Saturday, February 27, 1999:

AERO members arrived throughout the day. We met at 6:30 in the President’s Dining Room in the Reitz Union for dinner, and socializing.

Sunday, February 28, 1999:

Introductions: Anita introduced Linda Hacker, who attended our meeting as part of her Library School training. After Anita introduced herself, and described her facility, the rest of us did likewise. As always, it was interesting to note the differences not only in our types of facilities, but also the roles we play in the field of Agricultural Economics.

Before the "official" program began, Sue Sparling thanked AERO on behalf of the Colorado State University Library for the many gifts sent by AERO members to help rebuild their collection after the flood they experienced.

NAL UPDATE (Wayne Olson):

A little over two million dollars was allocated over the summer to renovate the first floor of the National Agricultural Library. "Renovation Update News", an email newsletter is sent to the NAL staff once or twice a week to keep all informed of the progress of Phase I of the renovation. Prior to the beginning of the project, the reference monograph collection was extensively weeded. In November, the public service areas on the first floor (the Reference Desk, the Reading Room, the Circulation Desk, and the Periodicals Reading Room) were moved to the ground floor to an area about 1/4 their usual floor space. All of the Reference staff offices were moved from the 1st floor to the 4th floor during November and December. In addition, the card catalog was moved to the 7th and 8th floors of the library. Older materials not covered in the online catalog and AGRICOLA can be looked up in the Bibliography of Agriculture and the printed Dictionary Catalog of the National Agricultural Library.

First floor renovations are scheduled to be completed by January 2000 and the public service areas will once again be on the first floor.

Phase II of the renovation, pending funding, will be converting the 4th floor into space for Special Collections.

At the same time there have been several groups working on "Reinventing Reference". Wayne anticipates that the outcome of this analysis will be some sort of tiered reference service. Wayne also predicts that another outcome of the study will be more emphasis on the development and enhancement of the NAL website. Further, the functionality of the NAL homepage should be much improved with a new design that will include a search engine and a site index. The redesigned NAL homepage should be ready by early summer.

Wayne also talked about IBIDS, (International Bibliographic Information on Dietary Supplements) a new database on the WWW which has been amazingly popular. Additionally, Wayne touched on several additional sources that will be useful for reference work. He will keep AERO members informed of these and other services/information via email.

USAIN UPDATE (Luti Salisbury):

Luti spoke about the upcoming USAIN meeting to be held at Kansas State University, April 22-24. Registration
is $225.00, but there are two $500 scholarships available for first time attendees. Information on obtaining a scholarship is available on the web. Current topics that USAIN is working on that are also of interest to AERO are the preservation of agricultural literature, and the digitizing of USDA publications.

A show of hands revealed that five AERO members present are also members of USAIN. On behalf of USAIN, Luti encouraged AERO members to join their ranks. Annual membership dues are $35, and only 15 members are needed to form an interest group within USAIN, which could be a possibility for AERO.

TOUR OF MARSTON SCIENCE LIBRARY  (Carol Drum, chair of Marston Science Library):

Anita introduced Carol Drum, who gave us background information on the Marston Science Library. The library houses materials that used to be located in five separate science libraries. The Library also houses an extensive map collection that is located on first floor, but is not really part of the MSL. The group walked up to the main floor level of the building for a brief question/answer period.

PRINT SHARING:

Members who had brought their favorite or new print resources, shared them with the group. It was interesting to note how many of these print sources are also now available in electronic format. Sources mentioned included a multilingual agricultural thesaurus, The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics and the Law, Andriot, and information on travel in other countries, among others. Frustration was expressed that a number of print products have been discontinued with nothing of substance in either print or electronic format to replace them.

TOURS:

AERO members toured several museums - The Harn Museum of Art, and the Florida Museum of Natural History, followed by a trip to Cedar Key late in the afternoon.

