Farm Lands Brochure

Heavy Artillery in the War Between the Bulldozer and the Plow

Larissa Johnson Schneider

Thirteen months ago the National Agricultural Lands Study (NALS) published a pamphlet to publicize its existence as a new federal agency. The publication "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" has been a surprisingly effective vehicle, not only enhancing the visibility of NALS but pointing out the problems inherent in agricultural land-use conversion. It presently is in its fourth printing after a little more than a year.

This article will argue that the effects of the brochure could have been predicted by considering the number of copies distributed, the media attention it generated, how readers form opinions on environmental issues over time, and how writing style affects the audience's understanding—even though much of the communication literature suggests that no single written effort on an environmental issue could so inform the public. The article also will demonstrate how the publication has redefined the form of the brochure, primarily by its superior writing style.

What Others Say

No previous studies have dealt specifically with the relationship of the NALS pamphlet to public awareness and knowledge of diminishing farm acreage. Several recent works, however, do examine the effects on the public

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Schneider is an editorial consultant from Silver Spring, Maryland. **This is a portion of a paper presented to the ACE 1981 National Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan.**

informational campaigns about environmental issues.

Two main problems in trying to communicate environmental issues emerge. Steven E. Hungerford and James B. Lemert have described "Afghanistanism" in reporting—the tendency to be concerned with problems "down the road a piece" and certainly outside of the newspaper's circulation area. Practitioners also must combat the complication exposed in a study by Phillip Althoff, William H. Greig, and Francine Stuckey—that editors consider environmental problems to be relatively unnewsworthy. And, some evidence suggests that media attention may actually substitute for reader involvement in solving environmental problems.

In spite of these and additional problems like dissonance, selectivity, and overload, communicative efforts like the NALS brochure do affect their audience. A myriad of ways exist to study these effects. One is to look at how closely the brochure meets its stated objective: to provide information about vanishing prime farm land, in order to get people to think about it and possibly to become involved in the situation.

I intend to look beyond mere effectiveness, however, to consider on the hierarchy of possible effects at least the first two steps—exposure and awareness or knowledge. Attitude change and behavioral change seem like unlikely effects. Hyman and Sheatsley, looking at the reasons why information campaigns fail, warn:

> **To assume a perfect correspondence between the nature and amount of material presented in an information campaign and its absorption by the public is to take a naive view, for the very nature and degree of public exposure to the material is determined to a large extent by certain psychological characteristics of the people themselves.**

Stamm confirms that research on persuasion has "taught us two things: 1) that salient attitudes are not subject to manipulation through short-term communication problems and 2) that attitudes are unreliable predictors of behavior." In his review of environmental communication he concludes that environmental information can increase knowledge and awareness but doing so does not necessarily change attitudes or predict behavior. Grunig comes to the same conclusion.

Schramm and Roberts contend, though, that because the media are capable of conveying information to large numbers of people, they potentially contribute to significant changes in individual and societal behavior. Grunig says that

information provided about the problem itself can get people to think about it and only possibly to get involved in the situation. He has found that communication helps a person develop a picture of the nature of a situation but that that picture is relatively unimportant when he or she evaluates alternative solutions to a problem in that situation. He calls this an apparent direct connection between superficial public concern with the environment and superficial media coverage of the environment. He qualifies this position by stating that media coverage of environmental issues has gone hand-in-hand with increasing public concern with the environment. And according to Broom, people can make better decisions for themselves if they are better informed; and so information dissemination can be a goal in itself. More recent analyses of agenda-setting provide an explanation of what public information directors *can* do to meet the goals of their communication efforts. The literature reviewed so far has shown that thinking about a message does not dictate agreement with that message but because accepted information is able to structure reader's processing of future information, agenda-setting at least determines what will be thought about. McCombs considers awareness and knowledge as necessary steps before attitudes, opinions, and behavior will show overt changes. In his opinion, the time for effective public relations is when an issue is just emerging in the public consciousness. At that point receivers have options or alternatives to stop and consider.

