

# EXTENOVATIONS

April 1985

Volume 6, Number 2

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
DOCUMENT  
APR 12  
ST. PAUL CAMPUS

## Ag recruits seasoned by county training



Jack Sperbeck, communication specialist (left), checks a story lead with agent-at-large Dennis Judd. Judd is spending part of his 18-month assignment developing educational material in Communication Resources (photo by Pam Wollum).

A new, young, bright but green county agricultural agent with an animal science degree starts in a southern Minnesota county in late June. The agent position has been vacant for six months and he (she) is the only ag agent in the county.

The first day on the job a farmer calls and says his corn has tiny pinholes. He suspects corn borer. Typical questions follow: Is it corn borer?

Do I need to spray? If so, with what and what's the cost? Then the clincher—can you look at the field and make a recommendation?

You know the agent is apt to feel anywhere from lonely to overwhelmed—unless he's been lucky enough to garner some crop pest management training along with animal science. To avoid this problem, new agents need to spend some time ob-

serving trained, experienced agricultural agents in another county. It beats being put out to sink or swim.

That's why agent-at-large positions in agriculture were started in January, 1984 by Assistant Director for Agriculture Jerry Miller. "We saw this as part of an aggressive effort to recruit for excellence and upgrade the pool of highly qualified people for county extension agent-agriculture positions," Miller says.

For several years there's been a shortage of well qualified candidates to fill agricultural agent positions in counties. "Many of the most qualified people are being attracted to positions in industry and other agricultural agencies," says Miller.

The at-large assignments are in six-month stretches, up to 18 months. At any time during that period, these people are encouraged to apply for county agricultural agent positions.

Candidates are required to have a minimum of a B.S. degree in agriculture with a GPA minimum of 3.0 or admission into graduate school. Experienced professionals were required to have demonstrated successful agricultural work experience. Also required was evidence of leadership, good teaching, communications and human relations skills.

These criteria were preferred:

1. Courses in farm management, crops and animal sciences.
2. Supporting courses in subjects such as education, communications, human development, community and society.
3. Leadership abilities.

The first three agents-at-large were hired in March, 1984.

Harold Stanislawski, a North Dakota State University grad, started with Jim Martin in Mahnomon County. After two months, Harold was hired as the county ag agent in Roseau County. His at-large agent experience had given him new computer skills and an orientation to extension before taking the Roseau County job.

Mary Anne Casey is an agricultural education/horticulture graduate

from Minnesota who started her program in Pope County with Jack Morris. There she worked with crop pest management and horticulture.

Later she switched to Rochester, where she worked with Merv Freeman in farm financial management. Now she's the acting ag agent in Hennepin County.

Dennis Judd is a Minnesota agricultural education/agronomy grad. He had little knowledge of extension work when he came to Dakota County, but working with Bob Olson and Warren Sifferath changed that. "One of the highlights was the opportunity to help organize and develop a county-wide organization for professionals working in agriculture," he says. "Warren and I were driving in his pick-up when we got the idea. We organized the first session in June of 1984—the program was on the farm financial crisis. Now the group has some very ambitious goals. They're working to improve the image of agriculture in Dakota County and around the state."

Judd benefited from tips that Olson and Sifferath gave him. "Both Bob and Warren were on vacation in June. Before they left, they told me that if corn borer problems surfaced, we should call field meetings for all chemical dealers and interested farmers.

"That was good information to have. We did have corn borer problems and a local chemical dealer, new in the county, asked me to call a meeting where he'd be the only chemical dealer there. I told him we needed to invite all chemical dealers, and the meetings went just fine."

Judd is presently working on the St. Paul campus, helping develop educational materials. He, Stanislawski and Casey have made their mark. Plans are to hire more agents-at-large for agriculture in the near future.

—Jack Sperbeck

## Caribbean effort advances global perspective

Since 1980, Minnesota's extension service has been working with the University of the West Indies to improve agricultural extension systems in eight Caribbean countries: Antigua, Belize, Dominica, Montserrat, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts/Nevis and St. Vincent. George Saksa from Duluth is currently the team leader in the Caribbean.

