Research in Agricultural Communications

What is research?
- Any systematic activity designed to develop or contribute to generalizeable knowledge
- To seek out and to find knowledge on things that you know or want to know more about.
- The quest of knowledge.

Ag Communications Research
- Broad component of social sciences
  - Social science: the branch of science that studies society and the relationships of individuals within a society.
- Conducted by
  - government and university researchers
  - Agribusinesses
  - Media organizations
  - Professional organizations
Theoretical clusters
- Interpersonal Communication and Relations
- Organizational Communication
- Mass Media
- Communication and Information Technology
- Communication Processes
- Health Communication
- Media, Culture and Society
- Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Where to Find Agricultural Communications Research
- Journal of Applied Communication
- Journal of Agricultural Education
- Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education
- Journal of Extension
- Journal of Southern Agricultural Education Research
- Journal of Communication
- Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly

SMCR as example of research
- SMCR communication model developed by David Berlo
- Source: point of origin
  - Evaluation of internal or external communication programs and activities
  - Individuals attitudes and preferences for messages and information channels
  - Image studies
SMCR as basis of research

- **Message**
  - Characteristics of messages and modification to meet needs and preferences.
  - Readership research
  - Audience preferences

- **Channel**
  - The vehicle used to deliver the message from sender to receiver
  - Individuals compare channels according to different criteria – use these to base decisions and value
  - Ratings research to document audience size and composition
  - Communication behaviors

- **Receiver**
  - Individual within an audience targeted by the source.
  - How farmers receive information
  - Consumer behavior
  - Diffusion
  - Media Effects
Media-effects

- Use and gratification
  - What motivates individuals to choose some programming and channels over others.
  - Includes gatekeeping and agenda-setting studies
    - Describe the nature of media influence on individuals

Evaluating Research

- How was the research conducted?
  - Methods of data collection
  - Use of statistical tests
- Who sponsored the research?
  - Commercially – generally funded for a specific purpose by a private company or organization
  - Noncommercial – non-profit foundations, government agencies and colleges or universities.

Ethical Dilemma

- A large biotech firm offers several million dollars to sponsor research at a public university but demands proprietary interest in the findings.

Should the university agree to this? Why or why not?

Scenario provided by Robert Hays in Agricultural Communications: Changes and Challenges, 2000
Ethical Dilemma

- The university agrees and accepts the funding. Scientists doing the research, working in university laboratories and collecting salaries, paid in large part by the taxpayers, develop a new seed variety and chemical herbicide combination that can quadruple grain production at little increased cost. The scientists want to share at least the basic principles on which their development is based through scientific journal articles, the biotech firm says they can't.

Is this fair? Why or why not?

Exam 3 – November 30

- Covers all lectures from October 26 through November 23
- Chapter 3 & 4 in textbook
- Includes research readings – module 13
- Bring large gray scantron
- Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving