Newspaper Content Analysis Monthly Update | May 2010

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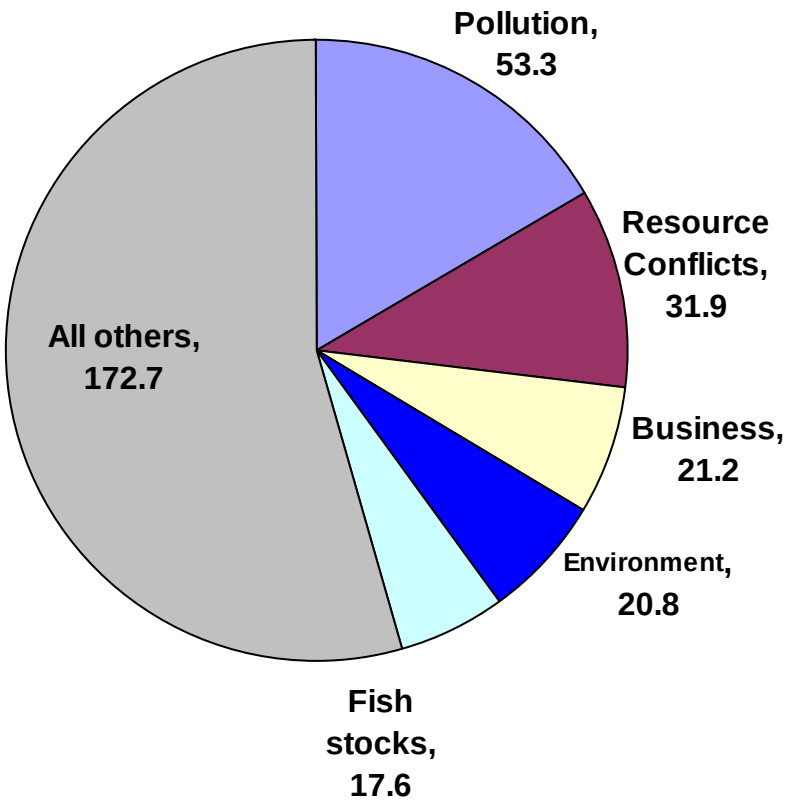
The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico (and the potential impact on regional and global fisheries) dominated agri-food coverage in the Chronicle Herald in May. As of the end of the month, the spill is the worst environmental disaster in US history and has not been stopped.

Resource conflict coverage received the second highest exposure score. Articles mostly surrounded the provincial decision to renew the moratorium on drilling for oil on George's Bank until 2015. This topic was increasingly relevant due to the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

Spotlight coverage on various agri-food businesses gave the business theme the third highest exposure. Articles included Clearwater focusing on the Chinese market and the need to be efficient in the face of a rising Canadian dollar (which makes exports from NS less cost competitive). The Masstown Market's expansion into the seafood business, and the Premium Group of Arichat's encouragement of innovative thinking amongst employees were also highlighted.

The environment theme was a secondary theme to many articles in May. The Gulf of Mexico spill and the general offshore oil debate were behind most of environment-related coverage.

Agri-food theme exposure- April 2010



Finally, the proposed Sable Island seal cull gave the fish stock theme the fifth highest exposure score. The cull is proposed in an attempt to reduce the impact that the large seal population has on regional fish stocks.

