AERO Report to the AAEA/ESIR Committee
July 28, 2002

Back Issues of AJAE Online

At the last meeting I was asked to follow up on the status of online access to back issues of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics. Under a contract between the AAEA and Cornell these issues were to have been scanned and made available via the Mann Library’s Core Historical Literature of Agriculture web site (http://chla.library.cornell.edu/).

I made repeated contacts with Mary Ochs, Head of Collection Development and Preservation at Mann Library. In August 2001 she gave the projected date the issues would be available as January 2002. In January 2002 the projected date was “Spring 2002.” In April 2002 no projected date was given, just the statement that “the system to get them up online is still not ready.” In June 2002 I requested a more detailed report on the status of the project that could be presented to this committee. Ms. Ochs’s response to that request follows:

Date: Fri, 28 Jun 2002 12:50:19 -0400
To: Judith Dow <dowj@pilot.msu.edu>
From: Mary Ochs <mao4@cornell.edu>
Subject: Re: AJAE's soon?
Cc: donna@aaea.org, jkelly@tc.umn.edu, tim.lynch@cornell.edu,
jp243@cornell.edu, janet McCue <jam7@cornell.edu>, fbw4@cornell.edu

Hi Judi,

Here is where we stand with AJAE:

The issues have been scanned and we have them here at Mann Library on CD-ROMs. The work that still needs to be completed includes:

1. OCR of TIFF images for generation of searchable full-text
2. Image structuring to identify the important features of each issue and article, i.e. table of contents, title of article, author, etc. and link these data elements to specific images
3. Load the images onto the Core Historical Literature of Agriculture server

It is the image structuring that is the most time-consuming task. We hire students to go through this material page by page. We are now aware of an experimental software that automates this process, but it is still experimental. We may be able to participate in a test of that software with these images, which could speed up the process.

I hesitate to give you yet another hopeful target date, but we are attempting to get this material up by fall. Please let your committee know that we are moving forward although from the outside it may not seem like it. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Regards,
Mary Ochs

The committee may wish to consider making a formal inquiry into the status of the project if there is no action by Cornell soon.
AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search is AERO’s most visible project. The role of this service in improving access to research in Agricultural Economics has been dramatic. As of June 30, 2002, AgEcon Search contained nearly 5000 papers, with over 300,000 downloads since January 2001. Several new institutions have begun submitting papers, a broad range of groups continue to provide support for the project, and outreach has been expanded. The experiment to add journal articles to AgEcon Search has been successful, and many more articles will be added during the upcoming months. Coverage of conference papers is growing, and a prototype project to add older staff working papers was completed this year. The benefits of archiving materials on AgEcon Search are currently being emphasized.

The vision and commitment of the AERO members at the University of Minnesota made this project possible, and they continue to do extraordinary work. Their detailed report is attached.

AERO Meeting

The AERO workshop, held every 18 months, is our primary means of providing professional development to our members. These workshops are made possible through the financial support of the Farm Foundation.

The 13th AERO workshop was held in April 2002 at Iowa State University. Twenty-one of our 56 members attended. (Membership list available at: http://www.lib.msu.edu/dowj/aero/members.pdf)

Members gave presentations or participated in panel discussions on the following topics:
- customer service in the electronic age
- copyright issues
- having a friendly inviting library and keeping in touch with patrons
- digital preservation
- core agricultural economics journals and which are available electronically
- how special libraries can survive in tough financial times
- measuring user satisfaction

Presentations where made by guest speakers from the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), Iowa State’s Sustainable Agriculture program, AAEA Business Office, and the ISU Library. Attendees toured the ISU Economics/Sociology Reading Room, Parks Library, and College of Veterinary Medicine, and the National Animal Disease Control Center.

Updates were presented by AERO liaisons to the USDA Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Library, US Agricultural Information Network, and this committee.

A complete report of the meeting is available at: http://www.lib.msu.edu/dowj/aero/min_13.pdf

Our next meeting will be held in the Fall of 2003 at Virginia Tech.

Submitted July 28, 2002
Judith Dow
Executive Summary

As of June 30, 2002, AgEcon Search contained nearly 5000 papers, with over 300,000 downloads since January 2001. Several new institutions have begun submitting papers, a broad range of groups continue to provide support for the project, and outreach has been expanded. The experiment to add journal articles to AgEcon Search has been successful, and many more articles will be added during the upcoming months. Coverage of conference papers is growing, and a prototype project to add older staff working papers was completed this year. The benefits of archiving materials on AgEcon Search are currently being emphasized.

Full Report

Usage

As of June 30, 2002:

- Number of papers: 4933
- Papers added in the last 12 months: 1803
- Downloads January 2001-June 2002: 315,103
- Average downloads per paper: 64

URLs for AgEcon Search documents are appearing in publications, and the National Agricultural Library’s Agricola database now includes direct links to AgEcon Search items that appear in Agricola.

Participants

- Participating universities: 36
- Participating institutions/associations: 18

Universities in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Israel, the UK and the US submit papers to the database, and four of the associations are located outside the US. Nine new groups began submitting papers during the last year (see the attached list), and four more are ready to begin.

The level of participation varies among groups, with some sending every paper they produce, and others submitting more sporadically.

