media
- National Impact Database
- Message Testing

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Our activities focused on providing a consistent voice for the land-grant system and highlighting the direct impact that both Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension activities have on the American people and, more broadly, the livelihood of our country. To best emphasize the land-grant system's positive impact and importance, we specifically featured stories related to this quarter's themes of Health and Nutrition and Water Security.

Our traditional media and digital media strategies along with our National Impact Database marketing plan are tools with which we can work towards our goal: **educating our audiences — namely, Members of Congress and the media that influences those Members — about the importance of the American land-grant university system and its contribution to our economy and education system.**



II. TRADITIONAL MEDIA REPORT

[TRADITIONAL MEDIA]

During the quarter, we implemented an aggressive strategy for traditional media, encompassing both print and broadcast outlets and corresponding news sites. These efforts resulted in over 500 media hits and engagement with nearly 100 members of the media and influencers. We started our strategy by expanding our editorial calendar to include more local and national news hooks, ultimately utilizing this tool to align our traditional media and social media strategies. We bolstered our traditional media efforts by issuing national level press releases, aggressively pitching and placing university stories, and continuing to actively build working relationships with university communicators and the media.

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EDITORIAL CALENDAR

To guide our traditional and digital media efforts, we continued to update our 12-month editorial calendar to feature hundreds of local and national news hooks from September through January. It follows the legislative calendar, highlights national observances, and includes university-specific events.

The editorial calendar prioritizes content for each day, week, and month, ensuring our efforts are coordinated across mediums as we match university stories to our news hooks. By doing so, we help universities participate in timely, relevant conversations occurring in traditional media and on Twitter, the social media platform where reporters, bloggers, and news affiliates congregate.

Our editorial calendar intentionally highlights national news hooks that align with the AgIsAmerica website so that we can easily synchronize physical pitch tactics with our digital branding. Most importantly, our editorial calendar highlights news hooks related to Health and Nutrition and Water Security, our themes for this quarter.

In addition, we continue to share our editorial calendar with university communicators on a monthly basis. As a result, many of these communicators have incorporated the recommended news hooks into their



own stories, shared content for our consideration, and suggested additional news hooks.

To view sample news hooks from our editorial calendar, please reference Appendix A.

If any land-grant university staff would like to receive our news hooks, we request that they contact ashley.hawn@kglobal.com to join the email list.

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TRADITIONAL MEDIA EFFORTS

From our traditional media efforts, we were able to highlight 11 land-grant universities and institutions in our designated districts, garnering over 500 media hits totaling 150 million impressions. Of these 508 media hits, nearly 100 occurred in the statewide media markets for our designated districts.

Throughout the quarter, we worked with land-grant university communicators and staff to develop and issue original national-level press releases and share press release templates for universities to use. These releases were unique because they showcased multistate or regional Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station efforts at a national level. These press releases demonstrated the impact of land-grant universities on both local communities and the agricultural industry.

In addition, we pitched university stories to members of the media, from newspaper reporters to bloggers.

Oregon State University Story, Vine to Wine Research: Less is more? Maybe not, says Oregon pinot noir study: Wine Notes

The story, titled “Less is more? Maybe not, says Oregon pinot noir study: Wine Notes,” appeared online on October 15, 2014. Katherine Cole, a wine columnist, wrote the story as a special to *The Oregonian*, the top circulated newspaper in the state with a circulation of almost 143,000. kglobal pitched the story to Cole and connected Cole to Oregon State University communicators and professors.



1 comment **Less is more? Maybe not, says Oregon pinot noir study: Wine Notes**



Ted Casteel and Patricia Skinkis at Bethel Heights Vineyard. (Katherine Cole/Special to The Oregonian)

53
173
f Shar

By Katherine Cole | Special to The Oregonian
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on October 15, 2014 at 12:40 PM, updated October 15, 2014 at 12:41 PM

Jack harvests his pinot noir grapes at 3 tons per acre. Jill harvests her pinot noir at just 2 tons per acre. Who earns the most money?

You might sav Jack. But most wine experts would sav Jill.



More Food & Dining

Search our recipe database

Oregon wine and wineries

Food videos

This video player must be at least 300x170 pixels in order to operate.

To view the story in full, please reference Appendix B.

October Press Release Headline: Multistate Land-Grant University Research Project Contributes to Domestic and International Dry Bean Industry

Issued on October 23, 2014, this press release highlighted land-grant university participation in a dry bean production and nutrition project. We expanded upon an existing release, researched additional information, and added new quotes to create a national-level press release that had both a domestic and international angle.

Total Media Hits	Number of Designated Universities	Media Hits in Key University Statewide Markets	Media Hits of Note
260 with almost 74 million impressions	6 / 20 of the participating universities	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Forth-Worth Star-Telegram o Long Beach Press-Telegram o The Sacramento Bee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mississippi State University o Cornell University o University of California, Davis o Oregon State 		



- University
- North Dakota State University
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln

To view the October release in full, please reference Appendix C.

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University of Nebraska Story, Dry Bean Research: Decade's-old dry bean research extends reach to the world

The story, titled “Decade’s-old dry bean research extends reach to the world,” appeared online on October 28, 2014. kglobal pitched the story to the *Midwest Producer*, which is an online and print magazine with a circulation of 35,000, which focuses on the agriculture industry in Nebraska and Kansas.



To view the story in full, please reference Appendix D.



