



A NEW GENERATION OF AG COMMUNICATORS  
NEEDS SOMETHING LIKE NEVER BEFORE

**YOUR HELP**



Agriculture is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges at a time when dynamic new media are redefining the way people access information.



#### **THE TASKS ARE DAUNTING:**

- Double food production globally in 40 years without significantly increasing land utilization.
- Replace a substantial volume of fossil fuels with renewable energy.
- Bring the green revolution to the underdeveloped world.
- Produce food and fiber sustainably, without insult to the environment.
- Advance the science of farming in a society that is sometimes technology-averse.
- Maintain the health and vibrancy of rural America.
- Encourage constructive development in rural societies everywhere.

**Addressing these needs requires a public informed by communications generated by science-based decision-making. Yet the environment in which producers and agricultural organizations operate is fraught with obstacles.**

# OUR OBSTACLES

The vast majority of today's consumers are so far removed from the farm that they have almost no knowledge about the many technologies, methods and daily management decisions upon which their food supply depends.

Popular literature often focuses heat rather than light on the problems facing modern food production, making it more difficult for the public to make educated choices. And interest groups spend literally hundreds of millions annually on communications aimed at disrupting the market for agricultural products.



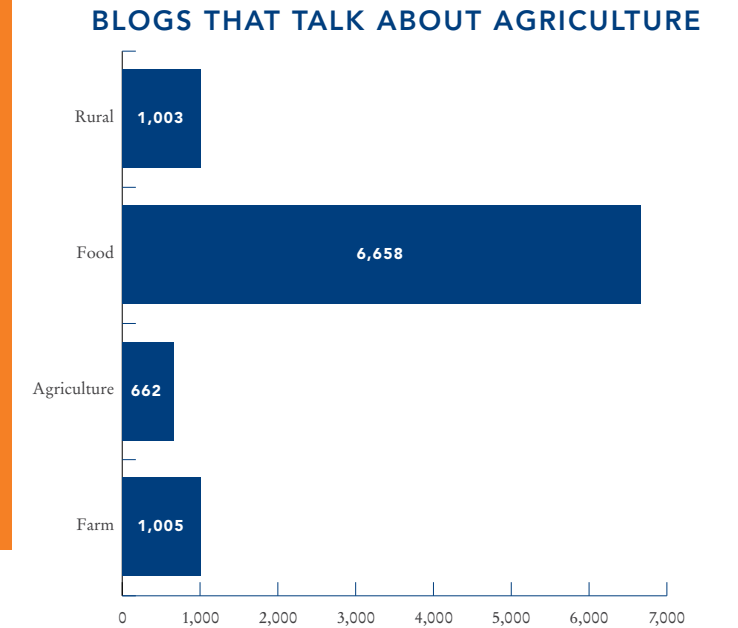
## FACT VS. OPINION

The explosion of Internet-based communications has provided more people access to more information, without the vetting and fact-checking that is fundamental to traditional media. Consequently, it is sometimes impossible for the reader or viewer to separate fact from opinion, or information from misinformation.

## MISTRUST

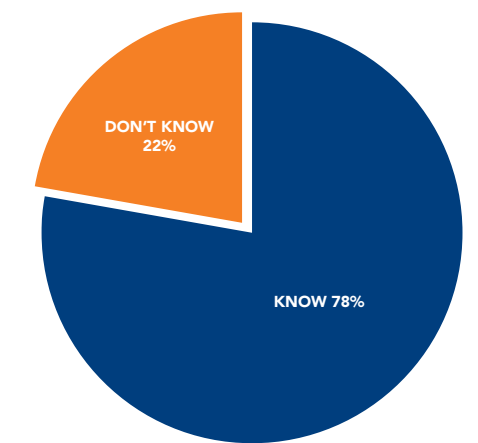
There is a fundamental mistrust among many people of new and novel commercial technologies and the companies that develop them. These companies, critical partners in food and fiber production, face increasingly longer and more expensive development and regulatory lead times, and thus fewer years of exclusivity to reward innovation and pay down research costs.