This year an independent team of evaluators studied the project and submitted a report to its funding source, the U.S. Agency for International Development. The evaluation results show that the project has been highly effective in reorganizing ex-

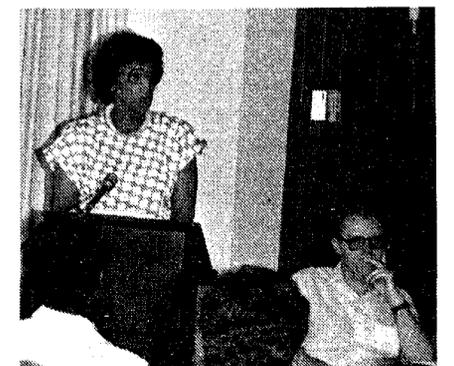
tension services, implementing program development processes, improving management, increasing farmer contacts, training extension agents and increasing the communications capabilities of the participating countries.

In November a major conference was held in St. Kitts to review the evaluation and establish future directions for the project. The conference included senior agricultural officials from all eight countries, farmer representatives, staff of international development organizations and others working in agricultural efforts in the Caribbean. The University of Minne-

sota was represented by Regent Wenda Moore and Gene Allen, dean of the College of Agriculture.

In her speech to the conference participants, Regent Moore emphasized Minnesota's commitment to being a truly international university and bringing its global perspective to bear on teaching, research and service. She noted that building the university's international character is a major planning theme.

In addition to long-term residence assignments, the project has involved thirty University of Minnesota fac-



Regent Wenda Moore emphasizes the university's commitment to international development efforts in her address before the Caribbean conference. Dean Gene Allen (seated) described the international nature of the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics.

CARIBBEAN continued on page 2

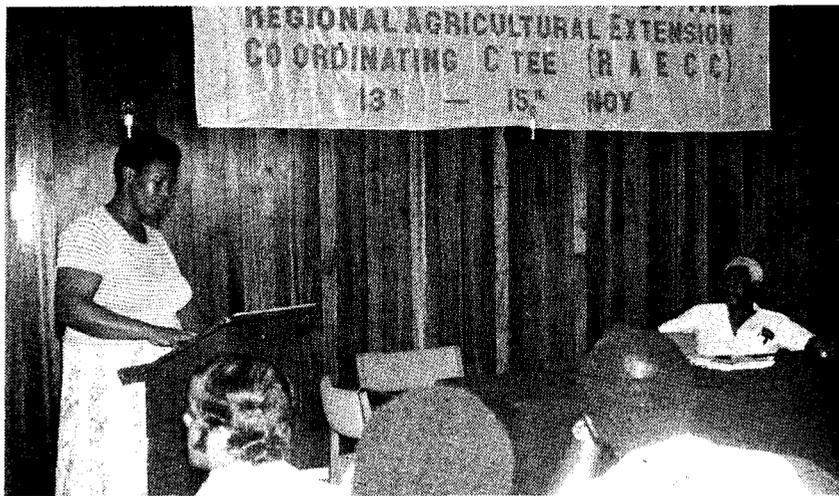
## CARIBBEAN

continued from page 1

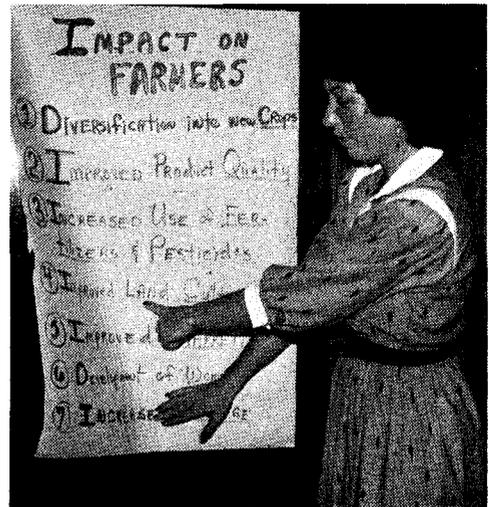
ulty and staff in short-term training and program development activities, including both recipients of this year's outstanding extension staff awards, Jane McKinnon and Dave Radford. The project is currently developing plans for future activities which will run through 1988.

