

Agricultural Education and Communication



Dr. Karen Cannon

Professor

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Dr. Karen Cannon, originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, grew up spending her summers on a horse farm in Mendocino County and traveling with her parents (who are now-retired teachers). Her first educational experiences with agriculture came when she attended Colorado State University, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in agriculture and natural resources journalism. There she was an active member of the CSU Equestrian Team and Sigma Alpha Agricultural Sorority and continued her education by earning her master's degree in Agricultural Extension Education, also from Colorado State.

After graduation, Dr. Cannon moved to Washington, D.C., to work as a public affairs specialist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Following her time in the nation's capital, Dr. Cannon returned to the Front Range of Colorado as a corporate public relations manager for a multinational beef and pork processing company and went on to work on the issues management team for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association where she specialized in beef safety information. During this period, Dr. Cannon's interest in the complexities of communicating science and agriculture was fueled by several significant incidents of animal disease outbreaks such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy and foot and mouth disease, as well as notable food safety outbreaks related to *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella*.

Dr. Cannon decided to return to graduate school at the University of Florida (GO GATORS!) to pursue her doctorate in agricultural communication and focused her studies on communicating complex agricultural issues to non-agricultural publics. She served as a graduate assistant, teaching writing courses to undergraduate students, working on research projects, and was a participant in the early stages of the creation of the UF-IFAS Center for Public Issues Education.

Following her graduation from UF, Dr. Cannon worked for several years as an assistant professor of agricultural communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she led the academic program name change from agricultural journalism to Agricultural and Environmental Sciences communication and restructured and updated the curriculum.

Dr. Cannon is thrilled to be back in her home state of California serving as a faculty member in agricultural communication and as the Director of the Brock Center for Agricultural Communication. Her research and teaching interests focus on bridging communication gaps between agricultural and non-agricultural audiences, public understanding of and engagement in science and agriculture, issues management and crisis communication, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.