This year saw the retirement of one of the co-founders of AgEcon Search, Patricia Rodkewich of Magrath Library at the University of Minnesota. She was replaced by Julie Kelly, who joins Louise Letnes as a co-coordinator of the project.
Support

In addition to the annual support that AAEA provides for AgEcon Search (covering the exhibit at the annual meeting and the personnel to add conference papers to the database), other groups also contributed to the cause during the last year.

The U of Minnesota College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences provided a grant of $2700, and the U of Minnesota Libraries gave funding to digitize back issues of two journals and the series of staff papers back to 1969. The AAEA Foundation provided money to the Southern Agricultural Economics Association to help cover the costs of adding the back issues of Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics and its predecessor, and the Farm Foundation will be helping defray the costs of including Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies – annual conference reports.

Outreach

Updates on new items added to AgEcon Search are e-mailed to 160 individuals as well as the Agecon-L, agric-econ and AERO listservs, which reach about 1000 people. Conference papers are now actively recruited, and an article emphasizing the partnerships in AgEcon Search was published in the spring issue of Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship. (http://www.istl.org/02-spring/article3.html)

New Resources

In addition to the core of recent staff papers that currently make up the bulk of AgEcon Search, there was notable growth this year in three areas: journals, conference papers, and older staff papers.

The experiment to include a small number of volumes of peer-reviewed journals was viewed as a success by the societies that publish the journals as well as the readers, so an expansion is underway in that area. As of June 2002:

- **Agricultural and Resource Economics Review**
  - Published by the Northeastern Agricultural and Resource Economics Association

- **Journal of Food Distribution Research**
  - Published by the Food Distribution Research Society

- **Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics**
  - Published by the Southern Agricultural Economics Association
Conference papers are making up a larger portion of AgEcon Search. By June 2002, 318 Selected Papers from this year’s AAEA annual meeting were posted. The association has included conference papers since 1997.

To build on the archival nature of AgEcon Search, a project was undertaken to digitize and include about 800 older staff papers from the U of Minnesota Department of Applied Economics. This was completed in early 2002.

On the Horizon

We anticipate growth in a number of areas in the coming months. We are talking to one other association about including their journal, and we have several others we that intend to approach with the idea. AAEA is also looking at the possibility of including some of its publications.

Ten institutions have expressed an interest in pursuing grant funding to digitize older staff papers, and the Farm Foundation will be covering the costs for digitizing and including Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies – Annual Conference Reports. These represent two efforts to build the archival aspects of AgEcon Search, and that is an area that will undoubtedly see more activity this year.

The e-mail notification about new papers has been very well received, and we will be contacting members of AAEA and other associations to invite them to join. Individuals may sign up at the AgEcon Search booth at this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Letnes
Julie Kelly
Project Coordinators
AgEcon Search
http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/

Quote from a New Participant

From Piero Conforti, INEA, The National Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rome, in an e-mail on July 2, 2002, asking to include INEA papers in AgEcon Search:

“Since all of us currently use AgEcon Search to find updated research papers, and we all realize that this has become the most used tool for bibliographic research also throughout Europe, we wish to submit the papers reporting the English translation of our work.”

Appendix:

List of AgEcon Search participants
Current Contributors to AgEcon Search

U.S. Universities

Auburn University
University of Arkansas
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
Clemson University
Cornell University
University of Georgia
University of Idaho
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Iowa State University
Louisiana State University
University of Maryland
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota
Mississippi State University
University of Missouri, Columbia**
Montana State University
University of Nevada, Reno
North Carolina State University
North Dakota State University
Ohio State University
Oklahoma State University
Purdue University
Rutgers University, Food Policy Institute (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
South Dakota State University
Texas A & M University
Utah State University
Washington State University
West Virginia University
University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Wisconsin, Madison, Land Tenure Center

Foreign Universities

University of Guelph, Canada
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel**
Imperial College at Wye, United Kingdom**
University of New England, Australia
Policy Research Group (PRG - Leuven) Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium**
University of Saskatchewan, Canada
Government Associations and Scholarly Associations

Agricultural Outlook Forum (USDA)
American Agricultural Economics Association
Canadian Agri-Food Trade Research Network**
Environmental and Natural Resources Policy and Training Project
Farm Foundation (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
Food Distribution Research Society
George Morris Center, Canada (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
INEA, The National Institute of Agricultural Economics, Italy**
International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium
International Food Policy Research Institute
Mozambique Agriculture and Rural Development Research**
National Animal Health Monitoring System, USDA
National Council for Agricultural Research, The Netherlands
Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA**
NCR-134 Commodity Price Analysis Papers
New South Wales Agriculture Program Economists, Australia**
Regional Research Project NE-165
Regional Research Project S-278
Statistics Canada (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
Western Agricultural Economics Association
Western Coordinating Committee on Agribusiness: WCC-72 (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)
Western Regional Coordinating Committee on Rangeland Economics - WCC-55

Full Text Journals

Agricultural and Resource Economics Review
   (Back Volumes Trial)
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics**
   (Contract ready to sign)
Journal of Food Distribution Research
   (Back Volumes Trial)

** New since the last Annual Meeting