

## The Editor's Page

The following article was printed in *The County Agent*. I have been asked to repeat it in the *Journal*.

### THE JOURNAL OF EXTENSION IS GREEN (FOR NOW)

Since becoming editor of the *Journal*, I find many of my colleagues in the Extension Service consider I'm in the advanced stages of senility or have some dread social disease. Based on my latest physical, I have no social disease—however, there may be some question about my progress toward the senile state. Actually, I accepted the *Journal* editorship because I believe it has some use for both the Extension Service and the professionals who conduct Extension work around the world. I'm writing this article to let you know what's happening to the *Journal* and to ask for your help.

This article's style closely follows that of another magazine Extension workers tell me they read—(the one with a centerfold). I'm told the interview technique in journalism is a useful way to get across information quickly and without a great deal of pain for either author or reader. So, here goes:

**QUESTION:** What color is the *Journal of Extension*?

**ANSWER:** The *Journal of Extension* is green (for now).

Actually, this question was put here just to give me an opportunity for an easy answer. Seriously, in my travels around the country, I find some Extension workers who still think the *Journal of Extension* is red and gray. Some professionals who haven't looked at the *Journal* since the red and gray cover days may be surprised to find that it has changed significantly since that period. But, I suggest you don't get too hung up over the color right now since Colleen Schuh, assistant editor, and the Board of Directors at the last annual meeting in June decided to change format and cover color again, beginning in the spring of 1975.

**QUESTION:** Does Extension really need a journal?

**ANSWER:** This is the first of the hard questions. I believe it needs a journal to have a place for information obtained through research and inventive thought to be provided to Extension staff. Yes, agents' associations have their own magazine, ES-USDA puts out *The Extension Service Review*, other professions have specific subject-matter journals. Regardless, there's no other single spot for

an Extension educator to acquire new information about his job. I also believe the *Journal* has the opportunity, maybe even the responsibility, to be controversial and probe new ideas about what we do. It can do this better than anything else, because it's self-supporting and isn't directly funded by any unit of government.

**QUESTION:** Who reads the *Journal*?

**ANSWER:** We don't know for sure. We have a feeling that of the 6,000-plus subscriptions, close to 75% are purchased by county and area Extension workers. Jim Bergeaux, from the University of Georgia, is summarizing a *Journal* readership study he reported to the Board of Directors. Based on these findings, the *Journal* is read by a lot more people than many people think.

**QUESTION:** Speaking of readability, does the *Journal* have to be difficult to read?

**ANSWER:** No. I don't believe there's a direct correlation between difficult-to-read, academic verbage and good useful research. Colleen Schuh and I are both working to help authors liven up their writing styles and make the articles more readable.

**QUESTION:** What's the financial situation at the *Journal*?

**ANSWER:** The *Journal* has lost money in the last few years. It can do this because it had a backlog of finances built up in its early years of existence. It can't do it forever, however. The Extension directors, through ECOP, have recommended that each state encourage members to subscribe to the *Journal*. Because of this, subscription numbers have increased, although due to the bulk rate (which is \$2.00 cheaper than individual subscriptions), the total amount of money coming to the *Journal* hasn't increased at this time.

**QUESTION:** Does this mean the *Journal* may increase its subscription rates?

**ANSWER:** Yes. When it does raise rates (and it seems inflation is forcing everybody to do that these days), it unquestionably will be considerably lower than professional journals in other fields.

**QUESTION:** How can an Extension professional contribute to the *Journal* besides subscribing to it and reading it?

**ANSWER:** The biggest contribution an agent or specialist can make to the *Journal* is to become involved with it! This means readers should contribute letters to the editor, write up 2 to 3 double-spaced pages on successful programs for the Idea Corner, and under some circumstances pull together a major article of 10 to 12 pages for the *Journal*. A major article, of course, should focus on

some theory as it relates to what you do in Extension. Major articles are reviewed by the Editorial Committee members, who don't get the names of the authors for the article they review.

Basically, you can support the *Journal* by letting us know what you think. I welcome both good and bad letters about the *Journal*. We can keep doing things that you feel are useful, and we can discontinue things you feel are useless, but we really don't know what to do about things when apathy reigns supreme.

**QUESTION:** Can the agents' associations do something for the *Journal*?

**ANSWER:** I believe the agents' associations have a responsibility to the *Journal* if they have a responsibility to improve the professional competency of their members. The agents' associations can help by encouraging subscriptions, contributions, and more than that, usefulness. Lots of county agents dislike the *Journal* because of past experience. All I can say is we think the *Journal* has improved, and we think it can be useful in helping you improve as a professional educator.

**FINAL QUESTION:** Will the new *Journal of Extension* have a centerfold?

**ANSWER:** The *Journal of Extension* is green (for now).

**PJB**