November Press Release Headline: Researchers from 20 Land-Grant Institutions Receive National Recognition for Multistate Water Conservation Project

Issued on November 3, 2014, this press release highlighted land-grant university and institution participation in a multistate microirrigation (MI) systems project. We expanded upon an existing release, researched additional information, and added new quotes to create a national-level press release that we shared with participating universities and institutions.

Total Media Hits	Number of Designated Institutions/ Universities	Media Hits in Key University Statewide Markets	Media Hits of Note
246 with over 74 million impressions	10/ 20 of the participating institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Auburn University ○ University of California, Davis ○ University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources ○ University of Florida ○ Kansas State University ○ Mississippi State University ○ University of Nebraska-Lincoln ○ New Mexico State University ○ Cornell University ○ Oregon State University 	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ . <i>Yahoo News!</i> ○ <i>Reuters</i> ○ <i>Bloomberg Businessweek</i>



In addition, we collaborated with the participating universities and USDA NIFA to create a united media outreach plan for traditional media and social media. For traditional media, several universities shared the national press release, and some tailored the release to their university's needs. For social media, we suggested a hashtag #CropPerDrop for participating universities to use on Twitter when discussing either the project or the award.

To view the November release in full, please reference Appendix E.

RELATIONSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATORS

During this quarter, we identified and communicated with representatives at every university in our designated districts on a monthly basis. By fostering these relationships, kglobal has been able to receive more content for AgIsAmerica, resulting in more traditional media opportunities and digital media engagement for the universities.

Sharing our editorial calendar was one prominent way we built relationships with university contacts. In turn, university communicators responded with additional news hooks or relevant stories. These stories were reviewed for traditional media and digital media opportunities.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

In order to enhance our traditional media strategy, we increased interactions and correspondence with members of the media. During the quarter, we engaged with nearly 100 members of the media.

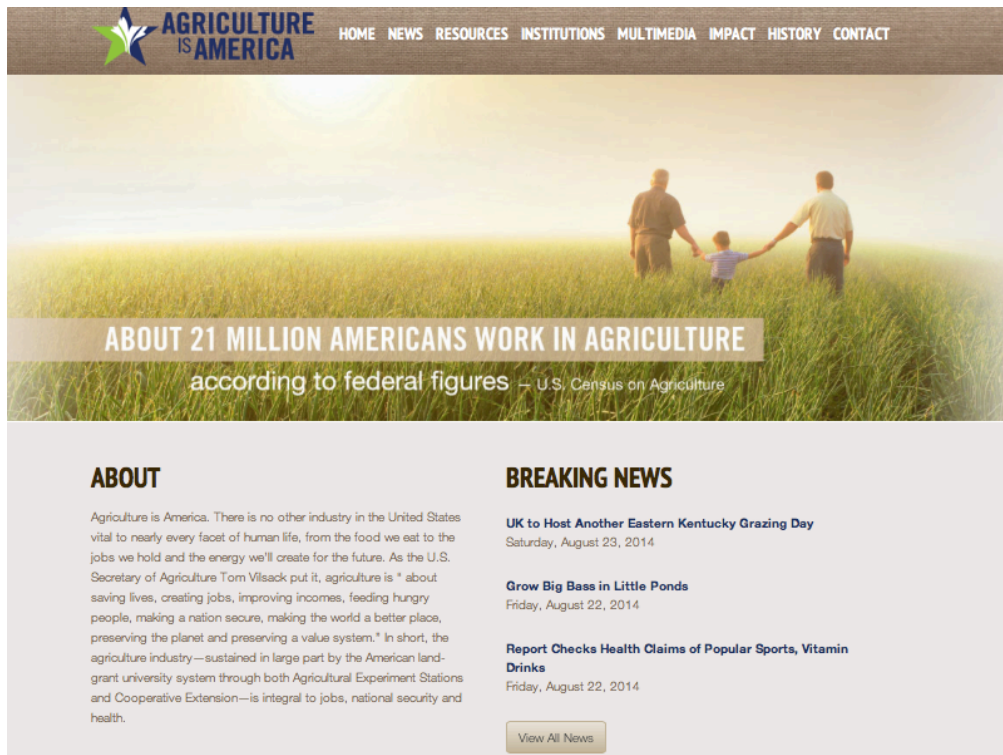
In order to do so, we greatly expanded our media list to include additional influencers: from reporters and bloggers to dieticians and agriculture specialists.

We interacted with these influencers via email pitches, phone, and social media. We specifically used Twitter as our primary social media medium. We crafted personalized tweets to bloggers, beat reporters, and news outlets to share university stories and updates. By doing so, we created opportunities of engagement between members of the media, universities, and AgIsAmerica. This effort enhanced recognition of both the AgIsAmerica brand and the land-grant university system.



III. DIGITAL MEDIA REPORT

[WEBSITE]



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This quarter, the website continued to act as the primary digital platform for coordination between the land-grant system, Agricultural Experiment Station, and Cooperative Extension. This method allows for brand consistency and new additions to the website both this quarter and next ensure repeat visits to the AgIsAmerica website.

In an effort to marry quality and quantity, we share between 10-15 university articles to the AgIsAmerica website each week. In addition to uploading articles related to our themes of **Health and Nutrition** and **Water Security**, we also uploaded and grouped articles into the categories of Food Security; Youth, Family, and Communities; Environmental Stewardship; Agricultural Systems; and Energy & Bioproducts. Between September 18, 2014 and December 30, 2014, we **added 232 new stories**.



