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Excellence in Programming

1987-88 Annual Report
Minnesota Extension Service
University of Minnesota

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Director's Report

The measure of an organization is the excellence of its product and the effects of the product on its clientele. In this report you'll find samples of educational programs sponsored by the Minnesota Extension Service (MES) which enhanced the lives—and often the pocketbooks—of Minnesotans. Thus, the title of this annual report, *Excellence in Programming*.

To support excellence in programming, MES continued to reorganize staff into multi-county clusters. Agents with specialized knowledge, working across county boundaries, are providing those counties in the clusters with resources they previously hadn't enjoyed.

As part of the transition to county clustering and agent specialization, agents engaged in training which enabled them to anticipate

and respond to issues in their communities.

Agents were supported in their programming efforts by extension specialists. These faculty relayed the latest research to agents and the public using publications, radio, video, software, seminars, and demonstrations. They also conducted applied research and agent training.

I hope you'll note how our agents and specialists have responded to people and the issues affecting them—people on farms, in towns and cities; people in their families, their businesses, and their communities.

If the measure of an organization is through excellence in programming, I'm pleased to say that the Minnesota Extension Service measures up very well indeed.

Sincerely,
Patrick J. Borich
Dean and Director
Minnesota Extension Service



Excellence in Programming



Economic Development

Extension strives to help farmers, business leaders and other entrepreneurs apply research-based knowledge to adapt to the demands and opportunities of our technological age.

Farm Credit Mediation. Minnesota's farm credit mediation program has served as a model for other states and several foreign countries. Extension has trained more than 700 mediators and since the program began in 1986, it has heard more than 6,000 cases between farmers and their lenders. In addition, FINPACK, the computerized financial management tool, has been used some 8,000 times to help farmers assess their financial operations.

"Mediation offers a forum for reason and restraint when emotions are high and tension is in the air...It is the most successful and most widely used program in the nation."

—Governor Rudy Perpich

Managing Our Farm Family Future (MOFFF). Born out of the farm financial crisis of recent years, MOFFF works with those farm families who have survived but are faced with the need to learn new business techniques to

thrive. More than 80 county and area staff in 50 counties have worked with some 250 families who intend to stay in farming but can benefit from help with record-keeping, financial management, budgeting, time management and family relationships.

"MOFFF is a timely program that addresses the needs of farm families with good and practical information."

—MOFFF workshop participant

"It fills an educational gap between past education and what farm managers and their families need to know and master to achieve business and family living success."

—MOFFF workshop participant

Tourism. Tourism is one of the state's fastest growing industries and one that depends heavily on the wise use of our natural resources. In addition to many publications, seminars, tours and newsletters for resort owners, tourism-based business operators and others in the hospitality industry, a satellite-linked teleconference beamed to 22 sites in the state was highly successful this year. More than 1,000 participants attended during National Tourism Week.

Excellence in Programming

Economic Development

Family-Based Business. Training in management, marketing, customer relations, taxes and finance were offered in county programs throughout the state for entrepreneurs who wanted to run home- and family-based businesses. Training also focused on the effects of such businesses on family relationships.

"I had never really thought about how the family and business need to be in partnership with one another."

—Aitkin County participant

Youth Entrepreneurial Seminar (YES). This 4-H program, an educational process for 9- to 14-year-olds, helps them explore the possibilities of marketing their skills, talents and hobbies and transforming them into business opportunities. As a result of this program, participants started 21 businesses and that number continues to grow.

"I came to the YES program because I told my mom I was bored. I'm not bored any more because I'm making money."

—YES participant

Dairy Pro. Formerly known as "Initiatives in Dairying," this program aims at developing a more profitable and survivable dairy

farming industry. Extension staff, dairy operators, and agribusinesses cooperate to educate participants on herd health and management, recordkeeping, forage management and new technology. Despite falling numbers of dairy cattle in Minnesota, milk production showed an increase in 1987 and the state retains its place behind only Wisconsin, California and New York for milk production.

Dairy Expert Systems. Dairy operators face countless decisions that can mean the difference between profitability and loss for their operations. By tapping the expertise of dairy authorities and making that knowledge available via microcomputer, such systems can help farmers diagnose diseases, make decisions on herd management, set production goals and compare their herd profiles with other successful operators.

"This technology can open a door of opportunity to capture the competence of experts ... and extend expertise independent of the expert's location and availability for problem solving and education."

