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# Visualizing Values: A Content Analysis to Conceptualize Value Congruent Video Messages Used in Agricultural Communications

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# Visualizing Values: A Content Analysis to Conceptualize Value Congruent Video Messages Used in Agricultural Communications


## Abstract

*Visual messaging is becoming the new avenue to connect with consumers. The majority of the American public is not connected with agriculture and often questions procedures, practices, and tactics within the industry. Practitioners and researchers have suggested value congruent messages, a type of emotional appeal, may increase attention to agricultural messages. However, limited research has been conducted to define and investigate value congruent messages in agricultural communications. The purpose of this study was to describe the presented messages in videos used in one agricultural advocacy effort, CommonGround's "Nothing to Fear Here" campaign. This content analysis described the video's message content and use of value congruent messages. Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values (2012) was used to identify the values present in each video within the campaign. The values of benevolence, security, self-direction, universalism, and hedonism were common values displayed in the campaign. Message sensation value was calculated, and it was found the videos had moderate levels of emotional arousal. The primary characters in the videos were mothers, farmers, and children. More research should be conducted to explore how the value congruent messages and message sensation value interact to increase a receiver's level of attitude change after viewing the message.*



## Keywords

message sensation value, value congruent messages, framing, message appeals, videos

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## Introduction and Literature Review

As the global population grows to nine billion people by 2050, many members of the American public, including decision makers for agricultural policy, are not aware of the substantial challenge the world is facing in regard to sustaining a viable agriculture system (Doerfert, 2011). However, education and communication efforts can address this agricultural knowledge deficiency. To provide more information about agriculture that resonates with the public, researchers and practitioners have suggested agricultural communicators use value congruent message appeals (Center for Food Integrity, 2014; Krause et al., 2015), and communicators should provide persuasive messages that resonate with a public audience to build trust in agricultural practices (Steede et al., 2016).

One way communicators can create persuasive messages aimed at restoring trust within the industry is to acknowledge audience members' social and personal beliefs. The Center for Food Integrity (2014) stated "connecting through shared values is the first step" (p. 16) to building trustworthy conversations with the public. When developing these messages, the communicator's goal should not be "to win a scientific or social argument, but to find more meaningful and relevant methods to introduce science and technology in a way that encourages thoughtful consideration and informed decision making" (Center for Food Integrity, 2014, p. 8).

Recent agricultural advocacy campaigns have adopted this approach to messaging with information presented in a way that is both informative and congruent with audience members' values. One such organization is *Find our CommonGround*, an advocacy group, developed by the United Soybean Board and National Corn Growers Association. This organization is comprised of female farmers who are "having conversations about the food we grow and how we produce it. [Who] share our personal experiences, as well as science and research" (Find our CommonGround, 2015, para. 6). To generate these conversations, CommonGround's mission is to combine personal experiences with relevant scientific research "to help consumers… sort through the myths and misinformation surrounding food and farming" (Find our CommonGround, 2016, para. 6). This agricultural advocacy initiative provides two-way communication through face-to-face interactions, a dynamic website with regular blog posts, and social media content.

Social media outlets have provided a place where organizations can create and share visual content to gain attention and encourage audience engagement to influence attitudes and behavior (Jenkins et al., 2013). Users actively seek out information on social media that meets their uses, needs, and wants, and communicators must create media content that is formatted to be found and accessed (Jenkins et al., 2013). YouTube, the second largest search engine, allows individuals to watch videos and engage with the content via sharing, liking, and commenting (Susarla et al., 2012). Video content is increasing in popularity. In 2015, online video traffic accounted for 70% of global consumer Internet use (Cisco, 2016). In 2018, YouTube surpassed Facebook as the social media platform most-widely used by U.S. adults (Pew Research Center, 2019). More than one billion people use YouTube, and people watch hundreds of millions of hours of videos every day (YouTube, n.d.).

In addition to easy access of content, social media content creators must design media that motivates the user to find, view, and share the information. One key aspect of designing media is making the information relevant to the audience (Jenkins et al., 2013). Smith et al. (2007) described how users tend to seek out information that supports their current beliefs, attitudes, and values. In addition, the social media user will selectively expose themselves to

messages and information in congruence with these beliefs. The more congruent the message is to the user's prior values, the more likely the individual is to allocate attention, process the message, and elaborate on the information (Smith et al., 2007).

