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**THE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY OF  
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES**

by  
Colleen Seale

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In order for agricultural economists to perform their work and research effectively, it is necessary that they have adequate reference materials, books, journals, documents and statistical series readily accessible to them. The service of providing these reference and statistical materials to agricultural economists in an academic environment is generally provided by one of two means, through an agricultural economics reference room (i.e. departmental library) or through the services of the library system (i.e. the main library or a special library) on campus. The purpose of this research was to determine the current status of these agricultural economics departmental libraries and in particular their levels of funding, staffing, and the services provided to the agricultural economics departments by these facilities.

This survey of agricultural economics departmental libraries in the U.S. and Canada was conducted in November 1984, to fulfill the author's research requirement for the completion of an M.S. degree in agricultural economics. Following this brief introduction, Section I, this paper is organized in the following manner: Section II provides a detailed discussion of the survey instrument, Section III presents the results of the survey, Section IV provides an analysis of these results, and Section V presents a summary and conclusions.

The data was collected by means of a mail questionnaire sent on November 19, 1984 to a total of 92 U.S. colleges and universities and comparable Canadian institutions. (See Appendix C for a complete listing of these 92 institutions.) The population was drawn from the listing of departmental heads and chairpersons in the American Agricultural Economics Association Directory issue of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics for 1984. In addition, academic institutions were also selected from a listing of Cooperators to the American Agricultural Economics Documentation Center, the AERO (Agricultural Economics Reference Organization) mailing list and a Michigan State University mailing list. The questionnaire with a brief letter of explanation was sent directly to the department head or chairperson with the recommendation that, if preferred, the questionnaire be forwarded to the person responsible for the departmental library or for liaison with the main library.

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The 30-question questionnaire was divided into three parts. All respondents were asked to answer the first three questions, part one of the questionnaire, to provide basic information on the name of the institution, and the number of faculty and students in the agricultural economics department. Questions four through seven, part two, were addressed to agricultural economics departments that did not maintain separate libraries. The questions were (4) where are agricultural economics materials for use by the department housed, (5) is there departmental input at this facility and are departmental funds contributed to this facility, (6) does the main library provide delivery of materials to faculty members, and (7) is a separate agricultural economics library proposed in the future.

Questions eight through 30, part three of the questionnaire, were addressed to those departments that maintained their own separate libraries. Questions eight through 11 asked about the affiliation of the departmental library with the university or college library system, its location and the approximate size of the departmental library. Questions 12 and 13 asked about funding provided for the library. Question 14 dealt with library staffing. Questions 15 through 18 asked about the approximate size of the library collection, additions and withdrawals and the library collection policy. Questions 19 through 30 covered the range of services offered to departmental faculty, staff and students by the library including borrowing privileges, reference service, photocopying, database searching, etcetera. A comments section was also provided. A detailed presentation of the questionnaire follows in Section II.

A second mailing of the questionnaire with a reminder was sent to approximately 30 institutions that had not responded within the specified response period (December 12, 1984, approximately three weeks). In total, 78 out of 92 questionnaires were returned, providing a response rate of over 80% (84%). Of those, eight were excluded from the analysis based on the criterion that the department did not place a substantial emphasis on agricultural economics. (A copy of the following is included in Appendix A: the questionnaire, the cover letter and the "reminder" letter.)

## II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was developed during the fall term of 1984. Numerous drafts were made and the final version was formulated in November 1984. The questionnaire was kept as brief and simple as possible to help insure a better response rate. Spaces for answers for the most part were provided on the left side of the questionnaire for maximum ease in entering the data into a computer. The survey questions were structured to elicit a yes or no response; a short answer (with examples of possible answers provided); a letter for the appropriate multiple choice response; or an approximate figure (where numerical answers were required). Questions were arranged in an order that allowed those departments not maintaining separate departmental libraries to complete and return the first page only of the questionnaire. In addition, those departments maintaining separate libraries were asked to fill out the questions on pages two through four. A few lines for comments were set aside on page one and page four for both types of respondents. Samples of the comments received are provided in Appendix B. A stamped envelope addressed to the author in care of the department was enclosed with each questionnaire to help insure its return.

Questions emphasized the location, size, and affiliation of the departmental library, as well as funding, staffing, collection size, and various services available to faculty and students. The numbered portion of the questionnaire was preceded by three questions asking for the name of the responding college or university in order to verify responses with the final mailing list and to ascertain whether the respondent wanted to receive a copy of the survey results and to whom it should be addressed. The first three numbered questions, part one of the questionnaire, were to be answered by all respondents. The first question asked for the number of students enrolled in the agricultural economics department at the undergraduate level, the Master's level and the Ph.D. level. The second question asked for the number of agricultural economics faculty members in the department. With these two questions the author hoped to establish a relationship between the number of faculty and students served with the existence and size of the departmental library. The third question asked whether the department maintained a separate library facility. Respondents who answered no to this question were asked to complete questions four through seven, part two, on page one, and then to return the questionnaire. Those who answered yes were asked to complete questions

eight through 30, part three of the questionnaire, on pages two through four and then to return the questionnaire.