Monday, March 1, 1999

WELCOME/GREETINGS:

Carol Drum, Chair of the Marston Science Library opened our meeting Monday morning. She introduced Dr. John Gordon, Chair of the Food and Resource Economics Department, and Dr. Michael Martin, Vice-President of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Dr. Martin shared with us briefly his impressions of agriculture in Florida which differs greatly from areas he’s served in the past - Minnesota and Oregon.

WEB INSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS (Brent Mai):

Brent spoke on designing his library's web page to make it an effective source of information for his patrons. Purdue’s situation is different from a number of our library systems, in that they do not have a "main" library, but, instead, have 15 subject specific libraries. The 15 libraries have little direct input on the library system’s homepage, but each library is able to design its site specific page. Thus the 15 libraries’ pages differ considerably according to the needs of their patrons. Brent has tried to design the Management and Economics Library homepage to be an effective, easy to use resource and has found it to be a particularly useful resource for their patrons during the hours after 5:00 p.m., when the Library is staffed by student employees.

One of the innovative things Brent has done is to perform popular searches ahead of time, creating links to the search URL. A patron need only click on the link, and the same search is generated in "real time". In addition, they have integrated the search screen from a number of resources directly onto their homepage page. This saves patrons the time of calling up the homepage of a particular resource and then having to click through one or more
Because there is so much "out there" on the web, part of what Brent sees as the role of a good reference person, is training people to be critical web users. The three questions he tries to get his users to ask themselves of web resources are:

1. HOW did you get to the information?
2. WHO put the information on the web?
3. WHY are they putting the information out there?

Brent opened the session up to comments/suggestions, which allowed spirited discussion regarding other members' experience with library homepages and staff/patron needs.

WEBSITES SURVEY AND SHARING (Deb Moore):

Deb distributed a handout of websites she prepared from AERO members' submissions. AERO members discussed their submissions and additional websites. As usual, this was one of the most helpful sessions of the workshop. In addition of viewing and discussing new URLs, there was discussion on the AERO website design.

LUNCH WITH DISCUSSION ON FARM FOUNDATION CONCERNS:

After lunch in the Micanopy Room, Sandy Sears introduced the topic of Farm Foundation concerns. Two handouts were distributed - one was Sandy’s Email that went to the membership prior to the conference, the other a handout prepared by Deb Moore with information on AAEA, USAIN and SLA, organizations we might consider joining. The floor was open for discussion.

Because Sandy felt the organization Farm Foundation is most interested in seeing us join is the AAEA, most of the discussion centered around the possibility/desirability of joining that organization. Comments to consider included:

- that AAEA is very different in organization and purpose from AERO and that our meetings likely could not continue to focus exclusively on library concerns if we were to become part of AAEA
- that funding for memberships and registration to attend meetings might not be forthcoming from our own institutions when faculty members would be asking for funding at the same time
- that the time of year AAEA meets would not be convenient for most of us to attend a professional meeting that we would lose our important "on-site" feel for how like facilities are set up and function, since AAEA meetings typically do not take place where AERO members' facilities are located

It was further suggested that increased involvement with AAEA could be gained in ways other than actually becoming part of AAEA. Suggestions included:

- having AERO members present a program as part of AAEA meetings
- encouraging co-authorship with credit being given to AERO members who have assisted in research for articles that appear in professional journals
- encouraging publication by AERO members in AAEA publications, with Choices and the newsletter being mentioned

Sandy asked for a show of hands of attendees as to whether or not we wanted to stay independent. It was unanimous that the membership wants to stay independent.

NASS FIELD OFFICE REPORT/CENSUS UPDATE (Dr. John Witzig, State Statistician for Florida):

The NASS field office is the primary collector of agricultural statistics for Florida. The office endeavors to supply the data, leaving analysis of that data to the ag economists. With the exception of the Census of Ag, all information received is submitted on a voluntary basis. The packets Dr. Witzig distributed provided us with
detailed information on the mission of NASS/Census of Ag. In addition, he demonstrated the NASS homepage (http://www.nass.usda.gov) and the 1997 Census of Agriculture homepage (http://www.nass.usda.gov/census) on the web, providing valuable navigating information and tips. A spirited question/answer period followed his presentation.

