

Extension's Future—A National Report

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This is not intended to review the total Report of the National USDA/Land-Grant Extension Study Committee. It does not attempt to embrace all recommendations contained in it. Rather, it is an attempt to outline the major thrust of the recommendations, illustrating with some specific examples. Detailed comments concerning recommendations will be found in the printed report. The report can serve as an important document to stimulate dialogue, to guide program analysis, and to provide future direction for the Extension Service. It is now available to Extension Services. Individual orders may be made to Colorado State University Printing Service (Attn: Mrs. Betty Ellis), Administration Building, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521. The unabridged version costs 75 cents per copy. An abridged version costs 25 cents.

WHAT MAY be one of the most important reports ever made on the Cooperative Extension Service was released for preliminary discussion at the meeting of the National Association of State University and Land-Grant Colleges November 10, 1968. This report resulted from studies made by the National USDA/Land-Grant Extension Study Committee during the past two years.

Twenty years ago (in the late 1940's), a similar joint Land-Grant/USDA committee outlined the role of Cooperative Extension as seen at that time. The 1968 Joint Study report carries perhaps an even greater impact since its membership included university presidents as well as representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the general public.

The studies were undertaken with the following purposes in mind:

1. To analyze and evaluate past contributions of the Cooperative Extension Service and assess its present posture.
2. To review basic administrative and operational relationships be-

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tween the Department of Agriculture and the respective Land-Grant Universities for the purpose of building a stronger program based on mutual understanding and direction.

3. To examine the functions exercised by the Cooperative Extension Service in relationship to other extension and extension-related programs of various executive departments of the federal government.
4. To project the future scope, direction and redirection of the Cooperative Extension Service in order that it may make the maximum contribution to local, state, and national goals and needs of the people it serves.

To establish a base for its analysis, the Committee reviewed the evolution of U.S. institutions for economic and social development. Special consideration was given to the influence of government in providing a framework for national development through assistance to the individual. Cooperative Extension appeared as one of the primary institutions created to serve this objective.

National goals stated in 1960 by the President's Commission were also reviewed, along with paramount and urgent problems of American society in the 1960's. Against this backdrop of national concerns, the Committee analyzed Cooperative Extension. Recommendations were based upon its assessment of Extension's existing and latent capabilities in the decade ahead.

The Joint Study Committee did not deal simply with an internal reallocation of resources available to Cooperative Extension. It was charged to review urgent and priority problems of the United States that can be tackled through extension education. The Committee concluded that Cooperative Extension has developed a capability for problem-solving education which gives it a great potential for meeting national, state, local, and individual needs in the years ahead. It was concluded that the potential of Cooperative Extension to meet relevant needs of society is such that expansion of effort rather than reallocation or contraction is called for. The basic recommendations of the report, therefore, deal with substantially increasing certain program areas and with increasing the efficiency of all existing programs.

EXTENSION PROGRAM AREAS

In viewing Extension's future role, the Joint Study Committee divided program efforts into four major categories: (1) agriculture and related industries, (2) economic and social development, (3)

quality of living, and (4) international extension.

Agriculture and related industries as described include production aspects of farming, ranching, forestry, and related income-producing activities; supplying purchased agricultural inputs (goods and services); related marketing, processing and distributing activities; and soil and water conservation. This category also includes current agricultural program activity now devoted to serving low-income families (approximately 35% of the total).

Economic and social development programs were defined to include community resource development, public affairs education, and the use, development, and conservation of natural resources. These programs deal principally with development activities that involve educational assistance to organizations and groups rather than specific assistance to individuals. Additional work to assist lower income farmers also was included in this category. The Committee states the belief that additional Extension work to serve low-income farmers should focus on group and organizational effort designed to improve the general social and economic environment in which low-income farmers operate, rather than upon additional production-oriented work.

Quality of living as used by the Committee deals with family programs, including youth educational activities and home economics programs. The fourth area, international extension, involves potential Extension contributions in international agricultural development sponsored by the United States.

To obtain a base for projections, present program efforts were quantified by a staff task committee. Their survey indicated that 58.2% of Extension's 1966 manpower was allocated to help people efficiently produce range, farm, and forest products. An additional 5.7% was devoted to increasing the effectiveness of the marketing and distribution system. Eighteen per cent was devoted to educational programs related to social and economic development. A total of 37% of the 1966 manpower was assigned to quality of living programs. One and one tenth per cent was devoted to international extension work.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the Joint Study Committee called upon the Cooperative Extension Service to adapt its staff and programs to better serve the pressing social and economic needs of our nation while continuing at full strength its work with the important and basic agricultural sector of the economy. A significant expansion of Extension

work in the quality of living and the economic and social development program categories is envisioned. Overall professional staffing recommendations by major category of domestic program emphasis are illustrated in Figure 1. These recommendations are in man-year equivalents and reflect an overall professional manpower increase of 95% for domestic programs. The Committee also recommends a

