

editor's page

Who Sets Extension's Agenda?

What is Extension's mission? Who are our clientele? Who should be?

What's Extension's program scope? What relationship exists between research and Extension? What relationship should exist?

How should programs be developed—carried out? Who should fund Extension? Who evaluates Extension, based on what criteria?

Recent reports from GAO,¹ the Oversight Hearings,² and the National Users Advisory Board³ identify these and other concerns about Cooperative Extension. Having such issues asked frequently means many groups with an interest in Extension—client, political, public interest, commodity—are expressing and seeking support for their priorities about Extension.

As Extension staff, where are we making an input into this discussion? Each one of us has had the opportunity to express our perspective to the committee responsible for "Extension in the 80's" report,⁴—and 80% of us did. This report will give direction to Extension nationally in the 80s—and beyond.

Yet, how often have we seen any one of these expressed concerns about Extension discussed in depth? Certainly not often in the *Journal of Extension*.

Journal articles permit substantive development and discussion on any one of these issues and others. Personal perspectives can be shared with others through the *Journal's* "forum" section. Letters to the editor are always an appropriate input.

Certainly we care how these concerns are resolved. Who answers these questions and how will determine what Extension will be in the years ahead. As Extension staff, we should be participants in this dialogue.

Let's use the *Journal of Extension* to understand the issues, to reflect the multiplicity of perspectives, and to serve as a resource to us and others involved in Extension's future.



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1. Comptroller General's Report to the Congress, *Cooperative Extension Service's Mission and Federal Role Need Congressional Clarification*, G.A.O. Report No. CED-81-119 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 21, 1981).
 2. U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Research and Foreign Agriculture, *Extension Service Oversight*, Hearing, 97th Cong. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982).
 3. *Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Recommendations*, Reports to the Secretary of Agriculture, National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board, USDA, 1982.
 4. USDA/NASULGC Joint Committee, *Extension in the '80's: A Perspective for the Future of the Cooperative Extension Service* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension Service, 1983).
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