When a message is relevant to the receiver of the information, the receiver is likely to place more attention on the message and they are more likely to engage (i.e., view, like, comment, share, and intereact) with the message (Susarla et al., 2012). Increased interaction with social media content correlates with attitude formation and behavior change because the information receiver is processing the information at a higher level (Susarla et al., 2012). Therefore, the creation and distribution of effective video messages about the agricultural industry could play an important part in providing trustworthy information to the public..

Although researchers and practitioners have recommended value congruent messages be used in agricultural communications, little research has defined value congruent messages and the content within them. This study sought to conceptually define the visual and audio content in one online video campaign, "Nothing to Fear Here" from the Find our CommonGround organization, and to determine how the communicators framed the messages to be value congruent.

## Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

We approached this study through Shen and Bigsby's (2013) framework for message construction. This approach suggests messages should be developed by first determining the message content then message style. In public relations and strategic communications research, communicators have shown an interest in understanding how messages may be designed to produce the highest level of cognitive processing to influence information processing and an attitude change (Shen & Bigsby, 2013). Similarly, Dillard and Pfau (2002) explained how "questions concerning how messages might be designed to produce the greatest suasory impact lies at the very center of persuasion research" (p. xvi). In fact, understanding how the message is constructed encourages the conceptualization of how the message can be developed by both researchers studying the effect of the message on the receiver as well as the practictioner who may use the construction steps to build messages to communicate with audiences (Shen & Bigsby, 2013).

### Message Content

The message's content refers to the, "topic, theme, or story being told (including plot and characters)" (Shen & Bigsby, 2013, p. 20). Message characteristics such as the source present in the message may influence the persuasiveness of a message (Krause et al., 2016). More specifically, perceived source credibility has an impact on whether a receiver processes a message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Prior research has discussed how consumers are most likely to trust sources they connect with such as friends and other parents as opposed to scientists (Center for Food Integrity, 2015; Fox & Jones, 2009; Funk & Raine, 2015). Prior research has found scientists often struggle to communicate with audiences (Funk & Raine, 2015; Ruth et al., 2015; Sommerville & Hossel, 2011). According to Sommerville and Hossel (2011), scientists often create message with too much detail that lack personal connections and fail to connect the research to the reciever's context. Similarly, Fox and Jones (2009) found 69% of adults ask friends or a family member for information on health topics as opposed to scientists. Recognizing this preference, the Center for Food Integrity (2015) suggested consumers are more



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likely to respond favorably to familiar-type people such as parents of children and farmers who produce their food as opposed to scientists and corporations. Additionally, Hughner et al. (2007) found parents, especially of young children, are the most likely to be concerned with the origin of their food.

## Message Style

Message style refers to how language, word choice, and figure of speech are presented. In mediated messaging, it also refers to the editing features of cuts, music, and pacing (Morgan et al., 2003; Shen & Bigsby, 2013). In mediated messages, message style may also refer to message features in the form of cuts, music, and pacing (Morgan et al., 2003). Additionally, Brader (2006) found emotional appeals must be structured to be consistent with the mood the creator is wishing to establish. One approach to describing the emotional style of video content is to determine the message sensation value (Morgan et al., 2003). Message sensation value is "the degree of to which formal and content audio-visual features of a televised message elicit sensory, affective, and arousal responses" (Palmgreen et al., 1991, p. 219).

Emotional arousal has been connected to higher levels of perceived interest in a video, and it has played a key role in the information processing and ultimately, the persuasiveness of a message. Because emotional arousal influences an individual's motivation to process a message (Harrington et al., 2006), when the video creator manipulates the variables of audio, visual, and content in videos, superior levels of message sensation are produced, resulting in greater stimulation of emotional arousal during information processing (Morgan et al., 2003; Paek et al., 2010).

### *Message Style through Framing*

Framing theory has been applied for years to describe how communicators present information. Framing involves the selection of portions of the information from a larger message and making them more noticeable to perform four main functions: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and/ or suggest remedies (Entman, 1993). Communicators may use message framing to present the information in a different form through language and the selected aspects of reality (O'Keefe & Jensen, 2006; Shen & Bigsby, 2013). As the framing theory implies, when a communicator frames a message, it may appear as if the message appeals to a specific audience segment.

To frame messages, communicators typically use one of two types of message appeals: emotional or logical (Brader, 2006; Krause et al., 2015). In the use of a logical message appeal, communicators minimize emotions and present statistics and facts to support their claim (Brader, 2006). In contrast, an emotional appeal would provide the same information, but the communicator uses references, audio content, and music in an attempt to evoke emotions from the receiver (Brader, 2006). According to Brader (2006), "an emotion is not technically a property of an ad, but rather a response that the ad may or may not elicit from those who view it" (p. 5).

A type of emotional message appeal is the value congruent message. The value congruent message appeal allows researchers to connect with the audience on an emotional level by providing references to the target audiences' values. Researchers have used value congruent messages to discuss climate change and make climate change conversations relevant to the audience (Somerville & Hassol, 2011). Somerville and Hassol (2011) stated, "people also want to know why they should care—the 'so what' question" (p. 50). To do so, the communicator

must first understand a consumer's values associated with agriculture. Then, they can develop framed messages targeted toward influencing the consumer to think positively about agriculture (Goodwin et al., 2011). Value congruent message appeals have allowed communicators to make information relevant to the audience's current values, social beliefs, personal beliefs, and cultural connotations (Schultz & Zelzeny, 2003). Previously, political communicators have used this type of message appeal to increase an audience's issue involvement and personal relevancy, which makes the message more salient to the audience member (von Borgstede et al., 2014). In addition to improving the saliency of the message, researchers have suggested value congruent messages may increase the level of information processing and ultimately attitude formation that occurs during message consumption (von Borgstede et al., 2014). Therefore, value congruent messages provide an avenue for communicators to provide consumers information in a way that resonates with their beliefs.

Agricultural communications researchers have suggested message appeals must provide a theme congruent with values, culture, or social aspects while also providing the necessary information to discuss the topic at hand (Abrams & Meyers, 2010; Gorham et al., 2015; Goodwin et al., 2011; Krause et al., 2016). Communicators may appeal to consumers by emphasizing social benefits of a particular issue, such as purchasing local food, or appealing to emotion by adding empathy to persuade a voter to support a specific legislation (Goodwin et al., 2011; Gorham et al., 2015). Communicators have also found the use of social and personal message appeals in water conservation research has increased attitudes toward participating in conservation behaviors (Warner et al., 2015). Similarly, in Goodwin et al.'s (2011) study, consumers in focus groups were shown 10 messages related to agriculture. The groups indicated language such as "stewards of the land" and "wide open green pastures" as favorable. The idea of farmers nurturing their natural resources and deeply caring about their influence on the environment resonated well with consumers. On the other hand, messages such as "best management practices" and "scientifically proven, sociably responsible and economically sound" were viewed as unfavorable feelings and the viewers had negative perceptions. Study participants said this language had too much potential for bias and created a feeling of distrust after viewing them (Goodwin et al., 2011).

### *Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values*

Within the agricultural communications literature, value-congruent messaging has been shown to impact target audiences, especially those with low-involvement to the agricultural sciences (Fischer et al., 2020; Shen & Edwards, 2005; Warner at al., 2015) . Value-congruent messages may be an effective avenue for communicating with public audiences because communicators can align these messages with audience members' personal value systems (Fischer et al., 2020; Warner et al., 2015).

We used Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values (2012) as a framework to identify and describe the values present in each video within the campaign. This theory "concerns the basic values that people in all cultures recognize. It identifies ten motivationally distinct types of values and specifies the dynamic relations among them" (p. 3). Schwartz (2012) suggested there is a universal structure of human motivation; however, individuals and groups may differ in where they place importance on the values. Values are able to be universal because there are six main features that contribute to all values (Table 1).



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**Table 1**

*The Features of Values as Defined by Schwartz (2012)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Values are beliefs | Values affect the emotions of individuals. When an individual value is activated, the individual becomes infused with a feeling. |
| Values refer to desirable goals | Values affect a person's motivation to behave. |
| Values transcend specific actions and situations | Values are different then norms and attitudes as values are continuous or surpass specific actions, objects, or situations |
| Values serve as standards or criteria | Values guide the selection and/or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. |
| Values are ordered by importance | Individuals place a certain structure or hierarchy of values which characterize the person as an individual. For example, one person may place more importance on achievement or justice rather than novelty or tradition |
| The relative importance of multiple values guides action | Values influence action when they are relevant in the context and important to the actor. |

Based upon these six features, Schwartz (2012) defined 10 values (see full definitons in Table 3). Values are categorized based on one or more of "three universal requirements of human existence which they help to cope" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 4). The requirements of human existence are "the needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 4).

Schultz and Zelezny (2003) provided recommendations for using communication messages to connect human values to environmental messages to persuade a specific environmental behavior. In this analysis, Schultz and Zelezny (2003) described the necessity to frame environmental frames in a way where they are consistent with self-interest. They provided three suggestions for framing environmental messages: "1) work within the motivations and inclinations characteristic of this species, 2) treat the human cognitive capacity as a resource, and 3) engage motivations other than altruism" (Schultz & Zelzeny, 2003, p. 132). The Biodiversity Project attempted to connect environmental issues with values (Schultz & Zelezny, 2003). Communications campaigns within the project centered on protection of endangered species, habitats, and open space. The project identified several reasons why people would care about the issue and related these to Schwartz's (2012) key values. In line with the values, a set of overarching messages, images, and anecdotes were created. For example, "Unless we protect natural lands, open vistas and recreation areas, we will forever lose our California heritage, healthy communities, and property values" (Schultz & Zelezny, 2003, p. 132).

Political campaigns have also used value-oriented frames to emphasize ideals such as universalism in gay rights and issuing foreign aid (Shen & Edwards, 2005). Research in marketing, media, and communications has also used the Schwartz (2012) Theory of Basic

Human Values. Value frames have been used to help messages resonate across different cultures, and these frames have been found to receive more favorable responses than messages with functional attributes when the message aligns with a pre-existing value (Torelli et al. 2012).

Literature has suggested an orientation of the message frame to a personal value has led to more positive attitudes toward the message (Fischer et al., 2020; Shen & Edwards, 2005). Specifically, messages with value frames have a significant impact on the individual's issue thoughts and attitudes (Shen & Edwards, 2005). In addition, Fischer et al. (2020) found those with low-involvement to agriculture were more likely to have more positive attitidues to messages that align with values. These frames are successful as they produce higher levels of information processing by activating "thoughts in memory participants would not otherwise recall; likewise, it may lead them to weigh thoughts to which they would otherwise attach little importance" (Brewer & Gross, 2005, p. 935). In Brewer and Gross's (2005) study, careful thought of the message facilitated more mental deliberation of the message leading to favorable attitudes of the message. Thus, in this study, we seek to understand what are the predominant values in the "Nothing to Fear Here" campaign.

## Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the value congruent messages used in agriculture that were presented in CommonGround's "Nothing to Fear Here" campaign. The following research objectives guided the study:

RO1: Describe the topic and length of the videos.

RO2: Describe the type of on-camera sources used in the campaign.

RO3: Determine the message sensation value presented in the campaign videos.

RO4: Identify the values presented in the campaign.

## Methods

The research design for this study was a mixed method approach in which we used both quantitative and qualitative content analyses. A quantitative content analysis may be used to make valid inferences to categorize trends and patterns from data by assigning numbers to demonstrate variation (Krippendorff, 1980). This method may also be used to provide a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure and analyze communication messages to describe content, explore the media image, and establish a need for other studies (Krippendorff, 1980). In addition, we selected the qualitative approach to analyze and describe the content provided in the videos and to identify frames and values within the message (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003; Altheide, 1996).

Our content analysis was focused on the Find our CommonGround initiative, "Nothing to Fear Here" campaign. The campaign was introduced in September 2015 when the organization posted the nine campaign vidoes to YouTube. These videos, and more information regarding each topic, are also on CommonGround's website and Facebook page. The YouTube playlist can be found via this link: https://bit.ly/39u0UzJ. As of September 1, 2016, the mean viewing frequency was 233.11 (*SD* = 119.96). The most viewed video was watched a total of 584 times; whereas, the least viewed video was viewed 40 times. This particular campaign was chosen as it features testimonial stories from volunteer female farmers, and the language suggests a



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connection to the personal values of their target audience – parents. In addition, the videos are well-produced and do not promote a single brand or product.

## Codebook

We used a researcher-developed codebook to analyze the content of the videos. The codebook had three sections: 1) topic and length of the videos, 2) type of on-camera sources, and 3) message sensation value and values presented in the campaign.

### *Video Content*

To address the first research objective, we identified the topics presented in the videos in the campaign and the length of the videos.

### *On-Camera Sources*

The second research objective sought to determine the type of on-camera sources used in the videos. The on-camera sources were coded as citizens (no children referenced), mothers, fathers, female farmers/ranchers, male farmers/ranchers, scientists, doctors, chefs, governmental, and other (*0 = absent; 1 = present*). On-camera sources could be placed in multiple categories.

### *Message Sensation Value*

The third research objective and section of the codebook determined the message sensation value of the videos. Message sensation value was calculated via Morgan et al.'s (2003) formula where the number of cuts and the presence or absence of certain message characteristics are determined to calculate a score from 0-12. These message characteristics were message visuals (i.e., special effects, text graphics, slow motion, unusual color, and intense images), message audio (i.e., sound saturation, music, sound effects), and content (i.e., acted out, unexpected format, surprise twist or ending). To calculate the score, we identified if the characteristics were present (1) or absent (0) then summed the score to arrive at the message sensation value for each video. In addition, we recorded the number of cuts, or the number of times the camera cuts from one visual scene (entire frame) to the next. Table 2 provides a description of the operational definitions used to determine message sensation value. Items were coded if any of the items were present (1), absence (0), or hard to tell (99)

**Table 2**
*Definitions of Message Sensation Value Characteristics (adapted from past literature Morgan et al., 2003).*

| Message Item | Description of Item |
|---|---|
| Visuals | |
| *Special visual effects* | Anything beyond the range of human ability. Computer generated/animated graphics. |
| *Text graphics* | Graphics on screen that are text |
| *Slow motion* | The slowing of real-life action through technical intervention. |
| *Unusual color* | Unusual colors outside the range of colors normally perceitved in real life. For example, people in black and white; washed out color, food with unrealistic colors. |
| *Intense Images* | Intense or horrifying images including needles going into arms, decaying children, etc. |
| Audio | |
| *Sound saturation* | Background sound throughout the video clip, including street noice or other sounds, rather thans imply a person talking throughout the video clip. |
| *Music* | Music to accompany the dialogue or action of the video clip |
| *Sound effects* | Unusual sounds (those that could have not ocured in real life) heard in the video clip including gongs, doorbells and other noises) |
| Content | |
| *Acted out (vs. talking head)* | Viewers see the actions corresponding to the point of the video clip |
| *Unexpected format* | If images and messages are interchangeable with those in other videos, the format is expected. |
| *Surprise/Twist Ending* | The presence of a climatic, shocking end to the video |

***Values***

The final section of the codebook was to determine the values present in the narrated aspects of the videos, which address research objective 4. To develop this section of the codebook, we used the Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values (2012) to categorize the narration. We transcribed the audio of the videos and identified the presence or absence of the values in the narration. In addition, we used qualitative thematic analysis to categorize the values into their respective themes based on the words, phrases, and patterns in the transcripts. To provide accuracy and credibility of the data, two researchers analyzed the data independently then peer debriefed to compare notes and provide final themes (Glaser, 1965; Lincoln & Guba, 1990). To categorize the human values portrayed in the video, the coders indicated if the following values (Table 3) were present in the videos.


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**Table 3**

*Values Present in the Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values (2012)*

| Value | Definition |
|---|---|
| Achievement | The desire for personal success in social situation. It is the desire to demonstrate ones skill when compared to the social norm or standard. |
| Benevolence | The desire to enhance the welfare of those around an individual. This value is seen typically in a mother and child relationship or those similar. Benevolence would be characterized as mature love. |
| Conformity | The desire or goal to maintain the social expectation. One focused on conformity attempts to fit in smoothly with groups and conform to the norm. |
| Hedonism | A value directly associated with gratification from oneself and pleasure associated with fulfilling themselves. |
| Power | The desire to be the dominant in a social situation. Words associated with power could be prestige or control. |
| Security | Directly associated with safety and harmony. While some security values are associated more individually, others can be expressed on a wider group like national security. |
| Self-Direction | An independent thought or action to choose something different than the norm. This is typically associated with creating or exploring. |
| Stimulation | Derives from the need for excitement or a challenge in one's life. |
| Tradition | Associated with commitment to customs established long ago. An example of tradition is best seen in culture or religious traditions. |
| Universalism | The goal is to maintain welfare for all people and nature. |

## Procedure

The coders independently analyzed each of the videos using a codebook. After coding, data were entered into Microsoft Excel and uploaded to ReCal2, a free web-based service, that calculates intercoder reliability. Krippendorff's alpha was used to calcualte intercoder reliability and 29 of 31 variables met the reliability of .70 or higher, which has been set at acceptable for exploratory research (Lombard et al., 2002). The coders met 100% agreement on 20 of the variables; whereas, a Krippendorff's alpha of .779 was achieved for the following variables: slow motion, stimulation, conformity, benevolence, mothers, female farmers, and other. Three variables did not meet an acceptable level of reliability: power (.622), security (-0.063), and fathers (-0.063). The coders met to discuss these variables and discuss discrepancies then recoded these variables in the videos and reached an acceptable level of reliability.

## Results

**RO1: Describe the topic and length of the videos.**

The video topics identified were: sustainability, organic foods, hormones in milk, genetically modified organisms, food safety, food prices, family ownership, antibiotics, and animal welfare. The videos ranged from 1 minute and 30 seconds to 1 minute and 50 seconds.

**RO2: Describe the type of on-camera sources used in the campaign.**

We explored the type and amount of on-camera sources used to provide value congruent messages in the videos. The most predominant on-camera sources in the campaign were female farmers/ranchers ($n$ = 9) and mothers ($n$ = 9). Children were also present in seven of the videos. Additionally, male farmers/ranchers were present in five of the videos, and fathers were present in four of the videos. The "other" category was used to describe on-camera sources that were not listed in the codebook, which were grocery store workers ($n$ = 1) and teachers ($n$ = 1). Table 4 displays the frequency and percentage of the types of on-camera sources present in each of the videos. The videos had an average of 3.33 sources per video ($SD$ = 1.5). The food safety video featured the highest amount of sources (citizens, mothers, fathers, female farmers, male farmers, and a teacher); whereas, the majority of the videos only featured female farmers, mothers, and/or children.

**Table 4**

*On-Camera Sources Present in the "Nothing to Fear Here" Campaign Videos (*N = *9)*

| Sources | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Female Farmer/Rancher | 9 | 100.0 |
| Mothers | 9 | 100.0 |
| Children | 7 | 70.0 |
| Male Farmer/Rancher | 5 | 50.0 |
| Fathers | 4 | 40.0 |
| Citizens (No Reference to Children) | 3 | 30.0 |
| Other | 2 | 20.0 |

*Note:* Totals will not equal 100%

**RO3: Determine the message sensation value presented in the campaign videos.**

Message sensation value is the summation of 12 variables (Morgan et al., 2003). Table 5 lists the variables along with the number of times they were represented in the sample ($n$ = 9). The videos were approximately two minutes in length with a mean number of cuts of 20.44 ($SD$ = 3.01). Slow motion b-roll was used in four of the videos; however, the videos did not contain any text graphics or logos, intense images, unusual color. Although the videos did not contain any sound effects, all of the videos ($n$ = 9) included sound saturation or natural background noise and music throughout the videos. Further, all of the videos ($n$ = 9) were constructed to have the process described acted out instead of the viewer being told about the information. The average level of message sensation value was 5.44 ($SD$ = .53). The highest message sensation value was 6 ($n$ = 4), and the lowest message sensation value was 5 ($n$ = 5).



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**Table 5**

*Frequency of Message Sensation Value Variables in "Nothing to Fear Here" Campaign Videos (N = 9)*

| Message Sensation Value Variable | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Cuts | | |
| 0-4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 5-14 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 15 or more | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Visual | | |
| Slow Motion | 4.0 | 44.4 |
| Special Visual Effects | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Text Graphics | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Unusual Color | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Intense Images | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Audio | | |
| Sound Saturation | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Music | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Sound Effects | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Content | | |
| Acted out (vs. Talking Head) | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| Unexpected Format | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Surprise Twist or Ending | 0.0 | 0.0 |

**RO4: Identify the values presented in the campaign.**

To categorize the type of values present in the "Nothing to Fear Here " campaign, we used the Schwartz (2012) Theory of Basic Human values. As table 6 displays, only five of the values were present in the videos. The following section provides examples of each of the values present in the campaign.

**Table 6**

*Basic Human Values (Schwartz, 2012) Present in the "Nothing to Fear Here" Campaign Videos (*N = *9)*

| Value | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Benevolence | 9 | 100.0 |
| Security | 8 | 88.9 |
| Self Direction | 4 | 44.4 |
| Universalism | 3 | 33.3 |
| Hedonism | 1 | 11.1 |
| Stimulation | 0 | 0.0 |
| Achievement | 0 | 0.0 |
| Conformity | 0 | 0.0 |
| Tradition | 0 | 0.0 |
| Power | 0 | 0.0 |

*Note:* Totals will not equal 100%

***Benevolence***

The value of benevolence, or the desire to enhance the welfare of those around an individual, was present in all the videos (*n* = 9). Benevolence was described when discussing the welfare of livestock sent to slaughter: "The thing I want consumers to understand is even though I am raising these animals for meat, I still care deeply for them." The act of caring for the land was observed in statements about agricultural sustainability: "This is our job, this is our livelihood, and we want to make sure we are doing the best that we can." Discussion of the use of antibiotics was also reflected using the value of benevolence: "We use antibiotics very judiciously. By using antibiotics and preventing animal suffering, I am able to be really compassionate toward that animal."

