

# Q3/2015 Report



**A COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING INITIATIVE  
OF THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEADS SECTION  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SECTION  
EXPERIMENT STATION SECTION  
OF THE  
APLU BOARD ON AGRICULTURE ASSEMBLY**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this quarter, kglobal continued to bolster our traditional and digital media efforts to meet our primary goal: educating our audiences — namely, members of Congress, industry leaders, and the media — about the importance of the American land-grant university system and its contribution to all facets of society. All of our tactics, from securing media interviews to executing Twitter Town Halls, represent ways in which we increase the overall awareness of AgIsAmerica and simultaneously highlight our campaign's themes of health, nutrition, and water security. This report contains kglobal's activities over the past quarter broken down into five categories:

- Traditional Media
- Digital Media
- Monthly Newsletter
- Events
- Miscellaneous

All of our activities are focused on providing a single voice for the land-grant system and calling attention to the direct impact that Colleges of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Stations, and Cooperative Extension have on the American people and more broadly, the livelihood of our country.

### TRADITIONAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

We coordinated with researchers, scientists, and communications specialists to draft and place numerous local and national land-grant stories. These stories showcased local, regional, and national research, teaching, and Extension efforts by land-grant universities and institutions. The stories were also shared with our audiences using our monthly newsletter, website, and social media platforms. Next quarter, we will maintain our aggressive traditional media strategy to continue to demonstrate the value of Experiment Station, Cooperative Extension, Colleges of Agriculture, and the land-grant system.

## TRADITIONAL MEDIA

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Land-grant stories were placed in numerous local and national media outlets.

**637** National and Local Media Hits

**265 MILLION** Impressions  
measured by circulation numbers and website traffic

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top story:  
**THIS GREEN EARTH** ...

NPR (KPCW)  
Deseret News  
Agri-View

antipated placement:  
**RURAL CONNECTIONS**



## DIGITAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, we continued to use Twitter Town Halls to expand our digital media reach. In conjunction with the Northeastern IPM Center, we worked to strategically emphasize and promote key message points and research areas of emphasis for this organization. Our grassroots and social media outreach were selectively targeted to the demographics that would be the most responsive to this, which proved very successful.

Also in this quarter, our digital media strategy emphasized identifying and recruiting a larger number of influential followers likely to engage with our content. To identify these followers, we continued to test audience segmentation tactics to reach specific regions and demographics. To recruit these followers, we continue to execute an enhanced social media strategy with refined, targeted copy and engagement with intent as well as demonstrate the creditability of scientists and researchers. As a result of our efforts, we continued to dramatically increase engagement across all AgIsAmerica digital platforms. Next quarter, we will continue to increase digital media traffic and engagement. We will continue to place additional focus on engaging directly with agricultural professionals, students, and academics associated with land-grant institutions as well as direct outreach to federal and state officials.

### DIGITAL MEDIA



Our digital platform metrics continue to remain high.

Website Page Views	<b>3,175</b>
Twitter Impressions	<b>148,313</b>
Facebook Reach	<b>41,952</b>
Potential Twitter Town Hall Impressions	<b>2,425,565</b>

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Every month, we issue a newsletter recapping our efforts and our most popular content, meaning the content that resonated most with our audiences. Our newsletter reaches internal and external audiences and is sent via email, posted on our website, and shared across our social media platforms. Our newsletter is another tool that we use to highlight the land-grant three-fold mission of teaching, research, and Extension. Since re-implementing this newsletter and sharing announcements about the newsletter on social media, we have seen a tremendous growth in organic signups from our website. Next quarter, we will continue to expand our newsletter outreach strategy to reach more internal and external audiences.

## EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, we attended three events where we discussed the importance of AgIsAmerica, highlighted best branding and messaging practices, and shared AgIsAmerica updates with internal stakeholders, from communications specialists to deans and directors. At the Western Region Joint Summer Meeting (Colo.), we helped to facilitate breakout groups, gave a presentation about AgIsAmerica, and discussed the importance of message development. At the Southern Region Program Leadership Network (Fl.), we represented the National Impact Database Committee and gave a presentation

### NEWSLETTER



Our monthly newsletter continues to expand.

Newsletter List (2012)	<b>86</b>
Newsletter List (Present)	<b>450</b>
Website Subscribers	<b>92</b>
Newsletter Growth	<b>500% +</b>
Newsletters Issued in Q3	<b>5</b>
Average Open Rate	<b>32.3%</b>
Average Click Rate	<b>13%</b>

on how AgIsAmerica leverages the Database and its corresponding website. At the ESS/SAES/ARD Fall Meeting (N.C.), we represented AgIsAmerica and discussed the importance of this communications initiative. Next quarter, we will continue to explore innovative ways to highlight AgIsAmerica's efforts and encourage internal engagement at these conferences.

## MISCELLANEOUS HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, we continued to work more closely with USDA-NIFA to better highlight the importance of NIFA funding and how it contributes to the land-grant story. We met with members of Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy's communications team, and we saw an increase in USDA-NIFA's engagement with AgIsAmerica on social media, particularly Twitter. We also met with Dr. Steve Young, Director of the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center, with whom we coordinated our August Twitter Town Hall. During this meeting, we discussed ways in which AgIsAmerica can better collaborate with the Center. Next quarter, we will continue to explore ways to elevate our existing partnerships and develop new ones.

In addition, we continue to serve on the National Impact Database Committee and participate in committee meetings. Specifically, we continue to promote the Land-Grants website and National Impact Database every time we use the hashtag #LGUimpact. This hashtag was initially created as an original hashtag for the Database's public launch. In order to reiterate the importance of the Database, we use the hashtag in conjunction with those stories every time we use a story from the Database or website on our platforms. We also encourage other land-grant institutions to use the hashtag. Next quarter, we will continue to support the Committee and promote the Database and its corresponding public facing website.

## II. TRADITIONAL MEDIA

During the quarter, we implemented an aggressive traditional media strategy, encompassing print, broadcast, and corresponding online news sites. We shared land-grant stories with national audiences, better established scientists and researchers as both credible messengers and sources of information, and actively built better relationships with university communications specialists and the media. Our efforts resulted in 637 media hits with 265 million impressions as well as significant engagement with media contacts and influencers.

### MEDIA LISTS

In order to familiarize more media with AgIsAmerica, we expanded our media lists and strategically engaged with beat reporters on social media. Our media lists reflect both location and beat, or a reporter's topic of interest and areas of expertise. We engaged with these reporters using traditional media pitches as well as by interacting with them over social media. In this way, we reinforced the AgIsAmerica brand and increased the cohesiveness of our traditional and digital media campaign.

Next quarter, we will continue to create more regional and state-specific media lists with local, national, and trade media contacts as well as use these lists to invite media to engage with AgIsAmerica, such as signing up for our newsletter or participating in our Twitter Town Halls.

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

In order to enhance our traditional media strategy, we continued to increase our interactions and correspondence with members of the media. During the quarter, we engaged with numerous media contacts, and as previously discussed, we greatly expanded our media lists to include additional contacts.

We have interacted with media via traditional media and social media. Specifically, we sent personalized emails or direct messages on Twitter, crafted personalized tweets, favorited media content on Twitter, retweeted media content on Twitter, and shared more media and trending land-grant content – engagement articles – on our platforms.

Although we do not write summaries of our engagement articles for our website, we connect with the articles' authors and acknowledge the specific land-grant university or universities mentioned in the article. By doing so, we create opportunities for engagement between members of the media, universities, and AgIsAmerica as well as demonstrate that our campaign is tapped into local, regional, and national media conversations surrounding the land-grant system. Overall, this strategy continues to enhance recognition of both the AgIsAmerica brand and the land-grant university system.

## EDITORIAL CALENDAR

To guide our traditional and digital media efforts, we continued to update our 12-month editorial calendar with local, regional, national, and evergreen news hooks from July through October. Our editorial calendar follows the legislative session, highlights national observances, and includes university-specific events, such as Extension workshops and research milestones. Our editorial calendar helps us prioritize content for each day, week, and month as well as ensure that our efforts are coordinated across mediums.

