



**AIARD**  
ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE  
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Communications Committee Report

**By Samantha Alvis**  
**Chair, AIARD Communications Committee**  
**June, 2015**

The AIARD Communications Committee continued to build upon the work that started during the previous year. We now have more channels of communication than ever before and are working hard to keep them all up-to-date.

### Newsletter

The switch to an electronic newsletter format utilizing MailChimp continues to receive positive feedback from the AIARD membership. Two issues of the newsletter have been produced since the last annual meeting, October 2014 and March 2015. The newsletter, as you can see in the figure below, has seen an increase in subscribers since the October issue and is well above the industry average open rate of 22.7.

#### AIARD Newsletter March 2015

Regular • AIARD Membership  
Sent on Thu, Mar 19, 2015 11:58 am

358      40.9%  
Subscribers      Opens

#### AIARD Newsletter October 2014

Regular • AIARD Membership  
Sent on Wed, Oct 22, 2014 09:27 am

333      33.7%  
Subscribers      Opens

Calls to the membership to submit member and partner updates have been successful, allowing us to spotlight the work of our members. For 2015, we anticipate returning to at least a quarterly newsletter and anticipate having an entire issue focused on Future Leaders. In addition to the newsletter, the MailChimp system has been utilized to create more visually interesting emails to membership, most notably reminder emails for the 2015 conference.

### Website

Prior to the 2014 Annual Conference, the AIARD website underwent a redesign thanks to the hard work of Amanda Crump and Kateryna Schroeder. Since the last annual meeting, the website continues to be updated on a regular basis. We welcome your feedback on changes and new features that members would like to see on the website.

### Logo

After the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AIARD, it was time for a facelift for the AIARD logo and a new design was developed through an online platform called 99 Designs. Hopefully you've noticed this new look throughout the conference and on recent AIARD communication materials.

## **Listserv**

Sue Schram continues to do a spectacular job of managing the AIARD Listserv and getting timely news out to the AIARD membership. The listserv was also recently transitioned to MailChimp.

## **Twitter**

The AIARD Twitter account (@aiardorg) was started just prior to the 2014 Annual Meeting and currently has 113 followers. The account is mainly utilized to live tweet the annual meeting and promote AIARD activities and member news.

## **Online Forum**

Following the 2014 Annual conference, an online forum was launched on the AIARD website (<http://www.aiard.org/forum.html>) to facilitate discussion around three key issues and action items for further debate: 1) Thinking Strategically About Key Focus Areas for AIARD; 2) Organizational Innovation for AIARD for the Future; and 3) Building Broader Support for the Organization. These issues and action items, summarized in the discussion paper, are now the subject of a year-long, on-line discussion forum. Reminders for each topic were distributed through the AIARD listserv, as well as the newsletter, but limited interaction/feedback was received from the membership. We welcome insight into how we can make the online forum a more useful tool for AIARD members.

## **LinkedIn**

AIARD has two LinkedIn Groups-the main AIARD group, and a new group created following the 2014 Meeting for Future Leader Alumni.

AIARD Group currently has over 12,000 members. It has a number of active posts, but we do realize that it most of the group members are not AIARD members. We do post AIARD information on the group (i.e. Newsletter, Conference, etc.).

The FLF Alumni group currently has 49 members. It has been utilized to post AIARD news, updates on future leaders

## **Brochure**

In 2015, a brochure promoting the Future Leaders Forum was developed to help promote the scholarship program. Up next, a redesign of the AIARD membership brochure and other recruitment materials.\

**Interested in joining the AIARD communications team?** Let Samantha know at [communications@aiard.org](mailto:communications@aiard.org).