



Agricultural News

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Advisory Council upbeat despite MES budget situation

A revitalized, hardworking Extension Agriculture Advisory Council has developed a marketing and public relations strategy for extension agriculture. The council also recommended future program directions and ideas for dealing with a downsized MES staff situation during their January 21-22 meeting in the Twin Cities.

Members also were updated on the budget situation, staff reductions, this year's legislative request and legislative agenda related to agriculture, international extension agricultural programs, the international agricultural trade situation, and the Dairy Initiatives Program.

...the Dairy Initiatives program should be used as a model...

Advisory council members gave the Dairy Initiatives Program numerous compliments. Several members stated emphatically that the program area should use this program as a model for development of similar, integrated "curricular" programs in partnership with producer groups and

agribusiness to address current needs in other segments of Minnesota's agricultural industry. The leadership development, applied research, and demonstration farm aspects of the Dairy Initiative Program especially drew questions, comments, and praise.

...council membership was revised and restructured...

The Agriculture Advisory Council normally meets one or more times each year to identify Minnesota's agricultural education needs, discuss current issues, and review proposed and continuing directions and specific programs. Originally called "The Council of 100," council membership was revised this year and re-structured with staggered terms of one, two, or three years to provide for continuity, as well as the addition of new voices representing the broad spectrum of Minnesota agriculture.

The council currently has 58 members with representation from major farm organizations and com-

modity groups, USDA and state agencies, agribusinesses, and agricultural lenders and other professionals, as well as individual producers of various commodities representing the geographic areas of the state.

Many producer representatives have served on county extension or advisory committees and were recommended by agents for state advisory council membership.

Eleven members with one-year terms are university faculty and staff, including several county and area agents, state extension faculty, department heads, an agricultural experiment station superintendent, and the dean of the College of Agriculture.

(A list of current members and terms is on the insert in this issue of *Agricultural News*. Please keep it for future reference.)

When asked what they thought should be MES' educational priorities for the next three to five years, advisory council discussion groups said the top priorities were for:

"Extension to be the facilitator/

Continued on page 2

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Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

Campus Profile

Dick Goodrich says recognition for Dairy Initiatives programs should go to “people doing the work—agents, specialists, department people, farmers and core group members.”

Goodrich, head of the University’s Department of Animal Science, is statewide coordinator for the Dairy Initiatives program.

“Demonstration farms in Minnesota’s dairy counties have nearly all been identified. In many cases, we had many more volunteers for the demonstration farms than we could handle. One county had 15 farmers volunteer, and we could handle only three or four,” he says.

Minnesota’s Dairy Initiatives program, designed to jump start the state’s dairy industry, initially focused on county programs. County extension agents held a series of meetings throughout the state with dairy producers and local ag professionals



who work with farmers. The topic: idea sharing on how to cope with low milk prices.

“These meetings went over

very well. The next step was establishing a core group of dairy professionals in each county to work with the 14 specialized dairy county agents, each of whom is responsible for a cluster of counties.”

The county core groups include credit people, veterinarians, feed and equipment dealers, milk processors and dairy organizations.

“The key to this part of Dairy

Initiatives is the county-based demonstration farms,” Goodrich says. Core groups will work with demonstration farm families to establish goals, identify and implement areas for improvement, and do follow-up work.

Although the demonstration farm program is economics-driven, Goodrich says disciplines such as family social science are important. “In some cases these professionals will be brought in to help establish family and personal goals,” he emphasizes.

“This is a team effort—professionals from many disciplines working with farm families to solve problems. We hope to show that economic conditions and family life can be improved on individual farms when people get together and cooperate as a team.

“It’s kind of exciting.”

Advisory Council/Continued from page 1

coordinator of public policy forums to bring various agriculture interests together to seek commonality of interests.”

“More programs similar to the Dairy Initiatives for each agricultural production area” (first priority from two groups).

“Increased leadership development for a unified agriculture.”

“Recruiting and retaining people

in farming and agriculture and providing training to current and prospective producers, including rural/urban exchanges.”

“Continuing to provide research-based education, but on a regionalized basis (break down county lines, use agent specialization to greater advantage).”

And, “making information services more user friendly.”

In terms of ideas for things to do differently or not at all, council members suggested:

- **Looking** for and eliminating duplication of effort with industry and other state and county agencies.
- **Enhancing** the “multiplier effect” with increased networking and partnering with agribusiness and producer groups.
- **Using** a regional emphasis and exploring joint powers arrange-

ments to lessen agent time spent responding to the county political structure.

