



Identifying Needs-based Issues for New eXtension Communities of Practice: Summary of Results

Introduction and Methods

To date, eXtension has been identifying and developing new Communities of Practice (CoP) through three approaches: 1) voluntary applications from content areas, 2) needs-based calls to Extension Directors/Administrators, and 3) through successful proposals submitted through various CSREES competitive grant programs (e.g., Specialty Crops Research Initiative (SCRI), Agriculture Food Research Initiative (AFRI), etc.). In an effort to expand our approaches to identify appropriate CoP's that are relevant to the Extension system, a national survey was conducted of Extension field faculty/educators. The purpose of the survey was to engage all Extension field faculty/educators in identifying issues/topics they feel may be appropriate for developing new CoP's.

Respondents' were asked: 1) their land grant institution, 2) to identify the top-three issues/topics that would be useful for eXtension to address through a CoP that would assist them in their Extension work, and 3) if they would be willing to participate in a CoP if one formed around the issues/topics they listed.

An invitation email and url to participate in the online survey was sent to all Extension Directors and Administrators on May 4, 2009. They were asked to forward the email invitation to all their field faculty and educators. In addition, an invitation email and url was also sent to all individual's with eXtension ID's on May13, 2009.

Response

A total of 985 individuals responded to the survey from 62 land grant institutions (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Respondents by region and institutions

Region	# of institutions	# of respondents
1890	10	27
North Central	13	253
Southern	13	350
Northeast	11	147
Western	15	208
Total	62	985

Institutions represented by region included:

1890 – Alabama A&M University, Alcorn State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, North Carolina A&T State University, Southern University A&M College, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, Virginia State University, West Virginia State University.

North Central – Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Michigan State University, Nebraska Indian Community College, North Dakota State University, Ohio State University, Purdue University, South Dakota State University, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of Wisconsin.

Southern – Auburn University, Clemson University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas A&M University, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Tennessee, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Northeast – Cornell University, Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers State University of New Jersey, University of Connecticut, University of District of Columbia, University of Maine, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts, University of New Hampshire, University of Vermont, West Virginia University.

Western – Blackfeet Community College, Colorado State University, Montana State University, New Mexico State University, Oregon State University, University of Alaska, University of Arizona, University of California, University of Guam, University of Hawaii, University of Idaho, University of Nevada Reno, University of Wyoming, Utah State University, Washington State University.

Results

The respondents entered issues/topics as text. They were thematically analyzed in two rounds. Categories presented typically represent larger issues/topics. Specific issues/topics included in the categories are presented following the tables. At the end of this report, links are provided to all raw data by region.

Presented below are the top issues/topics by rank and priority (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) by region (Table 2-6) and the top issues/topics overall (Table 7). The number in parentheses following the issue/topic is the frequency with which it was mentioned.

Table 2. Top six issues/topics for the 1890 region

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Small farms (4)	Youth (4)	Youth (3)
2	Families/parenting (4)	Small farms (2)	Small farms (2)
3	Health/nutrition (3)	Food (2)	Financial management (2)
4	Youth (3)	Financial management (2)	Community/economic development (2)
5	Community/economic development (3)	Community/economic development (2)	BMP's for green solutions (2)
6	Horticulture (2)	Natural resources and environment (2)	Health/nutrition (2)

Table 3. Top 12 issues/topics for the North Central region

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Financial management (25)	Financial management (24)	Community/economic development (19)
2	Youth (21)	Community/economic development (22)	Youth (17)
3	Health/nutrition (20)	Youth (21)	Health/nutrition (16)
4	Families/parenting (17)	Health/nutrition (16)	Financial management (11)
5	Food (15)	Food (9)	Food (10)
6	Community/economic development (15)	Sustainable agriculture (9)	Energy (8)
7	Leadership (8)	Families/parenting (8)	Families/parenting (5)
8	Volunteers (7)	Energy (7)	Livestock (5)
9	Corn and soybean production (7)	Water (5)	Farm management (5)
10	Horticulture (6)	Forage (5)	Leaderships (5)
11	IPM (5)	Volunteers (4)	Forage (4)
12	Beef (5)	Fruit production (3)	Volunteers (4)

