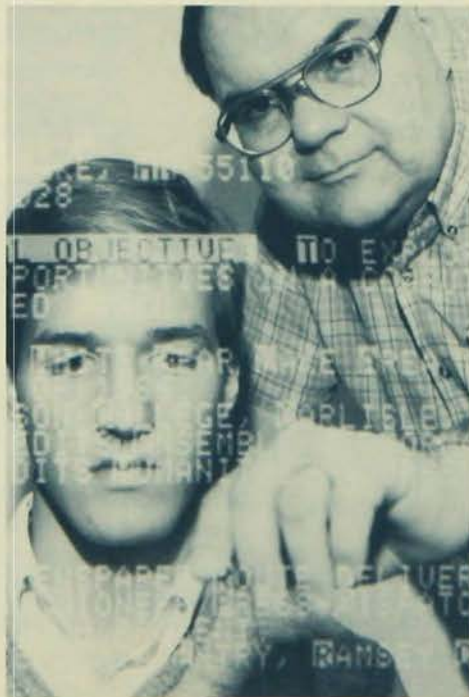


# WE RESPOND:

## *An Annual Report of Selected Minnesota Extension Service Accomplishments*

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## WE RESPOND

The Minnesota Extension Service is the outreach arm of the University of Minnesota that offers research-based education to people of all ages throughout the state, in cooperation with county, state, federal and private partners. We seek to enable people to foster full development of youth, adults, families and communities; to improve our economy, especially the food and fiber sector; and to provide effective natural resource management. Our purpose is to give people the understanding and skills to help solve their own problems and reach their own solutions.

This has been extension's mission since 1909, and the challenges of meeting that goal keep growing. Programs are developed by extension staff in cooperation with citizen advisory groups and volunteers. Research conducted by scientists at the Agricultural Experiment Station and throughout the University of Minnesota provides the basic information for much of extension's educational program.

### Extension Includes Many Ways of Educating

Extension provides information and education to Minnesotans through classes, meetings, seminars, workshops, over the phone, on radio and television, in newspapers, publications, and through computer programs. Whenever possible, extension works in the most direct way possible, often in one-to-one education. It also develops networks with other organizations to deliver programs with maximum educational effect and without duplication of services.

The people who take part in extension programs include farmers, homemakers, business people, children, government officials, families, community leaders, retirees, teenagers—people of all ages, interests, and walks of life.

### From the Dean and Director

I am pleased to report that the Minnesota Extension Service has made significant changes to increase our capacity and flexibility this past year in responding to critical needs of Minnesota citizens. Some highlights:

**RESPONSE TO THE RURAL ECONOMIC CRISIS:** In March 1986, the state legislature appropriated \$1.2 million

to the Minnesota Extension Service to continue Project Support programs in 1986-87. Part of these funds support 13 new area extension agents for one year to work with Minnesotans in farm management, family financial planning, and small business and economic development. Extension was also asked to give leadership to mandatory farm credit mediation because of successful Project Support programs. Special thanks for helping extension obtain this appropriation go to the legislature, the Board of Regents, and the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics Advisory Council.

**NAME CHANGE:** To better reflect the scope and range of extension's programs, we changed our name from the Agricultural Extension Service to the Minnesota Extension Service. I believe this name indicates high-quality, relevant education to Minnesota residents, not only in farming, but wherever our competencies can help people solve problems.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** To address emerging critical needs over the coming decades, we developed a responsive framework called, *Focus on People: A Statement of Direction and Priorities for Minnesota Extension Service*. County commissioners, county extension committees, advisory committees, and involved citizens assisted in this process. Approved by the regents in 1986, the plan directs us to focus our program priorities on the central issues affecting Minnesotans today and tomorrow.

**RESTRUCTURING:** A critical step in implementing *Focus on People* is restructuring the Minnesota Extension Service to create a flexible and responsive staffing structure. Major emphasis is on creating a system to identify issues around which to build educational programs. Following final decisions in October 1986, implementation will begin January 1987.

