

Mannifest

The Albert R. Mann Library Newsletter

Electronic Technology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

"Suddenly the Internet is the place to be. College students are queuing up outside computing centers to get online.... Millions of people around the world are logging on to tap into libraries, call up satellite weather photos...."¹ "Scientists use the Net...as a kind of electronic salon where they can instantly exchange text, sound, images, video or data, float a new idea for comment, pass around a resume or advertise an opening for a position, and keep up with trends in their field almost anytime day or night and from anywhere around the world."²

These recent quotes from *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report* were certainly not news in Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs). Researchers, instructors, extension personnel, students, and staff make sophisticated use of computers and networks in their daily lives all over the College. However, information technology has been implemented in CALs without centralized, coordinated planning, and its availability throughout the College is uneven.

In 1992, Dean David Call formed the Special Committee on Electronic Technology to develop a five-year plan for the College.³ The resulting plan included a recommendation that CALs develop an organizational infrastructure to implement and sustain electronic technology. A key component of this infrastructure is the Advisory Group on Electronic Technology (AGET), formed in early 1993. This group will be instrumental in insuring that members of CALs will benefit from—and serve as leaders in—the continuing evolution of computing and telecommunications technology.

Since its formation, AGET has worked to upgrade the computing and networking infrastructure in CALs; to provide more state-of-the-art, networked instructional facilities in the College; and to address issues of technical support, training, and access to software and databases. The group's first priority has been to insure that Ethernet access is available for the entire College by June 1994. Dean Call's office has budgeted \$600,000 to be allocated by AGET for this major networking effort.

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Mann is the Internet Site for USDA Statistical Data

It is now easier to find current information about U.S. and world agriculture and rural development as a result of a cooperative arrangement between the United States Department of Agriculture and Cornell University. Cornell's Albert R. Mann Library is now the host for data sets collected by the USDA's Economics Research Service (ERS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Providing quick and timely access to agricultural statistics, the system includes more than 140 agricultural data sets, most in Lotus 1-2-3 (.wk1) format. The data sets contain information on topics such as:

- worldwide textile fiber production
- farm production expenses
- European Community wheat supply
- milk and dairy product sales
- food spending in American households
- U.S. meat supply and consumption
- fertilizer use
- ozone records for the Northeast
- ... and many more

The data are public domain and access is free and open to all. The system is available around the clock, seven days a week. To connect, search, and display the files on your workstation, you will need:

- a computer
- an Internet connection
- Gopher, Telnet, or FTP software
- software to read and analyze the data sets, such as Excel or Lotus 1-2-3

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Recently, Lily Tomlin as "Ernestine" asked Vice-President Al Gore about the information superhighway: "Is it like billions and billions of tiny little Bac-o-bits of valuable information strewn in every direction across that great salad bar in cyberspace?"



Electronic Technology (continued)

AGET estimates that funding will be allocated for upgrades and installations in almost half the units of the College. Some of these units need to have their existing LocalTalk networks upgraded while others require new installations. Work has been completed, is in process, or is planned throughout Roberts Hall (Dean's Office/Administrative Services, Public Affairs, Research, Academic Programs, Cooperative Extension) and Kennedy Hall (Communications, Education, Landscape Architecture), and for Agricultural and Biological Engineering, the American Indian Program, the Center for the Environment, Floriculture, International Agriculture, Microbiology, Natural Resources, Ornithology, Plant Biology, Plant Breeding, Plant Pathology, the Plantations, and Soil, Crop, and Atmospheric Sciences. AGET's efforts have also included outlying CALS units such as the Long Island Horticultural Research Facility.

AGET's next priority is to upgrade the instructional facilities by installation or activation of network jacks in classrooms in Bradfield, Kennedy, Morrison, Plant Science, Riley-Robb, Stocking, and Warren, as well as in a reading room in Mann Library. Microcomputer centers in Mann Library, Warren, and Riley-Robb will receive equipment and software upgrades. Landscape Architecture and Biological Sciences have received funding to upgrade computer equipment available to their students.

One of AGET's greatest challenges is to respond to requests for funding to establish teaching facilities in individual units. Since CALS cannot afford to establish student microcomputer labs in every department, AGET is working with Cornell Information Technology (CIT) to maintain coordinated instructional computing services for students and faculty. It must also insure that the large microcomputer centers in Mann, Warren, and Riley-Robb feature up-to-date equipment and a wide range of software packages. Some complex software applications may still be better served in specialized labs—linked to departments—where expert assistance can be provided by departmental staff.