Further, the value of benevolence was observed when mothers were comparing the welfare of their children to welfare of animals. For example, in statements about animal welfare, the narrators compared their children's welfare to that of their animals: "As much as I care about how my children are raised, I care about how our cattle are cared for and so the standards that we follow in the care of those cattle is top priority for us." Benevolence was also observed when the topic of genetically modified soybeans was discussed:

> I have grown up on the farm my whole life, and I have eaten the soybeans right out the field – before they were GMOs and after they were GMOs. Now, my kids eat the soybeans right out of the field. I don't feel any worry about that at all. I would never intentionally feed my family anything that would be unsafe.

***Security***

The value of security was present in nearly all the videos (*n* = 8). For example, food security was reflected in discussions pertaining to animal antibiotics: "We will always have veterinarian supervision in how we use antibiotics on our farm and that's really important to us…We are trying to provide the safest, healthiest food possible for our children."

The farmers expressed confidence that their food was safe for consumers:



https://newprairiepress.org/jac/vol105/iss2/3
DOI: 10.4148/1051-0834.2368

> I absolutely feel confident that the food that we produce on our farm is safe and the reality is, the food that leaves our gate probably ends up on our plate, as well. As a wheat producer or as a cattle producer, we want to make sure that we are providing those consumers with the best possible product.

***Self-Direction***

Self-direction, the value of independent thought or action to choose something different than the norm was present in four of the videos in the campaign. Exploring different options for sustainable farming was described:

> The goal of sustainability on our farm is to farm indefinitely. Every year, we work to be a little bit better at being good stewards of the land. We work to be better at growing good crops and healthy and safe livestock.

The idea of creativity and exploring different option was valued as self-direction in one video:

> We grow both GMO and non-GMO soybeans on our farm, and one year, we decided to look and compare the two fields on chemicals for herbicides. That particular year, we used about 1/3 of the chemicals on the GMO as we did on the non-GMO.

***Universalism***

Universalism is the value of maintaining welfare for all people, animals, and nature, and it was present in three of the videos. The value was found in discussions of keeping people healthy: "Our farm philosophy is healthy cows, healthy people, healthy planet." Universalism was also evident when sources discussed how farming could impact the environment: "We have a lot to learn, but we know as farmers we have an impact on the environment and it's our responsibility to take care of that."

***Hedonism***

Hedonism has been described as the value associated with self-gratification from one's achievements and self-fullfilment. We found hedonism was present in one video regarding family ownership. The narrator discussed how she felt gratification from her farm ownership and the agricultural sector: "I started becoming a farmer [when I married my husband], and I have never been more passionate about something in my entire life."

## Conclusions and Discussion

Although the majority of the United States population is disconnected from agriculture, this public is still responsible for policy and market related decisions, and they need to be aware of and informed about the processes that occur in the agricultural industry (Doerfert, 2011). To make information relevant to consumers, researchers recommend value congruent messages should be developed to promote the agricultural industry (Center for Food Integrity, 2014; Krause et al., 2016;). Value congruent messages have the unique ability to provide scientific content, while also appealing to aspects of the consumer's social, cultural, and personal beliefs. This descriptive study sought to analyze videos from the "Nothing to Fear Here" agricultural communications campaign through the lens of Shen and Bigbsy's (2013) framework to help

conceptualize the message's content and style and the use of value congruent terminology. This study was limited to one agricultural communications campaign, and generalizations should be made with caution.

In regard to message content, this advocacy campaign was created to provide information for a public audience about multiple topics within the agricultural industry. The nine videos in the campaign showcased predominant topics in agriculture: sustainability, organic foods, hormones in milk, genetically modified organisms, food safety, food prices, family ownership, antibiotics, and animal welfare. Agricultural communicators must focus on developing communication materials to help inform the public about the agricultural sciences and initatives by producers (Doerfert et al., 2011).

