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Inside Information

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INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

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Page

WABC, network flagship station, to broadcast interview about USDA programs.....1
 Officers named for North Central Research Committee on Mass Communications.....1
 University of Missouri's annual agricultural communications conference set.....2
 University of Illinois produces questionnaire design checklist.....2
 One agricultural communications research team completes review; another sent...3
 New "Fact Book of U.S. Agriculture" available from USDA.....3
 Maryland writer/editor seeks position.....3
 New USDA slide presentation shows people on the farm "getting started".....4
 Note from the editor to readers of "Inside Information".....4

WABC RADIO INTERVIEW COVERS USDA MATTERS

Werner Hietsch, acting regional director of the AMS-administered Northeast information office in New York, will be the guest on WABC's weekly farm program March 21 to discuss several USDA programs and activities.

Since the program is broadcast at an hour when WABC's clear channel 50,000 watt signal has no competition from lower-powered local stations on the same frequency, it can be heard in just about the entire eastern half of the country.

The program's moderator says he has received mail from as far away as Florida and Minnesota.

Hietsch will review Secretary of Agriculture Block's recent speech to the dairy industry at Seattle, Wash., and how changes in the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service's dairy price support program could affect that agricultural sector.

Hietsch also will discuss the Agricultural Marketing Service's beef grading proposals, marketing order guidelines and proposed amendments to the egg research and promotion order.

He also will talk about the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service's mission and the highly successful publication, "Traveler's Tips."

The meat and poultry inspection program, administered by the Food Safety & Inspection Service, and that agency's consumer education efforts on food safety also will be covered.

Hietsch also will discuss the reason the New York regional information office is being closed at the end of this month, and the closing's ramifications (probably no more interviews on ABC's flagship station).

COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH COMMITTEE NAMED

New officers of the NCR-90 (North Central Research Committee on Mass Communications) have been named.

They are: Chairman, Dick Fleming, University of Nebraska; vice chairman, Len Maurer, University of Wisconsin; and secretary, Ed Roche, Ohio State University.

The next meeting of the group will be at Wooster, Ohio, early in October.

MISSOURI AG COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE SET

The annual Missouri Agricultural Communications Conference, sponsored by the University of Missouri, will be held at Columbia March 31-April 1.

In past years, 70 to 80 agricultural journalists have attended the event, according to Dick Lee, agricultural editor at the University of Missouri.

Lee says generally the audience is a midwestern one, but they've had registrants from all over the country in past years.

The conference is intended for journalists reporting agriculture and begins with a dinner meeting Wednesday evening, March 31, and continues through the day Thursday, April 1.

A farmer in the national news last year will be the kick-off speaker at the dinner session Wednesday evening.

Wayne Cryts, southeast Missouri farmer who defied a federal judge and marshall and removed his soybeans from storage facilities of an elevator which had filed for bankruptcy, has agreed to give his views on how he has been treated by the news media.

He will comment on national, regional and local, as well as farm and nonfarm coverage, and which medium he feels did the best job.

A variety of topics is included on the second day of the program. Leading off will be a panel discussion of agricultural journalists, who will review the question of whether they should be advocates or objective observers.

Don Muhm, farm editor of the Des Moines REGISTER & TRIBUNE, Bonnie Pollard, managing editor of the MICHIGAN FARMER, and Cordell Tindall, retired editor of the MISSOURI RURALIST, are the panelists.

Dale Spence, University of Missouri professor of journalism, will discuss rights of photographic and story subjects, and trespass laws.

Roy Fisher, dean of the Missouri School of Journalism, will give his views on the future of journalism education at the Thursday luncheon.

The afternoon program will be devoted to coverage of conservation of natural resources, with Don Doll, award-winning photographer from Creighton University at Omaha, and John Janovy, professor of life sciences at University of Nebraska and author of KEITH COUNTY JOURNAL, speaking about this important facet of agriculture.

Lee says advance registration fee for the conference is \$40 which includes banquet and luncheon tickets and two coffee breaks. Registration at the door is \$48.

Programs and registration forms are available from Dick Lee, 1-98 Agriculture Bldg., University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211, or call (314) 882-2480.

ILL. HAS QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN CHECKLIST

A very useful and practical "Questionnaire Design Checklist" has been put together by Ed Vernon, University of Illinois.

Its four pages detail 31 points one needs to remember in designing a questionnaire.

Vernon uses it when working with program specialists, both state and county level, and when consulting on surveys.

He says it helps him avoid the simple and obvious mistakes that cause many questionnaires to be unwieldy or unsatisfactory.