Our editorial calendar intentionally highlights national news hooks that align with the news topics listed on AgIsAmerica website so that we can easily synchronize traditional media pitches with our digital branding. Since the news topics on our website reflect the topics on the Land-Grant Impacts website, we indirectly synchronize our brand with the website and National Impact Database. Most importantly, our editorial calendar highlights news hooks related to our themes of health, nutrition, and water security.

We also match university stories to our news hooks. By doing so, we help universities participate in timely, relevant conversations occurring in traditional media as well as on Twitter – the social media platform where reporters, bloggers, and news affiliates congregate – and Facebook, the largest social media platform.

In addition, we continue to share our editorial calendar with university communications specialists on a monthly basis. We continue to receive positive feedback regarding this effort and encourage universities to engage with AgIsAmerica, from sharing impact statements that align with a particular news hook to engaging in our next Twitter Town Hall.

Since we first implemented these regular emails last year, we have noticed that many of our contacts have incorporated the recommended news hooks into their own stories.

To view sample news hooks from our editorial calendar, please reference Appendix A. To receive our news hooks and editorial calendar, please email [ashley.hawn@kglobal.com](mailto:ashley.hawn@kglobal.com).

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## RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS

During the quarter, we identified and regularly communicated with representatives at every university in our designated districts. By fostering these relationships, kglobal receives more content for AgIsAmerica, which results in more traditional and digital media engagement opportunities.

Sharing our editorial calendar represents one prominent way we build relationships with university contacts.

In response to our editorial calendar, university communications specialists share additional news hooks and/or relevant stories, which are then reviewed for traditional media and digital media opportunities. Our editorial calendar listserv has greatly expanded since we first implemented this regular email correspondence last year. Currently, our listserv has over 80 contacts, which we recruited organically.

In addition to sharing our editorial calendar, we re-implemented a regular newsletter. By cross promoting the newsletter's content on all of our platforms, we met a two-fold mission: encourage more university professionals to sign up for our newsletter and encourage more university contacts to send us content. We will discuss the newsletter in greater detail later in this report.

## TRADITIONAL MEDIA EFFORTS

Because of our traditional media efforts, we were able to highlight multiple land-grant universities and institutions in our designated districts, garnering 637 media hits totaling over 265 million impressions.

Throughout the quarter, we worked with land-grant university communications specialists, Extension educators, researchers, and other cocontacts to develop and share land-grant stories that aligned with national narratives already occurring in the news, such as National Catfish Month, 2015 as International Year of Soils, and sage grouse conservation. By highlighting timely and relevant multistate or regional efforts, we are able to call attention to the land-grant system's impact as well as demonstrate the national and regional importance of land-grant teaching, research, and Extension.

### **July Feature Story: Utah Community-Based Conservation Program Receives Western Extension Directors Association Award of Excellence**

Because of this feature story, we were able to secure an interview between Dr. Terry Messmer at Utah State University and "This Green Earth," a conservation radio show aired on NPR affiliate KPCW. In addition, we secured an interview between environmental reporter Amy Joi O'Donoghue with The Deseret News.

To view this feature story in full, please reference Appendix B.

To view O'Donoghue's article in full, please reference Appendix C.

### **August Feature Story: Seven Land-Grant Universities Help Stabilize Catfish Production, Increase Economic Vitality**

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

### **September Feature Story: Land-Grant Institutions Work Across State Lines to Increase Fruit Tree Production**

This story was also repurposed on BARN Media, an agricultural broadcasting service heard on 20+ radio stations in Colorado and neighboring states, and Agri-View, Wisconsin's leading agricultural outlet. To view this story in full, please reference Appendix E.

## III. DIGITAL MEDIA

### WEBSITE

This quarter, we were able to increase user activity on the website due to enhanced user experience (UX). As part of enhancing our UX, we continue to create new content and refine content copy. In order to maintain current traffic and drive new traffic to the website, we will continue to improve these UX aspects as well as emphasize cross-platform promotion.

The AgIsAmerica website continues to act as the primary digital platform for coordination between the land-grant system, the Colleges of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, and Cooperative Extension. Our website hosts external content, provides brand consistency, and allows us to highlight our feature stories and our new initiatives.

Between July 1, 2015 and October 1, 2015, we added a total of 27 new stories, such as the “Drought Tames California Wildflowers” story below. Our percentage of new website sessions increased from 70.2% to 73.48%, and we had a total of 3,175 page views.

## Drought Tames California's Wildflowers

A study from the University of California, Davis finds native wildflowers in California are losing species diversity after multiple years of drier winters. This provides the first direct evidence of climate change impacts in the state's grassland communities. “Such diversity losses may foreshadow larger-scale extinctions, especially in regions that are becoming increasingly dry,” said lead author Susan Harrison, a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy. The future grassland communities of California are expected to be less productive, provide less nutrition to herbivores, and become more vulnerable to invasion by exotic species, the study said.

[Read more here!](#)

We categorize the stories we share according to the following topics: Water Security; Nutrition & Health; Food Security; Youth, Family, and Communities; Environmental Stewardship; Agricultural Systems; and Energy & Bioproducts. These categories align with those listed on the National Impact Database to demonstrate cohesion and consistency across platforms and brands.

We use our website to highlight the important work being done at land-grant institutions, and we welcome videos, blog posts, and news articles. To send suggested AgIsAmerica content, please email to [ashley.hawn@kglobal.com](mailto:ashley.hawn@kglobal.com).

## AGISAMERICA FEATURES SECTION

In order to increase awareness of AgIsAmerica and the land-grant system, we continue to populate our website's Features section, which functions as a newsfeed unique to AgIsAmerica. To demonstrate, this section hosts our monthly newsletter, our monthly feature stories, and content relevant to our goals and objectives. Since July 1, 2015, we have shared 7 new pieces of collateral.

1. July 2015: Utah Community-Based Conservation Program Receives Western Extension Directors Association Award of Excellence
2. July 2015: Why Ag Matters (AgIsAmerica's Monthly Newsletter)
3. July 2015: Q&A with University of Maryland Researcher Dr. John Lea-Cox
4. August 2015: Meet Steve Young, Director of the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center
5. August 2015: Ag Is America & The Northeastern IPM Center Twitter Town Hall
6. August 2015: Seven Land-Grant Universities Help Stabilize Catfish Production, Increase Economic Vitality
7. September 2015: Land-Grant Institutions Work Across State Lines to Increase Fruit Tree Production



One of our most recent features, the Q&A Steve Young from the Northeastern IPM Center represents another way we will validate the creditability of scientists, researchers, and Extension educators as messengers, a lesson garnered from our message testing. “Meet the Researcher(s)” or “Meet the Extension Educator(s)” will be a unique regular feature, and we will aim to highlight a researcher or Extension Educator each month. All of our Q&As are shared via traditional and digital media efforts.

To suggest AgIsAmerica features, please email [ashley.hawn@kglobal.com](mailto:ashley.hawn@kglobal.com) for consideration

## SOCIAL MEDIA

This quarter, we focused our social media efforts on increasing engagement between AgIsAmerica and key influencers, some of whom we identified through audience segmentation. Since social media is an active, ever-changing conversation, we continuously analyze our engagement strategies in order to stay relevant and influential in our thought space. Using our analysis, we adopt the most effective tactics for grassroots, grassroots, and influencer outreach.

Across our social media platforms, we shared numerous impact statements that corresponded to our editorial calendar, local news hooks, and general national conversations. Since investment and engagement in trending conversations is vital to the growth and continued success of the campaign, we regularly participate in ongoing industry-specific and broader conversations. To help our efforts, we creatively used trending hashtags and referenced current events.

This strategy served two purposes. First, by providing this information to our follower base, we promoted the multifaceted efforts from land-grant institutions, ensuring a united voice for the land-grant system across the entire campaign. Second, engaging influencers in these conversations helped to drive organic, sustainable traffic to our digital media platforms, which in turn, raised the profile of member universities and institutions.

