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GEORGE W. H. FOUNDATION OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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REPORT
OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS REFERENCE ORGANIZATION
(AERO)
WORKSHOP

University of Minnesota
Sept. 16-17, 1985

by

Pauline Sondag, Librarian
Michigan State University *Dept of agricultural economics*

Agricultural Economics
Staff Paper 85-76

Twenty-two AERO members attended the workshop held in the Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics of the University of Minnesota. We were joined at different points by seven librarians from the University of Minnesota Library and St. Paul-Minneapolis company libraries. Sessions opened on Monday with a welcome by Louise Letnes (Waite Library, University of Minnesota) and Dr. W. Burt Sundquist, acting head, Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Minnesota.

Jean Albrecht (Forestry Library, University of Minnesota) described and demonstrated the use of dBase III in producing a bibliography on forestry. She explained that she is still working on providing a thesaurus to accompany it.

Grace Dote (Giannini Library, University of California-Berkeley) discussed the evolution of a software package for her library that will work on the Giannini's main frame computer to produce catalog records. She eventually hopes to modify the package so it will be adaptable to micro-computers. Such a package would be available to other libraries for a reasonable fee.

I.P. Sharp Associates databases were described and then searched by Priscilla Geahigan (Management & Economics Library, Purdue University). Sharp is an expensive, non-bibliographic database with many formatting options. It is a consulting firm that maintains international data series.

William Glynn (American Agricultural Economics Documentation Center) described the numerical database produced by ERS/USDA: Automated Research Information for Economic Series (ARIES). It is accessible on-line or batch mode and includes published and unpublished sources. There is a capability for browsing by keywords. A directory of software is available. The material in ARIES is provided for use by ERS staff first. A monthly tape may become available to the public by subscription.

Jan Sykes (Dialog Information Services, Inc.) gave an in-depth lecture of the enhancements offered by Dialog, version II.

Monday finished with an AERO business meeting. Sue Durden (Texas A & M) said she and Sue Chaboud (Texas A & M) would like to publish the next newsletter making it a compilation of brief descriptions by all members of their operations. A form requesting specific information will be sent to all members and used for the issue. The Texas contingent also agreed to edit any other newsletters published between now and September, 1986. Grace Dote agreed to continue reproducing and mailing the newsletter utilizing the membership list maintained by Susan Casement (University of California-Davis).

Members asked Glynn to find out if "active liaison with the AERO organization" can be written in as part of the job description for the person hired for the AAE Documentation Center to fill Cynthia Kenyon's slot.

It was agreed that we should meet at least every eighteen months. Suggestions for the next meeting place were Berkeley or Washington DC. The preferred spot is Washington but will be dependent on what National Agricultural Library (NAL) and ERS can provide in the way of a place, program assistance, etc.

Tuesday began with a presentation by Glynn on the future of the AAE Documentation Center and the ERS Reference Room. The center began in the 1960s with an agreement among ERS, NAL and AAEA. From the first there was a problem with the

"cooperators"--those persons designated in each department of agricultural economics in the country to gather and send material published in that department to the center. Some cooperators were never heard from and there was little effort on the part of the center to determine why this was so. Funding has been by ERS and AAEA. At the 1985 annual meeting of AAEA, funding for the center was withdrawn for the present. This leaves the future of the center in doubt but not necessarily finished. (Note mention in earlier paragraph regarding AERO relationship with person hired to run the center.) The current address is AAE Documentation Center, OA-USDA, Rm. 28, 1302 New York Ave., NW, Washington DC 20005-4788.

Roger Dahlgren (Chairperson of the AAEA literature retrieval committee) reported on the response he received to a survey made of agricultural economists' use of on-line searching. Briefly, it was clear that the "younger," "newer to the field" the person, the more use made of this research method. It was also apparent that although there was affirmative response to the idea of using on-line searching, the results from such searches tended to be below expectations. Dahlgren also touched on the matter of a thesaurus of agricultural economics terms which has been considered off and on for some years. He believes it would be an expensive undertaking that would require significant funding.

Pauline Sondag (Michigan State University) presented a preliminary analysis of responses to a questionnaire on agricultural economics reference services provided across the country. The survey is part of a research paper being completed by Colleen Seale, graduate student in the department of agricultural economics, MSU.

Louise Letnes distributed literature on and spoke about Martin Marietta's data system. The company is the official on-line distributor of USDA perishable data. The company will provide a Directory of Public Information Contacts free on request to the following address: 6801 Rockledge Dr., Bethesda, MD 20817.

Grace Dote reported on the meeting in Ottawa in June of the International Association of Agricultural Librarians and Documentalists (IAALD). There were two hundred persons from forty-four countries in attendance.

Julia Peterson (Cargill Research Library) discussed the background and purpose of the Food, Agriculture and Nutrition Division of Special Libraries Association and invited AERO members to consider membership within this organization.

Jennie Brogdon (Economics and Marketing Reference, NAL) described the reorganization of NAL and future plans and policies.

Wayne Pfeiffer (University of Guelph) described briefly the use of a combination of dBase II, Lotus 1,2,3 and Word Star for bibliographic control of departmental publications. The system has been put together by the department secretary.

The meeting closed mid-afternoon with tentative plans to meet again within a year to eighteen months.