As previously stated, the primary interest of this survey was to determine the "current status" of agricultural economics departmental libraries. In order to do this, an enumeration of the existing agricultural economics departmental libraries needed to be made. This was achieved through the third question (i.e., Does your department maintain a separate library facility?). The definition of a departmental library is open to interpretation. Purposely, no precise definition was provided nor any criteria for what constitutes a departmental library given in the context of the questionnaire or the cover letter, thereby allowing the department chair or respondent to make the decision as to whether a separate library was maintained by the department.

Questions four through seven, part two of the questionnaire, for those respondents without separate libraries were designed to gather information on where their agricultural economics library materials were housed and who provided library services to them. Question four specifically asked respondents to give the name of the library where their particular library materials were housed. Examples of possible answers were provided, i.e., main library building, agriculture library, science library. Question five, in two parts, asked the respondent to check yes or no as to whether the department provided input, explained in the question as book and serial acquisition suggestions, etcetera, to the staff at this non-departmental facility. The second part of question five asked the respondent to check yes or no as to whether the department contributed funds to this facility. Question six asked for a yes or no answer as to whether the main library provided delivery of materials to faculty members in the department. The final yes or no question in this section asked whether the department proposed a separate agricultural economics departmental library in the future. A few lines were provided for comments at the end of part two of the questionnaire.

Questions eight through 30, part three of the questionnaire, for those respondents with separate libraries were designed to gather information on the affiliation, location, size, source and amount of funding, staffing, collection size and services of the libraries. Question eight asked the respondent to check yes or no as to whether the agricultural economics library was a part of the university or college library system. Question nine asked the respondent to fill in a blank giving the

location of the library. Sample answers were provided such as in the same building, in another building, etcetera. Question 10 asked for the approximate size of the library in square footage followed by question 11 which asked for the approximate seating capacity. Questions 12 and 13 addressed funding for the library. Question 12 specifically asked for the library's source of funding. The respondent was asked to select an appropriate letter or letters from the three possible answers and describe as necessary. The answers provided were a) departmental, b) main library, c) another source: foundation, etcetera. Question 13 asked the respondent to give the approximate amount of money spent annually to purchase books, subscriptions and other materials for the library by selecting an appropriate letter from a choice of ranges: a) under \$500, b) \$500 to \$1500, c) \$1500 to \$3000, d) \$3000 to \$5000 and e) \$5000 and over.

Question 14, a multipart question, asked how the library was staffed, by whom, and for what length of time. The question was answered by filling in several blanks: parts a. through d. addressed the number of various types of staff members; a. professional librarians, b. agricultural economics faculty members, c. secretaries or clericals, and d. student employees. For each type of staffing the respondent was asked to fill in the number of hours worked by each per week.

Questions 15 through 18 addressed the library collection. Question 15, a multipart question, asked the respondent to fill in blanks with approximate numbers to show the size of the collection. Part a. covered serial titles received; part b., the number of monographs or books; part c., the number of documents (U.N., U.S., state); part d., the number of theses and dissertations; part e., the number of microfiche or film, number of microfilm readers, number of microfiche readers, and number of microcomputers. The final part of question 15, part f., asked for the number of miscellaneous materials, including agricultural experiment station materials, etcetera. The approximate number of volumes added to the collection per year was asked in question 16 and question 17 asked for the approximate number of volumes withdrawn per year. Question 18 asked if the library had a written collection policy and if so, to enclose a copy with the questionnaire.

The next group of questions addressed the range of services offered by the departmental library. Questions 19 and 20 asked the respondent to fill in blanks with the number of hours the library was open per day on weekdays and the number of hours the library was open per day on



weekends. Question 21 asked if the library was accessible at other hours to faculty or to students with a possible yes or no response. Question 22 asked who was allowed to borrow materials from the library. The respondent was asked to answer the question by checking all of the applicable answers: faculty members and staff, graduate students, undergraduate students and the public. Question 23 asked which materials were allowed to circulate. The respondent was asked to check all of the appropriate answers. The list included the entire collection; or one or more of the following: monographs or books, documents, theses and dissertations, periodicals, assigned reading for classes; or none of the above. Questions 24 and 25 asked the respondent to check yes or no as to whether the library provided reference service and as to whether the library served as an assigned or reserve reading facility for classes. Questions 26 and 27 addressed database searching. The first part of question 26 asked if database searching services were provided for faculty at cost or free of charge, the second part asked if these same services were provided for students at cost or free of charge. Question 27 asked for the approximate number of searches that had been conducted in the past year. The last three questions of the questionnaire required a yes or no response. Question 28 asked if there was a regular delivery service between the agricultural economics departmental library and the main library. Question 29 asked if faculty could receive and return library materials through this service. The final question of the questionnaire, 30, asked if photocopy services were available at the library. The questionnaire was followed by a space for comments. Samples of the comments are provided in Appendix B.