Over the next few years, AGET's plans call for the delivery of instructional software and resources over the campus network from a centralized server in Mann Library. The Mann Library Gateway will be upgraded to serve as the distribution vehicle for these applications packages and databases. For example, the Gateway will make statistical analysis software, geographic information system software, database software, specialized graphics software, reserve readings, slides, videotapes, and databases tailored for individual classes available to students at their personal computers. Additional funding is being sought for this effort since students' abilities to obtain jobs after graduation depends, more and more, on their abilities to

use electronic technology.

AGET has also discussed the needs of staff, faculty, and students for technical support and training. During the past year, the principal training focus has been to identify network administrators for all units and to begin providing the appropriate skills to these individuals. Meanwhile, AGET has begun to identify the areas of technical support which should be handled by a group of computer professionals within CALS, and those which should be the responsibility of CIT staff.

By the end of the spring, further training and technical support issues will be considered in AGET's strategic plan for information technology in CALS. It will include plans for the use of electronic technology in CALS; plans for roles of CALS administration, departments, students, faculty, staff, Media Services, Mann Library, and CIT; plans for networking; and plans for learning, research, extension, and administrative resources.

AGET meets monthly and distributes minutes of its meetings to all department chairs. The membership of the group is designed to represent all major units of the College. Faculty representatives, technical experts, and liaisons to CIT and the College of Human Ecology also participate as members of AGET. The current membership roster includes Brian Chabot, George Conneman, Henry DeVries, John Finamore, Geri Gay, Tim Lynch, Charles McClintock, Jim Millsbaugh, Jan Olsen, Carrie Regenstein, Bob Seem, Tom Wakula, and David Watkins.

AGET is chaired by the College's new Director of Electronic Technology, Ronnie Coffman, who also serves as the Associate Dean and Director of Research for CALS and was recently named chair of Cornell's new Advisory Board on Information Technologies. Coffman is enthusiastic about the work of AGET and its importance to the College. "Information is what we do, as a College and as a University," says Coffman. "Whether in teaching, research, or extension we generate and manage information. We must be on the leading edge in information technology to remain on the leading edge as an institution."

Questions and comments about AGET can be directed to Ronnie Coffman at wrc2@cornell.edu.

—Susan Barnes

¹Elmer-Dewitt, Philip. "First nation in cyberspace." *Time*, December 6, 1993, volume 142, p 62.

²Allman, William F. "Pioneering the electronic frontier: for many people, the information revolution is already here." *U.S. News & World Report*, December 6, 1993, volume 115, p 58.

³The whole issue of *Cornell Focus*, Volume 2, Number 2, 1993 is devoted to a description of the strategic plan for the entire College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The work of the Special Committee on Electronic Technology is described on pages 31-34 of this issue.



USDA Statistical Data (continued)

Gopher is the recommended access method because saving files is easiest when Gopher is used. There is public domain Gopher software available for many platforms. Gopher clients may be retrieved through anonymous FTP to *boombox.micro.umn.edu* in the */pub/gopher* directory. The Gopher software are also available through CIT.

Gopher access information:

Host= usda.mannlib.cornell.edu
Port Number= 70

For Bear Access users:
Choose "CUInfo Gopher"
Then choose "Other CU Gophers" option
on the main menu

Telnet and File Transfer Protocol (FTP) are two other Internet protocols which can be used to access the system.

Telnet access information:

Host= usda.mannlib.cornell.edu
User ID= usda <lower case>
Use a Telnet software capable of accepting file transfer (FTP)

FTP access information:

Host= usda.mannlib.cornell.edu
User ID= anonymous
Password= <your e-mail address> (optional)
After logging in, change the directory with the following command: *cd usda*

