



# **Advisory Committees**

**“An Essential Element In  
Extension Programming”**

# Advisory Committees

## “An Essential Element In Extension Programming”

### *Summary of Topics*

*Local Advisory Committees Required in Colorado*  
*Advisory Committees Defined*  
*Reasons for Utilization of Advisory Committees*  
*Authorization and Policy Regarding Advisory Committees*  
*Types and Levels of Advisory Committees Discussed*  
*Structure of the Overall Extension Advisory Council*  
*Selection of Overall Advisory Committee Membership*  
*Operating Procedures for the Advisory Committee*  
*Suggested Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities*  
*Maintaining Advisory Committee Interest*  
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*References for Further Study*

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## Advisory Committees

### “An Essential Element in Extension Programming”

#### **Preface:**

The purpose of this document is to assemble materials appropriate to the utilization of lay advisory committees by Colorado State University Extension. The information is provided for use by local Extension staff in developing and/or maintaining a local advisory structure to facilitate citizen participation in the furtherance of Extension’s educational mission.

Organizational expectations for local advisory committees will be addressed in addition to practical suggestions for effective citizen input to Extension.

#### **Introduction:**

The importance of citizen participation in an advisory capacity to Extension is embodied in the mission statement as revised by Colorado Extension in 1988. The mission statement reads as follows:

*Colorado State University Extension provides information and education and encourages the application of research-based knowledge in response to local, state and national issues affecting individuals, youth, families, agricultural enterprises and communities of Colorado.*

If indeed Extension is to effectively respond to issues facing its constituents, the individuals and groups making up the constituency must be provided a structural model to focus relevant issues affecting them. Although Extension staff through their community interaction may sense the educational needs of its citizenry and ultimately provide successful programs; the ‘corporate’ mind of a representative advisory council can be most helpful in the identification of program needs and will lend legitimization to priorities in Extension programming.

In discussing citizen involvement in adult education, E.E. McMahon states, *Historically the focus of adult education was on the individual and his needs. The failure to add the community dimension is a cogent (compelling) reason why adult education is challenged about relevance despite its long attention to needs.*<sup>1</sup>

Likewise in Extension, staff may focus on many expressed needs without the benefits of a local advisory group, but may find relevancy challenged unless legitimized by an appropriate citizen’s group. As a public supported entity, Extension cannot afford to operate in a vacuum and risk the relevancy of its educational mission being questioned simply because staff may elect to move ahead independently. Effective educational programs based upon relevant community involvement will garner public support which may result in greater financial support.

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<sup>1</sup> E.E. McMahon, “Needs of People and Their Communities – and the Adult Educator”, (Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University, 1970)

## **What is an Advisory Committee?**

A working definition offered by Cochran, Phelps and Cochran states, *An advisory committee is a group composed primarily of individuals outside the educational profession who are selected from segments of the community collectively to advise educational personnel regarding one or more educational programs or aspects of a program.*<sup>2</sup>

While this definition is used in the context of vocational education, it applies very well to advisory committees in Extension. Individuals selected for Extension advisory committees are those individuals outside the Extension profession who collectively advise Extension staff regarding educational programs. The primary purpose of an advisory committee is simply to advise! The committee is advisory in nature and has no administrative authority. This philosophy must be clearly understood if the group is to operate properly.

Colorado, unlike many other states, operates within the framework of 'advice'. Many states have statutes which provide for an Extension Board with legal and administrative responsibility for employment and termination of staff, staff salary administration, etc. This kind of board receives mixed reactions from Extension personnel; some believing that a legal board has more influence making Extension more effective, while others feel the legal board is too rigid and usurps power from the Extension organization.

While the legal board may well serve the states that operate under this system, Colorado has historically operated with the more informal, non-legal advisory concept.

The question often arises as to what terminology should be used to identify the advisory group. Such titles as council, board, or committee are frequently used. Because advisory groups in Colorado are advisory in nature and not administrative, the preferable title is advisory 'committee'. The word 'board' implies a board of directors which is not appropriate to the Extension function. A board generally is charged with administrative matters to include budget administration, employment and termination, and policy determination. By implication, a group called an 'advisory board' may perceive roles and duties not appropriate to the Colorado Extension operation.

In like manner, the word 'council' also implies broader duties such as may be vested in a city council or similar council which does make administrative and policy decisions.

