



Rural Library Service Newsletter



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Knowing Your Community, Country Style

Are you fluent in Farmingnese or Rural Languages? How are your verbal and nonverbal skills in rural communication? What would you score on a rural IQ test? After a session with Dr. Richard Boyum of the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, one may discover they are a rural illiterate and in need of special education country-style. That is what 130 librarians discovered on September 14th and 15th at a Rural Library Service Conference held at and sponsored by the Indianhead Federated Library System of Eau Claire.

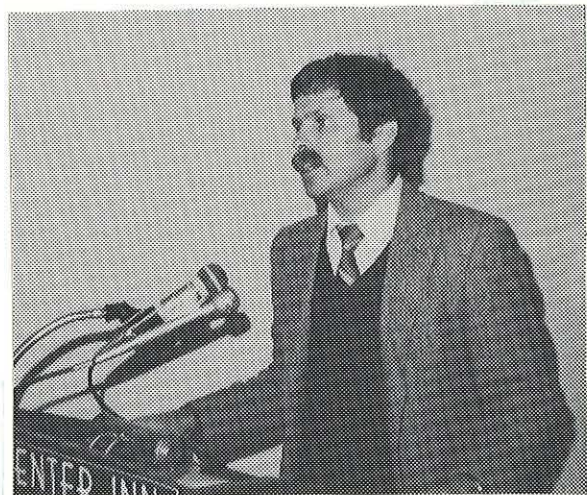
In the opening presentation at the Conference, Dr. Boyum enumerated the similarities and differences between rural and urban dwellers. He listed the roots for similarities as being:

1. Mass Media - Rural and Urban share the same television, radio and magazines and thereby are exposed to the same advertisements, sport shows, and entertainment programs. This shared viewing and exposure results in common interests and wants.
2. Schools - School Curriculums created by State and Federal Standards are relatively the same. There is however some variation due to the kinds of monies available to the small schools and the local life styles. Education is further homogenized by the fact that urban and rural teachers are trained in the same colleges and universities.
3. Standarization of religious practices and beliefs - The same dogma is taught in both communities. Additionally churches observe the same religious holidays.

4. Rural and urban people experience the same developmental sequence - People are born, they live and they die. They experience adolescence and live in families with the same pressures and problems.

Differences are caused by such factors as education, employment, and space. The lower level of education in rural areas is in part the result of an emphases on the value placed on personal experience over formal education. Labor such as those involved in farming demands knowledge of basic facts and information. The traditional rural pragmatist is less interested in concepts of hows and whys and instead focuses his attention on making things work.

In rural areas many activities occur out of doors. With fewer people around, the rural resident feels more comfortable and safer outside than his urban counterpart.



Dr. Richard Boyum addressing the topic Rural Psychology at the Eau Claire Library Conference. 130 librarians throughout the upper midwest attended the two day meeting.

These outside activities may involve little expense and command varying levels of skill.

"It doesn't take a lot of skills to go into the woods to pick blackberries." On the other hand, a lot of skill is needed to be a good troutman to search the streams and to tie the flies.

Because of their jobs rural residents frequently travel less. Dr. Boyum likes to tell of the time he attended a dairy herd auction. The auctioneer was praising the milking herd as excellent because the owners hadn't missed a milking in 30 years. Boyum raises the issue, if there are 2 milkings daily what would have been the furthest that couple could have traveled in one day and yet made both milkings?

Because many farm tasks restrict travel, there is a greater interest in the area in which one lives. As examples, Boyum points to the numerous local celebrations and the dominant influence specific cultures have on life in a community. One knows if the town is dominated by a specific culture or cultures, "or", he said with a grin, "if its half Norwegian and half Swedish, you really know."

"Whenever you teach, or provide service you must be able to understand and be able to communicate the core values of that community or group of people." With that in mind, Boyum gave the assembled 130 rural librarians the following Cultural Aptitude Rural IQ Test.

QUESTIONS

1. In the last 30 days the price of pork has risen. True or False?
2. Since the middle of summer the price of soybeans has risen. True or False?
3. Describe the workings of the PIK program.
4. What is a Chisel Plow?
5. What is an Offset Disc?
6. Can you describe a Dairy Step Saver?
7. Which type of silo unloads from the bottom instead of the top?

8. What is a good target average for the number of pigs weaned per litter?
9. What is the gestation period of a sow?
10. What is the general Market weight of a Holstein steer?

The conference audience as a group drastically failed the Cultural Test. The largest percentage of the group to answer any one question correctly was 1/3 of the audience. On one question only one person was able to answer accurately & on another only 5 persons out of 130 knew the right answer.