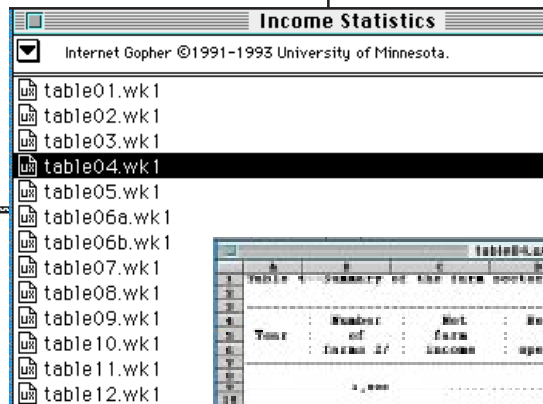
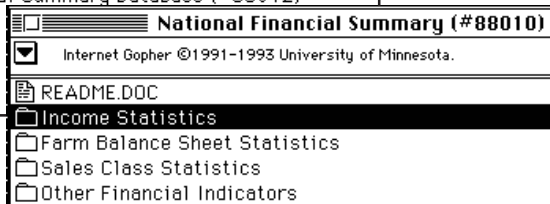
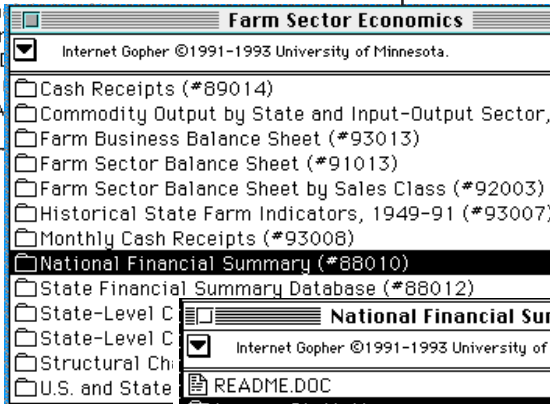
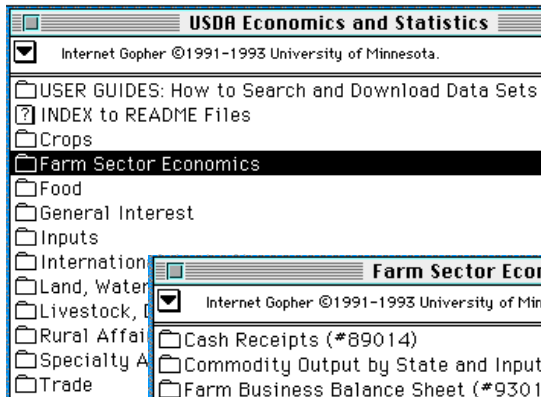


table04.wk1						
Table 4 - Summary of the farm sector's financial status (in \$)						
Year	Number of farms	Total farm income	Return to operators	Net cash income	Net cash flow	Net cash flow to operators
	(thousands)	(billions)	(billions)	(billions)	(billions)	(billions)
1988	2,000	42.8	28.7	48.8	48.8	48.8
1989	2,000	43.1	28.4	49.2	49.2	49.2
1990	2,000	44.0	28.0	49.5	49.5	49.5
1991	2,000	43.3	28.4	49.9	49.9	49.9
1992	2,000	44.7	29.0	50.4	50.4	50.4
1993	2,000	45.8	28.5	51.7	51.7	51.7
1994	2,000	47.5	28.5	52.8	52.8	52.8
1995	2,000	48.7	27.6	54.1	54.1	54.1
1996	2,000	49.7	28.7	55.7	55.7	55.7
1997	2,000	50.7	27.5	57.1	57.1	57.1
1998	2,000	50.8	27.7	58.2	58.2	58.2
1999	2,000	48.8	28.7	58.8	58.8	58.8
2000	2,000	48.9	27.5	58.3	58.3	58.3
2001	2,000	48.6	27.1	58.7	58.7	58.7
2002	2,000	50.1	28.5	59.7	59.7	59.7

For more information contact
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—Oya Y. Rieger

Mannifest, a publication of the Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, is delivered to faculty and departmental offices of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Human Ecology, the Division of Biological Sciences, and the Division of Nutritional Sciences. It is also sent to Cooperative Extension personnel statewide and institutional members of the United States Agricultural Information Network. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, please complete this form and return it to: Lisa Dayton, Public Services Division, Mann Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14853, or send email to lld2@cornell.edu.

Please put me on the mailing list for *Mannifest*

Name: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

We welcome suggestions for future articles about information access, management, technology, and services in the fields of agriculture, biology, human ecology, and nutrition.

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