To share and suggest research, teaching, or Extension updates, please email [ashley.hawn@kglobal.com](mailto:ashley.hawn@kglobal.com) and [ryan.schaefer@kglobal.com](mailto:ryan.schaefer@kglobal.com).

## TWITTER

AgIsAmerica launched its Twitter account on September 12, 2011 and has gained 22,094 followers to date. Since Twitter is the leading “live” social media platform, it is important for AgIsAmerica to maintain a consistent newsfeed as well as effectively recruit and engage with followers. We have shifted from a recruitment strategy to an engagement strategy in order to better foster relationships and establish brand loyalty with influencers.

Previously, we focused on recruiting a mass of followers. Now, after achieving this, we are targeting our content in order to better activate our followers. This will help to amplify our signal, allowing information to be dispersed to an even wider audience. During this quarter, we utilized more direct advocacy-based engagement tactics with federal elected officials.

We also used Twitter to cross-promote our other digital media platforms and traditional media efforts. Part of this increased engagement involved retweeting and engaging in conversations with other influencers and organizations. By doing so, we carried traditional dialogues and relationships into an online setting.

We also engaged in conversations with unaffiliated Twitter users who were interested in our news items. Although unaffiliated users usually do not have high social media influence scores, called Klout scores, this engagement represents a long-term strategy of creating informal dialogue that will increase brand awareness and loyalty over time.

Averages for active days include:

KEY METRIC	Q1	Q2	Q3
Impressions	92,830	168,790	148,313
Engagements	1,617	2,085	1,564
Retweets	253	327	232
Link Clicks	519	489	441
Favorites	215	277	290

During this quarter, we refined our Twitter Town Hall strategies and tactics. Last quarter, we hosted our first-ever Twitter Town Hall with Montana State University. Our goal behind these Town Halls is to improve engagement tactics, utilize audience segmentation tactics, and implement our message testing findings. We held our second Twitter Town Hall in August.

## Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Twitter Town Hall

To promote the Town Hall and encourage engagement, we issued a call to action at the onset of our Town Hall to our newsletter list. The promotional newsletter titled “Happening Now: Twitter Town Hall” resulted in a 30% open rate and 7% click-through rate. We also shared this collateral with the communications specialists, deans, and directors who receive our regular editorial calendar.



### Overview

The goal of this Twitter Town Hall was to establish credibility and raise awareness about the AgIsAmerica brand while simultaneously fueling interest and discussion surrounding land-grant universities and the Northeastern IPM Center. We used carefully structured messaging and audience segmentation tactics to achieve these goals.

### Our Results

This was the first time we implemented our new hashtag, #agischat. This is the hashtag we will use going forward for consistency and to start building brand recall. The research scientists for this Twitter Town Hall were:

- Harold van Es, Cornell University
- Allie Tasey, National Pest Management Association
- Jeff Bradshaw, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Steve Young, Northeastern IPM Center

We were able to create significant buzz around the event and our hashtag. Additionally, as a result of our “Meet the Researcher” Feature, our researchers generated some traction, as well. We were fortunate to receive assistance from such high-profile universities. They greatly contributed to the conversation and the overall success of the event by repurposing AgIsAmerica content.

Below are the topline metrics:

KEY METRIC	#agischat
Potential Impressions	2,425,565
Potential Reach	71,751
Total Tweets	292
Participating Users Average Followers	1,310
Average Number Of Tweets/Users	5.2

### Engagements

We were thrilled by the involvement of third party stakeholders from a wide range of fields including media, trade groups, education, other public land-grant universities, private citizens, and statewide organizations.

Importantly, AgIsAmerica worked to ensure that we engaged with every member on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees as well as the regional delegations before and during the Town Hall.

Examples of third party stakeholders who participated in the #agischat Twitter Town Hall include:

- USDA-NIFA
- Pesticide Action Network
- Cornell CALS
- Montana State University
- Berkeley Health
- UConn Extension
- Common Market (DE)
- Berkeley Food Institute
- University of D.C.
- Grower's Toolkit
- WAAESD
- Dr. Stafne (MSU Extension)



### Topics

The Twitter Town Hall focused on issues related to:

- Technology and its agricultural applications
- Invasive species (both pests and plants)
- Soil science
- The Master Gardener program
- Community events and outreach
- Federal funding and grants

### Takeaways

As discussed above, we believe this event was a huge success. We demonstrated that AgIsAmerica is an active, engaged brand, and has embraced Twitter as an important vehicle for connecting with followers. We also sharpened our model that we will expand on for future social media engagement. The same goes for the Northeastern IPM Center. We gained significant insight into the audiences that are most responsive to the messages we promoted. The convergence of the agriculture industry and social media in an hour long event is a very dynamic mechanism.

## FACEBOOK

Established on November 16, 2012, our AgIsAmerica Facebook account has amassed 12,882 fans. While this platform itself has lost a significant share of general usage to other platforms, it remains the largest. Thus, having an active, popular, and growing Facebook is integral to cementing a successful brand.

Like Twitter, we focused our strategies on user engagement and the application of our message testing findings. For example, toward the end of 2014 Q4, geotargeting posts became available on Facebook. Geotargeting posts allow us to pick where we would like Facebook users to view our post, and when appropriate, we used this tool as an audience segmentation and engagement tactic.

Throughout the quarter, we honed in on topics that resonated with followers and thereby, would increase our organic reach. As we continue to develop stronger relationships with universities and share content of interest to our audiences, we will continue to see a great deal of user-end engagement and amplification of our posts.

KEY METRIC	Q1	Q2	Q3
Daily Engaged Users	987	3,261	1,491
Daily Total Reach	16,116	50,767	37,973
Daily Total Impressions	40,003	110,828	64,435

## YOUTUBE

This quarter, we made the decision to discontinue consistently updating our YouTube channel. The opportunity cost of searching, sharing, and promoting videos on a non-social platform like YouTube was taking away too much time that could otherwise be spent on the growing demands of Twitter, Facebook, and our website. With the recent implementation and unprecedented success of our Twitter Town Halls, we feel it's best to dedicate our time and resources to fresh ideas like this that have visible high-yield returns.

As such, our numbers for the AgIsAmerica YouTube channel currently stand as follows:

[Playlists]

AgKnowledge: "The more you know, the more you grow." Videos: 42

Colleges of Agriculture in Action Videos: 77

Cooperative Extension in Action Videos: 59

The Land-Grant Mission Videos: 15

## IV. MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We re-implemented a regular newsletter strategy in order to better highlight teaching, research, and Extension efforts as well as the stories that resonate with our internal and external audiences. The newsletter – Why Ag Matters – is sent on behalf of AgIsAmerica and is circulated via email through a program that allows us to analyze its metrics in real time. We share every newsletter on our digital media platforms.



This quarter, we shared five newsletters with the average open rate of 32.3% and an average click rate of 13%.

We issued our monthly newsletter on July 1 and garnered a 34.8% open rate and 13.3% click-through rate.

To view this newsletter, please reference Appendix F.

We issued our monthly newsletter on July 31 and garnered a 30.3% open rate and a 16.5% click-through rate.

To view this newsletter, please reference Appendix G.

We issued a newsletter on August 27 announcing our Town Hill with the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center and garnered a 29.9% open rate and a 7.1% click-through rate.

To view this newsletter, please reference Appendix H.

We issued our monthly newsletter on August 31 and garnered a 31.9% open rate and a 12.5% click-through rate.

To view this newsletter, please reference Appendix I.

To date, our newsletter list consists of 450 contacts. Of these contacts, 92 contacts subscribed organically through the AgIsAmerica website. However, we will execute an aggressive external marketing rollout strategy to test the right time and days to best reach our subscribers as well as to expand our subscription list to include members of the media, industry experts, and Capitol Hill staff, among others.

To sign-up for our monthly newsletter, please email [ashley.hawn@kglobal.com](mailto:ashley.hawn@kglobal.com) or visit [agisamerica.org](http://agisamerica.org).