The media's ranking of salient priorities, though, will not necessarily be reproduced in the receiver of the messages. However, public relations practitioners should recognize the overlap between the intrapersonal agenda and the media agenda. They can transfer issues from the organization to the public over time.

According to Grunig's theory of communication behavior, people will process information if it is easy for them to do so. Even though they do not actively seek a message, they will accept it if it is presented to them enough times in appropriately low-involvement situations. When that happens, a person formerly exhibiting fatalistic behavior may change to become a problem-facer and then work toward solving environmental issues like vanishing prime farm lands. And although he stresses the importance of the content's relevance to readers, Grunig also had discovered that writing style is an important factor in stimulating thinking

and possibly understanding among some readers of scientific communication.

Development of the Brochure

In June 1979 the Department of Agriculture and the Council on Environmental Quality agreed to jointly sponsor a study of the nation's agricultural lands, looking at their conversion to other uses and the ways in which these lands might be retained for farming.* This 18-month National Agricultural Lands Study was to be an inter-agency effort aimed at determining the nature, rate, extent, and cause of the conversion of prime agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. The study also would evaluate the economic, environmental, and social consequences of this conversion and the methods available to restrain the conversion. By January 1981, in its final report to the president, the study would recommend administrative and legislative actions, if necessary, to reduce the potential losses to the nation from continued conversion of farm land.

One major component of the study was broad-based public involvement. NALS' initial step toward achieving this dimension was a series of seventeen public workshops held throughout the country during the fall and winter of 1979. About 2,000 people participated and although NALS administrators considered the workshops the cornerstone of this public involvement, a pamphlet first distributed at about the same time as the initial workshops ultimately seemed to have more impact.

NALS Executive Director Robert J. Gray had determined, early in July 1979, that a brochure could augment the "early and extensive public involvement in the study." He had in mind a short, simple leaflet outlining the who, what, where, when and why of NALS. What he got was something altogether different.

During the early months of the study, Gray had been in daily contact with Darwyn Briggs, a Soil Conservation Service careerist and environmental specialist. When Gray

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***Participating agencies were the Council on Environmental Quality, U.S. Department's of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Transportation, Treasury, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Water Resources Council.**

mentioned to Briggs that he wanted a folder describing NALS, Briggs took the request to another SCS employee, Shirley Foster Fields.

Fields, then an ACE member and who, as a public information officer, had written an audio-visual presentation on land use in 1976, was a logical choice for editor. Briggs approached her on what Fields calls "that memorable afternoon" and asked if she or someone in her office could produce a pamphlet about the existence of NALS along the lines of a small leaflet he had designed previously.

Fields seized this opportunity to publicize an effort that had personal significance for her. She explained her eagerness for writing and polishing the text for the pamphlet evenings and week ends while continuing to work for the SCS in the following way:

> **"I hoped to pay a debt I felt I owed for an extraordinarily happy childhood. I was a city girl from West Hartford, Conn., but for ten years, from the age of 5 to 15, I spent nearly every fall, winter and spring, week ends, at my aunt's farm in Granby and every summer at a woodland lake near Willimantic, Conn. My life as a child was drenched with the sensory impressions of rural life. Later, when I was 16, I rode a bicycle 3,000 miles through five European countries. Once again, I was immersed in the countryside—the Loire Valley in France, the Black Forest in Germany, pastures high in the mountains of Norway. Since then I have travelled as a journalist in 39 countries and seen the desecration of many rural places. In writing the pamphlet, I hoped to jolt readers into an awareness of the great value of agricultural land and encourage them to fight to save it."**

She considers her end product as more like a small book than like the leaflet her boss had in mind. Only two of the fifteen pages deal specifically with NALS; the rest dwell on problems of land conversion.

In late July, when Fields had nearly finished the project, she suggested to Gray that he offer her a full-time job publicizing the findings of the study. Gray, impressed with the manuscript, agreed.

By August Fields had moved to an office at NALS as Information Director. She hired a graphic designer from Wickham and Associates, Joyce Black, to help with page layout and size of the publication, but she herself remained the prime mover in researching, writing, and producing "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" For example, Fields selected accompanying photographs from SCS and USDA picture files as well as from her personal collection. She matched pictures and quotations and decided to superimpose those quotes over the pictures. She also integrated the text with the art and wrote much of what was attributed to others. At

this point the camera-ready copy was cleared for publication.