The most common on-camera sources in the videos sampled were mothers and farmers — who were in all videos. Other sources were children and citizens. The use of these sources added credibility with viewers because they presented information consistent with ideas, such as sustainability, that consumers found favorable in an earlier study (Goodwin et al., 2011). Further, Hughner et al. (2007) explained how parents, specifically of younger children, are most likely to be concerned with the origin of their food. Because the narration was congruent with consumer values and the type of sources used, researchers concluded the video producers were attempting to use the visual media to be congruent with family values.

To understand the style of the messages, we explored the level of message sensation value and the predominant value frames in the videos. It was found that the videos had message sensation value scores between 5 and 6, which describes an above average level of message sensation (Krause et al., 2016). Each video had sound saturation with voice over and natural sounds from the environment in the b-roll. According to Morgan et al. (2003), higher levels of message sensation value result in higher levels of emotional arousal. Prior research has connected emotional arousal and message sensation value to higher levels of information processing (Harrington et al., 2006). High message sensation value has also been connected to increased levels of social media engagement (Susarla et al., 2012). Because social media is an online community where organizations can make their messages readily available to consumers, these messages have the potential of not only attracting audience engagement, but also influencing their attitude (Jenkins et al., 2013). The more engaged viewers become, the more likely the video will influence them (Susarla et al., 2012). Prior research has also suggested understanding levels of message sensation value and the types of values present may increase the level of information processing that occurs when a receiver views a message (Harrington et al., 2006; von Borgstede et al., 2014). The more engaged individuals become with the video, the more likely the video will influence their behavior or attitude (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Susarla et al., 2012). Because the video creators used a moderate level of message sensation in their production techniques, it can be surmised these videos may have been produced to engage the audience on a deeper level.

In addition to understanding the style associated with the mediated message, we applied Shen and Bigsby's (2013) message construction framework and Schwartz (2012) Theory of Basic Human Values to understand how to construct value-congruent messages. Based on the values identified through qualitative analysis, it appears the video creators sought to use value congruent messages to provide connections to the target audience's cultures, social beliefs, and personal beliefs. The videos were constructed with value congruent messages because it helps to show the receiver why they should care about the information (Sommerville & Hassoll, 2011). Specifically, we found the values in these videos were benevolence, hedonism, universalism,



https://newprairiepress.org/jac/vol105/iss2/3
DOI: 10.4148/1051-0834.2368

security, and self-direction. These values were recognized in the video transcripts' inclusion of information pertaining to enhancing the welfare of people and animals; ensuring the welfare of people and animals; providing safety and security to people and animals; receiving gratification from life; as well as sharing life goals and improving the quality of life. Because the target audience of the campaign was parents, these values may be congruent as parents are concerned with enhancing and protecting the lives of their children and families (Hughner et al., 2007). We found the values stimulation, achievement, conformity, tradition and power were not present in the videos. Perhaps, these values were not congruent with the target audience of parents. Future research could explore these values in more detail and determine if these values aligned with the target audience.

## Recommendations

Shen and Bigsby's (2013) framework of constructing messages helped us identify the message content and message style used in one agricultural advocacy campaign. The results of this study provide insight for practitioners and researchers when developing value congruent messages. Communication practitioners should consider the on-camera sources present in their videos because they are vital aspect of effectively connecting to their audience. For example, this study found value congruent messages provide references to family through video clips of mothers and children. Additionally, Fox and Jones' (2009) research suggested consumers resonate with people who are similar to them. Perhaps, this campaign sought to use female farmers as representatives of the target audience. Future research may seek to determine if the use of female farmers resonates with this target audience.

Before agricultural communicators test messages with audiences, researchers should provide in-depth conceptualizations and/or explications of their messages. Researchers should apply theoretical frameworks such as message sensation value and Shen and Bigsby's (2013) message construction framework to understand how message aspects influence information processing.

When constructing messages with value congruence, practitioners should first determine the values of the target audience. In campaigns targeted toward parents, communicators should create content that exhibits values such as benevolence, hedonism, universalism, security, and self-direction. The presence of these values connect with the parent target audience through ideas of nurturing, fostering, and improving life. One recommendation for future research is to conduct an experiment to evaluate how parents perceive the effectiveness of various types of value-congruent message frames.

Additional research is needed to understand the effectiveness of value congruent messages in agriculture. Prior research has suggested value congruent messages may be used to promote trust and transparency in the agricultural industry by showing the receiver why they should care about the industry. Future studies should examine how value congruent messages may be used to promote higher levels of information processing that may lead to more positive attitude changes.

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