**UNIVERSITY TOURISM CENTER:** In July 1986 the University of Minnesota approved the development of a tourism center and land-grant chair within Extension. Research, education, and extension will come together from all University campuses to provide a link between University resources, the tourism industry, and community economic needs in Minnesota.

*Patrick Bouril*

Here are some examples of how the Minnesota Extension Service employed its resources during 1985-86:

### We Respond to the Farm Economic Crisis

Project Support, begun in December 1984 to assist rural Minnesotans undergoing severe economic crisis, continues to provide needed educational programs in farm and family financial management, family stress management, and community networking.

A major thrust of Project Support is the farm credit mediation program, which assists farmers and their lenders in debt restructuring disputes. (Mediation uses a neutral third party to facilitate discussions and agreements between lenders and farmers.) Based on a successful voluntary mediation program begun in November 1985, the legislature asked extension to spearhead the mandatory farm credit mediation program under the 1986 Omnibus Farm Bill.

As of July 1986, 1,897 mediations had been requested or were in progress. Between December 1985 and July 1986, extension trained 481 volunteer mediators. Information sessions for lenders and borrowers were also held across the state during July and August. Southwest and southeast Minnesota, hit hardest by this crisis, have averaged over 100 cases per county.

*"Once farm families have gone through mediation, they can at least say, 'we have a place to start from again,'"* —Volunteer Mediator and Farm Partner.

### We Respond to Farm Families

Farm families are struggling to manage their businesses. We help by emphasizing ways for them to *reduce* costs while maintaining production levels. We also teach farmers how to sell their products so that they get the highest returns possible. Some examples:

Over 20,000 farm families in Minnesota have had their financial records analyzed with the FINancial PACKage (FINPACK) computer programs developed by farm man-

agement specialists with the Center for Farm Financial Management. As of July, 1,106 families in mediation had had their records analyzed.

Careful observation of crops and use of pesticides to control insects, weeds, and diseases *only* when economically justified, enabled corn producers to reduce costs an estimated \$11.2 million while maintaining yields on 7 million acres last season. Economic control of armyworms reduced costs and increased returns to growers an estimated \$20.6 million.

Conservation tillage helped 13 percent of the corn producers and 11 percent of the soybean growers in southeastern Minnesota save time and spend 40 to 60 percent less for fuel and other machinery operating costs. Each year more farmers adopt these reduced tillage techniques which also help to conserve our soils from erosion and our lakes and streams from pollution due to runoff from farm fields.

### We Respond to Youth Needs

During 1985-86, the Minnesota Extension Service sponsored six Teens in Distress programs across the state for 1,700 professionals and caring adults who work with youth. Over 4,300 youths in 52 non-metropolitan counties were surveyed by extension and the University of Minnesota Medical School in the first major community-based study of adolescent stress ever done in this country. The findings, indicating a high level of stress in Minnesota teenagers, resulted in cooperation between the State Board of Education, 4-H, and other community agencies, on prevention programs.

4-H is more than a youth program. It is a family program. More than 14,000 adults provide guidance, direction, and assistance to over 116,000 young people enrolled in 2,000 clubs across the state. 4-H programs focus on helping young people develop life skills. Some examples:

Cooperating with community law enforcement agencies, Minnesota 4-H conducts the largest bicycle safety education program in the state. Teens trained at the state 4-H Pedal Power Camp conducted bicycle safety activities for hundreds of young people in 29 communities.

In the Community Pride project, 6,900 4-H'ers and 1,350 adult volunteers worked together to improve their communities. For example, the Johnsville Pioneers 4-H

Club in Anoka is helping develop an 80-acre city park in Blaine.

Game, fish, and wildlife 4-H projects reach nearly 3,000 4-H'ers, who study wildlife identification, wildlife habitat, and habitat improvement.