Concept of the Form

Explaining how "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" has influenced readers' lies more in an examination of the publication itself and in the terms which have been used to describe it than in the preceding discussions of its history and of communication theory. Fields, alternately calls her publication a "pamphlet," a "brochure," and a "tiny book." Her boss refers to it both as a "pamphlet" and as "brochure." What he had in mind originally was a "leaflet" or a "folder."

Ambiguity of language opened up the possibility for Fields to transform Gray's initial concept from publicizing the existence of NALS to emphasizing the problems of land-use conversion. Fields, intuitively or instinctively wrote, researched, and produced a publication whose ensuing prestige and impact have surprised even her.

More often, though, ambiguity impedes effective communication between superior and subordinates or between writer and printer. The confusion stems from the imprecise usage of words used to describe written efforts that are smaller than books: the form commonly called "pamphlets," "brochure," "booklet," "folder," and "leaflet."

I will argue that the publication is a brochure. I will begin by looking at existing explanations of the terms listed above, sorting out what the brochure is and what it is not in terms of its size, length, binding, design, accompanying art, distribution, cover, and content. I will compare its constituent elements with those of the pamphlet, the booklet, the folder, and the leaflet. Finally, I will examine one constituent element of the brochure, writing style, that is ignored elsewhere.

Most textbooks in advertising and public relations use the terms brochure, pamphlet, and booklet interchangeably and without definition. Less common but also thought of as substitutes for the brochure are the leaflet and folder, although they are typically regarded as synonyms for each other. The literature of direct-mail campaigns, however, does define these terms. Unfortunately, the definitions often contradict the terminology of professionals in the related fields of public relations, advertising, library and information sciences, and printing.

According to a chapter on direct-mail campaigns in *The Graphics of Communication*, a text that makes no distinctions among the brochure, the pamphlet, and the booklet, ". . . essentially [it] is a small book and is made up of eight or more pages bound together, usually stapled. The booklet ranges in number of pages up to 36 or 40 and the number of pages must be divisible by four. The format itself may be either vertical or Horizontal."

So far this description fits the NALS publication. Its format is vertical (4 inches by 9 inches) and its 24 pages, obviously divisible by four, are stapled.* Stitching, inherent in the derivation of the word brochure, is still present, since stapling is the contemporary version of saddle stitch binding. (Sheets formerly sewn together vertically are now stapled.)

Its content, according to the graphics text, is more likely than that of books to reflect promotional interests. Fields does promote NALS, but to a larger extent, she promotes the whole concept of preserving prime land for agricultural purposes. A public relations textbook adds "fund raising" as a content emphasis of the brochure, the pamphlet, and the booklet.

The graphics text continues: If the nature of the booklet is more promotional (than informative or literary) display treatment of the cover may be more extensive, incorporating both visual and verbal elements. The only visual impact of this brochure's outside front cover comes from the selection and size of type face and the rules used to separe the lines. The verbal elements are an involving question (the title itself) and a quotation from a Fields publication: "Ten years from now, Americans could be as concerned over the loss of the nation's prime and important farm lands as they are today over shortages of oil and gasoline." The cover, then, combines aspects of an informational and of a promotional publication.

In design, Turnbull says, ". . . tradition and informality may be applied in varying degrees." Because of its promotional nature, the content of the brochure dictates informal design. And because the message unfolds through succeeding pages, the designer must maintain a consistent style. To do so, Fields placed text on ten of the twelve even-

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***The first and second printings of twenty pages were expanded to include information made available nine months later in the third edition.**

numbered pages with a photograph on the facing pages. She superimposed related quotations on each picture.

Although brochures, pamphlets, and booklets are terms often used interchangeably, some distinctions have been made. Nolte considers a booklet to be "several pages which may be glued or stapled together." The possibility of glued, or perfect binding, then, distinguishes a booklet from the stitched or stapled brochure. Nolte also describes a booklet as having at least eight pages and its content being geared toward leisurely reading and retention. Like the leaflet, it is often distributed by means of information racks. "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" was distributed through the mail and so once again, it cannot be described as a booklet.