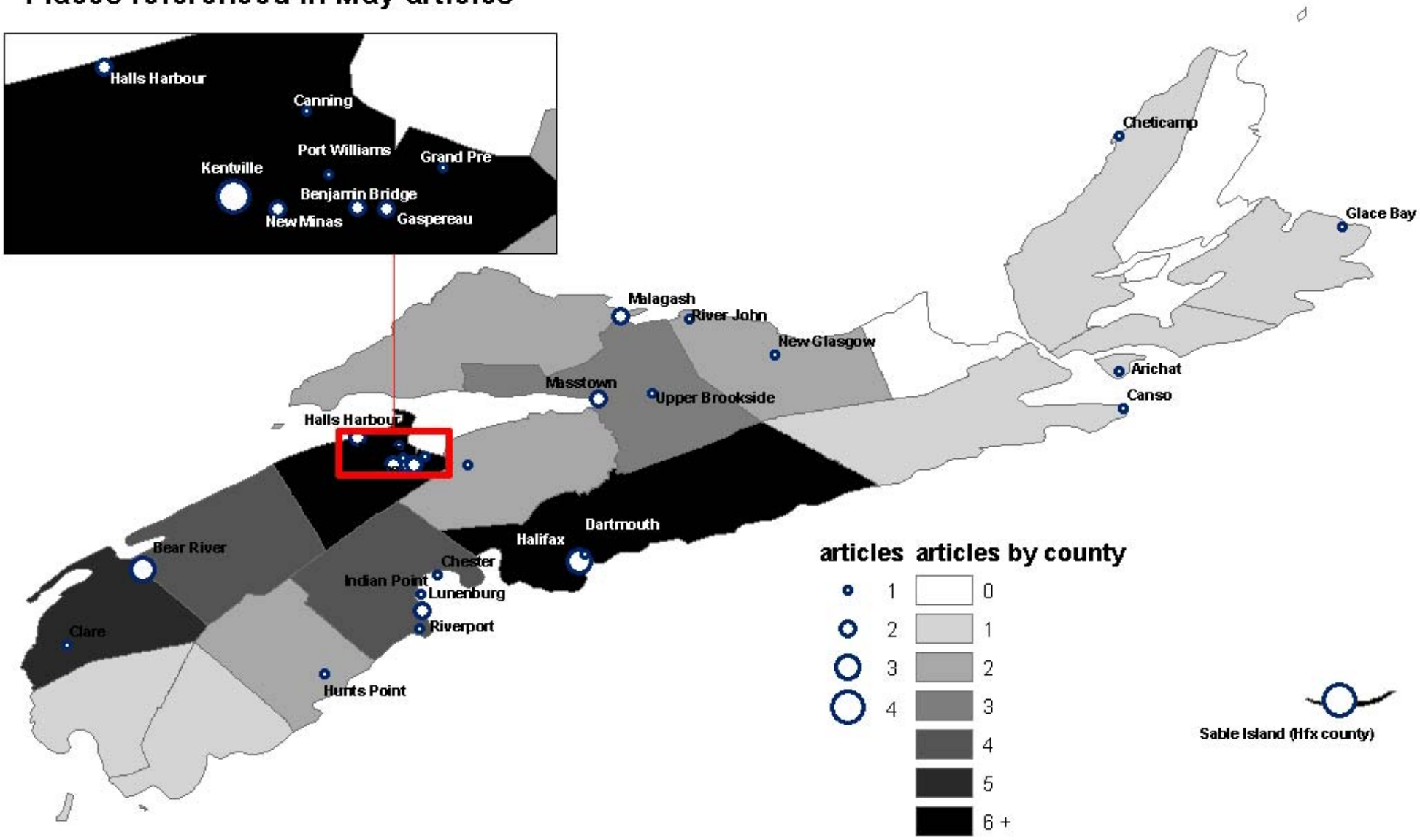
The top five agri-food themes in terms of media exposure, and the relation to total agri-food exposure score, are displayed in the chart.

The top five agriculture and fisheries themes are listed separately in the tables below.

AGRICULTURE THEME	EXPOSURE[i]	SLANT[ii]	TOP ISSUE
Local food	15.5	Highly positive	Profile of wineries
Events	10.7	Highly positive	Apple Blossom Festival
Animal welfare	6.2	Neutral	PETA buys shares in companies in order to influence business
Industry spotlight	6.1		Secondary theme to various other topics
Labour	4.6	Highly positive	World-wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF)
Note: A slant score is only given to a theme in articles where that theme is the main topic of the article. No slant is given to a theme when it is secondary to an article.			

