

AGRIS: An FAO Information Resource for the Agricultural Journalist

By Joe Zumalt, University of Illinois, USA.

Provided through an IFAJ partnership with the Agricultural Communications Documentation Center (ACDC).

Earlier this year we looked at AGROVOC, a multilingual thesaurus produced by the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO) of the United Nations. FAO has been continually selecting documents related to agriculture and related technologies and including them in a database know as AGRIS since 1975. The collection has grown to over 2.3 million records.

The Main Page of the FAO, www.fao.org, is jammed with information and AGRIS is not really found very easily. To access it, enter in www.fao.org/agris/ to pull up the initial page with a simple text box. Click on the link at the bottom entitled “Go to the New AGRIS Search Engine.” We will look at the “Documentation Tools” link on the right side later.

[A new vision for AGRIS](#)

[The network](#)

[Site map](#)



[The magazine](#)

[Documentation tools](#)

[Databases](#)

AGRIS is the international information system for the agricultural sciences and technology. It was created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1974, to facilitate information exchange and to bring together world literature dealing with all aspects of agriculture. AGRIS is a cooperative system in which participating countries input references to the literature produced within their boundaries and, in return, draw on the information provided by the other participants. To date, 240 national, international and intergovernmental centres participate.

Latest news! The AGRIS Repository is now available in a new revised version, which exploits the advantages of both open source search engine APIs (Lucene), and structured XML. Click on the link below to search the entire AGRIS bibliographic database, from 1975 to the present day.

[GO TO THE NEW AGRIS SEARCH ENGINE](#)

To carry on our example we started with the AGROVOC piece, the search term “avian influenzavirus” has 420 results.

[Search tips](#)

[Search Assistant](#)

[Set Preferences](#)
[Clear preferences](#)

Your Search For **"avian influenzavirus"** found **420** results . Showing Results **1-10**

Save results as:

Go to Page [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [Next](#)

[\[The avian influenzavirus\]](#)

[Real Soldevilla, G. del \(Conejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid \(España\). Centro Nacional de Biotecnología\) ;](#)

[Search Google for the full-text](#) 

A Google Search button has been integrated into these screens. However, testing of this feature does not seem to return a great deal of full-text. Try it, your experience may be different. Results may be saved in three file formats: XML, TEXT and HTML.

The “search tips” link on the top right provides several pages of instruction on how to create a better search in AGRIS. Along with standard methods such as use of the Boolean operators AND, +, OR, NOT and -, AGRIS allows you to “Boost a Term,” which makes the term more relevant the higher the number. Fuzzy searches with the tilde (~) are possible. The example given is roam~ returns records with roam, foam, roams, etc. More common proximity searches finding words within a set number of words are also allowed. This is accomplished by using the tilde at the end of a phrase. For example, “agricultural extension”~5 would return the phrase “agricultural extension,” with 3977 records, and instances of those two words within 5 words of one another, 7720 records. Another way to refine a search is to use modifiers like wildcards to broaden a search. In AGRIS, the question mark (?) is the term for a single character and the asterisk (*) is used for multiple characters. For example, “journalis?” would include both “journalist” and “journalism” whereas the search “journalis*” would include “journalist,” “journalism,” and also “journalists” and “journalistic.” A quick check shows 137 records for “journalis?” and 181 for “journalis*.”

The next screenshot shows the metadata which is included in each AGRIS record. This particular record is a Spanish journal article written in March 2004. As you can see, AGROVOC terms are included.

AGRIS record

Record number ES2004001156
Titles [The avian influenza virus]: La Influenza aviar
Personal Authors Real Soldevilla, G. del (Conejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Madrid (España). Centro Nacional de Biotecnología)
Publication Date (Mar 2004)
AGRIS Subj. Cat. Animal diseases

AGROVOC Terms POULTRY, VIROSES, AVIAN INFLUENZAVIRUS, AETIOLOGY, HOSTS, DISEASE TRANSMISSION, SYMPTOMS, LESIONS, DIAGNOSIS, VACCINATION, DISEASE CONTROL, ZOOSES, VOLAILLE, VIROSE, INFLUENZAVIRUS AVIAIRE, ÉTIOLOGIE, HÔTE, TRANSMISSION DES MALADIES, SYMPTÔME, LÉSION, DIAGNOSTIC, VACCINATION, CONTRÔLE DE MALADIES, ZOOSE, AVES DE CORRAL, VIROSIS, VIRUS DE LA INFLUENZA AVIAR, ETIOLOGÍA, HUÉSPEDES, TRANSMISIÓN DE ENFERMEDADES, SÍNTOMAS, LESIONES, DIAGNÓSTICO, VACUNACIÓN, CONTROL DE ENFERMEDADES, ZOONOSIS