A pamphlet, too, has been described in ways that help differentiate it from the brochure and from the booklet. Murray, for example, defines a pamphlet primarily in terms of its content: ". . . a treatise . . . on some subject or question of current or temporary interest, personal, social, political, ecclesiastical, or controversial, or which the writer desires to appeal to the public." Other constituent elements are size, composition method and binding. Webster's dictionary describes the pamphlet as unbound but adds that it is "stapled or stitched together." This dictionary also emphasizes temporal relevance and the political or social concerns of "pamphleteers," a related word.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, however, stresses the informational aspect of a pamphlet: "In the 20th century the pamphlet has been used rather for information than controversy, chiefly by government departments and societies." The encyclopedia cites the definition of the pamphlet commonly used by librarians and bibliographers: "Any short work, unbound or bound in paper covers."

Librarians (see Kent and Daily) argue, however, that there is no firm definition of pamphlets in a library context, although various limitations of numbers of pages or forms of binding are often cited as criteria. Librarians would include everything from single-sheet broadsides or local newspaper clippings to scholarly reports unavailable in any other format in the pamphlet collection. And, like the writers of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Webster's New World Dictionary*, they emphasize the pamphlet's temporal relevancy. They base their cataloging and acquisition procedures on the length of time the pamphlet will be valuable; its flimsy physical make-up also renders it short-lived.

Center might invalidate this argument. His text points to several pamphlets, which it alternately calls brochures, booklets, and folders as having had considerable social impact over time. It also describes what General Motors (the "pace setter" in most functional aspects of public relations devices, according to Center) considers to be the essence of a pamphlet: "reducing complex interrelated subjects . . . to graphic illustrations, caricature in some instances, and a common vocabulary, (that) enable direct communication with a single, unconfused voice and viewpoint." GM sees charts and graphs as essential to this effort. The fact that the NALS publication contains no charts or graphs helps distinguish it from a pamphlet.

Less has been written about leaflets and folders; but since they, too, have been used to describe what I consider to be brochures, they warrant a brief explanation. One major distinction is that a leaflet, according to Nolte, is a single printed page—one page or folder—whereas a folder, according to Turnbull and Baird, is always folded. This definition distinguishes the two forms from each other in many cases but always from a brochure, which is at least eight pages long. Also, the *New World Dictionary* states that a leaflet is a "folded *but not stitched*." (Italics mine.) Brochures are always stitched or saddle stitched via staples.

As Professionals Define the Terms

The aforementioned descriptions are too general at times and too specific at others. However, a third problem looms as an even greater complication. At least these descriptions, inadequate and overlapping as they may be, have been published. Many communication specialists rely on their own, unarticulated definitions for terms they bandy about.

Representatives of two large direct-mail organizations in Washington, D.C., for example, regard a brochure in significantly different ways. Nancy Lyons, Direct Mail Marketing Association, says it is the same as a folder—not stapled. Orville Shirey, Direct Mail Marketing Club of Washington, says though, the format of the brochure is limited only "by the ingenuity of the writer and the capabilities of the press and the folding process." Basically, he considers it a direct-mail sales tool typically sent in an envelope with or without a cover sheet. It can be any size

between about 4 x 9 inches and 8½ x 11 inches and can contain any number of pages.

Lyons limits the number of pages for a booklet to at least 40, whereas the pamphlet (synonymous with leaflet to her) is stapled and has about six pages. She emphasizes, though, that what matters is not what the practioner calls the vehicle—the crucial element is the name the printer attaches. And that, she says, depends on the printer one asks.

The Determining Element: Writing Style

Format and design considerations, important as they may be to help avoid confusion, say nothing of the style of writing. If one element of any written message deserves special attention because of the effect it ultimately has on the message's audience, I would argue that it is style. Style can be evaluated using two main criteria: Correctness and artistry. "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" has both. Fields has learned to write without error—punctuation, spelling, and grammar are flawless so the reader's attention is not diverted by non-standard usage.

