

editor's page

Criteria for More Effective Writing

How much of an Extension professional's time is devoted to communication—the placing of words in some kind of logical order? A lot, I'd guess. (Has anyone tried measuring that?)

I'd like to share with you the criteria used by our Editorial Committee members as they evaluate manuscripts. I have two reasons for doing so. First, the criteria should be useful to you as you prepare manuscripts to submit to the *Journal*. **Second**, they should help you as you develop written materials in your everyday work.

Two sets of criteria are used by Editorial Committee members—one set on *content* and the other set on *readability*.

The *content* criteria ask: to what extent is the manuscript—

- appropriate to the *Journal* audience?
- clear?
- communicative?
- consistent?
- likely to make a significant contribution?
- documented?
- innovative?
- integrated with current theory and practice?
- valid?
- visible (seen as important)?

The *readability* criteria ask: to what extent is the manuscript—

- coherent?
- familiar?
- imaginative?
- lively?
- logically organized?
- retentive?
- simple (meaning easy to understand, *not* meaning insignificant)?

I'm confident that if your day-to-day writing shows evidence that these criteria are met, your readers will judge that communication as being effective.

And, that manuscript you submit to the *Journal* will have a definite competitive edge.

Ray