- **Developing** a “retired peace corps” of agriculture professionals to volunteer their time to assist agents.
- **And, refusing** to accept new, externally imposed programs unless they’re adequately funded.

Council members spoke very favorably about increased international programming and international opportunities, provided they, too, were adequately funded. Several members also said MES should emphasize high priority quality efforts and seek greater visibility for our international and other programs, which in turn would help attract additional funds and staff.

In terms of marketing for greater visibility, council members recom-

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ADVISORY COUNCIL to the MES AGRICULTURE PROGRAM AREA

Membership—January 1992

One-Year

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Russ Bjorhus	Farmers Home Admin.	St. Paul	612-290-3842
David Hest	"The Farmer" magazine	Minneapolis	612-851-4651
Roger Baer	Producer	Lewiston	507-523-3194
Dave Kettering	Farm Credit Services	St. Paul	612-282-8456
Pat Henderson	American Oat Association	Minneapolis	612-542-9817
John Nelson	MN Corn Growers	Garvin	507-763-3675
Tom Sammon	Dairy Herd Improvement	Faribault	507-334-4592
Vern Ingvalson	MN Farm Bureau	St. Paul	612-739-7200
Gary Weness	MN Forage and Grassland	Minneapolis	612-481-2202
Roger Dziengel	Producer	Kennedy	218-674-4466
LaVonne Nicolai	Banker	Farmington	612-463-8726
Clifford Bussler	MN Pork Producers	Brownston	612-328-5377
Jim Kastanek	Total Ag Services	Albany	612-845-4795

Two-Year

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Curtis Pietz	Producer	Lakefield	507-662-6309
Ronald Harnack	Bd-Water/Soil Resources	St. Paul	612-296-0878
Alan Brutlag	Producer	Wendell	218-458-2114
Carmen Fernholz	Organic Growers	St. Paul	612-598-3010
Lyle Kuhlmann	Byron Elevator	Byron	507-775-2901
Ron Kroese	Land Stewardship Project	Marine	612-433-2770
Truman Jeffers	MN Bankers Association	New Brighton	612-338-7851
Roger Mussetter	Soil Conservation Service	St. Paul	612-290-3677
Ronald Ulven	Banker	Hawley	218-483-3361
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(Over)

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Allen Gerber	MN Assoc of Cooperatives	St. Paul	612-228-0213
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Sherwood Peterson	Producer	Baker	218-789-7378
Keith Finney	Producer	Hallock	218-843-3624
Frank Skaff	Minnesota Grown	Finlayson	612-233-6394
Randall Aarestad	Producer	Halstad	218-456-2162
Gary Blahosky	State of Minnesota	St. Paul	
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Farmers' direct marketing confab draws over 500

Over 500 direct marketers from throughout the U.S. and Canada attended the 7th National Farmers' Direct Marketing Association annual conference Jan. 30-Feb. 1 in St. Paul.

Specialty "tracks" on the program were farmers' markets, management, marketing education, niche marketing, food service-entertainment, marketing strategies for roadside PYO, developing a direct marketing image, and financing.

Some "traditional" corn and soybean producers interested in getting into direct marketing participated in the pre-conference tour, says Don Olson, agriculture program leader. "Some 'mainstream' farmers are learning about direct marketing and how direct marketers 'think' differently," he says.

Conference keynoter was Kelso L. Wessel, agricultural economist and farmer from Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. He spoke on "Focusing Your Marketing in the 90s," and told the marketers to think of their customers with a "Total Living Concern" attitude.

(More on the conference in our next issue).

Advisory/Cont. from p. 2

mended that county and cluster teams work with clients and extension committees to develop plans to market programs, using surveys and focus groups to determine and prioritize client needs.

They thought that involving committees and clients would help agents identify the top current needs to be addressed and extension committees could help them reduce their work loads by communicating and legitimizing the decisions to legislators and others in their communities.

—Marilyn Grantham

Planning Quality Extension Programs

"Gleanings" from the 1991 National Adult Education Conference

Another conference session of interest to extension educators focused on "Effective Teaching Strategies for Motivating Adults." The session was presented by Donna Brandeis LaGanga, national accounts manager, South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ms. LaGanga reviewed the basic principles of adult teaching from Malcolm Knowles' book, *The Making of an Adult Educator*, creating a win-win learning environment, and incentives that motivate adult learners.