### III. RESULTS

As explained above, the questionnaire was mailed to a total of 92 U.S. colleges and universities and comparable Canadian institutions drawn from various lists. Seventy-eight institutions responded. From the 78 questionnaires, 70 were selected for analysis. Eight were excluded because they represented institutions that did not place a substantial emphasis on agricultural economics. Of those eight, six indicated that there were no separately designated agricultural economics departments at their institutions. The other two institutions had extremely small agricultural economics departments with a very small number of students and faculty. After

some consideration, it was decided to eliminate them also from the analysis. The following results are based on the remaining 70 respondents.

Information was coded for entry into a database management system. Each variable was assigned a number for entry (there were 71 variables in the survey instrument corresponding to 30 questions on the questionnaire). Descriptive responses were either entered in full or abbreviated. Yes or no responses were coded 1 and 2, respectively. If the answer was marked not available or not known it was coded with the number 8, a missing response was coded with a number 0 or 9. Multiple choice responses were coded with corresponding numbers. Frequency tables were initially run on the data and cross tabulations were made on institutions with and without departmental libraries.

Academic institutions in every state except Alaska, Nevada and South Dakota were represented in the results as well as five comparable Canadian institutions. (Questionnaires were sent to academic institutions in those states; however, they were not returned.) A few states were represented by more than one institution. A regional breakdown of the 70 institutions reveals that there were 14 institutions representing the North Central region, 12 representing the North Eastern region, 21 representing the Southern region, 18 representing the Western region and five institutions representing Canada. (The North Central region included the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The North Eastern region included the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia. The Southern region included the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The Western region included Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.)

Thirty-seven institutions or approximately 53% were designated as having an agricultural economics departmental library, variously labeled agricultural economics reference room, reference lab, reading room, study, etcetera. Thirty-three institutions or approximately 47% did not maintain a departmental library. Detailed results of the survey follow in two parts: Part I, survey results of

the departments that did not have separate libraries; Part II, survey results of departments that did have their own libraries.

### PART I

Thirty-three institutions indicated on the survey that they did not maintain departmental libraries in answer to question number three on the questionnaire. Of these 33 institutions, eight actually indicated that they housed a "reference room" but chose not to classify it as a separate library facility on the questionnaire. These eight institutions were not added to the group with departmental libraries (although they actually may have qualified as having departmental libraries), because they answered no to this question and because they did not provide the additional information required on pages two through four of the questionnaire. However, six of the eight institutions provided some additional information: two had reading rooms with USDA publications; two maintained a periodicals room; one a reference room with USDA and experiment station publications, price reports, census data, etcetera; and one, a reading room with some books, journals and other publications.

In answer to question four, 25 of the 33 indicated that agricultural economics materials were housed in the main library on campus. Five indicated they were housed in an agriculture library and two indicated they were housed in other locations (i.e. faculty offices, management library). One institution replied that both the main library and the agriculture library kept agricultural economics materials.

Thirty of the 33 institutions, 90.9%, indicated they provided departmental input (i.e. book and serial selection recommendations, etcetera) to the library that housed their agricultural economics materials, (question five, part one). Less than 30% (27.2%) actually contributed funds to this facility, (question five, part two). At nine institutions (27.2%) the main library provided delivery of materials (question six). In answer to question seven, none of the 33 institutions proposed establishing a separate agricultural economics departmental library in the future.

**PART II**

The 37 institutions with separate agricultural economics libraries provided the following findings:

Questions eight through 11 generally addressed the size and location of the libraries. Over 80% of the departmental libraries were operating independently of the main library; an overwhelming majority (35 out of 37) of these libraries were physically housed in the same building as the agricultural economics department. Of the two remaining libraries, one was housed in a separate building and one institution did not answer this question. Approximate figures were requested for the actual size and seating capacity of the departmental libraries as it was felt it would be too difficult for most libraries to provide exact figures. The square footage of the libraries ranged from under 200 square feet to 6000 square feet. The seating capacity varied from no seating available to a seating capacity of over 80.