As both Regent Moore and Dean Allen indicated in their remarks at the Caribbean conference, international projects like this extension effort are not peripheral activities. International activities are vital to fulfilling the university's mission as a world-class institution.

—Michael Patton



Earlene Horne, Farmer of the Year from St. Vincent, explains the marketing problems of farmers (special photo).



Evaluator Dr. Kay Adams describes the Caribbean project's impact on farmers (special photo).

## Perham pastor mediates dispute

Reverend Dan Herman didn't plan to get in the middle of a hot controversy when he signed up for the 4-H Family Mediation Project in Perham,



Herman (special photo)

Minnesota. What he really wanted was a chance to increase his pastoral skills.

When Cindy Bigger, Otter Tail County agent, told him that mediation training was available through 4-H, Herman was surprised. "I'd always thought that 4-H was just for rural kids," says Herman. But he joined and by the end of the training he not only had new skills, but a new impression of 4-H as well.

Herman was one of 49 adults from five counties in the mediation training. Three days of lectures and role playing helped the group learn mediation skills through practice.

That was March. In July the community needed someone to head a task force to look into a hot issue. They wanted someone they could trust and who would let them retain local control. Who better than the young, community service-minded minister from the two United Church of Christ congregations in Perham and New York Mills? He had the training and was willing to serve without charge.

The hot issue was the way the district hospital was being run. Many people in the community were driv-

ing as many as 70 miles to Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls or Fargo to avoid using the local facility.

The Perham hospital board itself asked for the task force. The board seriously underestimated, however, both the extent of the problem from the community's perspective and the impact of the task force's findings.

Rather than deal with hard-to-prove, and possibly libelous allegations about abuse of power, the task force surveyed community opinion. Herman committed himself to four meetings a week for four months, from August to December of 1984. "The work involved took at least thirty hours a week," he says.

His congregations understood the importance of the task and gave him the needed time. Herman advises, "You have to have a deadline because such mediation can go on and on." He considered his role finished when the final report went in.

The survey showed that approximately 85 percent of the community was very dissatisfied with the way the hospital was being run. As a result of those findings the chairman of the hospital board was asked to resign. He did so. Further, every member of

that board seeking re-election was defeated. The hospital is presently being administered by St. Lukes Hospital of Fargo under a temporary agreement.

Herman says the opportunity gave him "great satisfaction, many new friends plus some enemies, and a feeling that I understand my community more fully. Of course, the former administrator probably feels that justice was not done by the task force, but in mediation there are always two sides."

By continuing to meet, Herman and many of the other mediation project participants get a chance to practice the valuable skills they've learned. Among those whom Herman credits for his improved skills are Steve Erickson, Marilyn McKnight and Bob Martinko of Family Mediation Services of Edina.

Herman is now excited about 4-H. He likes the family and community service projects it promotes and is impressed by the state staff's professionalism, and the amount of work they do on limited budgets.

It seems that 4-H has a convert in Perham.

—Henri Drews

## 'Food, Fitness, Fun and Fame' coming this summer

One success deserves another. "Food, Fitness, Fun and Fame," a sequel to last year's "Food, Fitness and Fun" will be held this summer.

Last year's program attracted more than 650 girls and boys to the six-hour workshop and this year's of-

fering hopes to reach more new audiences. "The food and fitness aspect will continue," says Roger Holmes, Hennepin County 4-H agent, "but we are adding some creativity, leisure education and performing arts in the fun and fame categories."

Recruiting last summer's short-term project members, most of them from ages 7 to 10, was done with the help of 17 agencies including park and recreation departments. "These were not 4-H members from community clubs, but new contacts,"

Holmes mentions.

Local planning for the 1984 Hennepin County program were Joanne Slavin, nutrition specialist; LaVonne Misner, Hennepin County extension agent involved in EFNEP; Linda Dieleman, EFNEP community program specialist; Bill Svendsgaard, 4-H agent; 4-H program assistants employed by Minnesota Emergency Employment Development (MEED) program and Holmes.