These categories continue to align with those listed on the Land-Grant Impacts website, the National Impact Database's host site, to demonstrate brand cohesion and consistency.

Plants May Use Language to Communicate With Each Other, Virginia Tech Researcher Finds

It seems communication is key, not only for couples but for plants as well. Now, thanks to Virginia Tech professor of plant pathology, physiology, and weed science Jim Westwood, a novel new way in which plants communicate on a molecular level has been discovered. Now that it we know more about how they share information, Westwood says, "the next question is, 'What exactly are they telling each other?'" See the exciting work Westwood and his team is doing, after the jump.

[Read more here!](#)

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Oregon's Artisan Cheese Industry Ages Well with OSU's Help

Lisbeth Goddik, the dairy-processing specialist with the Oregon State University Extension Service, provides training for all levels of artisan cheese makers, including assistance with improvements in product quality, shelf life and safety. She consults closely with them to solve specific challenges, and she serves as a technical liaison with the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Division. Establishment of an artisan cheese industry gives dairy producers the opportunity to earn greater returns for specialty products they make on their farms.

[Read more here!](#)

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

We continue to welcome press releases, videos, blog posts, and news articles from members of the land-grant system. Please send suggested AgIsAmerica content via email to ashley.hawn@kglobal.com and collin.lever@kglobal.com.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

To drive new and recurring traffic to our website, we continued to aggressively implementing SEO strategies that proved effective in Q3 2014, aiming to increase the visibility and placement of the AgIsAmerica website in search engine results.

As with last quarter, link building involving websites linking to agisamerica.org results in higher search placements. **Our link building strategy was integral to our digital engagement on both traditional and social media.** As a result of our press releases discussing regional, multistate,



or multi-university efforts, the agisamerica.org URL reached over 500 news sites, outlets, and reporters, from Reuters to Bloomberg.

Additionally, with the migration of the website to a new server, efforts have been underway to ensure all code is HTML5- and CSS3-friendly. Having a website with “clean” code for search engines like Google and Bing increases search engine result placements (SERPs) because it is deemed as a higher-quality website.

AGISAMERICA FEATURES SECTION

In order to increase brand awareness of AgIsAmerica and the land-grant university system, kglobal created a Features Section on the website. This will function as a newsfeed unique to AgIsAmerica and hosts both monthly articles and more frequent news bites relevant to AgIsAmerica and APLU. The Features section currently has 14 articles.

Feature	Date Added
Scientists from Twelve Land-Grant Universities Forge Partnership with Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Hypoxia Task Force	June 30
Recipe: Mediterranean Tuna Salad	Jun18
Researchers from 19 Land-Grant Universities Receive Western Region Award of Excellence for Multistate Water Conservation Project	July 11
Mississippi’s Mr. Tea	July 24
Prairie Fare: Conquer the Midmorning Slump with Breakfast	August 21
UC Davis and Mars, Incorporated announce plans to create first-of-its-kind innovation institute focusing on food, agriculture and health	September 17
Less is more? Maybe not, says Oregon pinot noir study: Wine Notes	October 15
Multistate Land-Grant University Research Project Contributes to Domestic and International Dry Bean Industry	October 23
Researchers from 20 Land-Grant Institutions Receive National Recognition for Multistate Water Conservation Project	November 3
Tips for safe as well as delicious holiday meals	December 9

We request that Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension contacts or university communicators send any story pitch ideas, op-ed suggestions, or AgIsAmerica features suggestions to ashley.hawn@kglobal.com and collin.lever@kglobal.com for consideration.



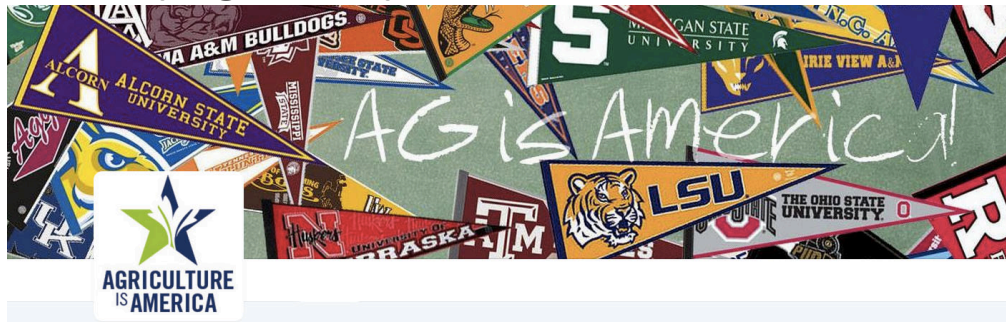
[SOCIAL MEDIA]

This quarter, kglobal focused our social media efforts to increase engagement between AgIsAmerica and key audiences through identified demographic and interest-specific engagements. As with last quarter, we are making a determined effort to analyze our engagement efforts over the past few months to determine the most efficient best practices for both grassroots and grasstops research.

We share research updates, university stories corresponding to designated news hooks, and notable Cooperative Extension happenings and outreach. By providing this information to our follower base, we promote efforts from land-grant institutions, ensuring consistency across the entire campaign.

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TWITTER (@agisamerica)



AgIsAmerica launched its Twitter account on September 12, 2011 and has gained 23,343 followers to date. Since Twitter is the leading “live” social media platform, it is important for AgIsAmerica to maintain a prominent presence and effectively recruit and engage with followers. As with last quarter, we are shifting from a recruitment to an engagement strategy. After achieving a critical mass of followers from our previous quarters, we are now targeting our promotions of the Twitter account to better engage them. This will help to amplify our signal, allowing information to be dispersed to an even wider audience.