According to Lorge ("Effective Methods in Adult Education," North Carolina State University), adult learners want to save time, money, work, discomfort, worry, doubt, risk, and personal embarrassment.

Therefore, incentives for adult learners participating in extension programs include gaining time, money, security in old age, business and social advancement, pride of accomplishment, health, leisure, comfort, increased enjoyment, self-confidence, personal prestige, praise from others, and popularity.

LaGanga also noted that in general adults want to be up to date, "first" in things, creative, efficient, social, hospitable, influential over others, and recognized as authorities. In addition, she indicated that adults want to emulate the admirable, improve themselves, satisfy their curiosity, express themselves, and resist domination by others.

(Knowing specifically what incentives are motivating a target audience (which can be determined by surveys, focus groups, or gathered informal from conversations with representative group members) provides key phrases for marketing program activities or events in brochures, flyers, news columns, and radio programs.)

LaGanga's key points on developing win-win learning environments included:

- (1) Providing "security" by constantly encouraging learners and being positive and empathetic to their needs and concerns.
- (2) Finding out where your learners are coming from and where they're going (academic and experiential background, aptitudes and dreams, short-range plans/long-range goals).
- (3) Letting learners know where you're going and inviting them along for the ride (by outlining your objectives at the beginning of the session or presentation, discussing evaluation plans, providing for "real" feedback).
- (4) Being sensitive to shifts and changes needed as program activities happen.
- (5) Using appropriate humor (jokes or anecdotes that are relate to the topic, are genuinely funny; avoid "putting down" any racial/ethnic groups or a gender).

Some of Knowles' adult teaching principles include creating a friendly and informal climate for learning, favorable physical conditions, active learner participation, relating the learning to adult experiences and enabling learners to learn at their own pace, to be aware of their progress, and to have a sense of accomplishment.

Adult teachers can achieve these principles by understanding adults and their need for growth, knowing their subject matter, being enthusiastic about the topic and their teaching, keeping their teaching plans flexible, and varying instructional methods.

Marilyn Grantham



Agent Profile

"I've heard nothing but good things from local people involved in the Dairy Initiatives program," says **Harmon Wilts**, agriculture agent in Kandiyohi County.

Wilts is coordinating Dairy Initiatives programs in six west central Minnesota counties. "Our cluster has established core groups in our heaviest dairy counties—McLeod, Meeker and Kandiyohi counties. There are 10 to 17 people in each core group," he says.

Core group people include farmers, veterinarians, creditors, feed and equipment dealers, Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) and Holstein association members and Soil Conservation Service (SCS) professionals.

"In each county we're picking one demonstration farm to work with. By

March 15, my goal is to have financial analyses done on all three farms," he says.

"We'll be helping farmers look at the 'whole farm' picture," he emphasizes. Included in the financial analysis will be a compilation and analysis of records on financial and money management, taxes, DHI, and management.

"At that point core group representatives will go to the farm and look at the farming operation; then sit down with the entire core group committee to analyze strengths and opportunities for improvement.

We'll offer suggestions for improvement. This could include 10 to 20 items, but we'll focus on only a few with potential for major impact," Wilts says.

Demonstration farms and core group people have a two-year commitment. "We're still in the process of deciding how many times we'll ask core group members to go back and visit the farm," he adds.

"We're going to put one individual in charge of certain areas. For example, veterinarians will consult on the herd's mastitis control program and feed dealers on the nutrition program. We're hoping these people can visit the farm monthly, then meet with the core group quarterly to share information."

As you'd guess, Harmon Wilts is a busy man. "Many Dairy Initiatives agents are the only livestock agents in their clusters. We can't forget about swine and beef producers," he concludes.

A successful environmental agriculture program

Some 13 county extension agents from Cluster 16 (Freeborn, Mower, Steele and Rice counties) along with numerous area and state extension specialists have conducted a "Successful Environmental Agriculture Program."

"This is a good example of university research and demonstrations at the local level where farm producers can see and use that research on their own farms," says Rod Hamer, Rice County agriculture extension agent.

A summary report of their demonstration plot and youth field day activities is available from the five county offices.

"Farmers themselves are no less aware (than consumers) of the importance of a healthy and sustainable environment in their daily lives," their report says.



Fritz Breitenbach, area crop pest management agent, talks about pest management and the environment at a youth field day.