**350**  
New Ag Comm  
Graduates in  
U.S. per year—  
far short  
of current  
demand



## LOST CONNECTION

Percentage that did not know bacon and sausage originated on farms




\*Recent survey of 1,073 adults in the UK




## BETTER COMMUNICATIONS

For agriculture to thrive and meet the food, fiber and biofuel needs of a growing world in the face of such obstacles, it will require a new generation of agricultural communicators to help it face its many challenges—men and women who are rooted in agricultural science and skilled in the use of all media, from traditional print to Twitter, from community meetings to social networking on the Internet ... and all of the communications technologies that will emerge in the future.

Three-fourths of the necessary growth in agricultural production must come from improved efficiencies and technologies. None of that will be possible without better communications systems, processes, methods—and professionals who know how to work with them.



Communications experts are key partners in implementing and positioning new technologies vital to meeting a growing demand for biofuels and safe, nutritious and affordable food.



These communicators will be the journalists, spokespersons, strategists and advocates who help educate producers and the value chain on consumer needs, help transfer technology from the laboratory and research farm to mainstream agriculture, create successful business plans, facilitate public dialogue on agricultural issues and foster sustainability and rural development in all parts of the world.



The University of Illinois is taking steps to meet the continuing need for such communications professionals through an innovative three-part initiative.



# THREE WAYS WE FACE THEM

1

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) and the College of Media are refining and strengthening a successful partnership of nearly 50 years. Programming and administrative innovations will provide closer collaboration and new opportunities for agricultural communications students, faculty and curricula—including a stronger focus on professional development and the strategic use of media, defined in the broadest sense of the word.



3

The University, with the help of individuals and agricultural organizations, is working to create the first-ever Endowed Chair in Agricultural Communications, to elevate the focus and academic standing of agricultural communications on a par with other leading-edge academic programs.

**Generating the financial resources to create the new Endowed Chair is an area in which the University needs your help.**

2

The University is committing new resources to expand and strengthen faculty and to provide more advanced teaching, research and advising services to students.





# WHY AN ENDOWED CHAIR?

In a world-class academic environment such as the University of Illinois, an Endowed Chair attracts many important assets:

**RECOGNITION** An Endowed Chair identifies an academic pursuit as special and important and carries a prestige both within and outside the University community. An Endowed Chair for Agricultural Communications will elevate communications to a peer level with many advanced disciplines.

**LEADERSHIP** With both prestige and added resources for salaries and research, the Endowed Chair helps the University attract the best, most distinguished faculty leader possible. In the College of Media, such a leader can come from either the academic or professional ranks. Having an Endowed Chair will cement the vision for the program and provide for a highly capable person to captain the curriculum.

**RESOURCES** An Endowed Chair helps attract grant money and graduate students to expand the program and contribute to innovation. Given the degree of austerity facing today's university administrators, an Endowed Chair quite literally can create opportunities for teaching and research excellence that won't exist otherwise.

# THE GOAL

The University of Illinois has long been regarded as a deep well of highly capable agricultural communications graduates. The person who transformed the agricultural communications program from a couple of courses into a full-blown college curriculum was Dr. Jim Evans, a seasoned and successful professional who saw the need to create a practice-based academic program, one that would prepare students to contribute professionally immediately upon graduation. While Dr. Evans has been retired from the University for many years, he is still the program's mentor and most stalwart supporter.

The Endowed Chair, established in his name, will help ensure that the University will always have a visionary leader such as Dr. Evans at the helm to attract the best and brightest students and to nurture their careers.



