

# The NDSU Extension Service

## Who We Are and What We Do

**An internal document to reaffirm the vision of the NDSU Extension Service**

*July 2009*

The North Dakota State University Extension Service exists to serve the people of North Dakota. The Cooperative Extension System was established in 1914 to address, through education, critical needs of the public in the areas of agriculture, communities, families and youth. The work of the Extension Service continues to be extremely important to producers, families, community leaders and young people. Extension maintains a unique relationship among federal, state and county constituents. Local input and funding into programs, combined with support and funding from state and federal partners, enables the Extension Service to truly meet the needs of people.

The NDSU Extension Service is faced with challenges and opportunities in funding, staffing, marketing and program development. This paper provides a general overview of the organization and its vision for the future.

<b>OUR PURPOSE</b>	To create learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities.
<b>PROGRAMS</b>	<p>The primary role of the NDSU Extension Service is to partner with individuals and groups to deliver educational programs to North Dakotans. Programs led by the county, area or state staff are either planned or responsive. In all cases, the programs contain a degree of both content and process. The work of Extension can be categorized as service, facilitation, content transmission and transformational education. Transformational education involves the highest degree of both content and process and, typically, provides the strongest outcome and impact. A transformational education program involves many components. It's not a one-shot meeting or approach to a topic. A transformational program requires several planned steps including: identifying needs, collaborating and/or partnering with other agencies, determining objectives or learner outcomes, choosing delivery methods, determining the impacts made by the program and reporting the results. Most programs include large and small group meetings, mass media, newsletters, individual consultation with clients, cooperation with other agencies and groups, and various applications of technology. While service, facilitation and content transmission continue to be important, the trend is for a stronger focus on transformational education programming.</p> <p>The Extension staff is also becoming more involved in public issues. In these situations, the role of the Extension staff is to provide accurate information about all sides of issues and lead communities through a process toward resolution. This work is not easy as communities are often very polarized on issues. Extension staff members need to understand the principles and values</p>

of delivering public issues education so they can assist citizens in determining appropriate and effective strategies for public decision-making. Extension staff members are not to make decisions for the public.

**Planned Programs.** Planned programs are initiated for several reasons: stakeholders express needs that must be addressed; specialists and researchers identify emerging issues they believe should be discussed with citizens; other states or our federal partner may identify an issue for one part of the country that later becomes an issue in North Dakota; or an agent may observe a situation that calls for him/her to design and deliver a program that addresses the situation at the local level.

Program priorities are also identified through the biennial budget-building process led by the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE).

Although planned programs can begin at any time during the year, the Extension Service has an ongoing program planning process that centers around eight program planning areas. All eight program areas are updated annually. A conceptual framework called "the logic model" is used to guide this process. Extension educators<sup>1</sup> also use the logic model to guide their individual annual plans-of-work.

There are program components within each program area. While individual program components served as a general guide for county, multicounty and state program planning in the past, the future trend is for each program component to have a highly active team of Extension educators responsible for program development and delivery for the entire state. Program components can also be described as communities of interest because of the shared interests of the team members. Additional programming occurs around emerging issues that may have a nationwide or state focus, such as energy.

The eight program planning teams are:

- Community, Economic Development and Leadership
- Competitiveness and Profitability of Animal Systems
- Cropping Systems in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Farm and Family Economics
- 4-H Youth Development
- Human Development and Family Science
- Natural Resources and Environmental Management
- Nutrition, Food Safety and Health

All eight program areas continue to be important and require on-going resource support. However, emerging trends indicate a need to enhance resource support to address issues and opportunities that lie within the "community, economic development and leadership" and "natural resources

	<p>and environmental management" program areas. Extension has always played a vital role in community economic development. This is becoming increasingly important as many North Dakota rural communities are in serious overall decline with shrinking populations and lagging economies. The NDSU Extension Service continues to have a vital role in helping local leaders define and pursue economic opportunities, and creating an environment that fosters entrepreneurship. The Rural Leadership North Dakota program has helped in this area. Increasing needs around "natural resource management" are also apparent as land owners and producers deal with environmental issues and look to additional economic enterprises that can be supported by the natural resource base or current assets on their farm or ranch.</p> <p><b>Responsive Programs.</b> Responsive programs are usually not planned in advance and are designed to address an urgent, negative situation that has occurred. Examples include excessive rain, hail, tornados, floods, droughts, serious financial problems, child abductions, food borne illnesses, etc. These programs require especially prompt attention, and the NDSU Extension Service has an excellent track record in quickly and effectively addressing these issues by applying the latest land-grant research to the situation. Urgent situations require the organization to be ready for action with little preparation time.</p> <p><sup>1</sup>This term applies to extension agents, area and state specialists, and nutrition education agents and assistants.</p>
<p><b>PROGRAM DELIVERY</b></p>	<p>Finding the most appropriate ways to deliver programs is as important as developing them. Extension programs must be delivered to targeted audiences in a variety of formats that meet their learning styles and schedules. Citizens are lifelong learners who want educational information at a time and by a means that is best for them: anytime anywhere learning. Some like educational meetings while others prefer to access information from computers or mobile devices. As a result, each program must be made available to people in multiple formats, and the staff must be trained to use a variety of approaches. Offices are equipped to reach the technologically proficient learner.</p> <p>Extension is part of a highly competitive information system, and citizens expect our programs and materials to be of high quality.</p> <p>NDSU Extension Service educators cooperate with colleagues across the country to develop collaborative programming through eXtension and utilize eXtension resources as they develop programs.</p> <p>Training and technical support on program delivery continues to be important to Extension educators and is provided by the NDSU Agriculture Communication department. There is a continued need for training in technology, writing, working with the media and curriculum development.</p>
<p><b>CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT</b></p>	<p>Today's political, social and economic conditions call for strong volunteer advisory groups to extend the mission of Extension education. They expand</p>