—Extension specialist



Excellence in Programming



Economic Development

PigCHAMP and DairyCHAMP. These two computer programs are being used across the state to help livestock producers make the management decisions that will determine how profitably they operate. By entering data from their herds, farmers get quick feedback on how they are doing and are alerted to any potential problems that could threaten their operations.

"PigChamp energizes people. It motivates them to do the job they always knew how to do. Producers look forward to getting the weekly report to see how they've done."

—*Extension veterinarian*

FINPACK. This set of farm management computer programs can boast users in 45 states as well as every Minnesota county extension office. The highly successful computer software program has aided thousands of Minnesota farmers to examine their profitability and make plans for the future. So successful and widely used are the

FINPACK programs that the University's Center for Farm Financial Management, which supports and markets FINPACK, was awarded a coveted U.S. Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award in 1988.

"Since using FINPACK our farm's cash flow is a lot better and still improving. Every farmer should use it, especially if you are expanding."

—*Minnesota farmer*

Forage Management. Extension's mobile forage testing van travels to dozens of hay auctions each spring and summer. Within minutes the Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy equipment in the van can evaluate hay samples. By knowing the nutritional analysis of the forage, both buyers and sellers can better determine price and how to use the forage in animal feeding programs. On one farm alone, feed changes as a result of the forage testing program increased milk production by nearly 500 pounds per cow per year.



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Environment and Natural Resources

Balancing economic activity with wise use of natural resources has long been a priority with MES. Fresh water is one of the state's most precious resources and it is an extension priority. In addition, wide-ranging programs have been started on soil conservation, fish and wildlife, land use, recreation and tourism, and waste disposal. The recently established Cold Climate Housing Information Center offers seminars and other forms of material on energy efficiency to homeowners, building contractors and building code regulators. **Water Quality.** This high priority extension program is offering educational materials and workshops concentrating on safe drinking water, waste management, and agricultural practices affecting groundwater. Water quality programs have been undertaken in more than 50 counties. These have included public awareness campaigns, well capping demonstrations and cooperative efforts with branch stations of the Agricultural Experiment Station.

Tillage Research and Demonstration Plots in Southeastern Minnesota. Fields worked by cooperating farmers provided research opportunities for University scientists as they gathered data about the effects of

tillage practices on soil conservation, water quality, and yield. More than 150 farmers attended tillage demonstration days to observe the experimental plots.

Faribault, Martin and Watonwan Water Project. On their own initiative, these three south central Minnesota counties have undertaken a water quality project, monitoring local wells for bacterial and agricultural contamination. In addition to the well testing, farmers have attended educational sessions outlining land use and proper handling of agricultural chemicals and animal wastes.

"I think that our county people attending the educational meetings really did us a service. In the future something's going to have to be done with all the chemicals and things that are being put in the soil."

—County Extension Committee Chair

Soils Management Correspondence Course. Several versions of this correspondence course were developed for different soil types in southeastern Minnesota. Approximately 550 people in the southern third of the state have completed the course which stresses the relationship of soil management, conservation, and groundwater quality.



Excellence in Programming



Environment and Natural Resources

The Economics of Tillage Practices and Nitrogen Application. Extension scientists and economists used demonstration plots to determine the effects of reduced tillage practices on farm profitability. Other scientists looked at different rates of nitrogen application on diverse soil types to see their effects on yields. The results will appear in extension publications encouraging farmers to select agricultural practices that are profitable as well as environmentally sound.

Solid Waste: I Can Make a Difference. With the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County has produced three slide tape sets on solid waste management and steps that consumers and municipalities can take to reduce and manage waste. Workshops and resource packets for more than 70 governmental officials and other leaders in the Twin Cities area have underscored the importance of waste reduction, recycling, composting and wise use of scarce landfill space.

"Individual lifestyles and decisions are more important (to this issue) than governmental action. I realize that you can't object to landfills and incinerators if you don't learn to recycle."

—County Waste Commission
Member

Aquaculture. Minnesota has the potential for new fish farming ventures. In the southern part of the state, spring water is ideal for salmon and trout hatcheries. Northern mine pits and central Minnesota lakes and ponds could be used for other species. Extension aquaculture experts are working with farmers and other potential entrepreneurs to educate them on the risks of such aquatic ventures, which require unpolluted water.

"Aquaculture will provide farmers with added incentive to safeguard surface and groundwater. They will be more likely to manage their water supply so it will be clean and abundant if they see it as a resource that could contribute to their farms' profit."

