

Research Briefs

Evaluation of Job Benefits of Members of the American Agricultural Editors Association

The Communication Clinic Committee of the American Agricultural Editors Association (AAEA), in cooperation with the Iowa State University Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, surveyed AAEA members to determine salaries, fringe benefits, and satisfaction with benefits. Six hundred questionnaires were mailed in August, 1979, yielding 245 usable responses (40.8 percent).

A composite of data from the survey shows a "typical" member to be a male, 39 years old, earning \$22,500 to \$24,999. He has a B.S. degree in either journalism or agricultural journalism, lives in the Midwest, and has a job title of editor, associate editor, or managing editor. Chances are one in four that he has changed jobs at least once in the past 10 years.

Salaries reported varied considerably. The range was from less than \$10,000 to more than \$40,000. The lowest average salary was reported by assistant editors--\$12,500 to \$14,999. Editors and publishers reported the highest average salary, \$32,500 to \$37,500. Eighteen individuals (7.6 percent) reported salaries above \$40,000.

A primary purpose of the questionnaire was to determine fringe benefits enjoyed by AAEA members, costs of these benefits, and member satisfaction with them.

Survey results showed that a typical benefit package likely would not include a company auto, but might include financial assistance for additional education and a health-accident insurance package as well as a major medical policy. It likely would not include dental insur-

ance but probably would include life insurance and a long-term disability plan.

Only 36 percent of the respondents reported having a company car. Most of the others said they were reimbursed for use of their own car for business purposes, at an average rate of 16 cents per mile.

Although nearly 58 percent of the AAEA members said their company provides financial incentive for additional education, only 39 percent of those having this opportunity had taken advantage of it.

Nearly 97 percent of those responding had health and accident insurance through their companies. About a fourth (24.6 percent) reported major medical insurance paid for by the company. An additional 27 percent reported major medical family policies paid for by the company. Another 40 percent reported that they and the company shared the cost of major medical coverage.

Almost 90 percent said they had life insurance through their employers. And 82 percent reported company retirement plans. Only 30 percent of the respondents said a dental policy is available through their employers.

AAEA members responding to the survey tended to be more satisfied with their benefits than dissatisfied. Generally, the greatest dissatisfaction was with retirement policies and the greatest satisfaction was with vacation and holiday plans. More than 20 percent said they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with retirement policies, while 65 percent said they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with vacation and holiday policies.

Asked what fringe benefits they would like to see improved, more than half the respondents (54.6 percent) listed retirement benefits as first or second choice. An increase in educational benefits was most consistently ranked as the sixth or seventh choice (i.e., least important).

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