## V. EVENTS

This quarter, we attended three events where we discussed the importance of AgIsAmerica, highlighted best branding and messaging practices, and shared AgIsAmerica updates with internal stakeholders, from communications specialists to department heads.

Next quarter, we will continue to explore innovative ways to highlight AgIsAmerica's efforts and encourage internal engagement at these conferences.

At the Western Region Joint Summer Meeting (Colo.), we helped to facilitate breakout groups for Deans, Directors, and communications specialists. For the first round of breakout groups, we helped Deans and Directors practice their elevator speeches, or brief pitches, for elected officials. In the second breakout group, we worked specifically with the communications specialists to identify the messengers and intended audiences for the Western Agenda. During this conference, we also gave a presentation about AgIsAmerica where we discussed the importance of message development, traditional media, and digital media.

At the Southern Region Program Leadership Network (Fl.), we represented the National Impact Database Committee and gave a presentation on how AgIsAmerica leverages the Database and its corresponding website. Specifically, we discussed how we use the Database to populate our editorial calendar as well as ways in which we continue to leverage the hashtag #LGIimpact. Our presentation was a joint presentation with contributions by Scott Cummings (Texas A&M), Faith Peppers (University of Georgia), and Frankie Gould (Louisiana State University).

At the ESS/SAES/ARD Fall Meeting (N.C.), we represented AgIsAmerica and discussed the importance of our communications initiatives. At the meeting, we met with leaders from Experiment Station and Cooperative

Extension to update them on our communications program as well as solicit them on future opportunities.

Next quarter, we will continue to attend various events that help us better connect with land-grant universities. Overall, our goal is to develop better working relationships with universities in order to better highlight their research, teaching, and Extension efforts.

## VI. MISCELLANEOUS

### USDA-NIFA

This summer, we met with members of Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy's communications team at USDA-NIFA. We discussed the ways in which we currently both promote and support land-grant universities as well as ways in which we could better work together to promote the same message. This meeting allowed us to establish a better working relationship with USDA-NIFA and resulted in a significant increase of USDA-NIFA engagement in our Twitter Town Halls.

As a result of this meeting, we hope to cement monthly calls with the USDA-NIFA communications team, work together to partner on opportunities, and share collateral and strategies. Specifically, kglobal will share our editorial calendar with Bueno and her team, highlight USDA-NIFA's funding role in more stories, promote USDA-NIFA's hashtag #NIFAimpacts, and better showcase USDA-NIFA's efforts on our platforms, from spotlighting a USDA-NIFA blog post in our newsletter to engaging with USDA-NIFA on social media.

### NORTHEASTERN INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT CENTER

In September, we met with Dr. Steve Young, Director of the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center. During our meeting, we discussed AgIsAmerica's Twitter Town Hall with the Center and presented our final metrics to Dr. Young. We also discussed additional ways AgIsAmerica could continue to engage with the Center and advised Dr. Young on tactics should the Center decide to host its own Twitter Town Hall.

### NATIONAL IMPACT DATABASE COMMITTEE

We continue to support the National Impact Database Committee and promote the Database. We have regular, bi-monthly check-in calls with the National Impact Database Committee and provide relevant feedback and updates. We continue to promote the Database by using the unique hashtag #LGUimpact we developed during the launch. Specifically, we connect this hashtag to any story we pull from the Database and repurpose on our platforms. That way, we continue to associate the hashtag with the Database beyond its launch. Currently, we are helping the Committee write a fact sheet about these resources for deans and directors to encourage usage of the Database and its corresponding website.

## VII. Appendices

APPENDIX A: Sample Editorial Calendar

APPENDIX B: July 2015 Feature Story

APPENDIX C: *Deseret News* Story

APPENDIX D: August 2015 Feature Story

APPENDIX E: September 2015 Feature Story

APPENDIX F: July Newsletter Text

APPENDIX G: July Newsletter Metrics

APPENDIX H: August Newsletter (1 of 2) Text

APPENDIX I: August Newsletter (1 of 2) Metrics

APPENDIX J: August Newsletter (2 of 2) Text

APPENDIX K: August Newsletter (2 of 2) Metrics

APPENDIX L: September Newsletter Text

APPENDIX M: September Newsletter Metrics

## APPENDIX A: Sample Editorial Calendar

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
243	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/features/growing-great-vegetables">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/features/growing-great-vegetables</a>	Growing Great Vegetables	N/A	8/13/2015	Communities, Health	NDSU	
244	<a href="http://uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-14-2015-Ark-What-we-learned-research.aspx">http://uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-14-2015-Ark-What-we-learned-research.aspx</a>	What we did this summer: learning real-word scientific research	N/A	8/14/2015	Research, Resources	Arkansas	
245	<a href="http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio_video/2015/08/081315-cal-hahntimelapse.html">http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio_video/2015/08/081315-cal-hahntimelapse.html</a>	Virginia Tech's Hahn Horticulture Garden springs into summer	N/A	8/15/2015	Resources, Communi	VT	Let's be sure to link to the video and add it to YouTube
246	<a href="http://ucanr.edu/News/ANR_News_Blog/?blogpost=18019&amp;blogasset=58743">http://ucanr.edu/News/ANR_News_Blog/?blogpost=18019&amp;blogasset=58743</a>	Warmer Winter is Hurting California Cherry Crop	N/A	8/16/2015	Resources, Water Sec	UCANR	
247	<a href="http://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-13-2015-Ark-KUAF-water.aspx">http://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-13-2015-Ark-KUAF-water.aspx</a>	KUAF, Extension explore water resources' impact	N/A	8/17/2015	Water Security	Arkansas	This is cool! Let's be sure to connect with the radio show - have them in our SM copy and follow on SM
248	<a href="http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/story/living_soils072115.aspx">http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/story/living_soils072115.aspx</a>	The International Year of Soils: Soils are Living	2015= International Year of Soils	8/18/2015	Resources, Land	K-State	Let's share the video on YouTube
249	<a href="https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/prairie-fare-is-coffee-good-for-your-health">https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/prairie-fare-is-coffee-good-for-your-health</a>	Prairie Fare: Is Coffee Good for Your Health?	N/A	8/19/2015	Health	NDSU	
250	<a href="http://news.ifas.ufl.edu/2015/08/two-ufifas-animal-sciences-faculty-members-each-earn-450k-cattle-research-grants/">http://news.ifas.ufl.edu/2015/08/two-ufifas-animal-sciences-faculty-members-each-earn-450k-cattle-research-grants/</a>	Two UF/IFAS animal sciences faculty members each earn \$450K cattle research grants	N/A	8/20/2015	Resources		Let's be sure to use #NIFAImpacts
251	No Link Yet	Smart exterior lighting can help protect wildlife	N/A	8/21/2015	Land Management	MSU	
252	<a href="http://uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-14-2015-Ark-Wind-Tunnels.aspx">http://uaex.edu/media-resources/news/august2015/08-14-2015-Ark-Wind-Tunnels.aspx</a>	Going long on berry season with high tunnels	N/A	8/22/2015	Resources, land management	Arkansas	
253	<a href="http://news.aces.edu/blog/2015/07/14/fresh-produce-selecting-serving-safely/">http://news.aces.edu/blog/2015/07/14/fresh-produce-selecting-serving-safely/</a>	Fresh Produce: Selecting and Serving It Properly	N/A	8/23/2015	Health, Nutrition	Alabama A&M	



## APPENDIX B: July 2015 Feature Story

### **UTAH COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION PROGRAM RECEIVES WESTERN EXTENSION DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

July 17, 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Dr. Terry Messmer, professor in the Department of Wildland Resources with Utah State University, received the Western Extension Directors' Association (WEDA) Award of Excellence on behalf of Utah's Community-Based Conservation Program (CBCP). Utah's CBCP coordinates communication and sage grouse conservation efforts between Utah State University Extension, resource management working groups, private partners, and public partners. The award was presented at the Western Region Joint Summer meeting hosted by Colorado State University in Breckenridge, Colo. last week.