Part of our increased engagement efforts involved retweeting other influencers and organizations. This helps further our traditional dialogue and relationships by carrying it into an online setting.



AgIsAmerica retweeted



Susie Kocher @UCsierraforest · Nov 18

Farm advisors throughout California have been helping growers look for ways to get by with less water... capitalpress.com/Research/20141...

Retweets: 4, Favorites: 3

AgIsAmerica retweeted



Mississippi State @msstate · Dec 23

We create solutions. MSU partners w/@NOAA to research preventative hurricane watershed impact: bit.ly/1t1Px9b

Unmanned Aircraft



Retweets: 5, Favorites: 10

[View more photos and videos](#)

Additionally, we engage in conversations with layman Twitter followers interested in AgIsAmerica. Although they do not carry the clout that engaging with an influencer might have, these increased efforts to engage in informal dialogues will increase AgIsAmerica’s brand awareness over a period of time.

All of our key performance indicators have trended up month-over-month, including Views, Mentions, Retweets, Favorites, and Clickthroughs to the AgIsAmerica website. Averages for active days include:

Metric	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Change
Views	1,382/day	1,732/day	+350/day
Link Clicks	408/month	540/month	+132/month
Retweets	151/month	152/month	+1/month
Favorites	91/month	144/month	+53/month



FACEBOOK (/agisamerica)



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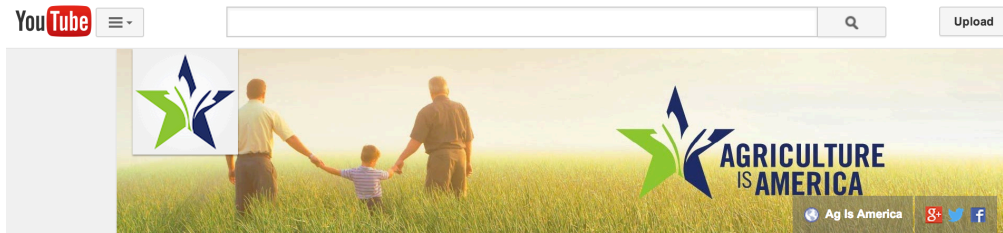
Established on November 16, 2012, our AgIsAmerica Facebook has amassed **12,863 fans**. Since Facebook is the largest social media platform, having an active, popular Facebook page is integral to cementing a successful brand. Similar to Twitter, we are working on increasing engagement on Facebook. For example, toward the end of Q4, Facebook started to roll out geotargeting posts. This means that our posts can be carefully targeted so that content will be seen mostly by the geographic regions that would be most interested in it. This new Facebook feature will heavily lead our future Q1 engagement.



Throughout the quarter, we honed in on topics that increased our reach. We also reach out to universities and have seen shares and increased reach through amplification of our posts. This increased our average reach to 18%.



YOUTUBE (/agisamerica)



Established February 2012, our YouTube channel has 4 channels and a total of 135 videos to date, all of which highlight agriculture and educate viewers about the importance of the industry and the land-grant system. We also follow land-grant university channels, specifically those dedicated to Cooperative Extensions and Colleges of Agriculture, to receive updates on the latest happenings. We repurpose these videos on our channel and social media platforms. As an entirely visual social media platform, our goal on YouTube is to provide another outlet for telling the AgIsAmerica story with a collection of videos that vividly demonstrate the applications of research and Extension in action.

AgIsAmerica currently maintains 4 playlists and is subscribed to 51 agriculture news channels to date.

[Playlists]

AgKnowledge: "The more you know, the more you grow."

Videos: 21

Colleges of Agriculture in Action

Videos: 53

Cooperative Extension in Action

Videos: 49

The Land-Grant Mission

Videos: 12

We request that any individual Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension accounts subscribe to this channel. We also continue to encourage you to send us links to your videos via email to ashley.hawn@kglobal.com and collin.lever@kglobal.com.



IV. NATIONAL IMPACT DATABASE

This quarter, we worked with the National Impact Database committee to execute our suggested marketing plan and prepare for the official launch of the Database and the website. Last quarter, we shared recommendations for search engine optimization (SEO) and user experience (UX) improvements, public launch marketing strategies, and media pitch strategies for university communicators. We used those documents to draft a 2015 launch date based upon the congressional calendar and designed and drafted language a one-page, informational document about the Database and the website for communicators. We will continue to support the committee next quarter as we prepare for the public launch of both the Land-Grants Impacts website and the National Impact Database.

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We introduced the marketing plan for the National Impact Database in Q3 2014 and designed the marketing campaign to meet three goals:

- Reinforce the importance of continued and sustained federal funding for land-grant universities;
- Enhance land-grants' national and regional brand profile by demonstrating the impacts and highlighting the successes of the system;
- And increase the audiences' use of and engagement of the Database.

We continue to communicate several calls with individual members of the committee and the committee at-large, coordinating our efforts with Cornerstone. In preparation for the Database's public launch, we continue to update contact lists for the intended and desired audiences.

To view our approved national press release, please reference Appendix F.

To view our approved university-specific press release, please reference Appendix G.

To view our congressional calendar, please reference Appendix H.

To view our e-blast language announcing the Database and website, please reference Appendix I.



