

## The Editor's Page

Lately, Extension seems to be spending a lot of time defending itself. Whether it's a new program thrust, a new way of organizing resources, or a new way of defining a particular Extension staff position, Extension has found itself in the difficult position of defending why the decisions were made.

It's perhaps academic to ask why this happens. The answer isn't easy. Maybe the people affected by the decisions weren't involved in the decision-making process, and thus weren't committed to the decisions.

Perhaps the people who were affected, particularly the power structure and those responsible for making decisions about budgets, didn't understand the importance of the decisions, didn't see the problems from Extension's point of view. For example, decision makers may give tacit approval to changing an Extension agent's responsibilities from agricultural agent to resource agent without fully understanding what the change means. And then when they see the resource agent in action, they question what he's doing. When people question, as taxpayers have every right to do, Extension often panics in its search for answers—and programs suffer. Extension people can spend their time going from one panic to the next.

The problem is how to keep Extension's clientele, community decision makers, power structure, and other organizations informed about what it's doing, and, if appropriate, involved in making the decisions. In a sense, it's answering the questions before they're asked so we have more time to work on programs rather than developing strategies for defending past activities.

**JWA**