Almost more important, though, is her artistic style of writing throughout the brochure. Style may be the element that separates this written form from the pamphlet, the booklet, the folder, and the leaflet.

As a journalist, Fields undoubtedly practiced the two types of leads that involve readers: questions and quotations. Her brochure contains thirty-two major quotes from credible sources. These direct quotations have two main functions. First, they enhance the human interest of the writing, taking it out of the realm of the straight news article and into the domain of the feature story. Second, they add credibility—important for the acceptance of any message. And Fields asks 25 questions of her readers, hoping to involve them enough to urge them to read on. Even her title is a question, as are seven of her ten subheadings.

Fields also enhances her audience's acceptance of the message by writing with explicitness and specificity. She explicitly states that "When pastures become parking lots, when houses crowd the land where corn once grew, the loss to agriculture is irreversible," rather than simply implying that loss of farm land is a problem. She goes on to state specifically: "Cloak fertile fields in asphalt, steel, and cement, and there is no turning back. The farm land is gone forever."

In addition to questions and quotations and the specificity and explicitness of her writing, Fields employs figures of speech, often analogies, to put unfamiliar terminology and situations within their grasp. Apparently this technique worked. Her translation of a million acres of prime farm lands lost to urbanization each year has appeared in numerous newspaper articles, both with and without attribution to Fields or to the brochure: "A Million acres equals a half-mile strip of land from New York to California—or the loss of four square miles of our best agricultural land every day." She also equates the yearly loss of three million acres of lesser-quality agricultural land with a "a half-section of farm land every hour."

Fields even quotes the comparisons others have made. George Anthan, for example, wrote in the *Des Moines Register*, "Every time a baby is born in the United States, agriculture loses one and one-third acres of cropland." She quotes Allen Hidlebaugh, NALS resource inventory specialist, as observing that "the annual loss will equal 480 million bushels of corn—at $2.50 a bushel, the equivalent of *one billion dollars* a year every year by the century's end." And she credits former Secretary of Agriculture Bergland with saying: "In my lifetime, we've paved over the equivalent of all the cropland in Ohio. Before this century is out, we will pave over an area the size of Indiana."

The main figure of speech to merge in Fields' style is the metaphor, equating the opposing forces of agricultural and urban land use with warriors. She begins this nonliteral representation by quoting Bergland on our collision course with disaster and then explicitly states: "In the war between the bulldozer and the plow one million acres of America's prime farm lands are urbanized each year." She continues with a quote from R. Neil Sampson, executive vice-president of the National Association of Conservation Districts: "If land and land-use are to be a battleground, then facts, trends and ideas must be the major weapon." She concludes by quoting cherry orchardist Josh Wunsch: "This public vote is encouraging, but it doesn't suggest that our battle is won. The developers are still beating on our gates."

Fields' choice of the war metaphor indicates the urgency and the severity of the threat of prime farm land loss. She hopes to marshal a volunteer army of concerned individuals to defeat the enemy, land developers.* If the valiant

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***By doing so Fields has set the stage for her sequel pamphlet, titled "ASPHALT IS THE LAND'S LAST CROP Save Your Farm Land: You can." (Unpublished. manuscript.)**

farmers, ranchers, scholars, and environmentalists fail in their heroic attempt, then Fields predicts a "wake or urban sprawl" not unlike the devastation any occupied country experiences after war.

By weaving this metaphorical thread throughout, Fields puts the unknown in terms of the familiar in her brochure. She also places intense figurative value judgments on the opposing forces of good (agricultural land owners and citizen activists) and evil (money-hungry land developers) in this battle for control of America's prime farm acreage. This war metaphor, then, may be expected to elicit significant value responses from its readers.