USDA/ERS UPDATE:

Because Jim Horsfield was unable to attend our meeting, Anita distributed paper copies of his update presentation and read portions of it aloud. ERS/NTIS issues were discussed by the membership, and people were encouraged to contact Jim directly with questions/concerns. Of particular concern was the increase in prices for publications.

COOPERATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS WEBSITE AT WISCONSIN (Linda Davis):

Linda spoke about the creation of the Agricultural Economics department website at Wisconsin (http://www.aae.wisc.edu). A former AERO member, Jack Solock, took the initiative to begin the departmental website several years ago. When he took a different position at the university, Linda took over the website, but she encountered difficulties in trying to maintain both the library and the website. She has now succeeded in securing funding for a staff position that will have website maintenance as part the position duties. To see how other AERO members deal with the website creation/maintenance issue, Linda surveyed AERO members prior to our meeting. The handout distributed reflects the findings of that survey. What is apparent is that there are many different scenarios in the departments we represent. There was discussion on the trials and tribulations of website creation, with comments and suggestions by the members.

USDA EFFORTS TOWARD Y2K (Wayne Olson):

In 1998, Wayne was approached for information on USDA’s Y2K efforts. He was amazed at how little information was available in the more credible indexes/abstracts, but how much information was available on the internet. Wayne further asked AERO members and other experts in the agricultural field for input on this topic. After assembling the information and sending it on, Wayne’s involvement has continued. He now has been charged with sending out Y2K alerts to the Food Supply Working Group, which meets weekly to discuss the Y2K issue. Wayne passed around several documents dealing with Y2K and agriculture, sharing several websites with the group. (examples: http://www.ocio.usda.gov/y2k/links.htm and http://www.ocio.usda.gov/y2k/index.htm)

Besides checking the USDA sites, Wayne suggested checking FEMA and other government agency websites for Y2K information.

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

COPYRIGHT UPDATE (Judy Dow):

Judi reviewed the basics of copyright covered at our last meeting along with what has changed since then.

The Copyright Extension Act has changed the rights to the life of the author plus 70 years, and works for hire (where a company or organization has the rights) to 95 years. This change makes the U.S. law agree with international copyright treaties.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act addresses many copyright issues that arise with digital materials - things that didn’t even exist when the 1976 law was passed. A link to "Primer on the Digital Millennium" can be accessed through the ARL (Association of Research Libraries) link on the AERO homepage or directly at the following url: http://www.arl.org/info/frn/copy/primer.html.
AGECON SEARCH UPDATE/AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ON AGNIC/THE LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE: (Louise Letnes and Patricia Rodkewich):

Louise shared that 99% of the comments she receives from AgEcon Search users are positive. They now have over 1,000 papers on AgEcon Search, more than tripling the number of papers since we last met. Louise anticipates that the total number of papers will double this year. AAEA has submitted the most papers (246), and their papers have been the most retrieved (accessed a total of 27,520 times) of all participants of AgEcon Search. Louise explained that the "hits" listed on the green handout she distributed, reflects people who actually pulled up the pdf file - not just those who looked at the abstract. Louise further emphasized the archival feature of AgEcon Search. Many departments have small servers and do not have this capability. Aside from the ERS submissions of abstracts only, AgEcon Search will accept only full text papers for their database. The copyright issue is dealt with by requesting the author to include a copyright statement. With it, the author still retains rights to his/her material, while allowing others to copy and use the pdf files, as long as the author is acknowledged. Louise reviewed the handout listing the top 15 papers, and read a list of countries that have used the database. Louise reviewed the new online submission form, which is now preferred over the traditional FTP method. Louise and Pat are planning to send out a letter to ag econ department heads shortly, detailing the submission guidelines and encouraging their departments to participate in AgEcon Search.