Minnesota is a leader in international exchange programs. Exchanges with Australia, Finland, Norway, Panama, Jamaica, Japan, and Thailand provide a rich flow of culture and ideas from all over the world. For example, in 1986, one program sent 7 Minnesota youth to Japan, while 4-H families hosted 75 Japanese youth in Minnesota.

### We Respond to Family Concerns

This year the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) was expanded from 6 counties to 12. EFNEP delivers sound and economical nutrition information programs. For example, the Dakota County Extension Service and the Dakota County Public Health Service taught 250 young mothers receiving food coupons from the Women Infant Children (WIC) program how to improve their family food patterns on a limited income.

EFNEP programs also receive support from communities. For example, the Duluth City Council funded three nutrition assistants to work with youth EFNEP programs through the St. Louis County Extension office. In Hennepin County, General Mills funds a Southeast Asian paraprofessional to reach families in urban and other areas.

*"EFNEP was more than a program to teach me about food. It helped me to have the self esteem to go on and to become a responsible citizen."* —EFNEP Program Participant

More than 3,300 families statewide enrolled in the self-study package, "Balancing Your Budget." More than 4,300 families enrolled in the self-study package, "Getting Control of Your Finances."

Nutrition-related programs in 1985-86 focused on nutritional "wellness" concerns, with lectures and leader train-

ing programs on cholesterol and cholesterol oxides; beef consumption and health; exercise and good health; fiber in the diet; women's health issues (including osteoporosis and calcium requirements); sports medicine (nutritional needs of athletes); and nutritional health information and misinformation.

Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Michigan jointly developed programs addressing farm family stress. Minnesota produced a video titled, "A Family's Fall," depicting the denial of family members in times of stress. Winner of a gold medal in national competition, the program has been used in all 87 counties in Minnesota and is in wide demand in all 12 north central regional states.

### We Respond to Community Issues

Crisis economic conditions throughout Minnesota have prompted many families to seek other sources of supplemental income such as small home-based and tourism businesses. Extension programs reaching nearly 5,000 people focus on issues relating to family implications, health and safety, market trend analysis, pricing and selling, record keeping, advertising, and customer relations. Several counties have recently developed programs with local chambers of commerce to help revitalize main street businesses for approximately 600 store-front owners and staff.

The Small Business Development Center is part of a network of 10 regional and 16 satellite centers throughout Minnesota which provide counseling and training for small businesses. The center emphasizes starting a business, adjusting to changing times, community hospitality training, tourism marketing, sawmill and logger management, and home-based business management. A free brochure-critique service is offered to resorts and other small businesses. By July 1986, 88 individual consultations had been held, and 43 training sessions reached 1,533 people.

*"It's an opportunity to discuss very confrontational issues in a nonconfrontational setting"* —Conference Participant



4-H programs help young people develop life skills.



The 1986 series of logging workshops focused on profitability.



Conservation tillage programs help farmers save time, fuel and other costs.



EFNEP programs teach good nutrition.



The Small Business Development Center provides training for small businesses.



The University Tourism Center will link university resources with the tourism industry.



Volunteer budget consultants help families get control of their finances.

The Minnesota Extension Service, the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, and the Spring Hill Center attracted over 190 participants from five states and Canada to a seminar exploring issues affecting agriculture in transition, including national and international economy, changes in farm financing, and coping strategies for rural areas.

## **We Respond to Natural Resource Issues**

A Center for Agricultural Impacts on Water Quality was established at the University with a special legislative appropriation of \$250,000. One of the first nationwide, the center will investigate the relationship between agricultural practices and ground water; make recommendations for agricultural practices; and develop a comprehensive educational program about potential impacts of agricultural practices.

Two woodland owner conferences in St. Paul and Grand Rapids reached over 250 non-industrial private forest owners (urban residents who own rural forest land) regarding woodland management topics. A forest management correspondence course has reached over 800 Minnesota forest owners in the last two years.