Questions 12 and 13 covered departmental library funding. Over 90% (91.8% or 34 out of 37) were funded by their own departments. A little over 5% (5.4% or two out of 37) received funds from the main library. Nearly 19% (18.9% or seven out of 37) received funding from other sources - foundations, grants, etcetera.

Six departmental libraries (16.2%) spent under \$500 annually on books, serial subscriptions and other materials. Eleven (29.7%) spent from \$500 to \$1500, six (16.2%) spent from \$1500 to \$3000, five (13.5%) spent between \$3000 and \$5000, and four (10.8%) spent \$5000 and over. Of the five remaining departmental libraries, one indicated no funds were spent and four indicated they did not know the amount of funding.

Staffing of the departmental libraries was covered in question 14. Professional librarians staffed nine of 37 institutions (24.3%) from 20 to 40 hours per week. About 14% were staffed by a faculty member from one to 40 hours per week. Twenty-seven departmental libraries (72.9%) were staffed by one secretary or clerical, one (3%) was staffed by two secretaries or clericals, and one (3%) was staffed by three secretaries or clericals. Seventeen libraries employed students to help staff their libraries, 13 employed one student and four employed two or more students.

The next set of questions (15 through 18) addressed the collections of these departmental libraries. One standard method of evaluating a library collection is by the number of volumes held. Question 15 asked the approximate size of the collection for various types of library materials. The number of serial titles received ranged from no titles to 2800 titles. The size of the monograph collections of departmental libraries ranged from zero to 18,000. The number of documents, foreign, federal and state ranged from zero to 27,900. The number of theses and dissertations ranged from zero to 1,486. The number of microfiche and microfilm combined ranged from zero to 3500. Four (10.8%) owned a film reader, 13 (35.1%) owned a fiche reader, and five had microcomputers. The number of miscellaneous materials (agricultural experiment station bulletins, for example) ranged from zero to over 25,000. Volumes added per year at these libraries ranged from zero to 4,000. Volumes withdrawn per year ranged from zero to 2500. Only three departmental libraries indicated that they had written collection policies. (Only one library enclosed a copy of its collection policy with the questionnaire.)

The last set of questions covered the range of services offered by these departmental libraries to agricultural economics faculty, staff and students. Questions 19 through 21 covered the hours of service of these libraries and their accessibility to faculty and students at other times. A majority (64.8%) operated eight hours a day or less during the week. The remaining libraries were open from nine to 24 hours per day. Over 90% (91.8%) were not open on weekends. Of the three libraries open during the weekend, one was open eight hours a day and two were open 24 hours a day. However, most (75.6%, 28 out of 37 libraries) were accessible to faculty and some (56.7%, 21 out of 37) to students at other times. Question 22 covered borrowing privileges. Thirty-five out of 37 libraries (94.5%) allowed materials to be borrowed by faculty, staff and graduate students. Twenty-two libraries (59.4%) allowed undergraduates to borrow materials. Only 27% (10) libraries allowed the public to borrow materials. Twenty-two libraries (59.4%) allowed their entire collection to circulate. Of the remaining libraries, 11 allowed books to circulate, 10 allowed documents to circulate, five allowed dissertations to circulate, 10 allowed periodicals to circulate. Only one library did not allow any materials to circulate. A little less than half or 18 libraries (48.6%) provided reference service (question 24). (However, only nine of these libraries were staffed by professional librarians.) About

65% (64.8% or 24 libraries) provided assigned reading or reserve reading for classes. Question 25, a multipart question, addressed database searching services for faculty and students. About 19% (18.9% or seven institutions) provided database searching for faculty members. Of those, two institutions did not charge for this service. A little over 13% (13.5% or five institutions) provided database searching for students. Two institutions provided this service free of charge. Five departmental libraries provided information on the number of database searches done per year. One listed six searches, one nine searches, one 10 searches, one 15 searches, and one 40 searches. In answer to question 28, 16.2% (six institutions) indicated they had a regular delivery service between the agricultural economics departmental library and the main library. Four of those libraries allowed faculty members to receive and return materials through this service. In answer to the last question on the survey, question 30, 24.3% (nine institutions) had photocopy services.

#### IV. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

As stated above, the primary purpose of this survey was to determine the current status of agricultural economics departmental libraries. To date very little research has been done to document their existence and their contribution to the academic environment. In 1982, as part of an effort to establish a support group among librarians and others working in the area of agricultural economics, Judith Seiss conducted a survey of land grant universities. She sent a total of 63 questionnaires and received replies from 57 institutions. In the results of her survey she identified 41 "reference rooms." A valid comparison of the results of Seiss' survey with this survey is difficult because this author was unable to obtain a copy of the questionnaire used in her survey. The present survey identified 37 reference rooms or departmental libraries from 70 institutions analyzed in the survey.

