Agricultural Public Relations

Carrying steam in a basket

What is Ag Public Relations?

- What it is not
  - Propaganda
  - "Spin"
  - Hype
- Public Relations fosters mutually beneficial relationships
- Good public relations goes unnoticed

What is Ag Public Relations?

- Management function
- Involves two-way communication
- Planned Activity
- Research-based social science
- Socially responsible
- Common thread?
  - Relationship management
What is Ag Public Relations?

- Research
  - Focus groups, surveys, SWATs
- Planning
  - Strategy
- Communication
  - Execute
- Evaluation
  - How well did it work? did it meet goals?

What is Ag Public Relations?

- Values-driven Public Relations
  definition:

    Public relations is a values-driven management of relationships between an organization and the publics that can affect its success.

What is Ag Public Relations?

- PR skill set is very useful
- PR practioners
  - PR Agencies
  - Corporations
  - Government
  - Non-profit organizations or trade associations
  - Independent PR consultants
History of Ag Public Relations

☐ As usual, agriculture came first
  ■ Iraq, Extension agents gave crop advice
  ■ 1800 B.C.

☐ Athens – first true democracy
  ■ About 500 B.C.
  ■ Rhetoric to influence public opinion

☐ Roman republic
  ■ About 100 B.C.
  ■ Voice of the people

History of Ag Public Relations

☐ Revolutionary America
  ■ Lots of PR use
  ■ Any publicity events?
  ■ Any campaigns to influence public opinion?

  ■ Boston Tea Party
  ■ Federalist Papers
  ■ Common Sense

History of Ag Public Relations

☐ Modern public relations
  ■ U.S. businesses began using PR in the late 1800s
  ■ Early in the 1900s, British government

☐ Industrial Revolution
  ■ Agricultural society to industrial society
  ■ Public opinion grew more important
History of Ag Public Relations

- Growth of Institutions
  - Big companies needed PR
  - People feared centralized power
  - Univ. of Michigan began promoting itself in 1897
  - Need for communication in general increased

- Ag PR began to flourish here
  - Agricultural producers were reachable
  - Companies began to see value of PR
    - Product information
    - Educational events
    - Company image as products became to be commodities
    - Branding

- Early activities
  - News Releases
  - Media relations

- Later
  - Educational events
  - Promotions and contests
  - Crisis management
Jobs in Ag. Public Relations

Five broad categories
- Corporate
- Nonprofit and trade associations
- Governments
- Public relations and communications agencies
- Independent consulting

Duties
- Managers
  - Oversee programs, projects, staffs
  - Plan, strategy
- Technicians
  - Execute
  - Implement

Time entry for both
DEADLINES!!!

Salaries
- Overall average $69,000 worldwide, $72,000 in United States
- Median starting salary $29,000
- Ag will be about $31,000
- Highest paid are consultants ($160,000)
- Corporations pay the most
- Men still make more
  - Mommy track – especially in agencies
What you may write

- News releases
- Letters
- Speeches
- Backgrounders
- Online copy
- Magazine articles
- Pitch letters
- PowerPoint presentations
- Media tour presentations
- Media kits
- Banners
- Contact sheets
- Newsletters
- Annual report letters
- Award announcements
- Award speeches
- Advertorials
- Letters to the editor
- E-mail messages
- Public relations plans
- Strategic communication plans
- Invitations
- Testimonials
- Biographies

What else you may write

- Apology letters
- Statements to the media
  - Crisis events
  - Surprise announcements
- Crisis management plans

Preparing for jobs in Ag PR

- Writing is a critical skill
  - Good writers can write anything
- Opportunities to work successfully in teams of all types
- Experience is a plus
- Firms usually do not hire students straight out of college unless they have significant experience