Pat spoke on the futures of libraries. She and Louise began working together on AgEcon Search less than four years ago. At that time, pdf didn’t exist, but gopher did. In just three and a half years, in the area of access alone, there have been many changes. Pat reviewed changes in libraries, formats of materials and ownership of materials. The shift to using the internet has been a major source of change. It has been a source of headaches, but it has also allowed sharing of information and collections among libraries. Because of funding problems, Pat feels that the traditional library is at risk, unless libraries become proactive in using the technologies that are now a part of librarianship reality. AgNIC is one of the electronic databases that allows this type of sharing, with specific universities taking on responsibility for specific subject areas. Pat demonstrated the ag econ portion of AgNIC, which she maintains. Additionally, the ISAAC Project at the University of Wisconsin should be a valuable tool in resource sharing among libraries. Pat also feels that the role of the librarian is changing from being less a collector of material to more of an "information manager", a position that should become even more valuable to the academic community, since electronic literature is more difficult to deal with than traditional paper formats.

SEARCH ENGINES (Lutishoor Salisbury):

Luti distributed a survey of members on "favorite search engines", and a handout on the strengths and weaknesses of search engines for us to share with our patrons.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON ATYPICAL MARKET RESEARCH (moderated by Margaret Merrill and Lutishoor Salisbury):

The discussion on atypical market research was prompted by a specific request Margaret worked on. The assignment students were given required that they explore demographic and consumer behavior information, statistical information, government information, lifestyle, cultural and business information, and miscellaneous published information. Luti shared that she often fields broad questions, such as "I want to know everything there is to know about making rice flour." She shared that her approach for this type of question is to break the question down into its many parts, and deal with each part separately, which makes the broad question more manageable. The handout distributed included the specific resources Margaret used in dealing with her question, along with resources that could be used to fit our own situations if this type of question should come our way.

Discussion/comments from the workshop participants included looking for an association that may already have done the type of work needed rather than doing the work again, contacting a county agent, and looking for community development case studies, and other resources to assist in this type of question.
TOUR OF LIBRARY WEST’S REFERENCE AND BUSINESS SOURCES (Peter McKay and Colleen Seale):

The group walked to the main library on campus for a demonstration of the business page on their website.

PRINT JOURNALS SURVEY UPDATE (Janet Wilson):

Janet distributed her survey on print journals. She would like everyone to fill out the survey and return it to her. She will mail the updated survey to members.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES SURVEY AND DISCUSSION (Sandy Sears):

Sandy presented the handout she prepared, "Electronic Journals and Resources". The survey includes electronic journals, newsletters, newspapers, tables of contents services, and other electronic information resources. The handout also gives subscription and fee information. Discussion included interest in SSRN (Social Science Research Network) and additional information on the materials covered in the handout.

HOW GREY IS THE GREY LITERATURE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS (Louise Letnes and Grace Dote):

Louise defined Grey Literature as "That which is produced in all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers." (This definition was agreed to by GreyNet, homepage: http://www.konbib.nl/infolev/greynet/home.html) Louise used the list of domestic academic agricultural economics working paper series prepared by Linda Davis for our last meeting, to analyze the "greyness" of grey literature. Of the 34 institutions on Linda's handout, 23 of those had lists of publications. Taking those, Louise and Grace used selected series, and randomly chose five papers from each. They then searched AgEcon Search, the internet via Alta Vista, EconLit, Agricola, and CAB Abstracts. The results showed that Alta Vista retrieved 58% of the papers, AgEcon Search retrieved 32%, Agricola 29%, CAB 14%, and EconLit 4%. Louise’s analysis of the data is that ag econ grey literature truly is grey, and is not readily accessed through the usual means of retrieval. While this may not be seen as a problem among faculty members in many of our departments, it is a problem for those of us trying to locate this type of information. There was particular concern regarding Agricola. Louise encouraged AERO members to be proactive in making their departments' grey literature more accessible. Suggestions for doing this include providing lists of departmental publications on the internet, and supplying Agricola and/or CAB with copies of departmental series.