FISHERIES THEME	EXPOSURE[i]	SLANT[ii]	TOP ISSUE
Pollution	51.4	Highly negative	Gulf of Mexico oil spill
Resource conflicts	28.6	Negative	Offshore oil drilling debate-George's Bank
Environment	18.9		Secondary theme (Pollution and resource conflicts)
Fish stocks	17.6	Negative	Proposed Sable Island seal cull
Business	15.3	Positive	Spotlight on fishery businesses
Note: A slant score is only given to a theme in articles where that theme is the main topic of the article. No slant is given to a theme when it is secondary to an article.			

Places referenced in May articles



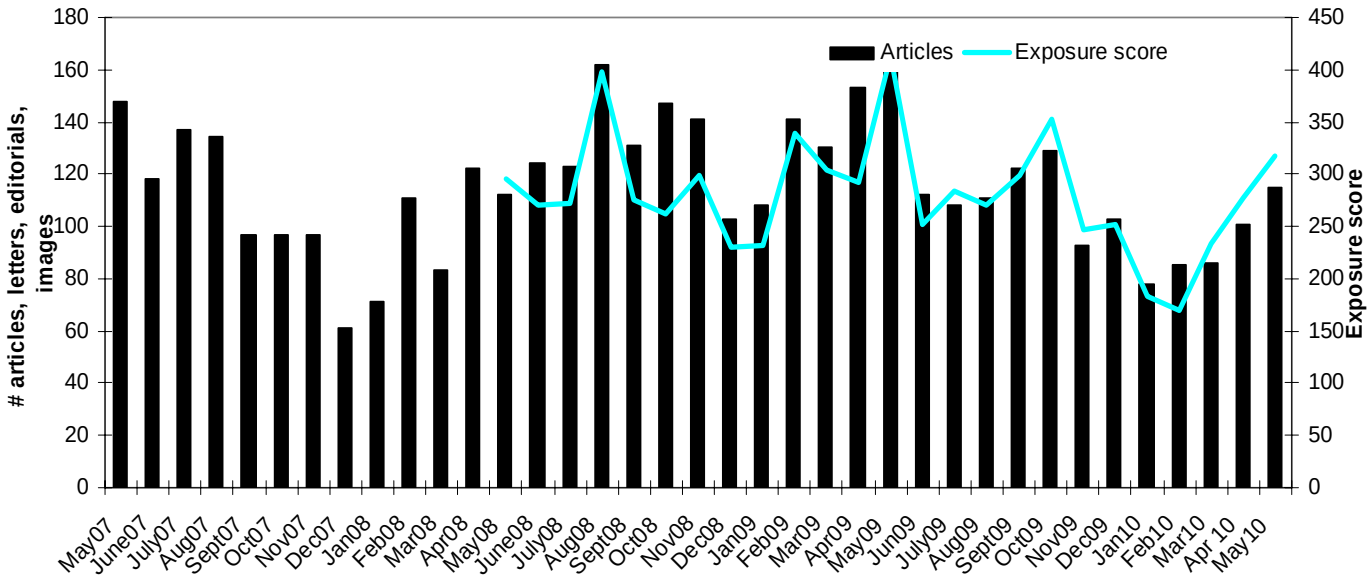
Kings and Halifax counties received the most geography-specific coverage in May; Kings for the Apple Blossom Festival, wineries and the sinking of a fishing boat off Cape Split, Halifax for the proposed Sable Island seal cull.

In total there were 115 agri-food articles in May, 37 of which were related to primary agriculture and 66 to fisheries. Eighteen articles related to processing and 18 to the food industry in general. The 115 articles is up 14 articles from April, but down 54 articles from May 2009, when there was a large amount of coverage on the state of the lobster industry and the Atlantic seal hunt.

