Bad Style Habits: Utilize & Purpose of

Abstract
In "Bad Style Habits: Utilize & Purpose of," I point out two of my least favorite style habits. In "August JOE," I highlight the three Commentaries, including the fourth Commentary JOE is publishing this year to commemorate the Smith-Lever Act Centennial, two articles on citizen science, and three on Google.

Utilize
This is an all-too-common habit, a bad one. Authors seem to think that "utilize" is more proper than "use," maybe because it's supposed to be more scholarly or something. It isn't. For one thing, "utilize" is kind of an ugly word. For another, it takes three syllables to communicate what "use" does in one.

Now there is a difference between the two words that can best be illustrated by these two sentences. "I used my knife to cut my steak." "I utilized my knife to eat my peas." Get it? "Utilize" is reserved for those instances when you are using something for a totally unintended purpose.

Otherwise, it's just pretentious and unnecessary.

Nine times out of 10—no, 99 times out of a hundred—"use" is the word you should, well, use. It makes your article more readable, and that's what you should want.

Purpose of
Another common but unfortunate habit is to write, "the purpose of this article is to describe" (whatever). Why not, "this article describes"? It's more direct. It says in three words what the former takes eight words to say. It's, again, more readable.
Just because the heading of a section of your article is "Purpose" doesn't mean you have to trot out the stiff and wordy "the purpose of this article is to." If your article is sound and well written, you do not have to spell out your intention for it. That will be clear.

Bite the bullet, and come right out with what your article does, for gosh sakes.

**August JOE**


There are a number of other articles discussing 4-H issues, including the first two Features, and FCS is also well represented.


That leaves 26 other articles to discover and enjoy.