

editor's page

What Value, Program Evaluation?

Evaluation and accountability are issues on every Extension educator's agenda. Understanding the rationale for conducting Extension program-related evaluations in today's complex environment, where competition among limited resources for equally legitimate requests exists, is often overshadowed by a suspicion of who, why, and for what is Extension being questioned. Who is entitled requires Extension to provide the external accountability needed for public understanding of our educational mission. Simultaneously, we must continue to maintain internal accountability to address program development and organizational management concerns. Purposeful evaluations allow us to do both.

This special issue focuses on some of the current issues on program evaluation facing Extension. The authors reflect their distinct perspectives of program evaluation and its meaning to us as Extension educators. To assure that the program evaluations we carry out are both useful and feasible requires us to understand the issues involved—the intent of this special issue. "Tools of the Trade" identifies resources to help us carry out our evaluation responsibilities as Extension educators.

Special thanks to Mary Andrews, Michigan State University, guest editor for this issue, and M. F. Smith, University of Florida, "Tools of the Trade" guest editor. The intense interest in Extension program evaluation is reflected in the more than 40 manuscripts submitted and the spirited discussions on the issues among the editors and some authors.

"Extension and You: Unchanging, But Changing" is the theme for the *Journal's* 1984 special issue. The "call for manuscripts" will appear in the November/December, 1983, *Journal*.

