History of US Extension and Elements of a Successful and Rewarding Extension Program

Louise Ferguson
Extension Specialist
Plant Sciences Department
University of California Cooperative Extension

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: History and Influences

Land Grant College Acts 1862
Hatch Act 1887
Smith-Lever Act 1914

Land Grants
Used to support education in the sciences and agriculture
Agricultural Experiment Stations
Institutions that engaged in the teaching of agriculture, rural life, and the mechanical arts
Extension Service
County-based agencies that provided extension education and research

1920s – 1940s
Growth and expansion of the Agricultural Extension Service

1950s
Introduction of the Food Stamp Program

1960s – 1970s
Mechanization
Food safety
Civil Rights

1980s – 1990s
Proposition 13
Budget cuts

2000s
Influences

New technologies
Crop production and protection
Integrated Pest Management
Labor efficiency

Environmental protection

History of US Extension

Cooperative Extension Offices: History and Influences

Grants and other extramural funds

County governments 13%
US Federal 13%
State of California (Gatelles) 60%

Government & Other Sources – 1997-2007

County Government Funding of Cooperative Extension Offices (FY 2007-2008)

Office, vehicles, clerical & technical support staff

$70,000 – $1.2 million / year

- < $100,000
- $101,000 - $250,000
- $251,000 - $500,000
- $501,000 - $750,000
- $751,000 - $1 million
- > $1 million

Agricultural Extension Model

Research Institution
Development and Outreach
Problem Identification

Extension
Problem reformulation for research
Development of new information

Farmers
Adoption or adaptation
Development of specific solution
Dissemination

Institution
Research
Development
Education
Extension

Office, vehicles, clerical & technical support staff
University of California  
Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources  
(2007)

- Campus-based Faculty  
  315 positions at 3 UC campuses
- Campus-based Specialists  
  111 positions
- 52 County Offices  
  219 Specialists
- 10 Research & Extension Centers

Agriculture (60%)  
Natural Resources  
Family & Consumer Sciences  
Youth Development

What Extension Specialists do ....

Research  
Extending Information  
Professional Competence

Solve LOCAL problems  
Plots in private orchards  
Individual or team effort  
Funding by: Agencies  
Commodity Groups  
Supply Companies

50-60%  
20-30%  
10-30%

Elements of a Successful and Rewarding LOCAL Extension Program

- Academic / University connection
- Outreach AND applied research
- Adequate funding & support
- Local connection
- Teamwork & collaboration
- Professional growth
- Personal rewards
- Advancement

Outreach AND applied research

- Stay on "cutting edge" of knowledge
- First hand knowledge = best knowledge
- Help researchers stay in touch with real world
- Farmer questions / problems shape research plans & priorities
- Over time, build cadre of farmer cooperators
Elements of a Successful and Rewarding LOCAL Extension Program

- Adequate funding & support
  - Vehicle, fuel
  - Communications (phone, computer, mail)
  - Clerical, Technical help
  - Office, Lab facilities
  - Meeting facilities
  - Commodity Funding for applied research

- Local connection
  - Extension director: administrative chain of command
  - Local farm, business, community organizations
  - Agribusiness
    - Fertilizer & chemical dealers & research
    - Banks
  - Leverage extension delivery to farmers

- Teamwork & collaboration
  - Collaborative research & demonstration projects
  - Researchers as partners
  - Collegiality and communication with extension peers:
    - Collaborative problem solving
    - Allows specialization by advisors
    - Networking

- Professional growth
  - In-Service training
  - Professional society involvement
  - Sabbatic leave
  - Foreign travel

- Advancement
  - Peer Evaluation of research & extension accomplishments
  - Local evaluation of responsiveness
  - Research: Creating new knowledge
  - Outreach: Activity AND impact
  - Growing expertise, recognition, reputation

- Personal rewards
  - "My own boss": Shape own program within assignment and local connection
  - Need "public service" attitude, not in it for money
  - Responsibility & rewards of setting and achieving goals
  - Respected as EXPERT by clients and colleagues

- Local connection
  - With CLIENTS AND COLLEAGUES

- Local connection
  - Local connection
  - Local connection

- Professional growth
  - Local connection

- Advancement
  - Local connection

- Personal rewards
  - Local connection

- Advancement
  - Local connection
Elements of a Successful and Rewarding LOCAL Extension Program

- Academic / University connection
- Outreach AND applied research
- Adequate funding & support
- Local connection
- Teamwork & collaboration
- Professional growth
- Personal rewards
- Advancement