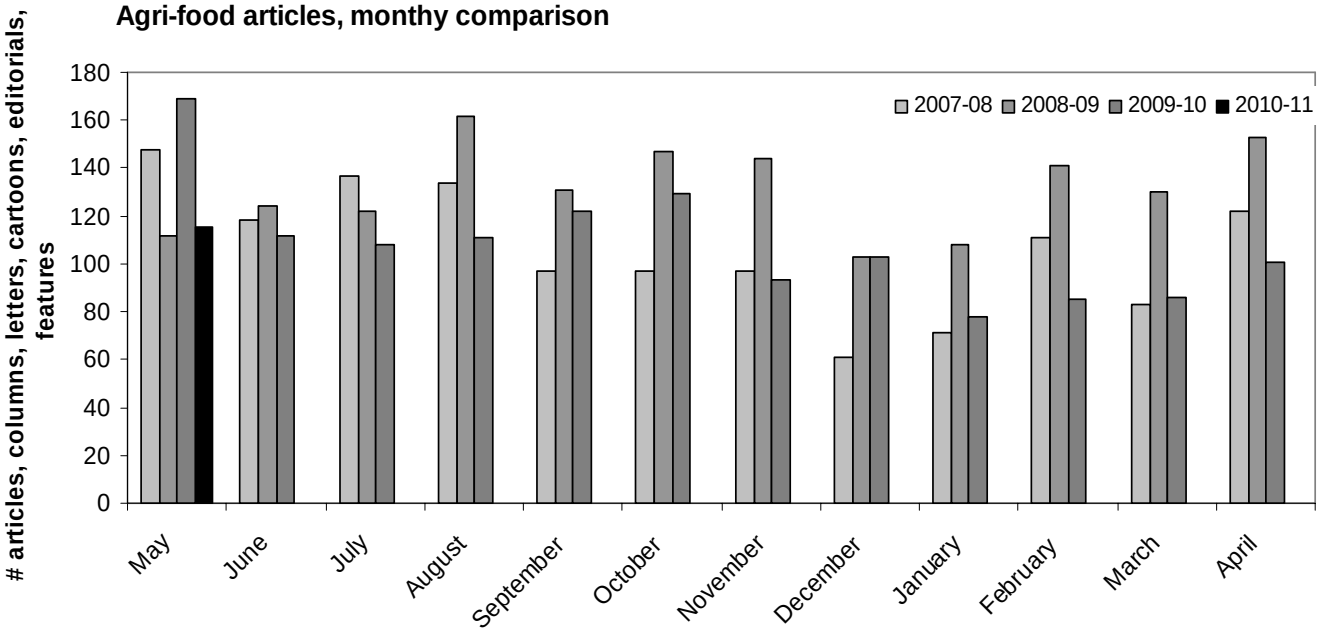
Compared to the previous four months, there were more front page articles (9 compared to 2.25). Articles were longer in length (2,109 characters vs 2,035) and had more images (0.7/article vs 0.48). The overall media exposure score of 317.4 was the highest since October 2009 and continues a three-month trend of rising agri-food media exposure.

