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## Introduction

SARAH C. WILLIAMS AND CHRISTINE D'ARPA

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The last *Library Trends* issue to focus on agricultural libraries and information, titled “Agricultural Libraries and Information,” was published in the winter 1990 issue (vol. 38, no. 3). In their introduction the issue’s editors, Keith Russell and Maria Pisa, noted that the state of agricultural information was changing due to increases in the number of individuals and organizations involved and in their inclination to cooperate. The editors also pointed to technological developments that helped facilitate cooperation in agricultural information work. Considering these changes, among others, they wrote: “The time appears to be right for agricultural information services to enter a new elevated phase of activity.” More than twenty-five years later, this issue of *Library Trends* highlights some of that activity, with a particular focus on the cooperative or collaborative nature of agricultural information work and librarianship.

The first three papers in this issue (Greider & Hutchinson; Olsen, Kelly, & Kopriva; Caminita, Cook, & Paster) examine the collaborative efforts of institutions, librarians, professional organizations, and government agencies to nurture professional networks, preserve historical agricultural information, and facilitate access to collections across institutions. The papers discuss the history of these collaborations, as well as their current state and future outlook.

Collaborative efforts by librarians to address agricultural information literacy needs through innovative and inclusive programs at land-grant universities are the focus of the next two papers (DeBose, Haugen, & Miller; Gilman, Sagàs, Camper, & Norton). These discuss the circumstances and factors that influence the success of information literacy programs geared toward a variety of users, from first-year undergraduate students to faculty members.

The next four papers (Stapleton, Fruin, Shorey, Taylor, & Dinsmore; Haugen, Mastel, & Pfander; Chimwaza et al.; Godfrey & Kenyon) examine

partnerships—land-grant libraries working with publishers, extension, international organizations, and USDA—that focus on the discovery of and access to agricultural information. As illustrated by these papers, agricultural information is very diverse, from society publications to imagery, and has a broad audience, from extension agents to researchers in developing countries.

The final two papers (Punzalan & Kriesberg; Bracke) describe models for professional work. The first proposes the term *library-mediated collaborations* to encompass how library and information professionals can work with various stakeholders on data curation projects. The second paper argues for a new model of work for agricultural librarianship rooted in traditional roles, but with expanded focus, new tools, and service strategies that build partnerships both inside and outside the library.

The work represented by the offerings in this issue continues a long tradition of partnerships among librarians (especially those at land-grant universities), researchers at all levels of inquiry, extension educators, and professional and governmental organizations. These partnerships and collaborations focus on increasing discovery and access to agricultural information by addressing critical issues, including the preservation of information resources, information literacy, and professional development for agricultural librarians, and they have demonstrated ways to use emerging technologies to facilitate access to collections that were historically confined to use at particular institutions.

The history of land-grant universities in the United States and agricultural information work and research is long and intimate. The Morrill Act of 1862 not only established a Department of Agriculture at the federal level, but it set the groundwork for land grants as institutions charged with agricultural education. Behind the politics and rhetoric was the understanding that agriculture “progress” was essential to a healthy and strong nation. Agriculture was the foundation of the economy, and the information collected, communicated, and shared in diverse forms, including seeds, plants, historical data, and publications, was as much a part of agricultural work as farming. This is no less true today.

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Sarah C. Williams is an associate professor, interim head of the Funk ACES Library, and the life sciences data services librarian at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research concentrates on data practices in the life sciences and services that can facilitate better data practices. She has been a member of the United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) since 2001. Her educational background includes an MS in information systems from Illinois State University, an MLS from Indiana University, and a BS in soil and crop science from Purdue University.

Christine D’Arpa is a doctoral candidate in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation is a history of the information work and services at USDA during the second half of the nineteenth century. She holds an MS in LIS from Illinois, and her undergraduate thesis examined urban agriculture in Chicago in the late twentieth century.