Table 4. Top 12 issues/topics for the Southern region

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Health/nutrition (36)	Health/nutrition (30)	Health/nutrition (28)
2	Financial management (34)	Financial management (30)	Horticulture (27)
3	Horticulture (31)	Horticulture (24)	Financial management (24)
4	Food (20)	Youth (17)	Youth (20)
5	Youth (16)	Families/parenting (15)	Families/parenting (16)
6	Families/parenting (14)	Community/economic development (13)	Community/economic development (14)
7	Water (10)	Food (11)	Agriculture marketing (11)
8	Beef (10)	Forage (11)	Food (10)
9	Volunteers (8)	Beef (8)	Forage (9)
10	Community/economic development (7)	Water (7)	Forestry (6)
11	Sustainable living (6)	Weed control (5)	Water (5)
12	Weed control (6)	Small farms (5)	Small farms (5)

Table 5. Top 12 issues/topics for the Northeast region

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Health/nutrition (14)	Health/nutrition (12)	Health/nutrition (10)
2	Youth (12)	Food (10)	Youth (7)
3	Food (11)	Families/parenting (9)	Financial management (7)
4	Horticulture (10)	Financial management (8)	Food (6)
5	Families/parenting (9)	Community/economic development (8)	Community/economic development (6)
6	Financial management (9)	Horticulture (8)	Homes (4)
7	Energy (7)	Youth (7)	Sustainable agriculture (4)
8	Community/economic development (7)	Energy (5)	Energy (4)
9	Water (5)	Water (5)	Forestry (3)
10	Agriculture marketing (5)	Agriculture marketing (3)	Horticulture (3)
11	Homes (5)	Forestry (3)	Animal welfare (3)
12	IPM (4)	Leadership (3)	Families/parenting (2)

Table 6. Top 12 issues/topics for the Western region

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Health/nutrition (23)	Food (14)	Horticulture (16)
2	Financial management (16)	Horticulture (14)	Health/nutrition (15)
3	Food (14)	Community/economic development (14)	Food (13)
4	Youth (14)	Financial management (12)	Community/economic development (13)
5	Horticulture (13)	Youth (10)	Youth (11)
6	Energy (10)	Health/nutrition (8)	Financial management (6)
7	Community/economic development (10)	Water (7)	Water (5)
8	Water (8)	Families/parenting (6)	Energy (5)
9	Weed control (8)	Weed control (5)	Volunteers (5)
10	Volunteers (6)	Forestry (5)	Families/parenting (3)
11	Sustainability (5)	Livestock (4)	Forestry (3)
12	Pesticide application (5)	Volunteers (4)	Weed control (3)

Table 7. Top 12 issues/topics for all regions

Rank	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Health/nutrition (96)	Financial management (76)	Health/nutrition (71)
2	Financial management (84)	Health/nutrition (66)	Youth (58)
3	Youth (66)	Youth (59)	Community/economic development (54)
4	Horticulture (62)	Community/economic development (59)	Financial management (50)
5	Food (60)	Horticulture (46)	Horticulture (46)
6	Families/parenting (47)	Food (46)	Food (39)
7	Community/economic development (42)	Families/parenting (38)	Families/parenting (26)
8	Water (23)	Water (24)	Energy (17)
9	Volunteers (21)	Forage (16)	Forage (13)
10	Energy (17)	Energy (12)	Forestry (12)
11	Beef (15)	Weed control (10)	Agriculture marketing (11)
12	Weed control (14)	Sustainable agriculture (9)	Water (10)

Health/nutrition – general nutrition education, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, physical activity/fitness, general health and wellness, weight loss, chronic disease prevention, healthy diets, feeding families on a budget, arthritis, cancer, recipes, heart disease.

Financial management – general consumer/family finances, financial literacy, estate planning, credit, farm financial management, managing finances in tough times, legal/tax issues, home foreclosure prevention, retirement planning, health insurance, youth money management, low-income, stretching the family budget, life insurance, stress related to finances, bankruptcy, shopping on a budget, record keeping, small business financial management, transferring assets, long term health care, debt management, investments.

Youth – general information about 4-H, 4-H club management, tobacco prevention, 4-H expressive arts, 4-H judging teams, drug prevention, youth/adult partnerships, leadership development, animal science, after school programs, volunteer training, residential and day camps, urban youth, military youth programs, career planning, mentoring/coaching, SET, non-traditional 4-H programming, workforce preparation, 4-H shooting sports, community/civic engagement, risk management, teen pregnancy, special needs, entrepreneurship, citizenship, marketing 4-H programs, early childhood education.

Horticulture – Master Gardner program, pest management/IPM, irrigation, lawns, organic gardening, pest identification, vegetable gardening, going green, landscape design, pruning, ornamentals, fruits, tropical plants, community gardening, school gardening, sustainable landscaping.

