

Date: Mon, 16 Feb 2009
From: BOB KERN <bob_kern@prodigy.net>
Subject: About ag com curricula
To: Jim Evans <evansj@uiuc.edu>

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

Bob Kern responds:

Writing is the primary communications skill—and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The writer, more than the broadcaster/telecaster/photographer, takes time to think about reader as well as content. Generally, he/she creates an outbound communication that is understandable as well as keyed to the reader. There may have been enough developed in visualization (in the last 50 years) to make this a needed element—I don't know if it should enjoy concentration.

Within agriculture, schooling should include input/output economics, policy-development process, and U.S. production and marketing within world agriculture. Finance and transportation may also be significant understandings needed.

Communications teaching should be based on applicable communications theory, emphasizing that which is research-based. Communication theory, in my view, owes most to its scientific and research base in the behavioral sciences. So include social psychology in the curricula.