In 1985 different themes will highlight each day. Themes last year included: Fuel for Fitness, Food for Fitness, Fluids for Fitness. A primary objective was to improve self image by eating properly and beginning a good exercise program. Aerobic exercises were practiced and participants learned ways to recognize snack foods that are high in calcium and vitamin C.

Svendsgaard did an in-depth evaluation of the program with staff from other agencies, hence the new name and slightly changed emphasis in the 1985 program.

—Mary Kay O'Hearn



Visuals play a large role in the summer learning program for non-traditional audiences in Hennepin County (photo by Roger Holmes).



A hand dips into the mystery box to identify the texture of a food and determine which of the five daily food guide groups it's from (photo by Roger Holmes).

## In brief . . .

A presentation by **Sam Bigger**, West Polk County, on using FINLRB to compare income from sheep versus beef cattle, was videotaped by the Wadena AVTI for use in classes. (Bigger found that while it would take 600 ewes compared to 335 cows to produce \$20,000 net family income, the beef cow enterprise required a much higher investment.)

\*\*\*

Extension engineer **Jack True** was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the USDA Soil Conservation Service for his efforts with the USDA Minnesota conservation tillage contest group. He was cited for "outstanding accomplishments in developing rules and conducting a contest as an educational tool for demonstrating the proper use of primary tillage equipment for desired conservation benefits."

\*\*\*

**Janie O'Connor**, Itasca County, received the 1984 Minnesota Association of Counties Community Service Achievement Award for her "Living Resourcefully" television program. The award was presented at the AMC banquet in early February.

\*\*\*

The newly formed **Red River Valley Emerging Leadership Program**, coordinated by Barb Klixbull, district program leader, HEFL, and Northwest District director, received \$5,000 from the Bremer Foundation for project expenses. Participants are couples selected by each of the fourteen counties in the Red River Valley King Agassiz program. The couples were identified as emerging leaders showing potential for making significant contributions to their communities and the valley.

\*\*\*

Three Northeast District agents—**Janie O'Connor** (Itasca), **Virginia Korte** (Carlton), and **Eileen Anderson** (St. Louis)—and specialist **Jean Bauer** helped **26 new extension volunteers** complete initial training in the Volunteer Budget Consultant program to help county families better manage their incomes. The program began in 1982 as part of the Northeast Thrust.

\*\*\*

Extension horticulturist **Harold Wilkins** was a co-recipient of the Best Refereed Paper Award for 1984 from his colleagues in the Department of Horticultural Science and Landscape Architecture. Wilkins and **W.E. Healy** co-authored, "Temperature Effects on 'Nellie White' Flower Bud Development," which appeared in the December 1984 *Hort Science*. The award is the first of its kind.

\*\*\*

The **Carver County 4-H program** won top honors in nation-wide competition through the National 4-H Council for its outstanding programs in safety and conservation of natural resources. A \$50 check was presented from the John Deere Foundation to help support the conservation of natural resources program, and the General Motors Foundation awarded a share of General Motors stock to recognize the county's safety projects. The awards will be used to further conservation and safety activities among 4-H'ers in the county.

\*\*\*

**Hennepin County** boasts 233 enrollees in a four-lesson home study course, "Balance Your Budget," begun in November. The course helped young families explore and analyze their financial goals and set up individual financial management systems. Musingwear also requested the study course for its employees.

\*\*\*

## Ugly eelpout overlooked by anglers

A lot of Minnesotans do things with fish that drive Jeff Gunderson crazy: they refuse to eat perfectly good fish like suckers and eelpout, and they treat the day's catch miserably, destroying its quality before the boat ever docks.

In an effort to eliminate both of these common blunders, Gunderson, a sea grant extension agent, has written a book called *Fixin' Fish: A Guide to Handling, Buying, Preserving, and Preparing Fish*. This slim paperback contains all the information upper midwest anglers need to know about those topics as well as information on common fish parasites, according to Gunderson.

The book grew out of Gunderson's success with workshops and demonstrations by the same name. Since starting the workshops in 1979, he has taught fish-handling techniques to more than 1,700 people throughout Minnesota. Commercial fishermen and processors have supplied the 200 to 400 pounds of fish needed each year for Gunderson's workshops.