There is a caution, however, in minimizing the function of advisory committees with respect to their limitation to advise. If the advice of an advisory committee is seldom accepted or implemented, it is unlikely the committee will remain a viable group. While it is true that all advice may not parallel Extension policy or direction, Extension staff is well served to take seriously the advice of its committee and weigh the merits within Extension guidelines and policy provisions. Extension would be ill-advised to establish an advisory committee and ignore their suggestions. Such a practice could well create an adversarial relationship rather than the intended advocacy relationship.

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie H. Cochran, L. Allen Phelps and Linda Letwin Cochran, Advisory Committees in Action, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980, p. 4.

## **Why Have Advisory Committees for Extension?**

### ***Upholding Grass-Roots Philosophy***

Historically, Extension has been labeled as a ‘grass-roots’ organization, implying that programs are initiated to the point of program delivery within the system. While it is true some programs are initiated from the state and national levels, it is generally accepted that local Extension programs are ‘born’ at the local level.

A local Extension Advisory Committee provides a basis for assuring the grass-roots concept remains a strong benefit to Extension. A local committee can be instrumental in sorting out local needs as they relate to broader issues identified by state or national advisory groups and the Extension staff. The diagram on the following page indicates how local programs are tempered with federal guidelines and state priorities. Also note that local clientele needs are given the most attention in Extension programming.

### ***Local Support System***

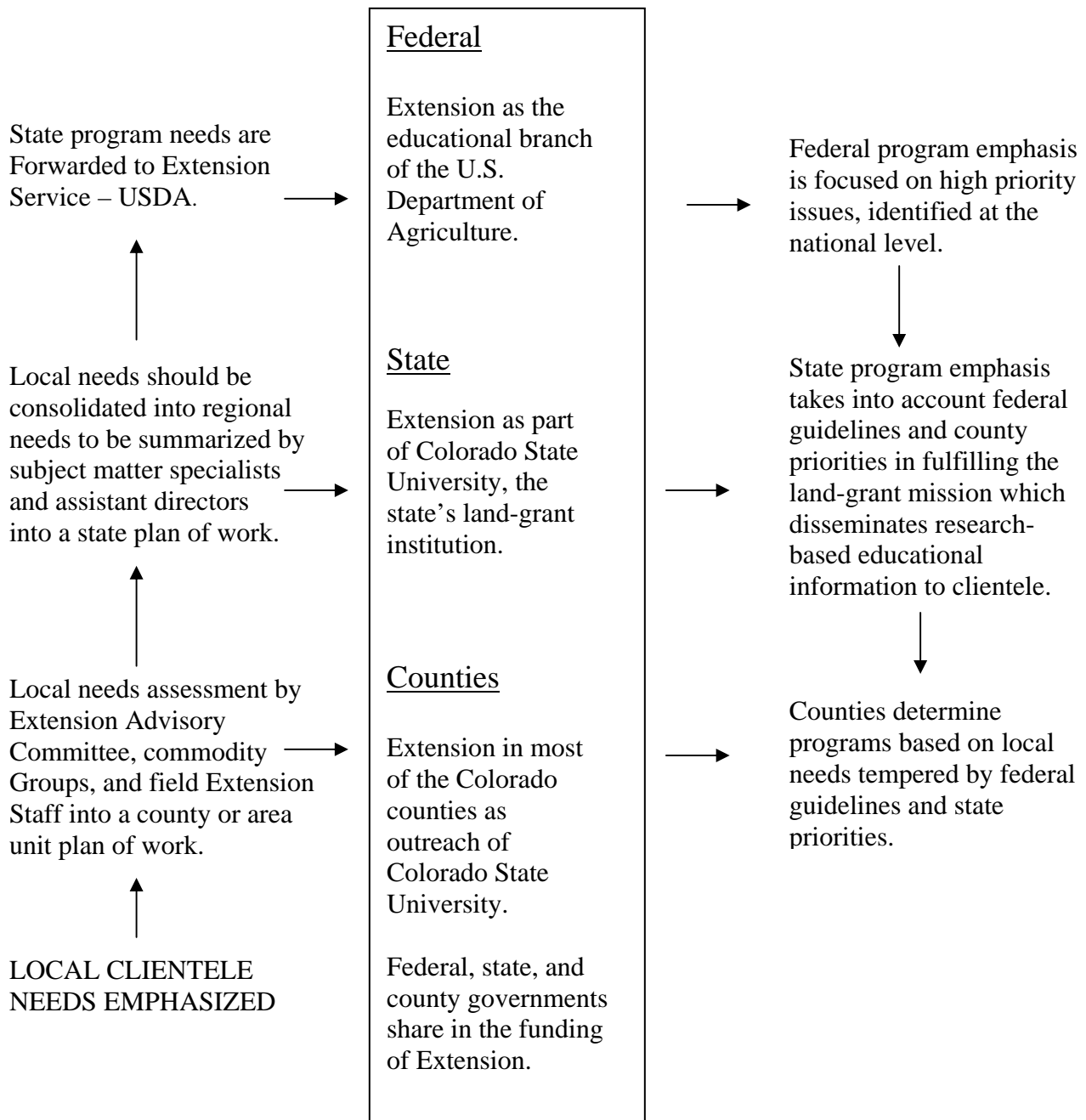
In addition to providing program suggestions and determining program priorities for the local planning unit, an advisory committee provides a support base for Extension. A well informed committee which has taken an ‘ownership’ view of the local Extension program will provide support by communicating the impact of Extension programs to the public-at-large and governmental decision makers.