V. MESSAGE TESTING

In order to better incorporate Health and Nutrition and Water Security into the AgIsAmerica campaign, kglobal started message testing around our themes. We used two primary means of testing – conducting targeted focused groups in each region and creating a national survey. At the time of this report’s delivery, we have completed all of our focus groups and are working with YouGov to issue the national survey later this month. After issuing the survey, kglobal will compile and analyze our results. All of our quantitative and qualitative data will be included in a comprehensive report with methodology, analytics, and recommendations.

We conducted a total of five focus groups where we asked the participants targeted questions in order to comprehend the gravity of current messaging. We conducted a focus group in every region. In the North Central region, we met with state university alumni in Chicago. In the Northeast region, we met with current students at the University of Maryland at College Park as well as former Capitol Hill staffers and interns at our offices in Washington, DC. In the Southern region, we met with state university alumni in Atlanta. In the Western region, we met with state university alumni in San Francisco

Following our focus groups, we drafted executive reports for each focus group where we detailed the interactions between the participants and the answers to our questions. From the individual reports, we were able to identify common notions about our themes that will impact future engagement tactics and thematic messaging.



VI. APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: Sample News Hooks

November is:

- American Diabetes Month
- Good Nutrition Month
- National Peanut Butter Lovers Month
- National Georgia Pecan Month
- National Pepper Month

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Some individual news hooks include:

- November 1-7: National Fig Week
- November 2-7: Obesity Week
- November 8: Cook Something Bold Day
- November 8-13: National Split Pea Soup Week
- November 11: Veterans' Day
- November 14: World Diabetes Day
- November 15: America Recycles Day
- November 17: Take a Hike Day
- November 23: National Cashew Day
- November 25: National "Eat with a Friend" Day
- November 27: Thanksgiving

And, don't forget that 2014 is the International Year of Family Farming.



AgIsAmerica is especially looking for stories related to the themes of **Health and Nutrition**, but we are also interested in stories related to **Water Security**.



APPENDIX B: Oregon State University Story, Vine to Wine Research



Less is more? Maybe not, says Oregon pinot noir study: Wine Notes

*By Katherine Cole
October 15, 2014*

Jack harvests his pinot noir grapes at 3 tons per acre. Jill harvests her pinot noir at just 2 tons per acre. Who earns the most money?

You might say Jack. But most wine experts would say Jill.

It's a head-scratcher for anyone with a basic grasp of economics.

Say you want to grow your winery business to meet an increasing demand for pinot noir. Try explaining to a banker that you want a loan so that you can buy a piece of expensive vineyard land, plant grapevines, wait four years for them to mature, then pay a team of vinetenders to carefully clip and compost 40 percent of your crop. Every year.

In theory, the fruit that remains on the vine should be higher quality. It should ripen more uniformly, and taste more flavorful. And it should command

a higher price.

In practice, no one has ever really put this presumption to test. Previous examinations of crop load have been conducted by horticulturists, in small research plots, not in working vineyards and wineries.

The fashion for dropping fruit, also known as "green harvesting," appears to have coincided with the publication of the first edition of "Parker's Wine Buyer's Guide" in 1995. In it, prominent wine pundit Robert M. Parker, Jr. quotes the winemaking maxim, "The smaller the yield, the better the wine," railing against "flagrant abuses of overproduction" and praising the "handful of fanatics who continue, at some financial sacrifice, to reject a significant proportion of their harvest in order to ensure that only the finest-quality wine is sold under their name."

And so, for the past couple of decades, Oregon vineyard managers have regularly discarded up to half of the precious clusters off their vines so that their surviving siblings can, the thinking goes, soak up more of



the plant's limited resources.

But the practice is expensive, not only in lost fruit, but also in terms of ever-rising labor costs, as cluster thinning cannot be mechanized.

*In 2008, Patricia Skinkis, an associate professor of horticulture at Oregon State University, decided to check out this supposition. After completing a successful experimental study, she has now launched a comprehensive 10-year crop-load study as part of her work as an extension specialist and researcher with the **Oregon Wine Research Institute**. Her goal: to definitively determine just how effective cluster thinning is in enhancing fruit and wine quality.*

So far, 14 working vineyards in the Willamette Valley have signed on to collaborate with Skinkis. The vineyard managers take care of the day-to-day farming and basic data-gathering; and Skinkis' team of scientists from OSU carries out more complicated investigations and analyses.

***Bethel Heights Vineyard** in Salem was the first to fully commit to the study, in 2011. Vineyard manager and co-owner Ted Casteel has been an eager proponent of vine research since the early 1980s, when vintages were frighteningly weather-dependent.*

"I remember the year we had a very late bloom in July, and then it started raining in November and never stopped. Most of the the pinot noir in the valley became pink wine," Casteel recalls. "I thought, 'We have got to get a handle on this.'"

Since then, viticulture has come a long way. Vines are grafted onto hardy rootstock, which deters certain pests, lowers yields and generates more uniform fruit clusters. Vineyard managers have become expert in the arts of trellising, leaf-and-shoot pruning, soil health and the sparing use of sprays and irrigation. Today, says Casteel, "We are starting to ask more sophisticated questions about vine balance that we were not asking back then."

At Bethel Heights, Casteel set aside 2.5 acres of vines for the OSU experiment, marking alternating end posts with a dot of either yellow or orange paint to identify which rows to crop-thin and which to leave alone. Bethel Heights donates fruit, labor and finished wine to the study, and pays for some lab analysis. "The benefit for me is a serious, high-quality experiment guided by excellent scientists taking place in my vineyard, and being a participating member of the collaborative team of people advancing our understanding of viticulture in the Willamette Valley," Casteel explains.



