



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

---

## NEWS COLUMN

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION  
Fayette County  
118 North Sixth Street  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
618/283-2753

News source: Ken Rinkenberger, [kenrink@comcast.net](mailto:kenrink@comcast.net) or Kim Meenen, [kmeenen@illinois.edu](mailto:kmeenen@illinois.edu)

News writer: Jennifer Shike, 217-244-0888, [jshike@illinois.edu](mailto:jshike@illinois.edu)

Digital photos available at [www.aces.uiuc.edu/news/News\\_Photos/FACNextFrontier](http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/news/News_Photos/FACNextFrontier)

### **University of Illinois hosts power-packed agricultural communications symposium**

#### ***Impressive speaker line-up to examine challenges and new frontiers***

URBANA – Is it possible to find common ground among colliding beliefs surrounding food and agriculture? Food security is one of the most pressing issues facing world leaders today, and despite the technological tools available to help more of the world’s population reach self-sufficiency, an epic communications challenge remains.

Business leaders, media, non-profit organizations, and academia will meet in Champaign, Ill., on Feb. 17 for a first-of-its-kind international agricultural communications symposium open to anyone interested in strengthening communications about food, fiber, feed, renewable energy, rural-urban relations, natural resources, rural development and other dimensions of agriculture.

“Effective communications is vital to feeding a hungry planet. This forum is a great opportunity to explore how communications talent and tools can—and must—help meet that challenge,” said Paul Schickler, symposium chair and president of DuPont business Pioneer Hi-Bred.

“Food & Agricultural Communications: The Next Frontier” brings together leading voices in food, agriculture and communications. Speakers will define and explore critical issues facing food and agriculture including:

**Seven revolutions and the world in 2030:** The Center for Strategic and International Studies has identified the most pressing global trends that will fundamentally change the way our society works, thinks and lives. Johanna Nesselth Tuttle will explore these seven areas, including population; strategic resource management of food, water and energy; technological innovation and diffusion; information and knowledge flows; economic integration; the nature and mode of security; and the challenge of governance.

**Communicating better about what science can deliver:** Agriculture needs more effective communicators in all phases of the food chain, from discovery and production to transportation and utilization. This session highlights needs, opportunities and methods for strengthening communications in support of agricultural science for the urgent mission of feeding and clothing 10 billion people. Sara Wyant of *AgriPulse* will lead this panel featuring Rob Aukerman of Elanco Animal Health, Robb Fraley of Monsanto, and Ed McMillan of McMillan, LLC.

**Food and ag – colliding beliefs and common ground:** Coalescing divergent assumptions, backgrounds and beliefs around a common objective like global hunger and food security is no easy task. While most would agree that a safe and reliable food supply is a basic human right, how that is accomplished involves some debate and compromise when making decisions about agriculture and food policy. Ann Hastings Kafer of Growmark will lead this energetic panel of Mateusz Perkowski of *The Capital* in Salem, Ore., Christine Bruhn of the Center for Consumer Research at the University of California-Davis, Forrest Roberts of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, David Schmidt of the International Food Information Council Foundation, and Ken Cook of the Environmental Working Group.

**Bringing nutrition and rural development to the farthest reaches:** Skilled communications is a vital partner in this mission. Scott Kilman, *Wall Street Journal* reporter and co-author of "Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty," will moderate this panel featuring Rikin Gandhi of digitalGREEN, Gregg BeVier of The Gates Foundation and Bella Mody of the University of Colorado. They will highlight essential elements of communicating in extremely challenging settings and describe innovative approaches and tools that work.

**Communications leaders – creating the next generation:** How is this generation preparing the next generation to cope and flourish amid these pressing challenges? Find out what Kristina Boone of Kansas State University, Tracy Irani of the University of Florida, Jim Evans of the University of Illinois, and Glen Broom of San Diego State University have to say about developing the next generation of thought leaders and communicators to successfully address global hunger and food security.

"The forum will give communications professionals, faculty and students a glimpse into the future of global communication and social networking needs and opportunities," said Ken Rinkenberger, chair of the symposium agenda committee and owner of KWR Consulting, LLC.

The symposium marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the agricultural communications program at the University of Illinois. The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) and College of Media, with farm broadcaster Orion Samuelson of WGN, Chicago, will host a gala celebration following the symposium. Participants will toast the past 50 years with alumni reflections from each decade and highlight the progression and changes in communications.

Space is limited for the symposium and gala. For more information and to register, go to [www.agcommevent.com](http://www.agcommevent.com). Early bird registration is available until Jan. 17. Final registration is due by Feb. 1.

###

Local Contact: University of Illinois Extension, Rachele Hollinshead, County Extension Director,  
618/283-2753