Extension programs for professionals in natural resources included continuing education workshops on federal income taxes, selling skills, and project (financial) analysis. Two computer programs on practical applications of computer technology to forest land management were introduced this past year.

The 1986 series of logging workshops focused on increasing profitability through production sorting and equivalent selection (for pulpwood, saw timber, log cabin logs); marketing; and selecting the most economically efficient combinations of logging equipment.

The second annual North Star Exposition of logging and sawmill equipment, held in Brainerd, attracted several thousand people. Besides the educational benefit to those in the forest industry, an economic impact study also revealed that the festival generated nearly \$500,000 in income for the community.

Extension foresters worked with farmers, Master Gardeners and the Soil Conservation Service in continuing programs to improve design of field windbreaks and farmstead shelterbelts. Results show less snow damage and more uniform snow distribution over croplands to reduce erosion and provide uniform soil moisture.

The Minnesota Sea Grant extension program reached more than 5,000. One newsletter, "Fixin' Fish," resulted in a 43 percent increase in consumption of underutilized fish species among the 2,000 participants in the program.

## **We Work in Leadership Development**

Leadership development for people of all ages is a high extension priority. Some examples:

Minnesota extension staff helped create a leadership development program for 16 farm and agri-business couples involved in the Red River Valley Winter Shows King Agassiz Event. The 1986 educational program emphasized learning and growing together as couples, developing leadership skills, and understanding government, agricultural policy, and related issues.

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*"I learned enough about community processes to form an effective group to deal with a school issue in my community."*

—Leadership Program  
Graduate

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Project LEAD (Leadership in Extension for Agricultural Development) is a three-year program begun in 1986 to improve the leadership capacities of extension agriculture faculty. The program will develop a leadership core faculty in agriculture who will better understand the nature and function of leadership, along with agricultural issues and the impacts of public policies.

Family Community Leadership is designed to teach leadership skills through public policy. Extension staff in Home Economics and Community Development help families and individuals identify policy issues and plan ways to address them through community leadership.

## **Volunteers Help Us Respond**

The Minnesota Adult Volunteers Association held its first annual meeting and statewide leadership development forum in April 1986. The association will: provide information and training to adult volunteers about 4-H; provide statewide opportunities for 4-H adult leaders to meet and share ideas; and promote communication between club, county, district and state levels.

4-H volunteers donate over 1.6 million hours in service to 4-H each year. The value of that contribution is conservatively estimated at over \$5.6 million.

Eighty-four certified volunteer food preservation consultants in 29 Minnesota counties reached more than 11,000 people through a variety of educational efforts. Volunteer food preservation consultants, volunteer budget consultants, EFNEP nutrition education aides, extension home study group volunteers, and energy consultants are some of the over 40,000 volunteers who extend the resources of Extension Home Economics.

Answer-U is a new effort to extend reliable, research-based consumer information from the university to each county extension office. Trained volunteer telephone teachers and home economics extension staff now have quick access to answers for both commonly asked and difficult-to-answer questions from a computer data base.

The Master Gardener program trains and supports volunteers to teach and advise home gardeners and other amateur horticulturists. This ongoing educational effort involved 792 Master Gardeners last year, each providing at least 50 hours of volunteer service.

The 481 volunteer mediators trained by extension for the mandatory mediation program have played an important part in meeting the rural crisis.

Citizens and program advisory committees provide counsel on program priorities from their communities. Statewide committees include the Minnesota Extension Citizens' Advisory Committee, the Home Economics Advisory Committee, the 4-H Advisory Committee, and the Agriculture Advisory Council.

## We Respond through Technology

The EXTEND statewide computer network continues to help county, area, and campus extension staff manage and present educational, research-based information to Minnesota citizens.

Computer decision aids and work sheets enabled over 5,000 dairy farmers, 72,000 feed grain producers, and 1,000 landowners to decide to participate in the 1985 dairy, feed grain setaside and conservation reserve programs. Minnesota had the highest dollar value of bids accepted for the CRP and the second highest acreage accepted in the first signup.