Two additional publications should be noted which enumerate departmental collections, the Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers, and Subject Collections: A Guide to Special Book Collections and Subject Emphases as Reported by University, College, Public and Special Libraries and Museums in the United States and Canada. However, neither provide comprehensive listings. The eighth edition of the Directory (published in 1983), listed four agricultural economics departmental libraries; the 1978 edition of Subject Collections listed three departmental libraries.

To further analyze the results of this survey, an examination can be made of the differences between those departments with libraries and those without libraries. A major difference that has been identified between institutions with and without departmental libraries is the size of the departments. As shown in Table 1 below, on average, the departments without libraries had a slightly higher average number of undergraduate students and a noticeably lower average number of graduate students and faculty. The departments with libraries had a slightly lower average number of undergraduates and a distinctly higher average number of graduate students and faculty.

Table 1

## Size of Departments With and Without Libraries

	Average No. of Undergraduates	Average No. of Graduate Students	Average No. of Faculty
WITH	191	49	25
WITHOUT	204	35	14

An examination can also be made of the regional differences among the institutions surveyed. Table 2 below shows the regional differences between institutions with and without libraries. All of the Canadian respondents indicated they maintained departmental libraries. Approximately 57% of the institutions in the North Central region, 56% in the Western region, and 50% in the North Eastern region had departmental libraries. The Southern region was the only region with a higher percentage of institutions without libraries (approximately 62%) than with libraries. The Southern region also had the greatest number of institutions compared to other regions.

Table 2

## Institutions With and Without Libraries by Region

	Canada	N. Central	N. Eastern	Southern	Western	TOTAL
WITH	5 (100%)	8 (57%)	6 (50%)	8 (38%)	10 (56%)	37
WITHOUT	-----	6 (43%)	6 (50%)	13 (62%)	8 (44%)	33
TOTAL	5	14	12	21	18	70

How important are these departmental libraries to the success of the agricultural economics departments they serve? Libraries are often included among various other criteria for rating academic programs, particularly with regard to graduate study. Two examples of such ratings of agricultural economics departments are the Boddy rankings and the Gourman Report.

As explained by Owen and Cross in their Guide to Graduate Study in Economics and Agricultural Economics (page 544), the Boddy report ranked economics and agricultural economics graduate programs. The rankings were based on the opinions of a sample of faculty members. Agricultural economics departments were ranked on the basis of the quality of their graduate faculty and the quality and effectiveness of their graduate programs. The respondents to Boddy's survey were asked to take the following into account in rating the effectiveness of the programs: the accessibility of the faculty, the faculty's scholarly competence, the curricula, the instructional and research facilities and other factors that contribute to the effectiveness of a graduate program. In the "Preliminary Report of the Results of the Reputational Survey of 31 Departments of Agricultural Economics," conducted in the spring of 1981, 18 departments were ranked for the quality and effectiveness of their graduate programs. Of those 18 top ranked departments, 14 (78%) indicated in the present survey of agricultural economics departmental libraries that they maintained libraries. Further, of those 14 top ranked departments with libraries, six were staffed by professional librarians.

The Gourman Report, also provides a rating of graduate and professional programs as well as undergraduate programs in a wide range of disciplines offered by American and international universities. In the preface to the first edition of the Gourman Report, Gourman states that the rating is a continuous process; evaluations are constantly being made on such factors as administration, faculty instruction, faculty research and publications, library resources for specific fields of study, student admissions policies and scholarship, budget requests and physical plant facilities. In the 1982 rating of graduate programs in agricultural economics (published in the second edition, 1983), 19 out of 26 departments (73%) rated in the report had departmental libraries included in this author's 1984 survey results. Of those 19, seven were staffed by professional librarians.

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One final comparison that can also be made is one comparing those agricultural economics departments with and without libraries and their memberships in ARL, the Association of Research Libraries. The ARL has long been known as one of the most prestigious groups of research libraries across the country. In 1984, 105 university libraries were members of ARL (Bowker, 1985, p.196).

Among the institutions without departmental libraries, 13 out of 33 (39%) were members of ARL. Among institutions with departmental libraries, 27 out of 37 (73%) were members of ARL.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Of the 92 American and comparable Canadian institutions originally surveyed in the Agricultural Economics Departmental Library Survey in the fall of 1984, 78 institutions responded and 70 institutions were selected for analysis. Thirty-seven of the 70 institutions had departmental libraries and 33 did not. Summary Table 1 shows the regional distribution of agricultural economics departments with and without libraries and the average number of undergraduates, graduate students and faculty at these departments.