"I'm honored to receive this Award of Excellence on behalf of my CBCP colleagues," said Dr. Messmer. "We will continue to engage local landowners, ranchers, agricultural producers, state and federal agencies and environmental organizations in partnerships that help protect sage grouse and the working landscapes that are the very essence of the Western way of life. The sage grouse plays an important role in sagebrush ecosystems in Utah and the western region, and our conservation efforts set a precedent for the protection of other sagebrush animals."

Sagebrush habitats stretch across most of the Western United States, and this "sagebrush sea" has supported humans and nearly 350 other species of wildlife for more than 10,000 years.

Sagebrush grows at elevations between 3,000 and 5,000 feet and has a long life expectancy. Although sagebrush can withstand drought conditions, invasive species, agricultural conversion, and fire severely deplete the vegetation.

Sage grouse are the largest native grouse species in North America. This long-lived, ground-nesting bird is found in 11 Western states where it is dependent on sagebrush habitat for survival. Current threats to sage grouse populations and habitat include climate change, overgrazing, and habitat fragmentation.

"Sagebrush is vital to wildlife in Utah as it provides shelter for many species, including the sage grouse, and can be used as forage by other wildlife, like elk, deer and domestic livestock. In fact, during the winter, sagebrush is often the only food source available to the sage grouse. It's imperative that we continue to work together to preserve this precious ecosystem and keep the sage grouse off the endangered species list," said Dr. Messmer.

Utah's CBCP made significant contributions to the sage grouse conservation and management plan for the state of Utah, and other western states have similar plans. To date, Utah's CBCP has 11 working groups across the state and over 20 local, state, and federal partners. To learn more about Utah's CBCP, visit <http://www.utahcbcp.org/>

About Agriculture is America

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

## APPENDIX C: *Deseret News* Story

### **'WESTERN WAY OF LIFE' MAY HINGE ON FATE OF CHICKEN-SIZED BIRD**

*Decision Due Tuesday On Whether To List The Greater Sage Grouse As An Endangered Species*

SALT LAKE CITY — Chicken-sized and unremarkable in its plumage, the greater sage grouse has captured hundreds of millions of dollars in a conservation race to save it from extinction, a controversial effort that has 11 Western states holding their collective breath over whether the bird will be added to the Endangered Species list.

On Tuesday at 10 a.m., Interior Secretary Sally Jewell will announce if the bird is on the list during an event at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge outside of Denver. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' director Greg Sheehan will attend the event, which he said celebrates the "collaborative" conservation success of species.

That language could possibly mean the bird will not be listed as endangered — something Jewell has previously said is her preference.

Critics of such a listing say the very fabric of the Western way of life is at stake — ranching, mining, oil and gas production, development of renewable energy, hunting and fishing and trails-based recreation would all be in jeopardy, they say.

"Our experience is that any wildlife is better taken care of under state management than under federal management," said Mike Styler, executive director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources. "We take care of our wildlife by creating habitat in an environment in which they can thrive. The federal government tries to protect them through regulation and regulation doesn't do anything."

The greater sage grouse is this century's northern spotted owl, which was added to the Endangered Species list in 1990, an action that led to an end of nearly all federal timber sales for most Western forests in Oregon and Washington. With those timber sales went the extermination of prime jobs in the timber industry. The species' numbers continued to decline, however, and now the federal agency is considering adding more stringent protections.

Conservative Western politicians believe a similar, drastic fate awaits their states' economies should the bird be listed.

"It is a huge issue for the West and we believe that active management is preferable to regulation," Styler said. "I can't think of a single regulation that will stop a wildfire or pinion or juniper encroachment, but on the ground work will."

The greater sage grouse has seen the majority of its west-wide range ruined by wildfires, invasive species, urban encroachment, and the onslaught of pinion and juniper pine.

According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, greater sage grouse populations have decreased by 65 percent in the past five decades. The bird is considered an "indicator" species for the overall health of the sagebrush steppe landscape, which supports 350 species.

Once numbering in the millions, the greater sage grouse has declined to a few hundred thousand birds, prompting multiple groups to petition the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to grant protections under the Endangered Species Act.

A court-ordered deadline for that decision is due by Sept. 30.

In 2010, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service launched the Sage Grouse Initiative, an extensive partnership among ranchers, agencies and universities to improve sagebrush habitat and the bird's populations.

Since its inception, the initiative has enrolled 1,129 ranches in 11 states covering 4.4 million acres. States have their own sage grouse conservation plans and Utah is among five states where governors issued executive orders to ramp up protections. The money expended is nearing \$750 million.

In May, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service released 14 sage grouse state management plans covering 165 million acres to help protect the bird.

The plans by the land management agencies are another nod to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that proactive steps are being taken to conserve the species, absent more stringent regulations imposed by status under the Endangered Species Act.

Jewell, in a meeting with the Deseret Media Companies' editorial board earlier this summer, said the conservation effort to save the greater sage grouse is unprecedented, and at the time, indicated she was hopeful that the wildlife service will ultimately say Endangered Species Act protections are not warranted.

Those who have been on the ground working to help the bird worry that the "hammer" of a listing will derail voluntary efforts involving ranching and other industries.

"We have 1,500 volunteers in Utah going to these (sage grouse) meetings and they are doing good stuff," said Terry Messmer, a Utah State University professor in the Department of Wildland Resources. "We know more about the sage grouse populations than any other state because we have mapped the ecology. Half of the sage grouse population is on land that is privately owned and so the idea is that we are focusing on learning what those threats are and working with private landowners and federal partners to put some good conservation on the ground."

Utah's plan has 11 distinct management areas covering 7.5 million acres to help populations that already saw an increase of 40 percent from 2013 to 2015.

Groups like the Western Watersheds Project, WildEarth Guardians and Center for Biological Diversity — three of the petitioners to get the bird listed — say state plans and federal plans fall far short and are not aggressive enough.

But Sheehan said the state's plan has been successful, demonstrating a commitment to conserving the bird and protecting a part of Utah's heritage.

"The sage grouse is an iconic native Utah species well documented by early settlers and mountain men. It was an important food source and part of our state's history," he said. "It needs to have solid protections for it but that does not mean being listed as threatened or endangered."

## APPENDIX D: August 2015 Feature Story

### SEVEN LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES HELP STABILIZE CATFISH PRODUCTION, INCREASE ECONOMIC VITALITY

August 2015

WASHINGTON, DC – Researchers from seven land-grant universities are working together to develop technology that helps catfish farmers meet rising consumer demand for catfish. These researchers participate in Multistate Research Project S-1031 “Hybrid Catfish Production & Performance” (S-1031), which is supported, in part, through USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. S-1031 researchers focus their research and outreach efforts on improving the efficiency of technology and practices used to raise hybrid catfish.

Saied Mostaghimi, BSE “Although channel catfish represent 70 percent of the catfish industry, production has decreased—both large commercial catfish producers and small family farms are struggling to keep up with rising costs of production and less expensive imported fish. That’s why it’s imperative that we continue to work together to make it easier to produce hybrid catfish, crosses of blue and channel catfish that are faster-growing and meatier. Although hybrid catfish farming can lower production costs, farmers need specific production and harvest technology,” said Saied Mostaghimi, director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station at Virginia Tech and administrative advisor for S-1031.

S-1031 researchers have worked together to increase adoption of efficiency-boosting technology and practices among hybrid catfish farmers. Specifically, researchers have developed technology for sorting fish in ponds into groups by size so that smaller catfish do not get caught in traditional sorting nets. In addition, researchers have developed ways to improve hybrid breeding, such as extending spawning seasons, determining ideal temperature and timing for hybrid embryo hatching, altering female catfish diets to increase fecundity, and selective breeding to select fish with valuable traits.