About 300,000 copies of the brochure have been distributed and another 160,000 will be available soon. The initial printing of 100,000 copies cost $11,000 and was sent to names appearing on several different mailing lists but with considerable overlap. The second printing, also of 100,000 copies, filled requests for additional copies by readers of the first run. The third printing of 100,000 copies, with one substantial addition to the content and subsequent increase in length, again filled orders for additional copies. The proposed fourth printing (still to fill back orders) will be distributed both by NALS and by the Government Printing Office; for the first time there will be a charge for the publication (about $6 per hundred) and, according to GPO, the numbers requested are substantially more than normally printed at one time. Because of this widespread circulation, style of writing, informational/promotional content, stapled binding, moderate length and size, vertical format, conservative cover, and sequential design, "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" has redefined the term "brochure."

Effects of the Brochure

Although the 13-month time period since publication of "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" is too recent to assess the brochure's impact on legislation and on the public attitude toward the conversion of cropland to urban uses, the brochure has been a factor in raising its readers' level of awareness about this problem. Farmers, citizen activities, legislators, librarians, teachers, and journalists have responded to the publication. Some have written letters to NALS, the agency that generated the information contained in the brochure. Others have written newspaper articles and letters to the editor. Still others have developed programs

for the broadcast media. A few have copied its format in their own pamphlets.

The brochure has resulted in almost 2,000 letters from readers. They describe the brochure as "very timely," "very informative and useful," "excellently written," "beautifully and effectively prepared," "a real eye-opener," "a valuable resource," "perfect reading for undergraduates in planning courses," "something we should all read," "good description of the problem and short enough to be read by busy county agents," and "one of the finest pieces of information I have ever received."

These responses come from interested individuals, both obscure and well-known. Motion picture star Eddie Albert, for instance, thanked Gray for sending him the brochure and added, "As a result of this piece, I am now involved in putting together a few films on the subject for Ted Turner and his satellite, as well as a book for Houghton, Mifflin." Publisher Alfred Knopf also requested a dozen brochures.

Almost all respondents ask for additional copies. By January 1980, requests for the publication averaged 400 per day. Many of these requests came from concerned citizens, like the woman in Wabash County, Illinois, who wanted 10,000 copies to mount a saturation campaign against a proposed shopping center in her formerly rural area. A man living near the prime agricultural land outside Detroit requested an additional 10,000 copies in hopes of halting the spread of urbanization there. A third request for 10,000 copies came from a newspaper editor in Oregon who distributed them along with the morning paper to every subscriber in town.

Many other requests come from representatives of governmental agencies. For example, a Connecticut state legislator ordered 4,000 copies to help push his ultimately successful legislation for preserving prime farm land. The USDA Soil Conservation Service in Ohio asked for 10,000 copies for statewide, all-media farm land preservation campaigns; Illinois' SCS requested 4,000. Citizen activists in Long Island, supported by county officials and conservationists who had read the publication, ordered 10,000 copies or a campaign to save farmland in that critically endangered region. The Farmer's Home Administration needed several thousand to accompany its responses to requests for loans to develop prime farm lands. The USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of Tennessee requested 10,000 copies—100 for each of its 95 counties and

these, in turn, led to an onslaught of requests from members in those districts.

Other letter writers requesting the brochure represent groups concerned with ecology. They include citizen activists, university professors, high school teachers, librarians wanting to update their vertical files, community planners, and environmentalists. For example, the Environmental Fund, a small but influential public interest group whose main concern is population control, requested and received 65,000 copies—one for each person on its mailing list. A Pennsylvania Audubon Society chapter asked for 5,000 brochures to distribute to "school children who, in turn, should convey the message to their parents." The Future Farmers of America lodged a request for a half million copies—one for every member in the country. And the 1980 Black Hills Survival Gathering asked for 10,000 copies to distribute at its ten-day workshop on land and agricultural issues.

Distribution of the brochure to journalists created even wider dissemination of its material. This mediated effect can be seen most strikingly in the case of a two-part segment for the NBC Nightly News that reached nearly 15,000,000 viewers. James Plante, director of domestic news for NBC, read the brochure, met with Fields, and ultimately produced a program that quoted from the publication.

Walter Cronkite also read the brochure and as a result, delivered a land use "feature brief" at the end of his 11:30 p.m. CBS network newscast. Harry Reasoner, also of CBS, read the publication and expressed interest through his assistant, Jean Dudasiks, in filming a news feature on NALS and farmland loss and preservation for "Sixty Minutes." After reading the brochure, Brian Kaufman, writer/producer for WGBH in Boston, contacted Fields for help in producing a television documentary for NOVA.