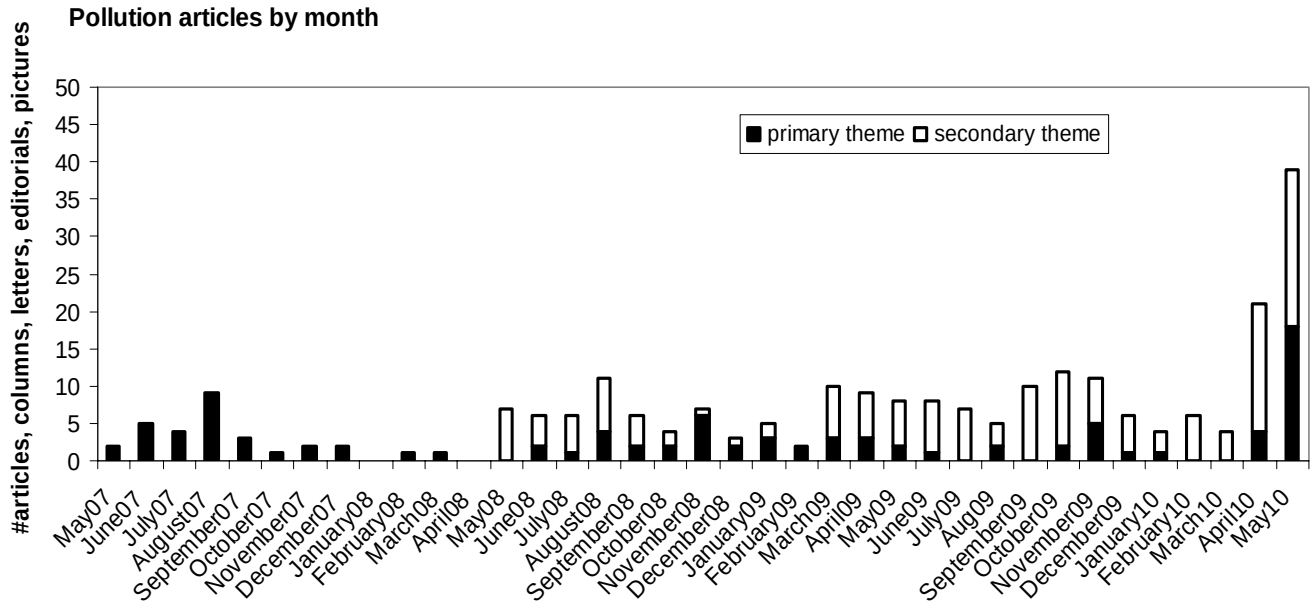
The seal and wine industries received the most sector-specific coverage in April.

Agri-food articles and exposure score



Note: exposure score calculated as of May 2008


Agri-food articles, monthy comparison
articles, columns, letters, cartoons, editorials, features
2007-08
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
April


