Objective of Workshop: “to collaboratively develop the framework for a plan to build and strengthen openly accessible LGU digital repositories of key agriculture-related information, data, and resources that will be available for sharing and discovery for current and future generations.”

Why is This Important?

- Today’s critical issues require an understanding of many disciplinary areas and the ability to bring these different knowledge bases together in new ways.
- Our collective current and future interests require immediate and novel approaches for securing our food and water resources, addressing the consequences of climate change, implementing alternative fuels and energy sources, and conserving natural resources.
- To find solutions to such complex issues requires the harnessing of all knowledge sources using the full power of information dissemination and discovery technologies.
- U.S. Land-Grant institutions are home to extensive resources (i.e. print, data, multi-media, historical but relevant collections, born-digital resources) that could be brought to bear on the challenges of our day, but current access is limited and much is being lost as the current generation retires and funding becomes more and more constrained.

Potential Goals:

- Gaining resources to build and strengthen openly accessible LGU digital repositories of agriculture-related information, data, and other resources
  a. Determining innovative (or realistic) approaches for sharing institutional knowledge in agriculture and related fields and for developing discovery services
  b. Identifying a first phase collaborative discovery system for LGU agricultural resources, especially given the broad range of readiness and accomplishment to date by various LGUs
  c. Determining the components needed to pursue such an effort
Background on Process:

- This started as a Western Region CALS deans discussion (2009) about ag-related institutional repositories and the possibility of working together to create a collaborative system; the purpose ultimately is to not lose institutional memory and knowledge (UC Davis started the discussion, then UA expanded on it).

- Last summer the deans suggested holding a planning meeting of key stakeholder representatives to develop a document outlining the specifics for how such a system might be developed, the services it would provide, and a timeframe for implementation. They suggested such a “proposal” would make it possible to market the concept at high levels in USDA and through such entities as APLU.

- At first, the idea was to convene a face-to-face meeting of representatives from the Western Region LGUs, but the idea expanded as there was recognition that it would be beneficial to include others outside the region with digital repository expertise so a few other institutions were contacted. Given limited travel budgets, this led to the plan for hosting a virtual workshop.

- Letters of invitation were first sent to the ag and library deans in the Western Region to participate in a planning meeting to be held in Tucson. Ten responded positively. In June, follow-up letters were sent to the original list, as well as those additional contacts, informing them of the revised strategy for the meeting and asking them to confirm their interest and designated representatives. 16 LGUs confirmed participation as did the National Agricultural Library.