Underutilization of certain fish has been a particular concern of the Minnesota Sea Grant Institute, because it represents waste of a resource. "The two reasons fish like eelpout (burbot), suckers and carp are overlooked are that they're ugly and they're inconvenient to prepare," says Gunderson. "It has nothing to do with their taste—they're good."

There isn't much Gunderson can do about the ugliness factor, but

there's a lot he can do about the preparation problem. In *Fixin' Fish*, Gunderson explains how to fillet, score, flake and grind fish, such as the sucker, which contains y-bones—the floating, forked bones not attached to the backbone or skeleton. Y-bones cannot be removed with normal filleting techniques.

Knowing how to debone these fish may break down some of the resistance to eating them, but Gunderson is realistic enough to admit that midwestern fish prejudice runs deep. "Eelpout is the only freshwater member of the cod family and is a nice, firm, white fish with a good flavor," says Gunderson. "But it is so ugly that I know macho fisherman who will cut their line rather than bring an eelpout in the boat. There's some strange kind of myth or mystery about this fish."

Mishandling fish, especially during the crucial period between catching and cleaning, is the other most common failing among people who fish. "I've always been an avid fisherman myself," says Gunderson, "but it wasn't until I became an extension agent and started examining preservation techniques that I realized how many things fishermen commonly do wrong."

Pulling a stringer of fish in and out of a boat all day is the single biggest handling mistake made in fishing, according to Gunderson. "People would never think of throwing a t-bone steak into the bottom of a dirty, oily boat, but that's what they do to fish and fish are actually more delicate than most other meats. They bruise easily and can spoil rapidly." Gunderson figures that one of the reasons walleye is such a popular fish in Minnesota is that it is very lean and doesn't develop off-flavors quickly. As a result, it still tastes pretty good in spite of mistreatment.

Gunderson's other fish crusade is to keep people from wasting parasite-infested fish. A variety of parasites are found in upper midwestern fish, but only the broad fish tapeworm is harmful to humans, and even that can be killed by heating the fish flesh to 140 degrees or freezing it for 48 hours at zero degrees. "I've known people who have tossed whole coolers of fish because of harmless parasites," says Gunderson.

Cooking methods are also of special interest to Gunderson. "People in



Jeff Gunderson, sea grant fisheries agent (right), offers some tips on preparing a delicacy from one of the state's lakes while veteran angler Steve Lamb of Grand Rapids assists at the *Fixin' Fish* conference (photo courtesy of the Grand Rapids *Herald Review*).

Minnesota think that frying is the only way to prepare fish," he says. In his book, he not only explains such common preparation methods as baking, broiling and poaching, he also devotes chapters to drying, smoking, pickling, canning, and salting fish and even explains how to make fish jerky and caviar.

Probably the most unusual preparation method Gunderson promotes is the grinding of fish to use it like hamburger in dishes such as chili, lasagna and casseroles. "Most people in this part of the country have a one-track mind in fish preparation, but you can't eat it every day if you'll only eat it fried," Gunderson says. At his

*Fixin' Fish* demonstrations, Gunderson takes along some fish chili for the audience to sample and most are surprised at how good it is.

"I like to get people into the demonstrations on one interest they have—often it's smoking fish—and then try to teach them about handling or freezing, which they don't even know they're doing wrong," he says.

There's plenty of misinformation among people who fish. One of Gunderson's favorite stories is of a man who heard that a person would starve to death trying to live on burbot and suckers, because they had no nutritional value.

—Alice Tibbetts

### Extenovations

Vol. 6 No. 2  
April 1985

Published bimonthly by the Director's Office, 240 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Managing editor . . . . . Deedee Nagy  
Production editor . . . . . Richard Sherman  
Designer . . . . . Henri Drews  
Photo editor . . . . . Don Breneman

Produced by Communication Resources, 433 Coffey Hall.

The University of Minnesota, including the Agricultural Extension Service, is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, or veteran status.