Other subjects Domestic animals, Immunization, Immunostimulation, Immunotherapy, Infectious diseases, Influenzavirus, Livestock, Orthomyxoviridae, Pathogenesis, Therapy, Useful animals, Viruses, Animal domestique, Animal utile, Bétail, Immunisation, Immunostimulation, Immunothérapie, Influenzavirus, Maladie infectieuse, Orthomyxoviridae, Pathogénèse, Thérapeutique, Virus, Animales domésticos, Animales útiles, Enfermedades infecciosas, Ganado, Influenzavirus, Inmunización, Inmunostimulación, Inmunoterapia, Orthomyxoviridae, Patogénesis, Terapia, Virus

Language Es
Notes Ilus., 1 tabla
Availability INIA/ES(Spain)
Availability number 2004001156
Serial Title Mundo Ganadero (España)
Serial ID - ISSN 0214-9192
Serial number (no.164) p. 23-28
Serial Date (Mar 2004)

This document is available from the following AGRIS Centre:
Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria, Servicio de Documentación, Biblioteca y Publicaciones, Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología
28040 Madrid
Spain

This includes material not always found in traditional publications like books, magazines, and newspapers. These materials are often referred to as grey literature, and include such things as reports, extension materials, manuals, conference proceedings etc. The following screenshot shows many of these and more. This preference page allows a very precise search for document type and also by 12 different languages, much like is possible on Google's search interface, worldwide. Now we will examine some of the features available through this interface.

Advanced searching is possible through the "Search Assistant" page, with multiple field searching and date and resource centre limiting possible. There are over 100 AGRIS Resource Centres worldwide. Here in the United States, the National Agricultural Library serves as one.

Search Assistant

Search for documents that have

All	of these words		in	Any
All	of these words		in	Any
All	of these words		in	Any

Any [click here to add a row](#) All of these

Select only records that are published after 2000

Include records with unspecified dates?

Select one Year Select Range

from Year Range to

AGRIS Centres: Select Centre Name

Search Reset

Preferences

No. of results per page displayed

10

Search for publications in the following languages

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Thai | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Danish | <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch |

Search for the following type of publications

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standard | <input type="checkbox"/> Patent | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Conventional | <input type="checkbox"/> Directory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing | <input type="checkbox"/> Lit. Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps or Atlases | <input type="checkbox"/> Extension |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summary | <input type="checkbox"/> Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Bibliography | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesaurus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis or Dissertation | <input type="checkbox"/> Numerical data | <input type="checkbox"/> News |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handbook/Manual | <input type="checkbox"/> Encyclopaedia | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech | <input type="checkbox"/> Dictionary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directory | <input type="checkbox"/> Image | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound/music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics | <input type="checkbox"/> Web site | <input type="checkbox"/> Film | |

Results window

Open search results in a new browser window.

As mentioned earlier, FAO provides numerous documentation tools to assist you. There is documentation about the previous focus, AGROVOC. In addition, a language code list gives you 42 different languages. Another helpful searching mechanism is the classification scheme used by AGRIS. FAO uses 17 letters as main categories and further subdivides them as needed.

AGRIS Categorization Scheme

A--B--C--D--E--F--H--J--K--L--M--N--P--Q--S--T--U

See also [Alphabetical Index](#)

A Agriculture

- [A01](#) Agriculture - General aspects
- [A50](#) Agricultural research

B Geography and history

- [B10](#) Geography
- [B50](#) History

C Education, extension, and advisory work

- [C10](#) Education
- [C20](#) Extension
- [C30](#) Documentation and information

D Administration and legislation

- [D10](#) Public administration
- [D50](#) Legislation

E Economics, development, and rural sociology

- [E10](#) Agricultural economics and policies
- [E11](#) Land economics and policies
- [E12](#) Labour and employment

C20 Extension

Use for extension, advisory work and demonstration in agriculture; add categories for specific subjects as appropriate;

Agricultural extension involving systematic and organized communication with farmers in order to aid them to choose

feasible objectives, acquire technical knowledge and skills, identify their problems, formulate solutions, solve the problems

identified and evaluate the results;

Extension operations and services, including programme planning, organization, management and evaluation of the

extension service, methods of communication, advice and guidance to farmers and rural residents, demonstration work.

Agricultural extension agents;

Communication; development and use of mass media (such as newspapers, broadcasts by radio or television, motion

pictures) designed to reach the rural population; agricultural journalism

The FAO Web site is quite rich in data and documentation. The focus of the last two features from the ACDC, AGROVOC and AGRIS, are products which often complement other Web sites and databases. While not a substitute for broader searches, they could well get you that hard-to-find document you cannot seem to find anywhere else.

If you have any questions about using some of the tools featured here, feel free to email Joe Zumalt, Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, at jzumalt@uiuc.edu.