So far, Casteel has been comparing the thinned and non-thinned rows for four vintages. As far as he can tell, the fruit tastes the same. The vines seem equally healthy. And the wine from the vines that haven't been thinned might actually taste better than the wine from less fruitful vines. Likewise, Skinkis and her team report that they haven't yet found any discernible differences; they will begin sensory evaluation comparisons of finished wines this autumn.

While the study currently only encompasses Willamette Valley pinot noir, Skinkis hopes to add other grape varieties and Oregon growing regions to her study in the future. For now, she's cautiously optimistic about her still very early findings: Vine health and fruit quality do not seem to be affected by increased crop load. "We're not advocating

for doing nothing," she warns. "Some sites will probably require some crop thinning on high-yielding years. But it's really about focusing on good management rather than yield."

Casteel is less guarded in his enthusiasm. "If I could leave one half-ton of fruit per acre more on my 100 acres, that's 50 more tons of grapes," he marvels. "Times \$3,000 a ton, that is three new tractors. That is money that we can use to build our business."

*-- Katherine Cole has been writing about wine for The Oregonian since 2002. She's the creator of Oregon Wine, the App, for iPhone, iPad and Android. She's also the author of "**Complete Wine Selector**" and "**Voodoo Vintners**."*



APPENDIX C: October National Press Release

Multistate Land-Grant University Research Project Contributes to Domestic and International Dry Bean Industry

Project Began in the 1970s as Regional Initiative, Has Since Expanded Internationally

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October 23, 2014

Washington, D.C. – Researchers from a multistate dry bean production and nutrition project recently met to discuss the project’s goals for the next five years. The project, titled W-2150 Breeding Common Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) for Resistance to Abiotic and Biotic Stresses, Sustainable Production, and Enhanced Nutritional Value, has come a long way since its establishment in 1977 as it has expanded beyond researching bean varieties in a few states in the western region of the United States. Now, the project has international participation and impact.

Many of the scientists who collaborate with the 20 land-grant universities participating in the W-2150 project are based across the country and serve as principle investigators on projects to improve nutrition in developing countries. Moreover, researchers regularly release new varieties of snap and dry edible beans and share dry bean breeding methodologies and findings with the domestic and international dry bean industry.

Unlike the corn, soybean, cotton and vegetable sectors, the dry edible bean industry still relies on the release of new varieties and genetic material from public sources, such as USDA and land-grant universities, according to Dr. James Steadman, head of the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. **“These (dry bean) varieties are for anybody to use. They’re free,”** said Steadman, who has been involved with W-2150 and its earlier version since the early 1970s. **“What we come up with, we’re sharing with the world, as well.”**

The 20 land-grant universities participating in W-2150 include: University of Puerto Rico; Colorado State University; Mississippi State University; Cornell University; University of California, Davis; University of Idaho; Michigan State University; Oregon State University; University of Wisconsin; North Dakota



State University; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; University of California, Riverside; Wayne State University; Mayville State University; and University of Arizona. In addition, the universities collaborated with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Michigan, Maryland, Washington, and Puerto Rico. W-2150 is administered through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

“By investing in research that analyzes resistance to different biotic stresses, drought, and heat, we have been able to develop a number of new dry bean cultivars in several states. As a result, researchers and dry bean producers are able to use dry bean lines from different breeding programs in the United States. The W-2150 project has also helped breeding programs to developing research protocols, but the main beneficiary of this project is the public,” said Dr. Carlos Urrea, dry bean breeding specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff, where the most recent meeting was conducted. The meeting locations rotate among the participating institutions.

The W-2150 project helps to ensure that there is a continued availability of dry beans, which have a number of human health benefits. Beans are full of fiber, protein, and nutrients like zinc and iron and have been shown to help prevent or fight diseases like cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and AIDs.

About Agriculture is America

Agriculture is America. In short, the agriculture industry – sustained in large part by the American land-grant university system through both Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension – is integral to jobs, national security, and health. To learn more, visit <http://agisamerica.org>.

[SOURCE Agriculture is America]



APPENDIX D: University of Nebraska Story, Dry Bean Research

Midwest Producer

Decade's-old dry bean research extends reach to the world

*By Midwest Producer
October 28, 2014*

WASHINGTON - Researchers from a multistate dry bean production and nutrition project now have international participation and impact.

*Project members recently met to discuss the goals for the next five years. The project, titled W-2150 Breeding Common Bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) for Resistance to Abiotic and Biotic Stresses, Sustainable Production, and Enhanced Nutritional Value, has come a long way since its establishment in 1977 as it has expanded beyond researching bean varieties in a few states in the western region of the United States.*

Many of the scientists who collaborate with the 15 land-grant universities participating in the W-2150 project are based across the country and serve as principle investigators on projects to improve nutrition in developing countries. Moreover, researchers regularly release new varieties of snap and dry edible beans and share dry bean breeding

methodologies and findings with the domestic and international dry bean industry.

Unlike the corn, soybean, cotton and vegetable sectors, the dry edible bean industry still relies on the release of new varieties and genetic material from public sources, such as USDA and land-grant universities, according to James Steadman, head of the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "These (dry bean) varieties are for anybody to use. They're free," said Steadman, who has been involved with W-2150 and its earlier version since the early 1970s. "What we come up with, we're sharing with the world, as well."