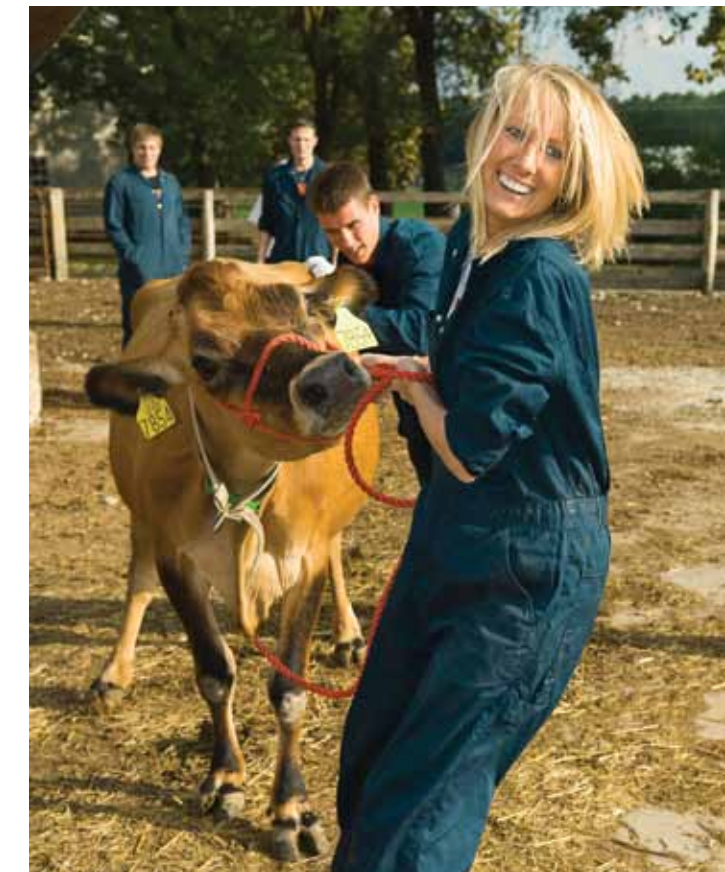
- Dr. Jim Evans -

## WORKING TOGETHER

Creating an Endowed Chair requires a \$2 million investment and a University department willing to support and encourage excellence in a chosen field of endeavor. The Colleges of ACES and Media have made the commitment to create a unique and innovative joint program with the distinct goal of making it a recognized Center of Excellence in agricultural communications.

But creating a position as significant as an Endowed Chair requires resources beyond the scope of departmental budgets, especially in these times of shrinking support for higher education. So the University of Illinois needs the help of alumni, friends and agribusiness—your help—to provide the financial resources necessary to endow the chair.

Please consider a significant contribution to the James F. Evans Endowed Chair Campaign today. Contributions can be in the form of single gifts or multi-year pledges. Individuals may also wish to consider estate gifts.



## BECOME A SUSTAINING SPONSOR OF AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS EDUCATION.

Sustaining Sponsors<sup>1</sup> of the Endowed Chair will be invited to have a continuing voice in the advancement of the University of Illinois agricultural communications program by participating in a special Colloquium on Excellence in Agricultural Communications to be held each year for faculty, students, industry leaders and Sustaining Sponsors. The purpose of the event is to exchange ideas about the needs and opportunities for improved communications in agriculture and the skill sets required now and in the future to address them. Thus the program will continue to benefit from the insights of those who strongly support this innovative agricultural communications educational initiative.

Agriculture is rife with opportunities and challenges. To address them, agriculture needs bright, capable experts to educate and communicate with all the stakeholders essential to agriculture's success and prosperity.

Help build the pool of well-qualified talent by contributing to the James F. Evans Endowed Chair. It will ensure that the University of Illinois Agricultural Communications Program will produce well-trained, well-grounded, highly capable agricultural communicators for years to come.

Sustaining Sponsors are defined as those companies that contribute \$200,000 or more and individuals who contribute \$50,000 or more to the James F. Evans Endowed Chair Campaign.

To discuss how you or your organization can help make the James F. Evans Endowed Chair in Agricultural Communications a reality, contact

**The Advancement Office of the College of ACES**

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**AG  
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ON THE  
*MOVE*