

Dear Colleagues:

It's been a week since we came together as a group to begin to give form to our Managing in Tough Times initiative. We thank you for the expertise and energy you invested in this project as we met in Dallas.

Since our meeting the issue areas from each target audience team have been finalized and sent to Dan Cotton and he is working with the programmer to begin modifying the CYFERNet framework into MiTTNet to accommodate our needs. We have met with Susan to complete her work from the conference and will forward her final report to all of you soon. The implementation plan has also been created based on the work plans submitted by each of the groups. We should have a draft letter of solicitation from the communications and marketing team within another week and hopefully by the beginning of next month we will be ready for the target audience teams to begin their process of populating the MiTTNet directory.

We believe that what we are creating is a tool that will not only be of value across the Cooperative Extension System as we work with our clients through tough times, but also in helping us help our clientele with future national issues.

Tom Coon reported our progress to ECOP during their conference call meeting this week with a very complimentary and supportive reaction. ECOP is interested in having a webinar briefing on the initiative sometime in June. Colien Hefferan, CSREES Administrator, also commented that reports about the meeting were very positive, and she likewise expressed her support for the group's work.

This is an exciting time as we continue this national effort and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

Lyla Houglum  
Executive Director  
Western Extension Directors Association

Jane Schuchardt  
National Program Leader  
CSREES-USDA