The Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC):
An International Library and Extension Collaboration Using Information Technologies

Barbara Hutchinson, Director, Arid Lands Information Center, University of Arizona
Melanie Gardner, AgNIC Coordinator, National Agricultural Library

Introduction: The AgNIC Alliance was formed in 1995 as a collaboration dedicated to bringing value-added international and U.S. regional, and state-specific information, resources, and decision-making tools on wide ranging agricultural topics to people throughout the world.

Purpose of Poster: This poster will provide an overview of AgNIC including its collaborative organizational structure, institutional memberships, international linkages, technical architecture, educational content, and online reference service function. The purpose is to alert potential users to the availability of this Web-based agricultural information gateway and to its potential as a foundation for further collaborations between the extension and library worlds in meeting their common outreach goals.

Major Points To Be Shared:

- AgNIC is a partnership of more than 40 institutions, the majority of which are state land-grant universities, and the numbers are growing each year
- AgNIC is a web-based gateway for accessing authoritative agricultural information and data using a distributed information architecture
- AgNIC involves librarians, extension specialists, USDA personnel, international organizations, and others in a multidisciplinary collaboration

Conclusions: Collaborative Web-based programs such as AgNIC offer new possibilities for partnerships between extension and library professionals to meet broad-based agricultural education goals throughout the world. In this time of downsizing and declining budgets, partnerships among like-minded professionals may be the most effective means for gaining support to meet the multi-functional information needs of today’s agricultural constituencies.

Educational Importance: The Internet and World Wide Web are becoming increasingly important vehicles for delivering educational information worldwide. As more people and organizations become connected, efforts such as AgNIC provide the means for widely distributing value-added learning tools and quality, evaluated agricultural information to support informed decision-making.