The University of Wisconsin professor stresses that service professionals in order to serve effectively must understand the core values of the community they are serving. Knowledge of rural life and jobs will aid the librarian to pair the values of the rural community with the values of library service. In psychology this is referred to as pairing core values.

In addition to understanding the rural patron's core values, it is equally important to understand and identify the community gate keepers, the people who make things happen and to whom people in the community will listen. Identify who they are, what they do, where they do it, and how to use them effectively to do what you want.

A person receives gate-keeper status because of their position or prestige. Prestige may be obtained simply because you make the best pie in the community. School Administrators, School board members, Clergy, the grocer, the mill operator, mechanics, filling station operators, the local media, and the cafe operator are all common gate keepers in the rural community.

You need to get to know these people and they need to know you. They are the ones to be used to spread information about your programs. "Professional people live and die by the opinions that the informal gate keepers spread to their constituents about who you are and what you do."

In addition to the gate keepers, rural librarians should become on a first name basis with the home economist, the agri-

cultural agent, agricultural teachers in the schools and FFA programs. These people can assist you in implementing your programs and they have access to materials and people that you will want.

The final element to serving rural people is the concept of matching: It is important that you match the people you serve. "Don't stand out like a sore thumb - verbally and non verbally. The way you dress says a lot about your approachability." Be aware of the styles of the gate keepers in order to gain access to them.

Be comfortable with the local language. Rural vocabulary is highly visual. Common expressions are, "the way I see it; Do you

get the picture?" A farmer might comment on a sick cow, "she just doesn't look right to me."

Many of the information needs of the rural patron are similar to the urbanite. Both are concerned with management skills, hobby and craft ideas, materials on family relations, books on aging, women issues, illness, disease, and nutrition. However the marketing of these materials may differ. If someone walked into your library, could you tell if it was located in a rural or urban area. Poster your library with farm or other ag related materials. Show people that you are interested in them. Become fluent in the language, the ways and the culture of the people in your community and better yet become a gate keeper.

IFLS's Twin Adventures in Rural Library Service

The Fall Conference on Rural Library Service featured in this issue was a product of an Indianhead Federated Library System project headed by Deborah Paulson and supported by Library Service Construction Act. The Wisconsin Library System has received grants of \$23,000 and \$29,000 respectively for projects on marketing to and on serving the geographically remote. Ms. Paulson directed the project, "Back up the Local Library in their Service to the Geographically Remote." In the grant application she wrote, "This grant will develop two regional rural resources centers designed to provide back-up library materials and services to meet the information needs of farmers and other rural groups in the region." The monies were to be used to purchase materials, to promote the materials and service, to provide a microfiche catalog of the materials available to area libraries and to hold a midwest regional conference on library services to farmers and other rural groups.

The other Indianhead LSCA project was placed under the direction of Sharon Charles. For this proposal "librarians in each county will be assisted by the regional staff and a planning committee to target certain farm or other rural groups within their communities, work with these groups to establish a collection or service that meets their needs and evaluate that service or collection after one year's time."

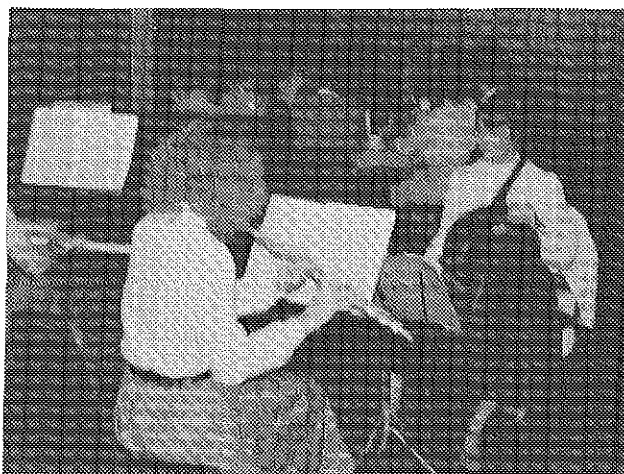
For more information about either of these projects contact the Indianhead Federated Library System, 400 Eau Claire Street, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701. Telephone 715-839-5082.