Food – safety, security, preservation, preparation, local food systems, supply, poverty, healthy foods, availability, stretching food dollars, sustainable food systems, decision making, quality, canning, allergies, special diets, organic, meal planning, food banks.

Families/parenting – child development, child care, co-parenting in divorce, general parenting education, marriage and re-marriage education, positive discipline for children, children with incarcerated parents, unemployment in families, support groups, divorce, raising respectful children, immigrant families, building strong families, time management, low-income families, court ordered situations, illegal drugs, single parent families, child care providers, adolescent parenting, teen pregnancy, keys to successful marriages, work life balance, child abuse protective factors, high risk families, health care, resilience, poverty.

Community/economic development – general community development, small business creation/entrepreneurship, rural community development, job creation/workforce preparation, civic engagement, sustainable community development, planning and zoning, tourism, economic development, unemployment and underemployment, ex-prisoner reintegration, training local government officials, beautification, land use planning, government budget constraints, public policy issues education, capacity building, growth, going green, political advocacy, asset mapping, development.

Water – quality, quantity, rainwater collection, reduction in runoff/pollution, storm water management, septic systems, private drinking water treatment, watershed nutrient management, conservation, irrigation, sustainability, reuse.

Volunteers – recruitment, training, retaining, rewarding.

Energy – biofuels, alternative sources, wind, conservation, renewable, solar, education, small commercial business use, wood, residential, economics, efficiency.

Beef – production/management, health, reproduction failure, marketing, processing, finances.

Weed control – invasive species, herbicide resistance, ID and control, switch grass.

Forage – pasture management, renovation, alternatives for small livestock, grazing, public land grazing, pasture rental rates, irrigation.

Sustainable agriculture – sustainable cropping and animal production practices, alternatives to commercial fertilizers, continuous no-till, environmental BMP's, ecological stewardship, ranch sustainability.

Agriculture marketing – general marketing practices, farmers markets, small vegetable growers, direct markets, specialty markets.

Finally, respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in a CoP if one formed around the issues/topics they listed. Overall results are presented in Table 8 below. The overall results are reflective of results for each of the regions.

Table 8. Willingness to participate in a CoP

Willingness	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
Yes	627 (66%)	528 (58%)	441 (53%)
No	89 (9%)	120 (13%)	116 (14%)
Don't know	238 (25%)	268 (29%)	281 (34%)
Total	954	916	838

Discussion

eXtension staff was pleased with the 985 responses representing 62 land grant institutions. As to the issues/topics identified, there was some consistency across regions. Perhaps most striking was that many of the issues/topics are already addressed, or will be addressed, by existing and planned CoP's (See the CoP list below). The only issues/topics among the top 12 overall that appeared not to be directly addressed are volunteers, weed control, sustainable agriculture, leadership, and agriculture marketing. However, some of these may be covered in existing and planned CoP's. These results should be examined and existing and planned CoP's may add content and resources to address them, or new CoP's can be developed.

Finally, it is encouraging to note that a majority of respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in a CoP. And while a fair number indicated that they didn't know, only a very small percentage said no.

eXtension Communities of Practices

- Ag Law
- Bee Health*
- **Beef Cattle Industry**
- Better Kid Care America
- Companion Animals
- **Consumer Horticulture**
- **Corn and Soybean Production**
- **Cotton**
- **DAIReXNET**
- **Diversity Across Higher Education**
- Drinking Water Issues
- **Entrepreneurs and Their Communities**
- **eOrganic**
- **Extension Disaster Education Network**
- Extension Wildfire Information Network
- **Family Caregiving**
- **Families, Food and Fitness**
- **Financial Crisis**
- **Financial Security for All**
- Food Safety
- Forest-based Bioenergy
- Freshwater Aquaculture
- **Goats**
- Home Energy
- **HorseQuest**
- **Imported Fire Ants**
- **Just In Time Parenting**
- Land Use Planning
- **Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Centers**
- **Map@Syst**
- **Niche Meat Processing Assistance Network**
- Pesticide Environmental Stewardship
- Pork Information
- Rangelands
- Sustainable Ag Energy
- Sustainable Marine Fisheries
- Urban Integrated Pest Management
- Water Conservation for Lawns and Landscapes
- **Wildlife Damage Management**
- **Youth SET for Life**

**Launch planned for July 15, 2009*

Boldface indicates launched as of 6/16/09

Links to Reports

<http://tinyurl.com/all-regions>

<http://tinyurl.com/1890-region>

<http://tinyurl.com/northcentral-region>

<http://tinyurl.com/northeast-region>

<http://tinyurl.com/southern-region>

<http://tinyurl.com/western-region>