# Good fortune found in volunteers

A staggering figure: more than 50,000 people contributed in excess of \$6,500,000 to Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service programs during 1984. But the contribution was in time, the many, many hours

from volunteers which, if translated into dollars, total the multimillion dollar figure.

"It represents so many people critical to extension programs," says Lois Mann, who chairs the extension Vol-

unteer Recognition Week Committee which includes Greg Hutchins, Jane McKinnon and Irene Ott. Once a year extension volunteers, together with millions of volunteers throughout the nation, are recognized during Na-

tional Volunteer Week—April 22-28 in 1985. Counties will be deciding how best to recognize the time spent by county committees and those assisting and advising in the many-faceted program areas.

## Advisory committee holds St. Paul meeting

The Extension Citizens' Advisory Committee met in early February in St. Paul at the Earle Brown Center. Highlights of the meeting included a joint session with the newly formed Home Economics Advisory Committee, Friday morning visits to the Capitol with individual legislators and a panel report from the committee to Minnesota-based staffs of the Washington congressional delegation. Graduating members of the committee were presented with certificates of appreciation from Dean and Director

Borich and Institute Deputy Vice President Dick Sauer. Outgoing chair Dorothy Bloemendaal (Murray County) was presented with a gavel and stand. Elected 1985-86 chair was Keith Raisanen, Wright County; elected vice-chair was Willis Miller, Scott County. New members of the committee prepared to travel to Washington, D.C., in early March for the three-day national lay leader seminars at the National 4-H Council and visits with the Minnesota congressional delegation.



1985 graduates of the Minnesota Extension Citizens' Advisory Committee are (left to right) Gary Allen (Olmsted), 1983-84 chair and 1984-86 CARET representative; Marlene Nelson (Douglas); Dorothy Bloemendaal (Murray), 1984-85 chair; Janabelle Taylor (Ramsey); Cliff Bussler (McLeod); and Don Forner (Carver). Not pictured: Ruth Chapin (Dodge), 4-H representative; and John Gaukerud (Roseau).

## Cassettes let families 'Keep In Touch'

"As a parent, you want to know how best to raise your children and how to improve your family life. Whether you work outside the home or not, your time is limited. At the end of the day, maybe you're too busy—or too tired—to attend a family educational meeting. Now there's an alternative."

These words are from a brochure describing Isanti County's "Keep In Touch" project. By making audio and video cassettes available for checkout from the local library, the project is able to reach busy young families who are unable to attend family education meetings.

Jean Anderson, Isanti County agent, developed the project in September, 1984 with the help of an innovative grant from the extension service. Extension home economics in Isanti County, the Isanti-Mille Lacs Community Health Services and the East Central Regional Library in Cambridge are cooperating in the project.

Many Isanti County residents commute to work and Anderson figured they could listen to cassettes while in their cars. And the library was noticing an increase in demand at the library for "how to" audio cassettes.

Twenty-two audio cassettes and six video cassettes on such topics as infant learning, discipline, single parents, communicating with adolescents, making marriage last and day care selection were placed in the library or on a special display stand. Checkout cards and forms asking if the users would be willing to participate in a telephone survey were included.



Carol Clauson, Isanti County home health aid, listens to a "Keep In Touch" tape while making rounds in her van.

A brochure that can be used as a poster was distributed through schools, churches and community agencies. News releases were sent to newspapers, radio stations, newsletters and community groups. Weekly extension columns and an ad placed in the local shopper section of the newspaper also publicized the project.

"Keep in Touch" week was proclaimed, thanks to Anderson's work with the Isanti County Board of Commissioners. Another promotional tie-in for the project was National Family Week, which occurred in late fall.

"The evaluation showed that the materials were utilized by com-

muters both within their vehicles and at home," says Anderson. "So family life education was gained by the commuter population."

Anderson has seen how working together strengthens each agency's educational offerings. She plans to continue networking with the library and community health services to offer new topics.



Lee Kingsbury, coordinator of health education for Cambridge Community Health Services; Cheryl Bjojn, director of the East Central Regional Library; and Jean Anderson, Isanti County extension agent; look over the "Keep in Touch" display rack in the Cambridge library.

—Gail Tischler