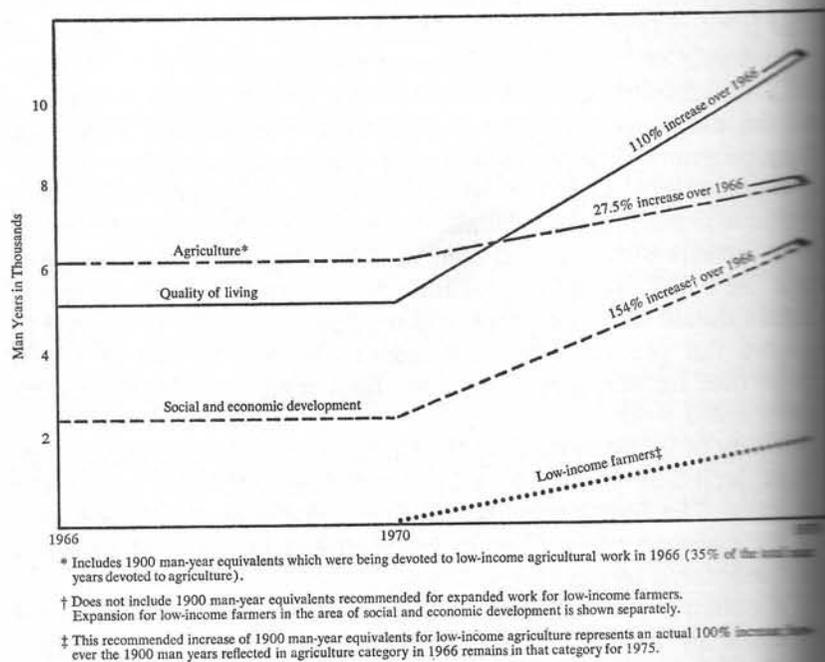


Figure 1. Allocation of staff resources (in man-year equivalents) by major category of domestic program emphasis for the Cooperative Extension Service for 1975, projected from 1966 by percentage increases.

more specific and formalized involvement of Cooperative Extension in future programs of international agricultural development. A brief review of two of the four major program categories of Extension work will illustrate the basic Committee viewpoint.

Agriculture and Related Industries

The viewpoint of those who have called for a significant curtailment of education and research designed to support agriculture and its related industries was considered by the Committee. It took issue with this point of view. Since a prosperous and productive agriculture was identified in 1960 as one of the national goals, the Committee concluded that a strong and viable agricultural industry is

one of the major components for continued national economic growth and development. It, therefore, supports the continuation and strengthening of Cooperative Extension programs designed to assist the total agricultural industry.

Recommendations pertaining to agriculture call for only modest increases in total staffing. They call for a substantial increase in educational efforts related to farm business administration and marketing, with a resultant proportional decrease in programs related to production and husbandry. These recommendations are based on the view that present staffing related to production and husbandry is generally satisfactory and increases related to the agricultural industry should go principally into the marketing and management areas.

A survey of private agricultural industry firms by the Joint Study Committee indicated an intent by these firms to increase their education-information programs in the years ahead. The Committee believes that Extension should seek closer relationships with these firms and utilize them, where practicable, to obtain greater efficiency.

Recommendations also call for continuing efforts by Extension administrators to modify agricultural work to cope with the priority needs of the nation. Specific reference is made to more extensive use of the area or multi-county approach and to better use of manpower by employing more specialized and highly trained personnel. Specific recommendations concerning the changing emphasis within the Extension agricultural program category are illustrated in Table 1.

Quality of Living

Many urgent concerns of American society are directly related to Extension's programs in the quality of living category. For this reason, the Joint Study Committee recommends that by 1975 Cooperative Extension programs of youth and family education be doubled. It is also recommended that strenuous efforts be made to develop new cooperative relationships with other agencies concerned with the quality of American life.

The Committee specifically recommends additional resources for these programs in metropolitan as well as in the nonmetropolitan areas. Special attention is given to those who are alienated and disadvantaged. Use of subprofessional aides from the target population is recommended to increase effectiveness of access in programs serving these segments of society.

Future objectives for quality of living programs are: (1) to enhance the quality of individual and family decisions and provide

the skills needed to carry out the decisions; (2) to increase the ability of individuals to interact effectively with others; (3) to assist the individual to acquire the ability to utilize community services and to participate in the development of community services; and (4) to enhance the social, physical, and economic mobility of the individual.