SUMMARY TABLE 1

<u>NATIONAL SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES</u>			
	WITH LIBRARY	WITHOUT LIBRARY	TOTAL
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION:			
Canada	5	--	5
North Central	8	6	14
North Eastern	6	6	12
Southern	8	13	21
Western	10	8	18
TOTAL NUMBER IN THE SURVEY	37	33	70
AVERAGE NUMBER OF:			
Undergraduates	191	204	
Graduate students	49	35	
Faculty	25	14	

Responses to selected questions from the questionnaire for departments without libraries are summarized in Summary Table 2. Twenty-six out of 33 departments indicated that agricultural economics materials were housed in the main library and 30 indicated they provided departmental

input (book and serial selection recommendations) to the library that housed their materials. Only nine of the 33 actually contributed funds to this facility. The departments without libraries had a higher average number of undergraduate students and a noticeably lower average number of graduate students and faculty. The Southern region had the highest number of departments without libraries. The Southern region also had the greatest number of institutions compared to other regions.

SUMMARY TABLE 2

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 AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTS WITHOUT LIBRARIES
 

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	Main Library	Ag. Library	Other Location*
Location of materials**:	26	6	2
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>
Departmental Input:	30	3	33
Contributed Funds to this Facility:	9	24	33
Delivered Materials to Department:	9	24	33
Proposed Establishment of Departmental Library:	0	33	33

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\*Other location includes faculty offices, management library, etc.

\*\*The total does not equal 33 because one department housed materials in two locations: the main library and the ag. library.

Of the 37 institutions with departmental libraries, 35 of these libraries were physically housed in the same building as the agricultural economics department; see Summary Table 3. Most (34) were funded by their own departments. Thirty-one libraries were open from seven to nine hours per day during the week, most (34) libraries were closed on weekends. However, most (28 out of 37) were accessible to faculty and some (21) to students at other times. Thirty-five libraries allowed materials to circulate to faculty, staff and graduate students; 22 libraries allowed undergraduates to borrow materials and 10 allowed the public to borrow materials. Twenty-two libraries allowed their entire collections to circulate. Eighteen libraries provided reference service although only nine of these were staffed by professional librarians. Twenty-four libraries provided assigned or reserve reading

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for classes. A few libraries provided additional services such as database searching services, delivery services for faculty members and photocopy services. The departments with libraries had a lower average number of undergraduates and an appreciably higher average number of graduate students and faculty. Regional comparisons show that (excluding Canada) the North Central region followed closely by the Western region had the highest percentage of departments with libraries. Summary Table 3 summarizes responses to some of the questions on the questionnaire for departments with libraries.

SUMMARY TABLE 3

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTS WITH LIBRARIES					
	Yes		No		No Answer
Library is Part of Library System:	6		30		1
	Same Bldg.		Separate Bldg.		No Answer
Library Location:	35		1		1
	Department		Main Library		Other Sources
Source of Funding*:	34		2		7
	<\$500	\$500-\$1500	\$1501-\$3000	\$3001-\$5000	>\$5000
Annual Budget**:	6	11	6	5	4
	Librarian		Faculty	Secretary/Clerical	Student(s)
Staffing*:	9		5	29	17
	Yes		No		
Provided Reference Service:	18		19		
Provided Assigned Reading:	24		13		

\*More than one answer is appropriate, therefore the total does not equal 37.

\*\*Annual budget figures were not furnished by five libraries.

Through the analysis of the survey results in the discussion above, this author has tried to point out the obvious importance of the agricultural economics departmental libraries to the rating or reputational status of agricultural economics departments. As important as they may be, however, what is their future in terms of continued funding and staffing? Question seven on the questionnaire addressed this issue to departments without departmental libraries. These departments were asked if a separate agricultural economics library facility was proposed in the future. However, none of the 33 institutions proposed the future establishment of a separate agricultural economics library. A similar question regarding the future was not included in the questionnaire to those departments with libraries.

A study conducted in 1982 by Shoham Snuneth and cited by Hugh C. Atkinson in a special report in the 29th edition (1984) of the Bowker Annual (p. 113) made the following point, "Patrons have always demonstrated a strong preference for either specialized or small local library units." Further the report stated, "The organizational structure of the future does seem to require an increasing number of smaller decentralized units. In academic libraries these are special libraries by subject or form..." While there are easily identifiable benefits to having access to a specialized departmental library, the costs involved may be the final determining factor. Over 80% of the departmental libraries were operating independently of the main library system and over 90% were funded by their own departments at the time of this survey. The future of these departmental libraries will be heavily dependent on the continued support of their departments. It is probable that only those departments that place a high value on library services will be willing to continue funding them in times of tight budgets.