—Extension aquaculture specialist

Forest Products Industry Expo '87. More than 4,400 people, mainly sawmillers and foresters, attended a two-day forest products industry exposition in Duluth in September 1987. In addition to contributing nearly \$500,000 to that city's economy, participants heard encouraging news about their industry's viability and importance in rebuilding rural communities, many of which have been hard hit by the downturn in farming and mining.

Excellence in Programming

Human Development

The pace of change in our society stresses family relationships. It puts new demands on families, new challenges for youth and their parents, and poses new concerns for the well-being of the elderly.

Alcohol decisions for young people. More than 3,500 elementary, secondary and college students and parents from 30 counties participated in this 4-H program, which encourages young people to make safe decisions about drinking and driving. Specially trained, older teens offer programs on coping with peer pressure and alcohol use and abuse for younger students and their parents.

"I think it's so good for the kids to hear that message about drinking and driving from someone other than their teachers. These kids come in (and they're popular kids)... and they are really good role models. When young kids hear it from them, the message is real."

—School principal

Quality of life for shift workers and their families. In cooperation with local industry, a pilot program for shift workers and their families was designed for Itasca county. Participants learned about answers to stresses they had identified—sleep disorders, digestive and nutritional problems,

and relationship problems within the family and the larger community.

Tackling Tough Stuff. This 4-H curriculum is a tool for junior and senior high school teachers and 4-H leaders to use with adolescents experiencing stress and depression, some of them to the point of attempting suicide. Coming out of the highly successful Teens in Distress program for educators and others dealing with adolescents, Tackling Tough Stuff materials are helping thousands of young people deal with the stresses of growing up in our fast-paced society.

Daycare provider training. More than half of Minnesota's preschoolers have parents who are employed. To help make these children's hours in daycare more enjoyable and productive and to help train and support the women and men doing daycare work, extension has offered daycare provider workshops throughout the state. A popular extension-produced newsletter reaches about 11,000 daycare providers each month.

"We need to be able to take care of ourselves fairly in order to continue taking care of the children properly. The newsletter helps. I learn something new every time."

—Daycare provider



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Community Leadership

Community leaders will never be more important than in the complex society of tomorrow. Extension is committed to helping develop those community leadership skills in tomorrow's leaders. Among the efforts underway are those aimed at helping young people form peer support groups and establish links with others who can add meaning and direction to their lives. Tapping the potential leadership abilities and public policy insights of volunteers is another way to help groom community leaders.

Project Future. This high priority extension program is designed to help get communities involved in analyzing their vitality, looking at prospects for the future, and taking action to secure that future. This is being done by expanding the leadership base within the community and providing a framework for looking at possible future courses and the people and organizations that can help bring about desirable changes. The Minnesota cities of Silver Bay, Ellendale, and Stephen along with Jackson and Sibley counties are the pilot participants in Project Future.

"We're glad it's (Project Future) more than another economic development program."

—Ellendale business owner

Volunteer Empowerment. Volunteers in 4-H clubs represent a great pool of potential leaders so this project was designed to enhance their skills for the benefit of not only 4-H but also many other community and youth-oriented activities. To date, 600 4-H volunteers participating in the program have each attended 14 hours of training. More than one-third of the state's counties are offering this leadership development option to their volunteers and it is expected to reap benefits in revitalized programs on the local level.

"I have never been a leader before, now I have a place to start from."

—Pennington County 4-H volunteer

Soaring Eagles. The Soaring Eagles 4-H club is an Indian leadership development program for Twin Cities youth ages 3 to 20. More than 100 members participate in educational, recreational, and cultural activities intended to nurture cultural pride, personal effectiveness, and academic achievement. The club has achieved national recognition for its blending of the 4-H and American Indian traditions in a leadership program.

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Facts About Extension

Mission. The Minnesota Extension Service (MES) is the outreach arm of the University of Minnesota that offers research-based information and education. It seeks to enable people to foster full development of youth, adults, families and communities; to improve our economy, especially the food and fiber section; and to provide effective natural resource management.

Partnerships. MES cooperates with state, federal, and private partners who share funding and decision-making for educational programs.

Staff (full-time equivalents). 435 county and University-based faculty

Funding for 1988-89.

Total budget—	\$36.6 million
Federal contribution	24%
State contribution	41%
County contribution	22%
Private and other contributions	13%

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