“Improved hybrid catfish production and harvest technology will not only help our farmers but will also improve our food security as demand for hybrid catfish increases. Catfish farming is an integral economic driver for many communities, especially here in the South, and we hope our research will sustain productivity and profits for our farmers,” said Mostaghimi, who is the associate dean of research and graduate studies for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Hybrid fry catfish production has drastically increased since S-1031 researchers first began working on this project. In fact, last year, 200 million hybrid catfish fry were produced, which is more than 12 times the production rate in 2007. This year, hybrid catfish production is expected to account for more than 50 percent of catfish production.

The seven participating institutions include:

- University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
- Auburn University
- University of Maryland
- University of Memphis
- University of Minnesota
- Mississippi State University
- Southern Illinois University

About Agriculture is America

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



## APPENDIX E: September 2015 Feature Story

### LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS WORK ACROSS STATE LINES TO INCREASE FRUIT TREE PRODUCTION

September 2015

WASHINGTON, DC – Nearly 30 land-grant institutions, representative of the Western, North Central, Southern, and Northeastern regions, are working together to increase the productivity of temperate-zone fruit trees by developing better rootstocks. Rootstocks (a plant's root system or other part of a plant where new growth stems from) are integral components of a high-density orchard because they control final canopy size, and a smaller tree canopy means more trees per acre. However, rootstocks that are currently available have many weaknesses that make them susceptible to pests and diseases and unsuitable for certain soils and climates. That's why researchers from Multistate Research Project NC-140 – Improving Sustainability in Fruit Tree Production through Changes in Rootstock Use – are researching and sharing information about sustainable, higher-yielding, easier to manage rootstocks.

“In North America, fruit tree growers can suffer great economic and yield losses due to freezing temperatures, diseases, soil conditions, and rootstock incompatibility. As consumer demand increases, growers will need to use less land and energy while garnering higher fruit yields,” said Ronald Perry, Professor in the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University and administrative advisor for NC-140. “In the last 30 years, fruit growers in North America have steadily transitioned to higher density orchards, and consumers benefit from fruit being produced and harvested from smaller trees by finding fruit is of higher quality and available at lower prices.”

Over the past five years, NC-140 researchers have measured tree growth, size control, and pest and disease resistance in order to develop the most sustainable rootstocks. NC-140's research trials are accelerating the process of identifying and commercializing high-performing rootstocks to make new rootstocks available to growers sooner.

Overall, the group's research and recommendations have resulted in earlier returns, greater yields, and higher fruit quality with a financial benefit to U.S. fruit tree producers of \$250 million. For instance, 98 percent of all New Jersey orchards now use apple, pear, peach and cherry dwarfing rootstock. In Indiana, grower use of rootstocks from NC-140 trials has increased by 660 percent, with an estimated crop value increase of more than \$12,000 per acre. Nationwide, sweet cherry acreage has increased by 10,000 acres in the last 10 years, and planting density has increased 400 percent, or 415 trees per acre. In addition, transitioning from large, unwieldy apple trees spaced far apart to compact rows of high-yielding, small trees, has eased apple orchard maintenance and harvesting labor and increased profitability.

NC-140 is supported in part through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Renewed until 2017, the participating land-grant institutions will continue to work with researchers and Extension educators as well as industry, state, federal, and international partners to support the fruit tree industry and its growers.

The participating land-grant institutions include:

Auburn University  
University of Arkansas  
University of California, Davis  
California Cooperative Extension  
Clemson University,

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Colorado State University  
Cornell University  
University of Georgia  
University of Idaho  
University of Illinois  
Iowa State University  
University of Kentucky  
University of Maine  
University of Maryland  
University of Massachusetts  
Michigan State University  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri  
New Mexico State University  
North Carolina State University  
Ohio State University  
Oregon State University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Purdue University  
Rutgers University  
Utah State University  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Washington State University  
University of Wisconsin

#### About Agriculture Is America (AgIsAmerica)

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

## APPENDIX F: July Newsletter Text

### WHY AG MATTERS – July 2015

Your monthly snapshot of the extraordinary work from our land-grant universities, institutions, and Colleges of Agriculture compiled by Agriculture Is America.

### 2015 is the International Year of Soils

Twelve land-grant universities are working together to make soil survey data more reliable and accessible. Soil survey data is used to evaluate soils and landscape health as well as address environmental concerns like erosion, crop yields, and climate change. Researchers from several universities serve on NCERA-003, a multistate research committee. NCERA-003 is now the longest continuous running research committee in the North Central region

Here's what Dr. Ken Olson, soil scientist at the University of Illinois and a former NCERA-003 administrative advisor, said: "Since soil is highly susceptible to disturbances caused by humans, it's imperative to use soil survey data when managing land and natural resources. We are developing new methods and tools to help gather more reliable data and broaden the scope and impact of soil science research."

Here's what Dr. Jerry Miller, soil scientist at Iowa State University and a former NCERA-003 administrative advisor, said: "By making soil survey data more reliable and accessible, NCERA-003 is facilitating smart, timely land and natural resource management decisions "We work tirelessly to demonstrate the importance of soils and monitoring soil health, from hosting conferences, to displaying museum exhibits, to publishing educational materials. Our goal is ensure land managers take care of the nation's soils and the life and infrastructure that depend on them."

To read more about NCERA-003, please [click here](#).

### Highlights in Research, Teaching, and Extension

- Alabama Cooperative Extension: Understanding Gluten
- University of Kentucky: UK Receives Grant from USDA NIFA to Empower Urban, Homeless Youth
- University of Missouri: Eating Breakfast Increases Chemical That Regulates Cravings

### Top Tweets

**Fun Fact:** Did you know July is National Blueberry Month? Check out this [Buzzfeed](#) article that highlights eight ways to use blueberries this season.

This is a monthly email highlighting some of the content featured on Ag Is America. Our goal is to share the land-grant story with you.

What has your local land-grant university or institution done to impact jobs, the economy, national security, water security, health or nutrition research and education?

We'd love to hear from you. We're particularly interested in updates from the Colleges of Agriculture, research accomplishments, and Extension efforts. Send your ideas and questions to [@AgIsAmerica](#) with the [#LGUimpact](#).

We also invite you to help communicate the value of land-grant institutions by:

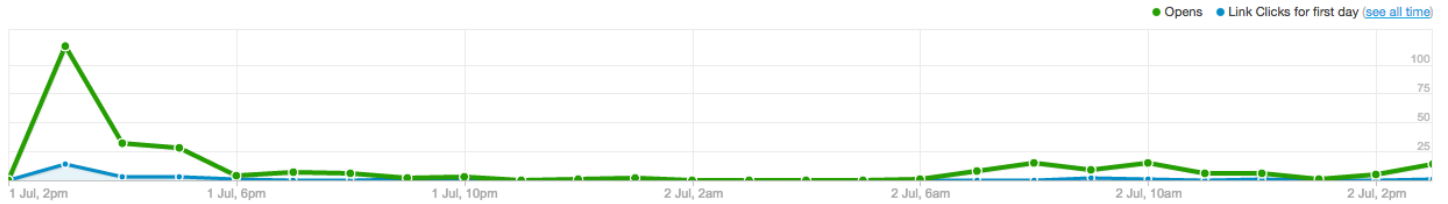
- Sharing this newsletter
- Following AgIsAmerica on Twitter and encouraging others to do the same
- Retweeting content from @AgIsAmerica
- Mentioning us in your own tweets and linking to stories on [agisamerica.org](https://www.agisamerica.org)

# APPENDIX G: July Newsletter Metrics

## Why Ag Matters - July 2015

Sent on 1 Jul 2015 to 422 unique subscribers across [2 lists](#)

[View](#) [Share Campaign](#) [Export Report](#)



- 143 Unique opens**  
356 total opens to date
- 11 Bounced**  
2.61% couldn't be delivered
- 268 Not Opened**  
Open rates are *only estimates*

- 34.79%** of all recipients [opened so far](#)
- 13.29%** [clicked a link](#) (19 people)
- 0.49%** [unsubscribed](#) (2 people)
- 0** people marked it as spam (0%)
- 3** [shares](#) across Facebook, Twitter & email

Most popular links <a href="#">(full report)</a>	CLICKS
<a href="http://agisamerica.org/news/understanding-gluten/">agisamerica.org/news/understanding-gluten/</a>	10
<a href="http://agisamerica.org">agisamerica.org</a>	6
<a href="#">Link to web-based version of this email</a>	6
<a href="http://agisamerica.org/june-2015-twelve-land-...il-science-impact-resource-management/">agisamerica.org/june-2015-twelve-land-...il-science-impact-resource-management/</a>	3
<a href="http://agisamerica.org/news/eating-breakfast-...ases-chemical-that-regulates-cravings/">agisamerica.org/news/eating-breakfast-...ases-chemical-that-regulates-cravings/</a>	3

Top countries <a href="#">(full report)</a>	OPENS
United States of America	237
France	3
Guam	2
American Samoa	1
Ireland	1



## APPENDIX H: August Newsletter (1 of 2) Text

### WHY AG MATTERS - August 2015

Your monthly snapshot of the extraordinary work from our land-grant universities, institutions, and Colleges of Agriculture compiled by Agriculture Is America.

