

## **LET'S COMMUNICATE**

### **Agriculture Communication Newsletter**

**November 2009, No. 166**

#### **Contents**

Ag Communication Needs Your Photos  
Fall Conference Sessions Available Online  
Use Wimba Classroom for Meeting and Collaborating  
VCRs, VHS Tapes and Audiocassettes Available  
Vinyl Now Available in Large-Format Printing  
Letter? Flat? Parcel?  
Technology Tidbits  
Employee E-mail Blunders  
Write the Right Word  
New Publications in the Distribution Center

#### **Ag Communication Needs Your Photos**

The N.D. Agricultural Experiment Station/NDSU Extension Service annual highlights publication is about ready to go to press, and once again we communicators wish we had more photos of faculty and staff in action. Most of you have digital cameras, so please hand it to somebody else to get you in the photo occasionally.

We hope to soon have a Web site where you can upload your selected photos with identification to share with Ag Communication and your NDSU colleagues. In the meantime, start shooting high-resolution photos that show people's faces and with them doing something.

#### **Fall Conference Sessions Available Online**

Many PowerPoints and other documents from Extension/REC Fall Conference sessions are online at <http://www.slideshare.net/tag/ndsufallconf09>. You're welcome to go there to learn about it if you missed the session or to get a refresher if you did attend. If you were a presenter and haven't yet uploaded your materials, please create an account and follow the simple directions.

#### **Use Wimba Classroom for Meeting and Collaborating**

Need to meet with a group of people from around the state and don't want to drive? Or do you just need to meet with one other person out of town to collaborate on a document? Try using Wimba Classroom.

Wimba Classroom is a virtual learning environment that includes audio, video, application sharing and content display. It can be as simple as person-to-person audio and video interaction, or it can be used for large group meetings. It's easy to learn how to share a PowerPoint or how to help someone navigate a website.

Wimba may replace some videoconferencing since it can be projected and people can stay at their own computers.

Scott Swanson, (701) 231-7086, [s.swanson@ndsu.edu](mailto:s.swanson@ndsu.edu)

### **VCRs, VHS Tapes and Audiocassettes Available**

Since Ag Communication is no longer copying multiple copies, six VCR machines and bunches of blank VHS tapes (15, 30, 60 and 120 minutes in length) and audiocassettes (30, 60 and 120 minutes) are up for grabs. Contact [NDSU.DistributionCenter@ndsu.edu](mailto:NDSU.DistributionCenter@ndsu.edu) if you'd like any.

### **Vinyl Now Available in Large-Format Printing**

Need a sign that will be sturdy and last a long time? How about a table runner that won't slip around like fabric? Ag Communication now has vinyl material for the large-format printer. The material doesn't slide when laid flat and is wrinkle-free when hung as a sign. The UV-resistant inks also reduce fading. Contact John to discuss your project and get a price estimate.

John Grindahl, (701) 231-7898, [john.grindahl@ndsu.edu](mailto:john.grindahl@ndsu.edu)

### **Letter? Flat? Parcel?**

To most of us, it's a letter in an envelope, but to the U.S. Postal Service it may be a flat or parcel. See <http://www.usps.com/mailpro/2009/sepoct/sepoct.pdf#search='mailpro> to view a table that explains the differences and the limitations of each. This issue of MailPro also includes a useful table of holiday shipping dates.

Sharon Lane, (701) 231-7882, [sharon.lane@ndsu.edu](mailto:sharon.lane@ndsu.edu)

### **Technology Tidbits**

Set your e-mail reply default to "reply to sender" rather than "reply to all." You can really be embarrassed when you send something to a large group of people but the message isn't intended for them.

Target e-mails you initiate as specifically as possible. The REC secretary probably can't help you find a certain variety of certified seed. The Slope County Extension agent probably won't make it to the campus sale. Use the e-mail lists that are in the password-protected Ag Info Center at <http://info.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu>. Forgot your password? Call the help desk at 231-8685.

See Bob Bertsch's e-mails for upcoming technology trainings. His list includes offerings from Ag Communication, NDSU Information Technology Services and eXtension.

### **Employee E-mail Blunders**

According to “The Top 10 E-mail Blunders That Cost Companies Money” from Creative Communications & Training, a company with 100 employees can expect to lose about \$450,000 a year or more because of e-mail blunders, inefficiencies and misunderstanding. The top 10 are:

- Inaccurate or vague subject line
- No specific action step
- Incomplete information
- Too much information
- Harsh or demanding tone
- Breaking privacy guidelines and crossing ethical boundaries
- Conveying sensitive or confidential information
- Errors and inaccuracies
- Excessive volume

See [http://www.businesslunchandlearn.com/documents/SpecialReportE-mailBlunders\\_001.pdf](http://www.businesslunchandlearn.com/documents/SpecialReportE-mailBlunders_001.pdf) for the details -- and think about how you can avoid these e-mail blunders.

