

Why Cooperative Extension?

Extending Knowledge . . . Changing Lives

A livestock producer needs help meeting goals for lower water and pesticide use. A farmer wonders how to plug into the international market. A local leader prepares the community in the face of potential environmental disasters. A low-income parent wants to better manage the family food budget. Young people yearn to work together to help others. Where can they turn for help?

Cooperative Extension.

This unique network of educators links locally based educators and land-grant university faculty — along with federal, state and local partners — to people in more than 3,000 counties/parishes in all 50 states and in U.S. territories. Celebrating 100 years of service in 2014, this system has one unifying core: It works!

Cooperative Extension educators:

- **Translate** science for practical application. Experiment Station scientists and Cooperative Extension educators identify emerging research questions, form teams to find answers and encourage application of findings to improve economic and social conditions.
- **Engage** with the public to take action. Cooperative Extension helps youth and adults acquire the knowledge, skills and motivation to take action related to food, families, agricultural businesses, communities and more.
- **Prepare** people for healthy, productive lives. Sustained Cooperative Extension programs help break the cycle of poverty for families, encourage healthful eating/lifestyles and prepare youth for responsible adulthood.
- **Provide** rapid response regarding disasters and emergencies. The Extension Disaster Education Network (eden.lsu.edu) provides real-time alerts and resources so Cooperative Extension educators can respond after hurricanes, floods, oil spills, fires, droughts and outbreaks of pests or infectious diseases affecting humans, livestock and crops.
- **Develop** partnerships to address major issues. Cooperative Extension works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and other federal departments, nonprofit organizations, foundations, state Experiment Stations and the private sector.
- **Connect** people online with information and assistance 24/7 year-round through eXtension.org. This online Extension network includes informative articles, frequently asked questions and ways to ask an expert.



What Does Cooperative Extension Do for YOU?

Every day, Cooperative Extension is helping people achieve their goals through practical, community-based and online education. Extension identifies needs and then responds with education. Through its nationwide partnerships, it strengthens the profitability of animal and plant production systems, protects natural resources, helps people make healthful lifestyle choices, ensures a safe and abundant food supply, encourages community vitality, supports energy independence and works to grow the next generation of leaders. Examples include:

Ensuring an Abundant and Safe Food Supply

- Colorado State University faculty helped the state's cantaloupe growers respond to a deadly listeria outbreak with research to prevent future issues and formation of a growers association to strengthen and protect the reputation its now trademarked Rocky Ford Cantaloupe.
- More than 400 growers in New York have attended Cornell Cooperative Extension Good Agricultural Practices workshops and have begun implementing farm safety plans targeting microbial contamination risks.
- University of California Cooperative Extension led a multistate research coalition that discovered new strains of downy mildew fungus and developed strategies to protect California's \$156 million spinach industry.

Crisis Management: Responding to Disasters

- New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service and its partners formed the Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center to protect the nation's food supply from security threats.
- Oregon State University's Sea Grant Extension is helping residents, businesses and officials of coastal communities learn about the nature, likelihood and potential effects of a tsunami. As a result, officials in five of the state's largest coastal counties incorporated new information in their public safety and planning policies.
- The Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Breakthrough Solutions Community and Economic Development team and 18 partner organizations help communities build the basis for a vibrant and prosperous future. Harrison, the pilot community, reported a net increase of 35 new businesses from 2009 through the 2012.

Preparing a Strong Workforce

- Across the nation, Cooperative Extension is addressing the potential shortage in the future workforce with programs for 4-H'ers and other youth to study science, technology, engineering and math. For example, more than 100,000 New York youth are involved in such projects, and Bio-Science Montana connects teams of 4-H students in grades eight through 11 and their volunteer leaders to Montana State University and its top scientists for an intensive year-long experience.
- The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences offers worker certification programs, such as its Green Industry Best Management Practices, Pest Management University and ServSafe®, which train employees in areas ranging from sustainable landscape practices to safe food handling.
- The North Dakota State University Extension Service Center for Community Vitality focuses on building a strong core economic base and has helped hundreds of existing or future business owners.

Fostering Greater Energy Independence

- Engineers at the University of Georgia are providing energy assessments to help animal, poultry and crop producers reduce their energy bills and operate their facilities more efficiently, leading to more than \$3.6 million in grant applications for energy efficient renovations and projected cost savings exceeding \$550,000 a year.
- A multistate, interdisciplinary team (South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa) developed a training program on ventilation system management for hog producers. Benefits to participants included more than \$400,000 in production improvements and energy cost savings.

Helping People Live Better

- Universities in all 50 states partner with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention and the National 4-H Council to implement the 4-H "Youth and Families With Promise" program. Participants increased self-confidence, improved their outlooks on life and made more positive choices.
- Of the nearly 650,000 low-income participants in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in 2012, about 90 percent of adults and 60 percent of youth improved their food choices toward a healthful diet.
- 4-H'ers are about four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, two times more likely to be civic minded, two times more likely to make healthful choices and two times more likely to participate in science, engineering and computer technology programs during out-of-school time.

- Kansas State Research and Extension worked with local partners to offer Walk Kansas during 2013. Nearly 16,000 people reported improved overall health and motivation to exercise as a result of the eight-week program encouraging them to walk more than 400 miles.

Making Agriculture More Profitable

- Michigan State University Extension created Enviro-weather, a comprehensive network of weather stations, that led to \$1.8 million in gains for the state's tree fruit industry alone.
- Peonies can be produced in Alaska when no other peony is available in the world. University of Alaska faculty are providing best management practices and working with growers – resulting in the injection of about \$2.75 million into the economy.
- Beef 706 is a two-day educational program from Texas A&M Extension aimed at teaching cattle producers the importance of producing more consistent and high-quality beef products. Its increase in returns to beef producers is estimated at \$17.5 million since 2006.
- Ohio State University Extension is offering "Transferring the Farm to the Next Generation," and participants say it has helped them improve family communication and to begin retirement and estate planning.

Protecting Natural Resources and Environment

- Extension Service faculty across the country are working in outreach and educational programs aimed at water conservation and reducing pollution. A University of Vermont effort led to conservation practices that prevented 2,000 tons of soil and 54 tons of fertilizer from becoming pollutants.
- The Alabama Cooperative Extension System established the E-Waste Institute to educate the public and influence public policies for responsible disposal of potentially hazardous electronic waste.

Cooperative Extension provides education you can trust to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.



Prepared 2/10/14 by the Extension Committee on Legislation and Policy, the representative leadership and governing body of Cooperative Extension nationwide. For more information, contact Jane Schuchardt at jane.schuchardt@extension.org or 202-478-6029 or visit www.extension.org/ECOP.