The land-grant universities participating in W-2150 are University of Puerto Rico; Colorado State University; Mississippi State University; Cornell University; University of California, Davis; University of Idaho; Michigan State University; Oregon State University; University of Wisconsin; North Dakota State University; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; University of California, Riverside; Wayne State University; Mayville State University; and University of Arizona. In addition, the universities collaborated with the



USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Michigan, Maryland, Washington, and Puerto Rico. W-2150 is administered through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

"By investing in research that analyzes resistance to different biotic stresses, drought, and heat, we have been able to develop a number of new dry bean cultivars in several states. As a result, researchers and dry bean producers are able to use dry bean lines from different breeding programs in the United States. The W-2150 project has also helped breeding programs to

developing research protocols, but the main beneficiary of this project is the public," said Carlos Urrea, dry bean breeding specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff, where the recent meeting was conducted.

The W-2150 project helps to ensure that there is a continued availability of dry beans, which have a number of human health benefits. Beans are full of fiber, protein, and nutrients like zinc and iron and have been shown to help prevent or fight diseases such as cancer, Type 2 diabetes and AIDs.



APPENDIX E: November National Press Release

Researchers from 20 Land-Grant Institutions Receive National Recognition for Multistate Water Conservation Project

November 3, 2014

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, researchers from 20 land-grant institutions received the 2014 Experiment Station Section Excellence in Multistate Research Award from the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP). The award, presented by ESCOP Chair, Bob Shulstad, and Director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), Sonny Ramaswamy, recognized the researchers' exceptional collaboration on a multistate research project that helps farmers better use microirrigation (MI) systems to sustainably irrigate their land, especially during droughts and water shortages. Researchers participating in the project, W-2128 Microirrigation for Sustainable Water Use, were honored for their efforts during the Awards Program held at the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

"The Multistate Research Program is one of the best kept secrets of the land-grant university system, and this award recognizes outstanding interdependent efforts of researchers and extension specialists that have come together to tackle a priority issue that no one institution can address on their own. This microirrigation project was selected out of more than 300 multistate projects because, since 1972, the group has made major advances in sustainable agriculture and water conservation," said H. Michael Harrington, Executive Director of the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors.

Conventional irrigation systems that apply high volumes of water over wide areas can lose a lot of water through runoff, wind, or evaporation. As a result, conventional irrigation systems often over- or under-water plants. Instead, MI systems use special timers, sensors, and a network of narrow tubes to deliver the right amount of water at the right time.

In the last five years, W-2128's research has led to new MI equipment and tools that are easier to install, more durable, and more precise. These advances, along with engagement with farmers, have encouraged adoption



of MI systems, which has led to significant economic and environmental impacts. In Idaho, farmers who used MI systems saved 10% on labor and water pumping costs. Farmers who used MI systems in Puerto Rico were able to grow taro on a commercial scale despite dry conditions. In Oregon, MI systems have reduced groundwater pollution and increased onion crop yields. MI systems have also helped to restore land disturbed by uranium mill sites on the Navajo Nation.

“As director of USDA-NIFA, my goal is to ensure the science we invest in leads to solutions to today’s most pressing challenges. One of those challenges is finding ways to feed the growing population while minimally impacting the environment,” said Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA director. **“A safe, reliable supply of water is inextricably linked to food security. The five-fold increase in irrigated acres that took place during the 20th century cannot be repeated in the 21st century—there isn’t the space. Instead, we must increase efficiency of the irrigated farmland we have, and that is what this project is doing.”**

W-2128’s efforts are supported, in part, through USDA-NIFA by the Multistate Research Fund, established in 1998 by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (an amendment to the Hatch Act of 1888) to encourage and enhance multistate, multidisciplinary agricultural research on critical issues. Additional funds were provided by contracts and grants to participating scientists.

The land-grant institutions participating in W-2128 include: Auburn University; University of Arizona; University of California, Davis; University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Colorado State University; University of Florida; University of Hawaii; University of Idaho; Iowa State University; Kansas State University; Mississippi State University, University of Nebraska, New Mexico State University, Cornell University; Oregon State University; University of Puerto Rico; Texas A&M AgriLife Research; University of the Virgin Islands; Washington State University; and University of Wyoming. In addition, the universities collaborated with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and Agricultural Research Service.

“Leveraging the expertise at several institutions and federal agencies gives much greater impact to the results of the research and education efforts,” said Steve Loring, Associate Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station at New Mexico State University and administrative adviser for the project.



Following the awards ceremony, the project's name will be added to a plaque at the USDA Waterfront Centre in Washington, D.C., and the group will receive \$15,000 to support their ongoing work. The group's continued efforts are more critical than ever as the U.S. continues to experience extreme droughts that threaten water supplies and crops that depend on irrigation.

About Agriculture is America

Agriculture is America. In short, the agriculture industry – sustained in large part by the American land-grant university system through both Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension – is integral to jobs, national security, and health. To learn more, visit <http://agisamerica.org>.

[SOURCE Agriculture is America]



APPENDIX F: National Press Release for National Impact Database

Contact: Ashley Hawn
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January X, 2015

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LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES ANNOUNCE NEW SYSTEM-WIDE ONLINE RESOURCE

Website Provides Access to Research and Extension Program Impact Across State and University System

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities announced the official launch of the Land-Grant Impacts website, a public online resource that highlights the teaching, research, and extension efforts by the land-grant universities. Specifically, the website provides access to university or regional-specific impact stories, which document the research and community programming planned, performed, and implemented by land-grant universities. The website, as a cooperative effort of the U.S. land-grant universities, represents a single voice for the universities' agricultural experiment stations and Cooperative Extension.