## APPENDIX A

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY SURVEY

Name of College or University \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive a copy of the survey results?

yes  
 no

If yes, to whom should it be addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many students are enrolled in your department at each of the following levels?

undergraduate  
 Master's level  
 PhD level

2. \_\_\_\_\_ How many agricultural economics faculty members are in your department?

Structure

3. Does your department maintain a separate library facility?

yes  
 no

If you answered no, please complete questions 4 - 7.If you answered yes, please complete questions 8 - 30, (pages 2 - 4).

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Where are agricultural economics library materials housed? (main library bldg., agriculture library, science library, etc.)

5. Is there departmental input ( e.g., book and serial selection suggestions, etc.) to the staff at this facility?

yes  
 no

Do you contribute funds to this facility?

yes  
 no

6. Does the main library provide delivery of materials to faculty members?

yes  
 no

7. Is a separate ag. econ. library facility proposed in the future?

yes  
 no

COMMENTS:


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THANK YOU for completing this portion of the questionnaire. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by Dec. 12, 1984.

8. Is the ag. econ. library a part of the university library system?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Where is the library located in relation to the Ag. Econ. Department? (in the same building, in another building, etc.)

10. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the approximate size of the library in square footage?

11. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the approximate seating capacity of the library?

Funding

(Select the appropriate letter(s))

12. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the source of funding for the library?  
( a. departmental, b. main library, c. another source: foundation, etc.)  
Describe as necessary. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_ If known, what is the approximate amount spent annually to purchase books, subscriptions and other materials for the ag. econ. library?

- a. under \$500
- b. \$500 - \$1500
- c. \$1500 - \$3000
- d. \$3000 - \$5000
- e. \$5000+

Staffing

14. How is the library staffed? (Please fill-in the blanks)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ # of professional librarians? \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours/week for each
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ # of ag. econ. faculty? \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours/week for each
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ # of secretaries/clericals? \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours/week for each
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ # of student employees? \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours/week for each

Collection

15. What is the approximate size of the collection? (If appropriate, fill-in each blank)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ # of serial titles received
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ # of monographs or books
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ # of documents (U.N., U.S., state)
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ # of theses and dissertations
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ # of microfiche/microfilm  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of microfilm readers  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of microfiche readers  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of microcomputers
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ # of misc. materials (include ag. experiment station bulletins,

16. \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate # of volumes added per year?
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate # of volumes withdrawn per year?
18. Do you have a written collection policy?  
(If yes, please enclose a copy of the policy)
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no

Range of Services Available to Ag. Econ. Faculty and Students

(Fill-in the blank)

19. \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours the library is open per day on weekdays?
20. \_\_\_\_\_ # of hours the library is open per day on weekends?
21. Is it accessible at other hours to faculty?
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
- to students?
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
22. Who is allowed to borrow materials? (Check all answers that are applicable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty members and staff  
\_\_\_\_\_ graduate students  
\_\_\_\_\_ undergraduate students  
\_\_\_\_\_ public
23. Which materials are allowed to circulate? (Check all answers that are applicable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ entire collection (or)  
\_\_\_\_\_ monographs or books  
\_\_\_\_\_ documents  
\_\_\_\_\_ theses and dissertations  
\_\_\_\_\_ periodicals  
\_\_\_\_\_ assigned reading for classes  
\_\_\_\_\_ none
24. Do you provide reference service?
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
25. Do you serve as an assigned or reserve reading facility for classes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
26. Do you provide data base searching services?
- \_\_\_\_\_ for faculty  
\_\_\_\_\_ at cost  
\_\_\_\_\_ free of charge
- \_\_\_\_\_ for students  
\_\_\_\_\_ at cost  
\_\_\_\_\_ free of charge

Please turn over

27. \_\_\_\_\_ Approximately how many data base searches have been done in the past year?
28. Is there a regular delivery service between the ag. econ. library and the main library?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
29. May faculty receive and return library materials through this service?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no
30. Do you have photocopy services at the library?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no

COMMENTS:

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THANK YOU for completing the questionnaire.

Please return the questionnaire by Dec. 12, 1984 to the following address:

Agricultural Economics Departmental Library Survey  
Colleen Seale  
Department of Agricultural Economics  
Michigan State University  
E. Lansing, MI 48824



## COVER LETTER

Ag. Econ. Dept. Library Survey  
Colleen Seale  
November 16, 1984

Dr.  
Agricultural Economics Department  
University  
City, State Zip

Dear Dr. ,

The purpose of the enclosed, brief questionnaire is to determine the current status of agricultural economics departmental libraries. This questionnaire is being distributed to land-grant colleges and universities and comparable institutions as part of my research in connection with an M.S. degree program in agricultural economics. My particular interest in this area also reflects a previous M.L.S. degree in library science. Dr. Lester Manderscheid is my major adviser on this project.