#### Utah Community-Based Conservation Program Receives Western Extension Directors' Association Award of Excellence

Dr. Terry Messmer, professor in the Department of Wildland Resources with Utah State University, received the Western Extension Directors' Association (WEDA) Award of Excellence on behalf of Utah's Community-Based Conservation Program (CBCP). Utah's CBCP coordinates communication and sage grouse conservation efforts between Utah State University Extension, resource management working groups, private partners, and public partners. The award was presented at the Western Region Joint Summer meeting hosted by Colorado State University in Breckenridge, Colo.

Here's what Dr. Messer said: "I'm honored to receive this Award of Excellence on behalf of my CBCP colleagues. We will continue to engage local landowners, ranchers, agricultural producers, state and federal agencies and environmental organizations in partnerships that help protect sage grouse and the working landscapes that are the very essence of the Western way of life. The sage grouse plays an important role in sagebrush ecosystems in Utah and the western region, and our conservation efforts set a precedent for the protection of other sagebrush animals.

"Sagebrush is vital to wildlife in Utah as it provides shelter for many species, including the sage grouse, and can be used as forage by other wildlife, like elk, deer and domestic livestock. In fact, during the winter, sagebrush is often the only food source available to the sage grouse. It's imperative that we continue to work together to preserve this precious ecosystem and keep the sage grouse off the endangered species list."

To read more about the award and CBCP's efforts, please [click here](#).

To learn more about Utah's CBCP, please [click here](#).

#### Meet the Researcher: Dr. John D. Lea-Cox with University of Maryland, College Park

Meet Dr. John Lea-Cox, Professor and Nursery Extension Specialist in the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture with the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Lea-Cox is a nutrient and water management expert and currently leads a team of researchers focused on developing and implementing wireless water and soil sensor technology. AgIsAmerica spoke with Dr. Lea-Cox about his research. To read our Q+A with Dr. Lea-Cox, please [click here](#).

Photo courtesy of Edwin Remsberg/University of Maryland, College Park

#### Highlights in Research, Teaching, and Extension

- Auburn University: Farming for the Future
- Cornell University: On Planes, Savory Tomato Becomes Favored Flavor
- North Dakota State University: Stem Counts Help Assess Alfalfa Stand Potential

#### Top Tweets

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**Fun Fact:** Did you know the first reference to apple pie was in 1589? Check out more about the history of apple pie and some other summertime favorites and classic food fares, like waffles and peanut butter.

This is a monthly email highlighting some of the content featured on Ag Is America. Our goal is to share the land-grant story with you.

What has your local land-grant university or institution done to impact jobs, the economy, national security, water security, health or nutrition research and education?

We'd love to hear from you. We're particularly interested in updates from the Colleges of Agriculture, research accomplishments, and Extension efforts. Send your ideas and questions to @AgisAmerica with the #LGUimpact.

We also invite you to help communicate the value of land-grant institutions by:

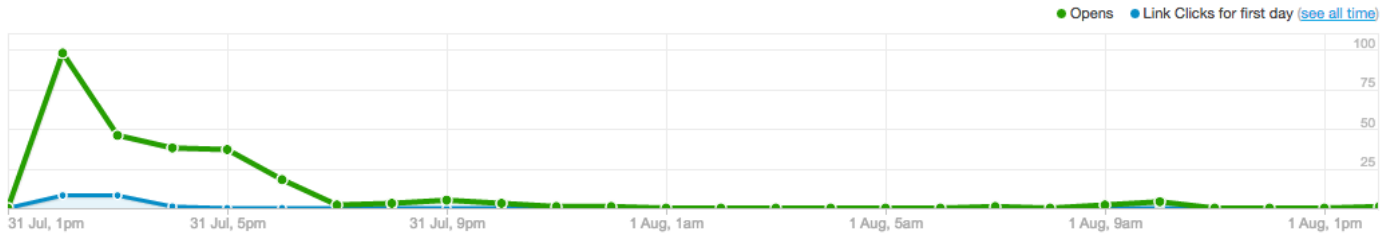
- Sharing this newsletter
- Following AgisAmerica on Twitter and encouraging others to do the same
- Retweeting content from @AgisAmerica
- Mentioning us in your own tweets and linking to stories on agisamerica.org

# APPENDIX I: August Newsletter (1 of 2) Metrics

## Why Ag Matters - August 2015

Sent on 31 Jul 2015 to 433 unique subscribers across [2 lists](#)

[View](#) [Share Campaign](#) [Export Report](#)



- **127 Unique opens**  
498 total opens to date
- **14 Bounced**  
3.23% couldn't be delivered
- **292 Not Opened**  
Open rates are [only estimates](#)

- 30.31%** of all recipients [opened so far](#)
- 17.32%** [clicked a link](#) (22 people)
- 0.24%** [unsubscribed](#) (1 person)
- 0** people marked it as spam (0%)
- 2** [shares](#) across Facebook, Twitter & email

Most popular links <a href="#">(full report)</a>	CLICKS
<a href="#">agisamerica.org</a>	7
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/news/farming-for-the-future/</a>	7
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/july-2015-qa-with...aryland-researcher-dr-john-lea-cox/</a>	6
<a href="#">Link to web-based version of this email</a>	6
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/news/on-planes-...ory-tomato-becomes-favored-flavor/</a>	3

Top countries <a href="#">(full report)</a>	OPENS
United States of America	452
Spain	5
Guam	1
Puerto Rico	1
Palau Island	1

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## APPENDIX J: August Newsletter (2 of 2) Text

### **Happening Now: Twitter Town Hall**

Agriculture Is America is hosting a Twitter Town Hall with the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Center. The center's director Steve Young will be among the panel of experts answering your questions about recent IPM technology, soil science, invasive species, and community outreach.

The Town Hall is happening now and will end at 3:30 PM ET. You can submit a question using the hashtag #AgIsChat to @AgIsAmerica. Hope you will engage with us!

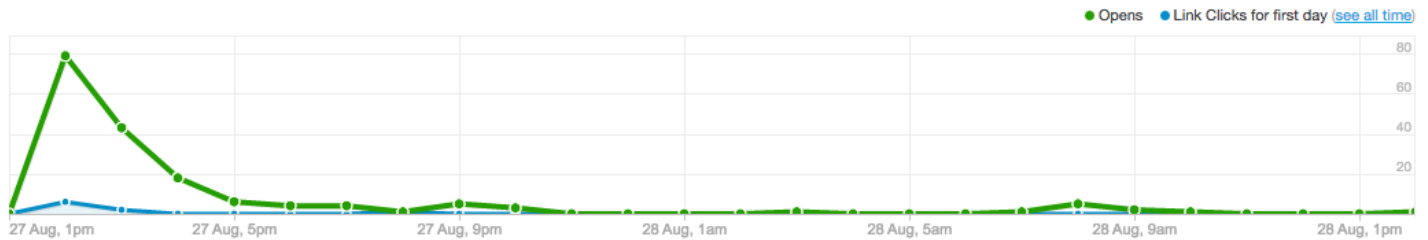
Read more about the Twitter Town Hall [here](#).

