NEEDS ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

From Iowa State University
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/assess/
And
University of Arizona
http://extension.arizona.edu/evaluation/content/needs-assessment
Situational and Needs Analysis
The Foundation for Program Planning

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The Process

- One of the most important functions of Extension educators is to make accurate assessments of people in their county or region. The situational analysis is essential in determining the needs of individuals and communities.
Situational and Needs Analysis

- Situational **analysis critical** to identifying needs. There are always more situations that need attention than you can possibly address due to time and resource needs.

- We must **be proactive** about program priorities. The scope of the analysis should have a clear focus and purpose directed toward a specific subject, clientele, time, location or other related factors.

- **Get advice** from stakeholders who will help focus efforts on needs-based programs.
Situational Analysis - Some Factors to Consider

- County or community demographics
- The economic structure of the county and its individual communities.
- Topography and other physical characteristics of the county or area.
- Government, public, private community and other support systems available.
- Population characteristics
  - educational levels
  - cultural characteristics
  - life styles and standards of living
  - primary Occupations
  - Income levels
  - mobility and rates of in and out migration
  - services available
Maintain Objectivity in Situational Analysis

Be certain to include groups and individuals representative of the county's citizens or of the target audience.
Needs Assessment in Extension

- Use the BUGS formula to facilitate Extension Program Planning

- Business

- University

- Government

- Special Sector

- Extension Planning requires systematic and widely representative opinions, attitudes and input. The "old reliables" are just not enough
Assess Needs in Many Ways

- Advisory Councils
- Task Forces
- Voluntary Organizations
- Community Representatives

• Nominal Group Technique
• Brainstorming
• Focused Group Interviews
• Face-to-Face Surveys
• Mailed or Telephone Surveys
Needs Assessment is the process of determining what issues are important to clientele in the communities we serve.

Needs assessment techniques; existing data, surveys, focus groups, and working with advisory committees or key informants.

Needs Assessment is often paired with Priority Setting, a process for determining which issues are most important, and Strategic Planning to map out how issues can best be addressed.
**Important questions when planning needs assessment:**

- **Who** is the assessment attempting to inform, influence, or persuade?
- **What** purpose is the needs assessment intended to accomplish?
- **Whose** needs are to be assessed?
- **What questions** need to be asked? Do you already know the answers? Can you do anything to change the situation?
- **How** will the information be used?
- **What resources** are available to do needs assessments?
Five Needs Assessment Techniques

1. Existing Data Approach
2. Survey Approach
3. Key Leader Approach
4. Community Forum
5. Focus Group Interview
Already existing statistical data is used to obtain insights about the topic area. This approach uses descriptive statistics such as Census or Agriculture for background information.

http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/agriculture.html
# Table 855. Wheat—Acreage, Production, and Value by Leading States: 2007 to 2009

[50,999 represents 50,999,000. One bushel of wheat (bu.) = 60 pounds]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Acreage harvested (1,000 acres)</th>
<th>Yield per acre (bu.)</th>
<th>Production (mil. bu.)</th>
<th>Price per unit ($/bu.)</th>
<th>Value of production (mil. dol.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. ¹</td>
<td>50,999 55,685 49,868</td>
<td>40.2 44.9 44.4</td>
<td>2,051 2,500 2,216</td>
<td>6.48 6.80 4.85</td>
<td>13,289 16,568 10,626</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>8,600 8,900 8,800</td>
<td>33.0 40.0 42.0</td>
<td>284 356 370</td>
<td>5.93 7.15 4.85</td>
<td>1,683 2,545 1,793</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>8,405 8,640 8,415</td>
<td>35.6 36.0 44.8</td>
<td>299 311 377</td>
<td>7.74 7.20 4.85</td>
<td>2,340 2,299 1,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>5,065 5,470 5,305</td>
<td>29.6 30.1 33.3</td>
<td>150 165 177</td>
<td>7.14 6.55 5.15</td>
<td>1,076 1,091 906</td>
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<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>3,500 4,500 3,500</td>
<td>28.0 37.0 22.0</td>
<td>98 167 77</td>
<td>6.22 6.50 4.80</td>
<td>610 1,082 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3,327 3,420 3,009</td>
<td>43.1 50.5 42.9</td>
<td>144 173 129</td>
<td>6.42 6.80 5.10</td>
<td>899 1,175 662</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>2,369 1,936 2,479</td>
<td>39.2 30.8 40.6</td>
<td>93 60 101</td>
<td>6.01 6.50 4.50</td>
<td>561 389 452</td>
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<tr>
<td>TX</td>
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<td>37.0 30.0 25.0</td>
<td>141 99 61</td>
<td>6.40 7.45 5.25</td>
<td>900 738 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2,137 2,225 2,225</td>
<td>58.7 52.8 55.3</td>
<td>125 118 123</td>
<td>7.58 6.40 4.80</td>
<td>949 755 585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Includes other states, not shown separately.

**Survey Approach**

**USDA Survey on renewable energy.pdf**

### SECTION 2  WIND TURBINES

1. Did this operation **own** any wind turbines that generated electricity during 2009? **Exclude** turbines on this operation under a wind rights lease agreement.
   - [ ] Yes – Complete this section  
   - [ ] No – Go to SECTION 3

2. How many wind turbines were owned and used on this operation in 2009?  

   a. What was the rated generating capacity of all turbines reported in question 2?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average per Turbine (Kilowatt hr)</th>
<th>Total for All Turbines (Kilowatt hr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>221</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
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3. When were the wind turbines reported in question 2 installed?
   a. prior to year 2000?
   b. years 2000 – 2004?
   c. years 2005 – 2009?

4. What was the total cost (the initial or start-up investment) for all wind turbines reported in question 2? Include outside funding.
   a. Of this total cost, how much was received from outside funding? Include federal, state, local, and private funding. Exclude loans.

SECTION 3  SOLAR PANELS

1. Did this operation own any photovoltaic or thermal solar panels in 2009?
   1  Yes – Continue
   3  No – Go to question 6 below

2. Were any of these solar panels photovoltaic? Include solar panels used to generate electricity to power buildings, pump water, etc.
   1  Yes – Continue
   3  No – Go to question 3

   a. What was the total maximum power rating of these photovoltaic solar panels?

3. Were any thermal solar panels used for heating buildings or water on this operation in 2009?
   1  Yes
   3  No
Focus group interviewing helps provide insight on a particular issue or issues. Focus groups as a data collection tool can provide a rich and meaningful context for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a focus issue. It is a way that participants’ responses can be explored in a real-time, dynamics of within group behaviors can be observed and put into perspective, and responses can be clarified. Focus groups afford participants an opportunity to be involved in the design and the decision-making process of an issue.
A needs assessment answers the question; Is there an educational program that can be designed to fulfill the needs of my clients?