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Subject: Designing Ag Comm. Program

“How would you design an undergraduate agricultural journalism/communications program for the 21st Century?”

Proper grammar and having a style of writing that is both intelligent yet speaks to the level of your audience is a must. You must present your information in a professional way that still has the laid back feel and comfort that agricultural people enjoy. This is mainly true for feature and some news (depending on your topic) stories, not necessarily technical reports.

Design and photography are also extremely important. Most agricultural communicators work for a company or organization where the budget relies on them to write, photograph and design their stories. In my situation, I design brochures, newsletters, web pages, write articles and do event planning. It is diverse and challenging, but it is all communication.

Web design is a must for ag communicators to learn. It is getting to be a more valuable and widely used source of communication everyday and must be used as an outlet. Photoshop and other graphic design programs are also a necessity, as well as layout programs such as InDesign. I know that I use these everyday and they make my job much easier.

Communications theory and research was drilled into me all through graduate school, and while I thought a lot of it was pointless, it has made me better at my job. I have a better understanding of which communication outlet is best suited for which audience and why. I am also more thorough in researching a topic or person before writing a story on them in order to fulfill all needed details. These are all skills that were enhanced through the teachings of theory and research. Understanding how people retain what we present to them, gives us more control in knowing how to write, speak and present to them.

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