In times of limited financial support for public education and other services, a well-informed, influential group of individuals is essential to the continuation of funding and support for Extension and the programs it delivers.

### ***Opportunity for Two-Way Communication***

An advisory committee should provide a two-way communication between Extension professionals and the community. Advisory members who represent their local area are in an advantageous position to relay concerns and needs as expressed by their neighbors and community in general. Needs and concerns of various communities may or may not be the same. Differences and similarities can be expressed maintaining a broad perspective of the community-at-large.

## Levels of Governmental Participation and Assessment of Needs





## *Catalyst for Change*

The objective of educational programs provided by Extension is to affect a change of behavior of those individuals receiving the information. An advisory committee can serve as a catalyst for change among clientele. The San Diego County Department of Education in its “Guide for Community School Advisory Councils,” identifies six principles of social interaction which can be achieved through advisory groups.

1. *“People are more likely to accept a changed pattern of behavior when they have participated in the planning.*
2. *People are more likely to change their behavior if they see that other people like themselves are also planning and endorsing such a change in behavior.*
3. *People are more likely to act upon a request if they can be persuaded to commit themselves to a positive decision at the time they hear the request.*
4. *The group itself can be used to stimulate consideration of the new action, to analyze the difficulties and suggest ways of overcoming them, and finally to arrive at some decision about the action being discussed.*
5. *If free discussion of a proposed action results in some general agreement among group members that they will participate in this action, there is a good chance that the action will be carried out.*
6. *A group decision can do a great deal to strengthen an individual’s good intentions and change his attitudes.”<sup>3</sup>*

These six principles relate directly to Extension’s role in promoting change and stimulating acceptance through the local advisory committee.

## **Authorization and Policy Related to Advisory Committees:**

### ***Administrative Expectation***

The Colorado Extension Handbook under the section, “Administrative Guidelines”, Page 4-1, states, ***“It is the expectation of Colorado State University Extension that each county or area unit will develop and maintain a viable Extension Advisory Committee(s) and formally identify its membership and structure.”*** The policy further indicates the **organization and use of advisory groups shall be a basic requirement for holding assignments as County or Area Director.**

Regional Directors or appropriate administrators are charged with assessing the effectiveness of local advisory committees and making the results a part of the annual performance appraisal with county and area directors.

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<sup>3</sup> San Diego County Department of Education, A Guide for Community School Advisory Councils, San Diego County Department of Education, 1975.

The administrative director does not specify the organizational framework for a local advisory committee, but does call for a formally organized group with an elected chair and minutes or documentation to be kept on file in the local Extension office. Advisory structures will be addressed in another section of this document.

### ***Legislative Authorization***

Senate Bill #77 enacted in 1979 by the Colorado General Assembly cited as the ‘Colorado Cooperative Extension Service Act’, references advisory committee involvement. In addition to the authorization of a statewide advisory committee for Extension; the Bill also authorizes Extension to cooperate with boards of County Commissioners in creating local advisory committees.