Pollution articles by month
#articles, columns, letters, editorials, pictures
primary theme
secondary theme
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
May07
June07
July07
August07
September07
October07
November07
December07
January08
February08
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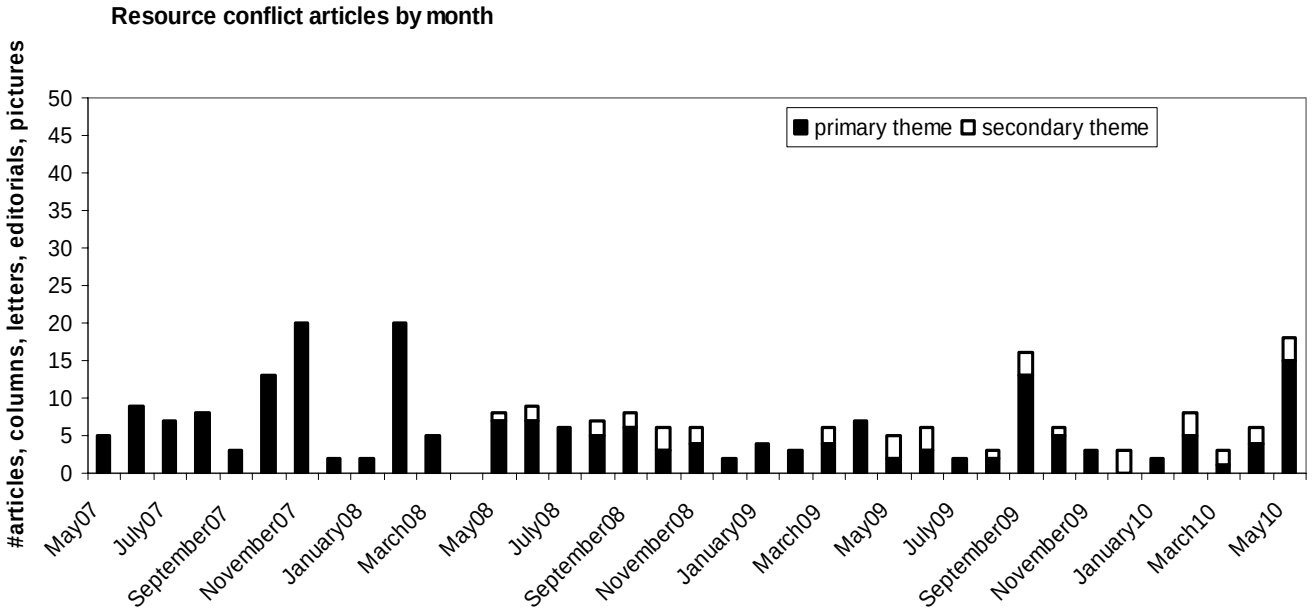
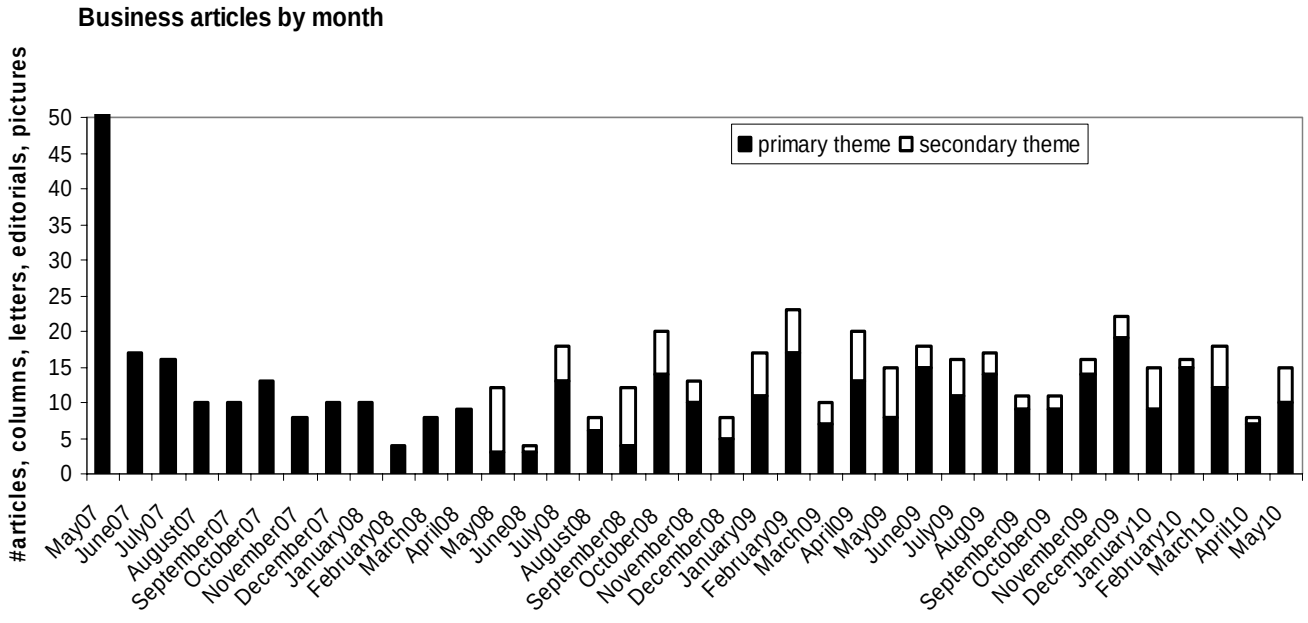
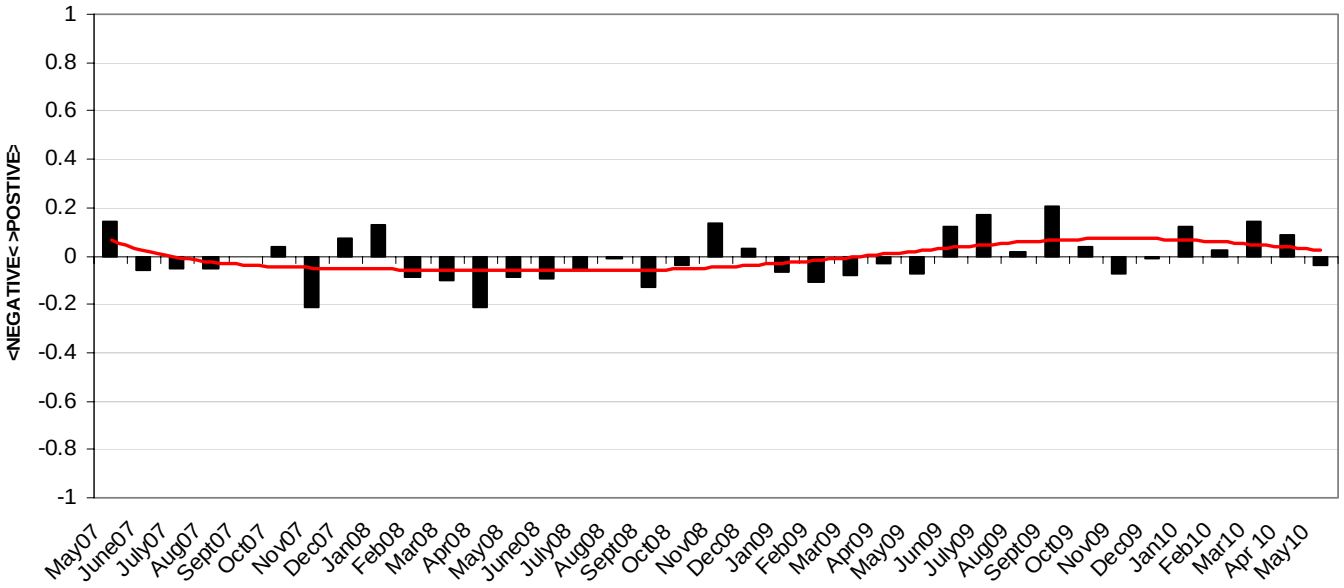