Print-media journalists throughout the country have carried the story in their magazines and newspapers. These journalists are editorial writers, national and city editors, farm/environmental reporters, and syndicated columnists. They work for both major metropolitan daily and small-circulation weekly papers. *Parade* magazine, for example, quoted the brochure in a brief article. Major portions of the brochure reappeared in a recent lead story of the *Wall Street Journal*.

Although little more than a year is too soon to assess the impact of the articles that use the information—with and

without attribution, verbatim or woven into their own material—the series on prime agricultural land that appeared last summer in the *Tulsa Tribune* provides an indicator of what might be expected to happen elsewhere. Reporter John Cozart describes its impact:

> **I think our series on the prime agricultural land was a real eye-opener from several viewpoints. No. 1 it made the editors of the *Tribune* aware of some of the very critical problems facing American as well as Oklahoma agriculture.**
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> **Our readers also responded very favorably to the series. We received numerous letters to the editor and the majority of the letters were supportive. In fact, we received one letter from a large association of land developers, who support the idea of some type of national land use policy or some direction in protecting agricultural lands.**
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> **As a result of the success of the stories, we will have future spin-off articles on prime agricultural land . . . .**
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> **A conservation [sic] in Stillwater, Okla., has purchased 300 copies of the section and is distributing them to schools. I held back well over 200 copies and have about 50 left. Most of my copies have been sent to conservation groups, local, state and national agricultural officials who have requested copies.**

Sections of the brochure also have sprinkled the pages of the *Congressional Record*. These portions appear in remarks made both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate.

The publication's format and text have been duplicated in at least two subsequent brochures about land-use conversion. "New York's Vanishing Farmland," a publication of the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Syracuse, N.Y., is a different size (eight-and-one-half inches by eleven inches) but is a mirror in use of text and photos on opposing pages, quotations, question subheadings, and certain content. Another, "Disappearing Farmlands: A Citizen's Guide to Agricultural Land Preservation," credits Fields in its first footnote, on p. 1. Attribution also is given twice on p. 5 and once on p. 16.

The brochure itself has had an immediate impact on the career of Fields, its researcher, writer, and producer. The high quality of the manuscript so impressed Gray that he offered her the job of NALS information director. And, her brochure won first place in the single direct mail piece category of the 1980 Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE) Critique and Awards Program. It scored 100 out of the 100 possible points in all three areas in which it was judged: page design and cover, content, and writing style.

Implications of the Effort

The 13-month success of "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" is especially reflected in the demand for the first three printings totalling 300,000; in the NBC Nightly News spot it generated last spring; in the thousands of reader letters NALS has received; and in its mention by hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles during the past year.

The publication's ultimate effect, however, may be on professional communicators in several related fields. Public relations public information, library and information sciences, graphics, and advertising practioners alike will benefit from the criteria implied in this brochure and established in this study.

The study has demonstrated, for example, that a "brochure" is from at least 8 to 40 pages long. Its format may be either vertical or horizontal but the publication must be saddle-stitch bound (stapled). Its content is largely promotional but it may be informational as well. This, in turn, dictates informal design of the cover as well as the text, with the message unfolding through succeeding pages to maintain continuity of style. Distribution is typically through the mail.

More important than the aforementioned elements, though, is writing style—impeccable English grammar, spelling, and punctuation coupled with artistry, primarily achieved through analogy and metaphor. Style, then, separates brochures most explictly from booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, and folders. By earning a perfect score in the ACE competition, Fields destroyed the old, fuzzy notion of the form of the brochure. Out of the ashes of this formerly ambiguous concept, "Where Have the Farm Lands Gone?" rose like the Phoenix to set new standards for the brochure.

Editors' note: There have been other similar publications by state-USDA information people in the past that have received perfect scores in ACE competition and that have prompted television program interest and reprinting by various newspapers and magazines. Their stories have never been told, however, with such detail.

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