The information requested concerns agricultural economics library materials and library services to the ag. econ. department. If you prefer, please forward the questionnaire to whomever has responsibility for the departmental library or for liaison with the "main" library. If a report or publication results from the survey, names of institutions will not be used. We hope to make copies of the survey results available, and, if you would like to receive a copy, please indicate this on the questionnaire. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is very much appreciated and essential to the success of the survey. Please return the survey questionnaire in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by December 12, 1984.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Colleen Seale

## REMINDER

Ag. Econ. Dept. Library Survey  
Colleen Seale  
December 18, 1984

Dear Department Chair:

Recently I mailed you a brief questionnaire on the current status of agricultural economics departmental libraries. To date I have not received your reply, and I'm writing now to ask that you please complete and return the survey to me. Even though the Dec. 12 deadline has passed, it is still not too late to respond. I am interested in having your input and am relying heavily on the data that you'll be providing. I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I would very much appreciate receiving a reply in the next week to ten days.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Please disregard this letter if you have already returned the questionnaire and thank you for your participation in the survey.

Sincerely,

Colleen Seale  
Ag. Econ. Dept. Library Survey  
Department of Ag. Econ.  
Michigan State University  
E. Lansing, MI 48824

**APPENDIX B****COMMENTS**

One library indicated, "We had an ag. econ. library which was closed and books and journals distributed to appropriate faculty members because of lack of personnel to administer the library."

"We just closed down our separate library because of lack of support help to staff it. We transferred all but a few things to the university library. We used the space [as well as] other [space] to remodel making a nice student advising center."

In answer to question three, does your library maintain a separate library facility, one respondent replied, "Yes, but we are seriously considering termination."

"The proximity of this library to the main library has allowed us to keep the collection 'within bounds.' By this I mean we feel free to withdraw older materials that may still be needed on occasion knowing that going to the main facility to use them is not a problem. Therefore, we are constantly removing older theses, journals, documents, etc. as shelves fill giving us regular growth room -- one of the most pressing problems in many libraries."

"The university main library is within 100 feet of the Agricultural Economics building. Primary library services are provided and are not duplicated by the department."

"Our library is understaffed, poorly organized and not an effective support center for our research and educational activities. We are currently in the process of reorganizing and upgrading it."

"Our library, or more appropriately our reference room, started with my collection of various ag. econ. staff papers and USDA publications. It grows very quickly with retiring individuals donating books as well as with student donations. A major problem in the future will be to contain its growth. I do need to establish some ties with the main library."

**APPENDIX C****Institutions Excluded from the Survey**

Alabama A and M University  
Alcorn State University  
Arizona State University  
Fort Valley State College  
South Carolina State College  
Tuskegee Institute  
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff  
University of California at Riverside

**Institutions without Departmental Libraries**

Auburn University  
California State Polytechnic University at Pomona  
California State Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo  
California State University at Chico  
California State University at Fresno  
Cornell University  
Langston University  
Louisiana State University  
New Mexico State University  
North Carolina A and T State University  
North Dakota State University  
Oregon State University  
Purdue University  
Rutgers University  
Southern Illinois University  
Southern University  
Tennessee State University  
University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
University of Chicago  
University of Delaware  
University of Florida  
University of Hawaii  
University of Idaho  
University of Kentucky  
University of Nebraska  
University of New Hampshire  
University of Rhode Island  
University of Tennessee  
University of Vermont  
University of Wisconsin at River Falls  
Vanderbilt University  
Virginia State University  
West Texas State University

Institutions with Departmental Libraries

Brigham Young University  
Clemson University  
Colorado State University  
Iowa State University  
Kansas State University  
Michigan State University  
Mississippi State University  
Montana State University  
North Carolina State University  
Ohio State University  
Oklahoma State University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Stanford University  
Texas A and M University  
Texas Tech University  
University of Arizona  
University of California at Berkeley  
University of California at Davis  
University of Connecticut  
University of Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station  
University of Illinois  
University of Maine  
University of Maryland  
University of Massachusetts  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri  
University of Wisconsin  
University of Wyoming  
Utah State University  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Washington State University  
West Virginia University  
McGill University  
University of Alberta  
University of British Columbia  
University of Guelph  
University of Saskatchewan

Questionnaire Nonrespondents

Delaware State College  
Florida A and M University  
Kentucky State University  
Lincoln University  
Prairie View A and M College  
South Dakota State University  
University of Alaska  
University of Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station  
University of Calgary  
University of California at Irvine  
University of Georgia  
University of Manitoba  
University of Maryland at Eastern Shore  
University of Nevada

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