[QUOTE, USDA NIFA]

Impact statements relay the results and impact of local and regional research and outreach education programs. They include contact information for university research and extension project leads and updates on grant funding, project implementation, or community impact. Impact statements are categorized according to six focus areas: Food Security; Health and Nutrition; Youth, Family, and Communities; Environmental Stewardship; Agricultural Systems; and Energy and Bioproducts.

[QUOTE, APLU, President]

The website also informs users about the history of the land-grant university system and how its mission has evolved since the systems' founding. Land-grant universities are committed to a three-fold mission of advancing learning, cultivating practical fields, and contributing to the



economy. The website fully demonstrates why teaching, research, and extensions are interrelated and how they better our students, improve our communities, and benefit our country.

[QUOTE, Chairman of the Ag Board]

The Association of Public Land-Grant Universities represents 238 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations across all 50 states, the four U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, Mexico, and Canada. The land-grant universities were founded in 1862 after Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which granted each state funding to charter a university with the purpose to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies to help members of the working class obtain a liberal, practical education.

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APPENDIX G: University-Specific Press Release for National Impact Database

Contact: X
Email
Phone

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January X, 2015

X UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES NEW LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY SYSTEM-WIDE ONLINE RESOURCE

Website Provides Access to Research and Extension Impact Statements Across State and University Lines

[CITY, STATE] – Today, X University announced the official launch of and participation in the National Land-grant Impacts website, a centralized online resource that highlights the teaching, research, and extension efforts by Land-grant universities. Specifically, the website provides access to university or regional-specific impact stories, which document the research and Extension programming planned, performed, and implemented by X University and other Land-grant universities. The website, as a cooperative effort of the Land-grant universities, represents a single voice for the Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension arms of the Land-grant universities.

[QUOTE, UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL]

Impact statements relay the results and impact of research and Extension education programming. Information lists include contact information for university research and Extension project leads and updates on funding, project implementation, or Extension education impact. Impact statements are categorized according to six focus areas: Food Security; Health and Nutrition; Youth, Family, and Communities; Environmental Stewardship; Agricultural Systems; and Energy and Bioproducts.

[QUOTE, USDA NIFA]

The website also informs users about the history of the Land-grant university system and how its mission has evolved since the systems' founding. X University, like all Land-grant universities, is committed to a three-fold mission of teaching, research and Extension. The website fully



demonstrates why teaching, research, and Extension are interrelated and how they better **X University** students, improve communities in **X University state**, and benefit the nation.

[QUOTE, Chairman of the Ag Board]

X University is one of the 238 public research universities, Land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations represented by The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The Land-grant university system has affiliations in all 50 states, the four U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, Mexico, and Canada.

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[QUOTE, APLU, President]

X University was founded in **X Year** as a result of the **Morrill or Second Morrill Act**, which granted each state funding to charter a university with the purpose to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies to help members of the working class obtain a liberal, practical education.

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APPENDIX H: Congressional Calendar

House Calendar

For the month of January, the House of Representatives is in session during the following days:

- Tuesday, January 6th – Friday, January 9th
- Monday, January 12th – Wednesday, January 14th
- Tuesday, January 20th – Wednesday, January 22nd
 - Tuesday, January 20th: State of the Union Address
- Monday, January 26th – Wednesday, January 28th

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For the month of February, the House of Representatives is in session during the following days:

- Monday, February 2nd – Thursday, February 5th
- Tuesday, February 10th – Friday, February 13th
- Tuesday, February 24th – Friday, February 27th

Senate Calendar

For the month of January, the Senate is in session during the following days:

- Tuesday, January 6th – Friday, January 9th
- Monday, January 12th – Friday, January 16th
- Tuesday, January 20th – Friday, January 23nd
 - Tuesday, January 20th: State of the Union Address
- Monday, January 26th – Friday, January 30th

For the month of February, the Senate is in session during the following days:

- Monday, February 2nd – Friday, February 6th
- Monday, February 9th – Friday, February 13th
- Monday, February 23th – Friday, February 27th



APPENDIX I: E-Blast Language for University Communicators Participating in the National Impact Database



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Announcing the National Impact Website

There are two exciting projects under development to help us tell our land-grant story - the National Impact Database ("the Database") and its companion project the Land-Grant Impacts website.

The Database is an internal resource that allows university researchers and affiliates to upload and search for impact statements regarding Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension efforts. Each land-grant institution can designate the appropriate contact to input data and stories into the system. Contacts are selected by the research and extension directors and are issued passwords to begin contributing the best work from their institutions.

The Land-Grant Impacts website is a public portal to our three-fold mission of advancing learning, cultivating practical fields, and contributing to the economy. We will share impact statements from the Database in order to continue to publicize land-grant university work to national media, decisions-makers, and others.

Although the Database and the website are currently live, the National Impact Database planning committee will be announcing an official launch of both projects in January 2015, and we need your help to make the launch successful. In the coming months, we will be sharing information and materials on how you can help us promote the site at your university and your institution's participation in the Database and the website.

If you want to learn more about the Database or the website, the project team will be offering introductory webinars this fall. The webinars will walk participants through the input process and highlight the importance of the Database. We will be sharing more information on when and how to attend one of the webinars.

Thank you for your support of this important project for the land-grant system.