*note: secondary theme data collected as of May 2008.

Average slant of agri-food articles



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[i] Exposure score takes into account # of articles, size of article, # of images, theme appearing as an underlying theme in another article, and front page articles. Full methodology is available from the author.

[ii] A score between -100 and 100 is assigned to each article in an attempt to asses how positive or negative the issue is presented. There is no implication of a bias simply whether the issue would seem “good” or “bad” to a reader. Highly negative= -100 to -75. Negative= -74 to -25. Neutral= -24 to +24. Positive= +25 to +74. Highly positive= +75 to +100.

List of agri-food topics, by exposure score and number of articles- May 2010

RANK	TOPIC	# OF ARTICLES		EXPOSURE SCORE	PREV MONTH RANK	CHANGE
		Primary	Secondary			
1	Pollution	18	21	53.3	3	**(+2)**
2	Resource conflicts	15	3	31.9	14	**(+12)**
3	Business	10	5	21.2	16	**(+13)**
4	Environment	1	43	20.8	5	**(+1)**
5	Fish stocks	7	8	17.6	30	**(+25)**
6	Events	7	2	16.4	20	**(+14)**
7	Local food	5	3	15.9	4	**(-3)**
8	Safety	5	2	13.1	n/a	**(+n/a)**
9	Sustainability	4	10	12.6	8	**(-1)**
10	Industry spotlight	4	10	10.9	2	**(-8)**
11	Animal welfare	3	4	8.7	30	**(+19)**

Notes:
Only agri-food topics with exposure scores greater than 7.5 are listed