Editor's Note: The Rural Library Service Newsletter welcomes information about other specially designed programs for rural constituents and how they are being funded. If you are offering or know of a library that is conducting such projects please write or call: Northwest Regional Library 6th and Jackson, Sioux City, Iowa 51105 (712-279-6186)

Eau Claire's Conference: Sights, Sounds & Sonnets



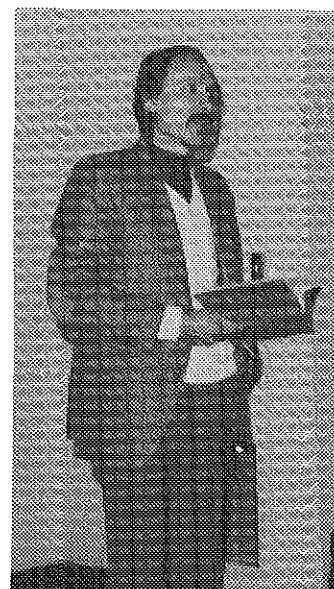
Henry Drennen, consultant from Craftsbury, VT, being interviewed by local media. Drennen, retired from the Public Library Division of the U.S. Department of Education, spoke on "Meeting Information Needs of Rural People."



Luncheon music provided by a college chamber trio demonstrates the fact that not all rural library programs have to feature country western music.



← John Christenson, Executive Director of the Traverse des Sioux Library System in Mankato, MN, studies his notes for his presentation on "How To Be the Place to Go for Those Who Need to Know."



→ Joe Paddock, regional poet and author of The Things We Know Best, was featured in the session on Cultural Service for Rural People.

→ U.S. Representative Steve Gunderson (1) Third District Wisconsin, receives a coffee mug with the library logo from Conference host Milton Mitchell, Director of the Indianhead Federated Library System. Gunderson, a co-sponsor of the bill which provided public works construction money for libraries, spoke on "Power and the Rural Political Structure."



Farmers Will Have to Pay for Reports from USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has begun moving away from its traditional role as a provider of free information to the American farmer.

What's emerging instead is a new philosophy that requires farmers and others to pay for much of the agricultural information the USDA collects at taxpayer expense.

It's a dramatic change in the historical mission of the Agriculture Department.

When President Abraham Lincoln signed a law in 1862 creating the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its first duty was "to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word."

Sometime next year, the USDA will fulfill that historic mission by contracting with a commercial electronic network, which will charge fees for the government data it "diffuses" among the people.

At the same time, the USDA under Agriculture Secretary John Block has ordering a sizable reduction in the number of free reports, periodicals and pamphlets issued by the department to the public.

"There are a lot of implications in all this," says former Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland, "and they're all bad. The department historically has developed information and assisted persons who need help the most - the smaller, poorer farmers, less affluent families concerned about nutrition ... the people who can't afford computers and paying for computer time."

Much of the information generated by the USDA's vast array of economists, statisticians, scientists, commodity experts and foreign agriculture attaches remains available free to the press, Congress and

to such institutions as the landgrant colleges. But USDA officials acknowledge that the department is moving in the direction of a "pay-as-you go" information distribution system.

Pamphlets on human nutrition that individuals and groups could get for free or for a few cents three years ago now cost up to \$10 from the Government Printing Office.

SAVING \$2 MILLION

USDA officials acknowledge that the reduction in the distribution of reports to the public, along with policy of charging fees for much of the information that is issued, is saving the department up to \$2 million a year. In recent years, the USDA budget has ranged to more than \$40 billion.

The reduction in the flow of free information began with the directive from Budget Director David Stockman, who prohibited the USDA from issuing any new publications until it had submitted a cutback plan.

"As a result," said the USDA's Nelson Fitton, who monitors the agency's progress in complying with Stockman's order, "we eliminated over 1,000 public reports. We recently went through another purge, reevaluating our publishing program. And we've eliminated a number of others and combined others."

"There's been a dramatic cutback in our publishing. We don't give away many public documents free anymore. It's a new approach."

Fitton said that because the Government Printing Office "can't publish a single sheet for less than \$1.50, a large portion of our distribution to the public is wiped out."

The result of such a policy will be that "certain kinds of information will not generally reach the public." As for the impact of the savings on the USDA budget, he admitted, "It's minuscule."

When Stockman's order was issued, USDA historian Wayne Rasmussen remembered the opening lines in the 1862 law that established the department.

"I quoted those lines to our hierarchy when this proposal came up," he said. "But it didn't do any good."

SOMETHING STILL FREE

Several USDA officials emphasize that the department still is providing for free much of the information it develops, and that the only change is that fewer people and organizations are eligible to get it at no cost.

The press here and across the country, for example, remains on the USDA's free mailing lists. But that's at least partly the result of a protest last year by Senator Roger Jepsen (Rep., Ia.) over a plan by Block to charge fees to reporters to get information from the USDA.

Jepsen sent a letter to Block strongly opposing the fees, and the USDA agreed to continue its policy of free distribution to the press.