Anyone interested in seeing a copy of the checklist may contact Dr. Edwin W. Vernon, Instructional Media Coordinator, Office of Agricultural Communications, 62 Mumford, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801, or call (217) 333-7117.

AG RESEARCH INFO REVIEW TEAMS AT WORK

Mason Miller, communications officer with USDA's Cooperative State Research Service in Washington, D.C., reports that another research information review team is set for action soon.

The CSRS review of the University of Nebraska's Department of Agricultural Communications is scheduled for the week of April 12.

The team will include Gary Vacin, Kansas State University; Roger Brown, Iowa State University; Don Springer, Texas A&M University; and Miller.

A similar review team spent a very profitable week at Washington State University recently, with Hugh "Pete" Cameron's Agricultural Information Office staff.

That team included Art Higbee, Utah State University; Jack Sperbeck, University of Minnesota; Glen Goss, Pennsylvania State University; and Miller.

Miller said they uncovered at Washington State, as usual, that some of the information staff have been doing evaluation studies and surveys for particular purposes right along as part of their regular jobs.

"I'm so pleased to see so many doing something in evaluation and research," Miller said in his latest CSRS Research Information Letter, "and finding out how useful it can be in your decision-making.

"But we do all need to keep evaluating the studies we do and get expert help to critique what we have done and improve it for next time."

Miller requests copies of any reports resulting from information studies which he can help diffuse to others who might be interested.

FACT BOOK ON AGRICULTURE AVAILABLE

The new "Fact Book of U.S. Agriculture" is out and available from USDA's Office of Governmental and Public Affairs.

As usual, the publication is full of interesting and useful (and factual) information.

Major sections are titled: Farm production supplies, the farming operation, food marketing, agricultural services and the rural social environment.

Anyone needing a copy should contact GPA PUBLICATIONS, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Room 507-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

WRITER/EDITOR SEEKS POSITION

B. Kimball Baker, an experienced writer/editor is seeking a professional position.

His experience includes a GS-14 level deputy director of information for the Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.

He has also been a speechwriter, magazine writer/editor, news release writer, radio writer/editor/reporter, and currently is freelancing for such magazines as SMITHSONIAN, AMERICAN WAY, EBONY and BARRISTER.

Baker has a B.A. from the University of North Carolina and an M.A. from the University of Maryland.

He may be contacted at 13125 Clifton Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904, or call (301) 384-7530.

SLIDES SHOW GETTING STARTED IN FARMING

A slide and filmstrip presentation showing how a young family is trying to get established in farming is now available from USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs.

"People on the Farm: Getting Started" is the sixth in a series of slide and filmstrip presentations about farming and farm people.

It takes a detailed look at two young black farmers, Wilbur and Ramona Minisee, of Niles, Mich., as they try to build up their fledgling farming operation which includes dairy cattle and several kinds of crops.

The presentation looks at problems common to all beginning farmers, irrespective of race, although the Minisees are bucking a trend which began in the 1920s in which a disproportionate number of blacks left the farm.

The 122-frame, 13-minute presentation may be purchased from USDA for \$20 as a filmstrip or for \$29.50 as a slide set.

The prices include one copy of an illustrated narrative guide, one copy of a companion publication and a cassette soundtrack.

The cassette has inaudible 50Hz and 1,000Hz pulses for automatic slide changing with the proper equipment.

The Office of Governmental & Public Affairs' Photography Center, with help from the Office's Special Programs Center, prepares the "People on the Farm" presentations to aid urban students and others who are unfamiliar with farming operations.

Each presentation takes a detailed look at modern farming operations in the United States.

Other subjects in the series are dairying, broiler growing, corn and hog farming, growing oranges and raising beef cattle.

The Special Programs Center has booklets on each of these subjects, plus wheat farming and vegetable farming, along with a teacher's guide for their use in classrooms.

The slide sets and filmstrips may be ordered from: Photography Center, Office of Governmental & Public Affairs, Room 4407-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (202) 447-6633.

The booklets and teacher's guide may be ordered from: Special Programs Center, Office of Governmental & Public Affairs, Room 536-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC, or call (202) 447-5163.

NOTE TO READERS OF "INSIDE"

Once again the editor of "Inside Information" wishes to thank those who have expressed kind comments about the contents and the efforts in preparing this weekly newsletter for agricultural communicators.

Your suggestions for improvement and contributions in the form of items for the newsletter are always welcome--particularly items about information people and successful or interesting public information projects.

Some of you have asked about changes in mailings, additions, deletions, number of copies, etc. The process for handling mailed versions through the USDA system often takes considerable time, and we apologize.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land-Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to Stan W. Prochaska, Assistant Public Affairs Director, Room 407-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, to AG002 on the Dialcom INTERCOMM system, or call (202) 447-7454.