Becky Koch, (701) 231-7875, [becky.koch@ndsu.edu](mailto:becky.koch@ndsu.edu)

### **Write the Right Word**

Readers’ attention spans are short, so make your message as concise as possible. One way to do that is to cut out unnecessary words.

For example, don’t overstate the obvious. You’ve probably seen (or written) something such as this: “Applications are due in the month of April.” Everyone knows April is a month, so leave out “the month of.” “Applications are due in April.”

You can eliminate “in the year” in most instances, too. For example, “The law will expire in the year 2010” becomes “The law expires in 2010.” The only time you would need to indicate the number is a year is when that’s not clear from the context of the sentence.

“In order to” is another phrase that doesn’t help make a sentence clearer. Thus, “I went to college in order to earn a degree in communication” becomes “I went to college to earn a degree in communication.”

Also delete “located,” as in “The news conference was located in front of Old Main.” “Located” doesn’t tell you any more than a simple “in.” “The news conference was in front of Old Main.”

Ellen Crawford, (701) 231-5391, [ellen.crawford@ndsu.edu](mailto:ellen.crawford@ndsu.edu)

### **New Publications in the Distribution Center**

**FN1414 Nourish Your Brain with a Healthful Diet** by Julie Garden-Robinson, Sherri Nordstrom Stastny and Jessica Ryant

Following a heart-healthy diet can help decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity, and improve your brain health. This publication serves as a guide to help make those changes.

**FN1431 Exercise Your Brain** by Julie Garden-Robinson, Sherri Nordstrom Stastny and Jessica Ryant

“Exercise Your Brain” goes with “Nourish Your Brain with a Healthy Diet “ and provides tips and exercises to keep your brain sharp.

**FN1423 Jams and Jellies from Native (Wild) Fruits** by Julie Garden-Robinson

This publication provides recipes and preparation tips for several wild fruits, such as buffalo berries, chokecherries, elderberries and gooseberries.

**FN1428 Quick Facts for Men: Keep Yourself Tuned Up with Good Nutrition** by Lucy Chermak and Julie Garden-Robinson

This publication shows the comparison of your body and your vehicle to keep both well maintained.

**FS1430 Bright Beginnings #25 What Young Children Learn Through Play** by Sean Brotherson

Play is really the most important way children learn about the world around them. Sean explains how different activities and play experiences help children learn.

**FS1441 Talking to Children About Money** by Debb Pankow and Sean Brotherson

As a parent, relative or other adult important in the life of a child, you are teaching the children you come into contact with about money. This publication helps guide you with age appropriate discussion points, as well as insight on discussing money problems and thoughts about allowances, earnings and managing money.

**EC1343 What is the Value of a Standing Corn Crop for Silage?** by Dwight Aakre

Dwight has revised this publication to reflect updated information on how to determine a fair price for the standing corn crop for silage.

**CD1419 Socioeconomic Impacts of Developing Wind Energy: The Langdon Wind Energy Center** by F. Larry Leistriz and Randal Coon

The case study presented in this publication documents the socioeconomic effects of the development of a wind energy center.

**CD1426 Biofuels: A Major Rural Economic Development Opportunity** by F. Larry Leistriz and Nancy Hodur

Off-farm wages and salaries of farm households in ND more than doubled from 1993 to 2007. This publication discusses how an emerging biofuels industry could offer the new jobs and economic stimulus that many agriculturally dependent areas have been seeking.

**NM1422 Animal Carcass Disposal Options** by Shafiqur Rahman, Teresa Dvorak, Charles Stoltenow and Saqib Mukhtar

A producer is responsible for disposing of animal mortalities within 48 hours in an environmentally acceptable manner. A brief discussion of each disposal option is covered in this publication.

**AE1442 Top Ten Home Energy Checklist: How much energy is my home wasting?** by Carl Pedersen

Whether trying to save money or save natural resources, concentrating on the areas of the home that are the largest energy consumers or areas for energy waste makes sense. This guide provides direction for where to concentrate efforts to reduce energy consumption.

Most peer-reviewed publications are available at <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/>.

### **Let's Communicate**

Past issues of Let's Communicate are at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/agcomm/letscomm/letscomm.htm](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/agcomm/letscomm/letscomm.htm). If you have questions or comments, or would like to submit information or make a suggestion for Let's Communicate, please contact me.