Grace discussed ways of getting our series indexed. She distributed letters she received in response to her request for information on submission of grey literature. Those she'd communicated with were CABI Information, National Ag Library (Agricola), and AWPE (Abstracts of Working Papers in Economics). Additionally, Grace provided copies of the web links she created covering "International Academic/Non-Academic Institutions" regarding their on-line working papers or lists of grey literature publications.

INVESTING FOR FUN AND PROFIT: ARE YOU AN ANT OR A GRASSHOPPER? (Dr. P.J. van Blokland):

Dr. Blokland, part of the Food and Resource Economics Department spoke on personal investing, answering many questions and addressing investment concerns.

TOUR/DEMOS IN THE AQUATIC FOOD PRODUCTS LAB (Dr. Gary Rodrick):

Dr. Rodrick, part of the Food Sciences and Human Nutrition Department, hosted a tour of the university’s new Aquatic Food Products Lab. Current experiments he shared included a study on hand washing, the use of copper and ozone to rid food of bacteria, and a study on properly cooking seafood to make it safe. Dr. Rodrick requested and addressed the many questions AERO members had on the issue of food safety.
AAEA SUBSCRIPTION AND ACCESS TO AAEA BENEFITS THROUGH THE SUBSCRIPTION: There was concern on the part of several AERO members that those of us receiving the AAEA subscriptions do not have access to the directory of members and AAEA newsletter. After further investigation, it appears that even though we are getting a special subscription rate through AAEA, we are not actually members. AAEA has legitimate concerns about non-members having access to their “members only” publications, and so it was decided not to pursue this topic.

DEVELOP A LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION: It was decided to put an alphabetical mailing list of members on the AERO website with asterisks identifying board members.

FARM FOUNDATION AND AAEA. DO WE OR DON’T WE? The suggestions made at the luncheon regarding this issue were reviewed. Motion was made by Ellen Reneke that AERO remain independent. Motion was seconded by Sue Sparling. Motion passed unanimously. At the same time, the membership agreed that we do want to increase our association with AAEA and will continue to look for ways to do so in the future. It appears that three AERO members will be attending the AAEA meetings in Nashville, so we will have a presence at that particular meeting. Judi Dow will draft a letter of reply to Farm Foundation, addressing their concerns, and distribute it to the executive committee for review before sending.

NEXT CONFERENCE: Linda Davis read a letter of invitation from the Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics at University of Wisconsin, Madison... for fall 2000. Motion was made by Louise to enthusiastically accept their invitation. Motion was seconded by Grace Dote and carried. Iowa State University has tentatively agreed to host the meeting in Spring 2002.

OFFICERS: Officers for next term are:
- President: Anita Battiste
- President-Elect: Linda Davis
- Secretary/Farm Foundation Liaisons: Deb Moore/Kathryn St. John (Deb will be the primary secretary/liaison with Kathryn taking over after the Wisconsin meeting)
- AAEA/ESIRC Liaison: Brent Mai

AAEA/ESIRC REPORT: Brent reported on the sessions he attended at the AAEA meeting in August. The ESIRC meeting was especially interesting. Brent shared information on AERO’s meeting in Oregon and AgEcon Search with the committee.

PREFERENCES FOR NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION: Judi had sent out a survey regarding newsletter distribution. The results were evenly divided between those wanting electronic format, and those wanting a paper copy. Judi plans to provide both.

ANNOUNCEMENTS ON TRAVEL FUNDS AND FARM FOUNDATION FEEDBACK: Deb distributed Farm Foundation reimbursement forms for those requesting travel funds, along with the “three ideas you will take back to implement in your library” forms. Both should be turned in before attendees leave the workshop or mailed to Deb within a week of the meeting for those who choose to “think about it”.

APPRECIATION EXPRESSED: The membership expressed appreciation to Anita Battiste for hosting this workshop/meeting and to Sandy Sears for serving as president.

Meeting was adjourned.