

Milestones & Memories: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, American Agricultural Editors' Association

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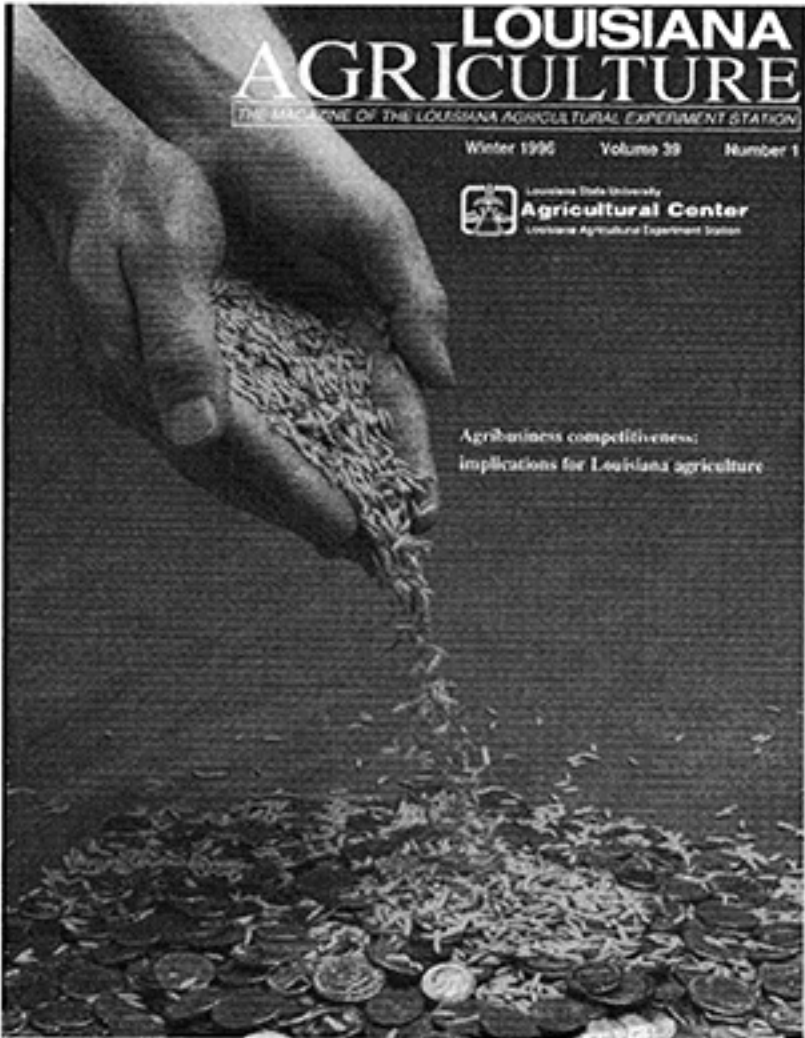
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Abstract

A review of *Milestones & Memories: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, American Agricultural Editors' Association*, by Wayne E. Swegle and John Harvey, eds.

1997 Critique and Awards Program



Class 8-B/W Photo Series, Gold Award: John Wozniak, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

Reviews

Milestones & Memories: Seventy-fifth Anniversary, American Agricultural Editors' Association

Wayne E. Swegle and John Harvey, eds., *Farm Magazines*. \$29.95, 145 pages.

More than anything else, *Farm Magazines' Milestones & Memories* is an inside document. It is a mirror that reflects, with honesty and a lot of pride, the first 75 years of the American Agricultural Editors' Association (AAEA). Any agricultural communications veteran of what co-editor Wayne Swegle calls annual "Hell Week" will revel in the memories and reacquaintances these pages stir up.

Hell Week, to more recent generations, was that week in late November every year when the concurrent National 4-H Club Congress and the International Livestock Show in Chicago brought many college ag editors plus many more commercial farm newspaper, broadcast, and magazine editors to Chicago for what was probably the most widely covered of any annual agricultural event. Besides their long days of coverage and writing, these professionals—overwhelmingly male, of course—found time for a lot of professional shop-talk and interaction.

More recent arrivals into agricultural communication should also find a lot of interesting material here. They will meet dozens of writers who sketch their own bit of insight into for-profit agricultural publishing and broadcasting from which evolved the broader profession which exists today. An active sense of history isn't a prerequisite to enjoy this work, but it will add to the pleasure.

While this book does not lay out a straight historical account of AAEA, the reader learns that the organization was formed in 1921—not as old as ACE, but earlier than some other related associations. AAEA attracted mainly the top-echelon editors of national, regional, and state farm magazines, and it stayed a Good Ol' Boys Club until the 1970s, writes former *Successful Farming* editor Rich Krumme. That's when he dates AAEA's transformation to "an important source of professional improvement for its members."

The co-editors of this work spent many years in agricultural magazine work, and each was once president of AAEA. The career

of each reached into other ag communication areas, which provides the wider perspective apparent in their choices of essays.

Five chapters make up the volume, each assembling by-lined pieces by AAEA members: The Early Years to Build On; Washington and the World; A Good Organization Gets Better; Adapting to a Changing World; We Remember Them Well (vignettes of both famous editors and famous publications, no longer with us); The Magazines Behind the Editors (including a short essay from his doctoral dissertation by Missouri ACE Dick Lee, retired, on Farm Magazines: Their History and Future); and Making Farm Life Better. The reader will find a veritable Valhalla of heroes in agriculture and ag communication.

Some readers will swathe themselves in nostalgia, relating personally to people and events laid out here. Others who lack the needed ingredients for a nostalgic adventure will find much to help them understand people and events that have helped make their profession—and ours in ACE—what it is today.

AAEA sponsored and published this volume, and its headquarters is handling sales. You can order it, at \$29.95 post paid, from the following address:

American Agricultural Editors Association
c/o Denise Clarke
DC Communications
612 W. 22nd St.
Austin, TX 78705-5116

The phone number is 512/474-2041, and the fax number is 512/474-7787.

Bob Kern
Life Member