The Telecommunications Development Center, funded in 1985 by the Kellogg Foundation, trains faculty and staff to plan, design, and deliver instructional programs using technologies such as television, computers, and teleconferencing. In its first year, the center completed an ag law and policy project resulting in a radio and TV call-in program about how to select a lawyer. Examples of other projects now underway: a Northeast Minnesota telecommunications network; a home volunteer consumer information service; and developing telecommunications educational programs for natural resource professionals.

## Extension Funding: A Federal, State, Local, and Private Partnership

Federal funds are appropriated and distributed to states in two ways. They are either distributed on the basis of a formula to meet the high-priority needs of each state, or they

are earmarked to meet special needs of national concern. The federal portion of the Minnesota Extension Service budget was reduced by \$400,000 this year because of the Gramm-Rudman legislation, which cut extension budgets nationwide.

State funds are appropriated every two years by the legislature as a special line item in the University of Minnesota budget. County funds are appropriated in accordance with Minnesota statutes by each of the County Boards of Commissioners, based on the recommendation of their County Extension Committees.

Non-tax funds include fees, gifts by individuals, and grants from business and industry. Individuals, organizations, and businesses may make tax-deductible gifts to the Minnesota Extension Service through the University of Minnesota Foundation or the Minnesota 4-H Foundation.

In 1985-86, the total revenue from all sources was approximately \$29,801,467. Around 85 percent of the total budget is used for professional and support staff. Staff resources of the Minnesota Extension Service are distributed approximately as indicated in figure 2.

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*“We focus on those issues of greatest concern to Minnesotans. We focus on those issues where we have competence. We focus on those issues where we can make significant contributions.”* —Focus on People Strategic Plan

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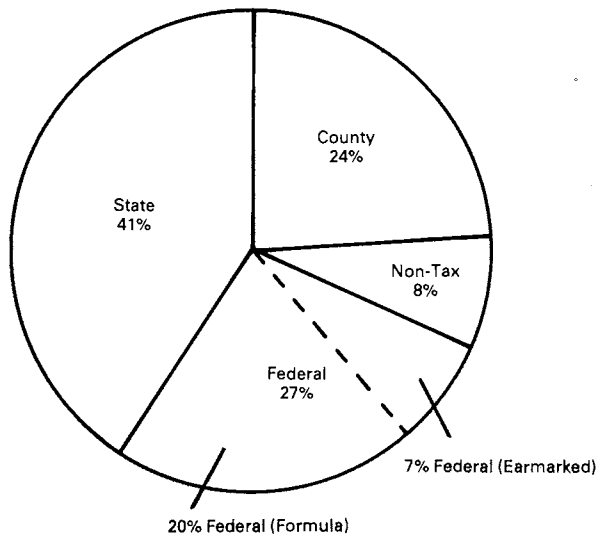


Figure 1. Source of funds, 1985-86.

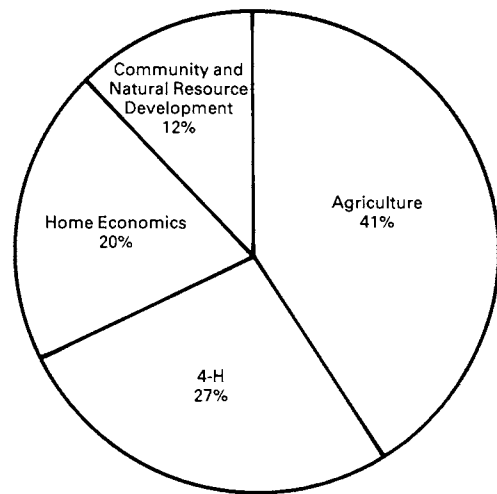


Figure 2. Distribution of staff resources, 1985-86.