Table 1. A summary of the projected changes in Extension program emphasis expressed in per cent of time allocated to each activity contributing to the agricultural production program, 1966 to 1975.*

Program emphasis	Per cent of time	
	1966	1975
Developing an understanding of situation, outlook, policy, market structure, and other forces affecting decisions	10	14
Improving management through the consideration of size, organization, and effective allocation of resources	7	14
Improving the efficiency of the selection, procurement, and use of supplies, labor, and credit	6	12
Improving the design, construction, procurement, maintenance, and use of buildings and equipment	8	10
<i>Subtotal</i>	31%	50%
Improving plant and animal nutrition and feeding	18	12
Improving plant and animal selection and breeding	11	8
Controlling diseases, insects, weeds, and other pests	13	13
Improving harvesting, storage, and marketing	8	7
Other cultural and husbandry practices	19	10
<i>Subtotal</i>	69%	50%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%

* These projections are based on an assumed increase of 27.5% in total agricultural program activity by 1975.

Priority groups identified for greatly increased attention in Extension's quality of living programs are disadvantaged youth and adults in rural slums and urban ghettos, potential school dropouts, young families, and unemployed young adults of high school age. The Committee does not believe that the Extension Service can attain a satisfactory impact from such efforts without a significant addition of funds and the addition of persons trained in disciplines appropriate to the needs of the target families. It recommends that personnel broadly trained in the social and behavioral sciences be hired to

complement existing staff for low-income programs. Personnel assigned to Extension youth programs should be qualified in disciplines relevant to the education and motivation of youth.

The Committee expresses the view that Extension must obtain access to the full resource base of its parent university. Particularly for those programs related to quality of living, access is needed to departments which have not traditionally contributed staff to Cooperative Extension. It is recommended that the administrative mechanisms necessary to provide access to the full university resource base be developed. In addition, it is recommended that Extension make maximum use of short term, consultant or part-time professional assistance of faculty of other institutions or agencies who have specific capabilities related to the Extension programs.

During its deliberations the Committee gave specific attention to the complex and pluralistic society in which Extension operates, particularly in the metropolitan areas. As a result, it expresses a view that Extension cannot hope for nor should it seek to provide all of the services needed by persons served through programs designed to enhance the quality of living. To an increasing extent, Extension should develop closer cooperative working relationships with other agencies, institutions, and organizations. In many instances, Extension may contribute most by referring its clientele to agencies designed to assist on specific problems.

The report makes specific reference to Extension's traditional program efforts with home economics and 4-H clubs. It suggests that these programs continue to play an important role in Extension quality of living programs. But it stresses that the approach be broadened beyond the traditional homemaker councils and 4-H clubs in order to reach new audiences with problems which heretofore have not been tackled. It is suggested that the 4-H program be maintained as a youth development activity for youngsters from all walks of life and economic levels—that it should become neither a poverty program nor a strictly middle-class activity. In reference to both homemaker and 4-H clubs, the Committee stresses the need to increase the proportion of time spent on educational activities and to decrease the amount of time in servicing such organizations.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Special attention is given to the matter of staff training and development. It is recommended that each state Extension organization assign to one or more staff members responsibility for this function. Such a function should include identifying training needs, develop-

ing recommendations on training policies, and arranging learning experiences for professional staff development. It is recommended that Extension's current training staff be doubled.

Additional details concerning these and other recommendations may be found in the printed report of the Committee. The report includes a chapter dealing with the relationships between Cooperative Extension, the Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant Universities, and cooperating organizations and institutions. Included also are recommendations pertaining to the relationships between the predominantly white and predominantly Negro institutions.

CONCLUSION

The Joint Study Committee has supported the general level of existing Extension programs but has outlined a new and broader role in several aspects. Cooperative Extension in the Joint Study report is described as a broad-based developmental organization which must draw competency from its parent university, from the federal government, and from all other available sources. It is described as a problem-solving educational organization with the basic organizational framework upon which to build the strengths required in the decade ahead.

Extension is described as performing a catalytic function. It is responsive to the needs of people. It is an organization that stimulates people to inquire and to question, helps them uncover issues, and assists them in seeking better adjustments to individual and group problems. It serves as a connecting link between the people and the larger university and causes community groups to interact in finding solutions to current problems.

An example of the breadth of the program role envisioned by the Committee is provided in the specific recommendation that "the local Extension office should be strengthened as the public's focus of contact with the entire Land-Grant University and as a referral point for the many programs involving relationships between government and people."

For those who seek a comfortable niche and a definite blueprint for action, the Joint Study Committee report will be disappointing. For those who can conceptualize the full potential of Cooperative Extension as an educational function, the report will be disturbing but certainly challenging. As a basis for dialogue, for national and individual state discussion, it should provide a stimulant as well as a sense of direction in the years immediately ahead.