Jepsen says Congress should "conduct oversight hearings to examine the long-term ramifications" of the USDA's information policies, including the plan to allow a single commercial computer firm to sell data.

Stan Prochaska, the USDA's deputy information director, said the proposal is the result of concern about the department's current fragmented approach to issuing data by computer.

The USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service now issues reports through a computer network operated by the University of Nebraska, Prochaska said, and several other agencies are providing statistics and market information to several kinds of electronic information services.

Prochaska said commercial firms will be asked early next year to bid on providing this service. "Everybody then would have to go to this one place to get information they wanted to get electronically," he said.

Prochaska said the fees charged by the winning bidder will be negotiated as part of the contract with the USDA. The department will monitor the situation to ensure that charges aren't exorbitant, he said.

WHO WILL BUY

Prochaska said farmers, agribusiness companies, commodity firms and others who want to obtain USDA information electronically will use computer terminals to call up the data they want and will pay fees.

USDA press releases, which daily are available free to reporters in Washington, are placed into a computer. Newspapers, magazines and radio and TV stations can obtain them electronically, at a charge of 25 cents for each minute of computer time they use, he said.

Prochaska said the USDA is willing to mail such press releases to news outlets across the country, but that many "say they're not willing to wait, that it's worth 25 cents a minute to them to get them right away."

As for farmers, Prochaska said it will be cheaper for them to get information through a computer than paying the Government Printing Office fees for published reports.

USDA officials note that Congress and others have criticized the department for spending too much money on printing and issuing free reports.

Ben Blankenship of the Economic Research Service said some mailing lists with 5,000 names have been cut down to 2,000, and that half of those pay for the information.

Among the most important material issued by the USDA is the Agriculture Market Service's daily reports on commodity prices. This information is posted publicly at more than 100 offices across the country, where a copy also can be picked up free. It's available free to the press and to agribusiness companies, which can get it through a leased wire system.

CHARGE FOR WIRE FACILITIES

Under this system, the information is free, but telephone companies charge for use of the wire facilities. Also, a commercial computer

network currently obtains daily USDA market data by paying leased-wire fees to a telephone company, then charges its subscribers who use their own computer terminals to retrieve the information.

Agriculture Marketing Service officials said the agency plans to continue its free distribution policy to the press after the USDA centralizes its data distribution system through a single network.

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*FARM BOOKS FOR THE SMALL LIBRARY

Battaglia, R. - HANDBOOK OF LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES. Burgess 1981 \$24.95

Behn, E. - MORE PROFIT WITH LESS TILLAGE. Wallace-Homestead 1982 \$7.95pb

Chapman, A. - CHRISTMAS TREES FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT. 2nd Rutgers Univ. 1979 \$12.95

Ensminger, M. - DAIRY CATTLE SCIENCE. 2nd Ed. Interstate 1980 \$29.95

Fite, G. - AMERICAN FARMER: THE NEW MINORITY. Indiana Univ. 1981 \$19.50

Gilmore, R. - A POOR HARVEST. Longman 1982 \$25.00

Harpstead, M. - SOIL SCIENCE SIMPLIFIED. Iowa State Univ. 1980 \$8.25

Harsh, S. - MANAGING THE FARM BUSINESS. Prentice-Hall 1981 \$18.95

Horwits, E. - ON THE LAND: AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FROM PAST TO PRESENT Atheneum 1980 \$9.95.

Huff, C. - COMMODITY SPECULATION FOR BEGINNERS. Macmillan 1981 \$13.95/\$5.95pb



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Jackson, W. - NEW ROOTS FOR AGRICULTURE. Brick House 1980 \$4.95 pb

Jacobs, H. - A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE BEGINNING FARMER. Dover 1978 \$3.95 pb

Jundt, D. - BUYING AND SELLING FARMLAND. Doane 1980 \$16.95

Kramer, M. - THREE FARMS. Atlantic 1980 \$12.95/\$3.95pb

Looney, J. - ESTATE PLANNING FOR FARMERS. Reston 1979 \$19.95

McMillen, W. - FEEDING MULTITUDES Interstate 1981 \$12.00

May, C. - CATTLE MANAGEMENT. Reston 1981 \$18.95.

Mortenson, W. - APPROVED PRACTICES IN DAIRYING. State Mutual 1981 \$35.00

O'Byrne, J. - DOANE'S TAX GUIDE FOR FARMERS. 1981 revised edition Doane \$12.95

*Adapted from bibliography of same title compiled by Wisconsin Library Association, Public Library Association, Small Library Committee (April 1983).