	<p>Extension’s presence in the community plus represent Extension needs to governing bodies and decision-makers at all levels.</p> <p>North Dakota county commissioners are the elected officials who work directly with Extension on county staffing and other organizational matters. SBARE provides strategic guidance for both NDSU research and Extension. The importance of having advisory groups and involving citizens in identifying community needs and mobilizing resources to address those needs cannot be overemphasized.</p>
<p><b>STAFFING</b></p>	<p>A key strength of the NDSU Extension Service is its strong mix of county, area and state staff. Staff members are located at county offices, Research Extension Centers and other area offices, on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, and on the NDSU campus at Fargo.</p> <p><b>County Staff.</b> County staff members are located in 52 county offices and at the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. They provide a grass-roots connection with North Dakotans and a professional network that reaches into virtually every community across the state. This network is the reason why many groups and agencies often want to partner with Extension on program delivery.</p> <p>The NDSU Extension Service is committed to having a full-time Extension presence in every county as long as that is what the county wants and they provide financial support. County Extension agents are currently funded on a 50/50 basis between the NDSU Extension Service and county government.</p> <p>The 52 county Extension offices are grouped into ten multicounty program units for primarily administrative and communication purposes.</p> <p>Professional development opportunities with the NDSU Extension Service are developed around five identified basic competencies that are important to be successful in Extension work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject Matter</li> <li>- Program Development and Educational Design</li> <li>- Information and Education Technology</li> <li>- Communications</li> <li>- Personal and Organizational Management</li> </ul> <p>Under subject matter competency areas, Extension agents plan, deliver, teach and market programs in their communities of interest or multicounty programs.</p> <p>Also located in county offices and Fort Berthold are nutrition educators who deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Family Nutrition Program (FNP). These two programs are financed with federal dollars through USDA and in-kind local match contributions.</p> <p><b>Area Staff.</b> Area staff are located at Research Extension Centers across the</p>

	<p>state and in area and county offices. Their purpose is to provide a higher level of knowledge and skill to the programs developed by county staff, and to extend the expertise of specialists at NDSU.</p> <p><b>State Staff.</b> Extension specialists, some of whom have academic rank, are located on the NDSU campus and other strategic locations across the state. Some have joint appointments with the N.D. Agricultural Experiment Station and/or the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources, or the College of Human Development and Education or are affiliated with an Extension Service from another state. Their purpose is to conduct research, analyze and disseminate research results, and provide subject-matter expertise for Extension programs.</p> <p><b>Support Staff.</b> All of the above positions within the Extension Service are greatly enhanced by an effective group of support staff. The support staff is usually the first point of contact to NDSU for office callers and visitors. They maintain coordinated office environments and help in the distribution of high-quality materials to the public. Technical staff help prepare and deliver educational materials through print, audio, video, graphic and computer technology.</p>
<p><b>FUNDING</b></p>	<p>Funding for the NDSU Extension Service is a blend of federal, state, county, and grants and contracts dollars. Today, 15% of the budget is comprised of federal Smith-Lever funds, 39% is obtained from the state general fund, 18% comes from county government, and 28% is from grants, contracts and partnerships.</p> <p>New budgets are built with counties each year with the fiscal year beginning January 1. State biennial budgets, which are guided by the SBARE and the State Board of Higher Education and approved by the legislature and Governor, operate on a July 1 fiscal year. The federal fiscal year starts October 1, and the federal budget is contingent upon our federal plan of work, funding proposals and accomplishment reports.</p> <p>To remain positioned to address future issues, the NDSU Extension Service must continue to grow funding by aggressively seeking new grant funds, finding new funding partners, generating revenue and finding new ways to become even more efficient.</p>
<p><b>MARKETING</b></p>	<p>The 2008 Extension Brand Value Study found that 43% of the North Dakotans surveyed had used Extension and 28% had in the last 12 months. While these are impressive numbers, they also mean 57% have never used Extension and 72% haven't in the past year. However, our audiences may not always realize that the programs or information is from Extension. Parenting Pipeline newsletters and the Master Gardener program are two examples.</p> <p>The NDSU Extension Service must continue to market itself, including the connection with NDSU. An organizational marketing plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDSU Extension Service logo on all printed and Web materials, in staff PowerPoint presentations and at offices</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booths and displays at events</li> <li>• A quarterly advertisement in all official county newspapers</li> <li>• News releases that market in addition to educate</li> <li>• Reminders to staff about wearing nametags and possibly shirts or hats that identify them with NDSU</li> <li>• Suggestions for office appearance</li> <li>• Additional information on the Web</li> </ul> <p>Marketing must be an ongoing effort of all Extension faculty and staff.</p>
<p><b>BROADER MISSION</b></p>	<p>The official purpose of the NDSU Extension Service is “to create learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities.” As issues facing the people of North Dakota become increasingly complex, the role of the Extension Service is to continue to meet the needs of the people as they adapt to this changing environment. This means putting into user-friendly form a high amount of credible research data for a high number of people with individual issues and needs. This means addressing problems holistically with producers, business-people, families, individuals, youth and communities. And it means building on our traditions, planning and working within today’s situations, and looking toward the future with positive alternatives.</p>

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