## APPENDIX K: August Newsletter (2 of 2) Metrics

### Happening Now: Twitter Town Hall

Sent on 27 Aug 2015 to 430 unique subscribers across [2 lists](#)

[View](#) [Share Campaign](#) [Export Report](#)



- 126 Unique opens**  
185 total opens to date
- 9 Bounced**  
2.09% couldn't be delivered
- 295 Not Opened**  
Open rates are [only estimates](#)

- 29.93%** of all recipients [opened so far](#)
- 7.14%** [clicked a link](#) (9 people)
- 0%** unsubscribed (0 people)
- 0** people marked it as spam (0%)
- 0** [shares](#) across Facebook, Twitter & email

Most popular links <a href="#">(full report)</a>	CLICKS
<a href="http://agisamerica.org/august-2015-ag-i-...rtheast-ipm-center-twitter-town-hall/">agisamerica.org/august-2015-ag-i-...rtheast-ipm-center-twitter-town-hall/</a>	4
<a href="http://www.northeastipm.org">www.northeastipm.org</a>	3
Link to web-based version of this email	2
<a href="https://twitter.com/AgIsAmerica">https://twitter.com/AgIsAmerica</a>	1
<a href="https://twitter.com/search?q=%23agischat&amp;src=typd">https://twitter.com/search?q=%23agischat&amp;src=typd</a>	1

Top countries <a href="#">(full report)</a>	OPENS
United States of America	161
Virgin Islands (USA)	2
American Samoa	1
Germany	1
Guam	1



## APPENDIX L: September Newsletter Text

### WHY AG MATTERS - September 2015

Your monthly snapshot of the extraordinary work from our land-grant universities, institutions, and Colleges of Agriculture compiled by Agriculture is America.

#### **Seven Land-Grant Universities Help Stabilize Catfish Production, Increase Economic Vitality**

Researchers from seven land-grant universities are working together to develop technology that helps catfish farmers meet rising consumer demand for catfish. These researchers participate in Multistate Research Project S-1031 “Hybrid Catfish Production & Performance” (S-1031), which is supported, in part, through USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. S-1031 researchers focus their research and outreach efforts on improving the efficiency of technology and practices used to raise hybrid catfish.

Here’s what Dr. Saied Mostaghimi, director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station at Virginia Tech, administrative advisor for S-1031, and the associate dean of research and graduate studies for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences said:

“Although channel catfish represent 70 percent of the catfish industry, production has decreased—both large commercial catfish producers and small family farms are struggling to keep up with rising costs of production and less expensive imported fish. That’s why it’s imperative that we continue to work together to make it easier to produce hybrid catfish, crosses of blue and channel catfish that are faster-growing and meatier. Although hybrid catfish farming can lower production costs, farmers need specific production and harvest technology.”

“Improved hybrid catfish production and harvest technology will not only help our farmers but will also improve our food security as demand for hybrid catfish increases. Catfish farming is an integral economic driver for many communities, especially here in the South, and we hope our research will sustain productivity and profits for our farmers.”

To read more about the research project and its impact on aquaculture, please [click here](#).

#### **Meet Dr. Steve Young, Director of the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center**

Meet Dr. Steve Young, Director of the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Center and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell University. Dr. Young is a weed ecologist with interests in plant community dynamics, including invasive species, abiotic and biotic stress-related responses in plants, and innovative methods for managing agroecosystems.

His previous research and Extension programming at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln focused on the ecology and management of invasive plant species. He received his PhD in soil science from the University of California, Davis, M.S. in weed science from the University of Idaho, and B.S. in horticulture from Washington State University. Dr. Young completed a two-year post doc in biofuels and automation research at Washington State University’s Center for Precision & Automated Agricultural Systems.

AgIsAmerica spoke with Dr. Young about soil science, invasive species, and IPM. To read our Q+A with Dr. Young please [click here](#).

## #AgIsChat: Twitter Town Hall with the Northeastern IPM Center

Last Thursday, AgIsAmerica co-hosted a Twitter Town Hall with the Northeastern IPM Center and several of its partners. A big thank you to our IPM, research, and Extension specialists who answered questions, specifically:

- Steve Young, Northeastern IPM Center;
- Jeff Bradshaw, UNL Entomology;
- Allie Tasey, National Pest Management;
- and Harold van Es, Cornell CALS.

And, thank you for engaging with us!

## Highlights in Research, Teaching, and Extension

- New UK Certification Program Targets Wine, Brewing, Distilling Industries
- MU Extension Offers to Help Reduce Atrazine Runoff
- University of Maryland: Ripe on Time

## Top Tweets

**Fun Fact:** Do you know why stink bugs actually stink? Check out the recap of our Twitter Town Hall (#AgIsChat) with the Northeastern IPM Center to learn more.

This is a monthly email highlighting some of the content featured on Ag Is America. Our goal is to share the land-grant story with you.

What has your local land-grant university or institution done to impact jobs, the economy, national security, water security, health or nutrition research and education?

We'd love to hear from you. We're particularly interested in updates from the Colleges of Agriculture, research accomplishments, and Extension efforts. Send your ideas and questions to @AgIsAmerica with the #LGUimpact.

We also invite you to help communicate the value of land-grant institutions by:

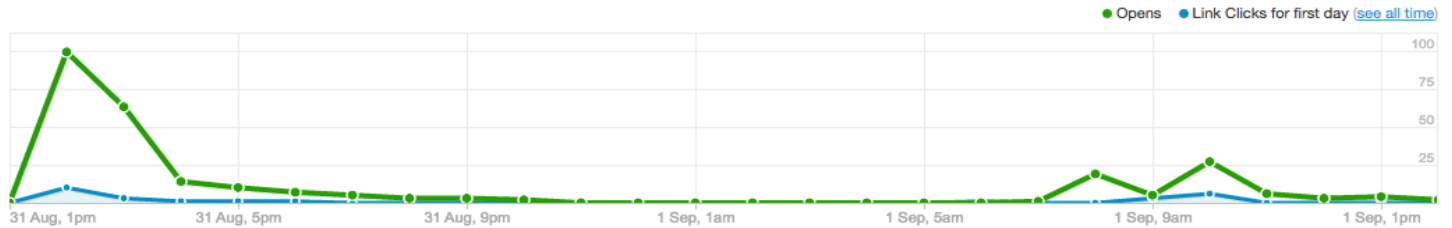
- Sharing this newsletter
- Following AgIsAmerica on Twitter and encouraging others to do the same
- Retweeting content from @AgIsAmerica
- Mentioning us in your own tweets and linking to stories on [agisamerica.org](https://www.agisamerica.org)

# APPENDIX M: September Newsletter Metrics

## Why Ag Matters - September 2015

Sent on 31 Aug 2015 to 435 unique subscribers across [2 lists](#)

[View](#) [Share Campaign](#) [Export Report](#)



- 137 Unique opens**  
323 total opens to date
- 9 Bounced**  
2.07% couldn't be delivered
- 289 Not Opened**  
Open rates are [only estimates](#)

- 32.16%** of all recipients [opened so far](#)
- 12.41%** [clicked a link](#) (17 people)
- 0.23%** [unsubscribed](#) (1 person)
- 0** people marked it as spam (0%)
- 8** [shares](#) across Facebook, Twitter & email

Most popular links ( <a href="#">full report</a> )	CLICKS
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/seven-land-grant...duction-increase-economic-vitality/</a>	7
<a href="#">agisamerica.org</a>	4
<a href="#">Link to web-based version of this email</a>	4
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/august-2015-mee...ntegrated-pest-management-center/</a>	3
<a href="#">agisamerica.org/news/mu-extensi...ffers-to-help-reduce-atrazine-runoff/</a>	3

Top countries ( <a href="#">full report</a> )	OPENS
United States of America	284
American Samoa	2
Guam	2
Virgin Islands (USA)	2
Brazil	1

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