*This legislation goes on to state, Advisory committees are to assist local Extension personnel in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and performance. Extension may establish administrative standards, operating procedures, and methods for utilizing such advisory committees; and may make the utilization of said standards, operating procedures, and methods for utilizing such advisory committees a basis for program cooperation and coordination.*

Although Senate Bill #77 does not dictate the use of advisory groups, the language used in authorizing such groups does make it clear that utilizing advisory groups as a basis for program cooperation and coordination is intended. Consequently, it appears that the legislature should be receptive to advisory committee input when evaluating support to Extension. A strong case can be made for Extension personnel to make every effort to establish and/or maintain a viable advisory committee. Some legislators have stated, “*My support for Extension is dependent upon you maintaining strong advisory committees and responding to their recommendations.*”

### **Staff Responsibility with the Advisory Committee:**

#### ***Advisory Group Viewed as Support, Not a Threat***

Some Extension personnel over the years have been hesitant to actively participate in establishing and maintaining an advisory committee. This may be attributed to several factors. Some staff may perceive an advisory committee as a threat to their leadership. Others may feel an advisory committee may recommend discontinuing some programs the staff wants to continue or establish new programs in areas where the agent is not trained or is uncomfortable providing. Another factor has to do with possible criticism by an advisory committee with regard to the agent involved or aspects of program delivery.

It is certainly possible an advisory committee may express any or all of the items referred to above. However, an advisory committee can provide a forum for discussing concerns before they become community wide concerns. An advisory committee should be viewed as an important resource and not as a threat to the local program or the local staff. In reality, the program belongs to the local people and Extension staff are placed in the county or area to provide leadership for educational programs identified as their needs. With this in mind, an

advisory committee should be viewed as a means of reaching mutual goals in a supportive, helpful role rather than a threat to Extension staff.

### ***Staff Commitment***

Whether a single agent county or a multiple staff unit, agents need to agree to the importance of an advisory committee and secondly, commit ample time and effort to appropriately sustain a viable advisory structure. As stated earlier, the county or area director has the major leadership responsibility for effective advisory involvement; however, other staff have a vital role to play in providing adequate program information as requested to assist the advisory committee with its responsibility. From time to time, the advisory committee will want program reports and base data needed to prioritize program effort. Generally, staff or clientele who have been impacted positively by Extension programs can best provide needed information for advisory committee consideration.

### ***Staff Linkage to the Advisory Committee***

Since the advisory committee is established to provide ‘advice’ to the staff, agents are generally not considered as official members of the advisory committee. Staff are often viewed as ex-officio members with no voting privileges or as consultants to the committee. Additionally, staff should not serve as the chair or president of the committee since this minimizes the autonomy and leadership of the advisory group. A chair should be elected from the committee.

Staff generally provide for meeting arrangements and often send the notices for the meetings. Some advisory committees, however, provide their own leadership in communicating with the membership and may be preferable as long as efforts are coordinated with the local Extension staff. The county/area director or designated staff member should coordinate meeting agendas with the chair of the committee to assure appropriate agenda items are addressed on a timely basis.

### **Types and Levels of Advisory Involvement:**

Advisory committees exist in many forms within the Extension system. Many counties or areas have had various advisory groups within its structural makeup numbering as high as 30 or 40 depending upon size and scope of program delivery. The major categories of advisory group types are: (See the diagram on page 9).

### ***Overall Extension Advisory Committee***

The overall advisory committee for a county or area program is considered the group with broad directional responsibility and corporate oversight and support for the entire Extension program. It is the overall advisory committee referenced in the Extension Handbook Policy and Senate Bill #77. Regardless of the number of program committees utilized in a local unit, it is the ‘overall’ committee which is required by policy.

It is generally the responsibility of the overall advisory committee to assess trends within the county or area and implications for future programming for the entire Extension effort. This will

involve assessing needs, resource availability and prioritizing program effort in line with staff capability. Although the primary responsibility of the advisory committee is to advise on program needs, the committee may function as legitimizers and advocates for Extension and assist in budget support and liaison with appropriate decision makers such as county commissioners, city council, and legislators.

This committee may also be called upon to appoint a subcommittee to assist in the interview process in hiring new Extension personnel. While it is the responsibility of the Colorado State University Extension Administrative staff to employ personnel, local input is desired, since staff will interact closely with the leadership of the community they are hired to serve.

Some counties have adopted a model which selects an executive committee or a subcommittee from the membership of the overall advisory committee to interact more directly with staff in furthering the Extension cause. Such a committee may meet more often and deal more directly in communicating with decision makers or assessing day-to-day Extension operations. The membership composition of an overall advisory committee will be addressed in the section on structure.

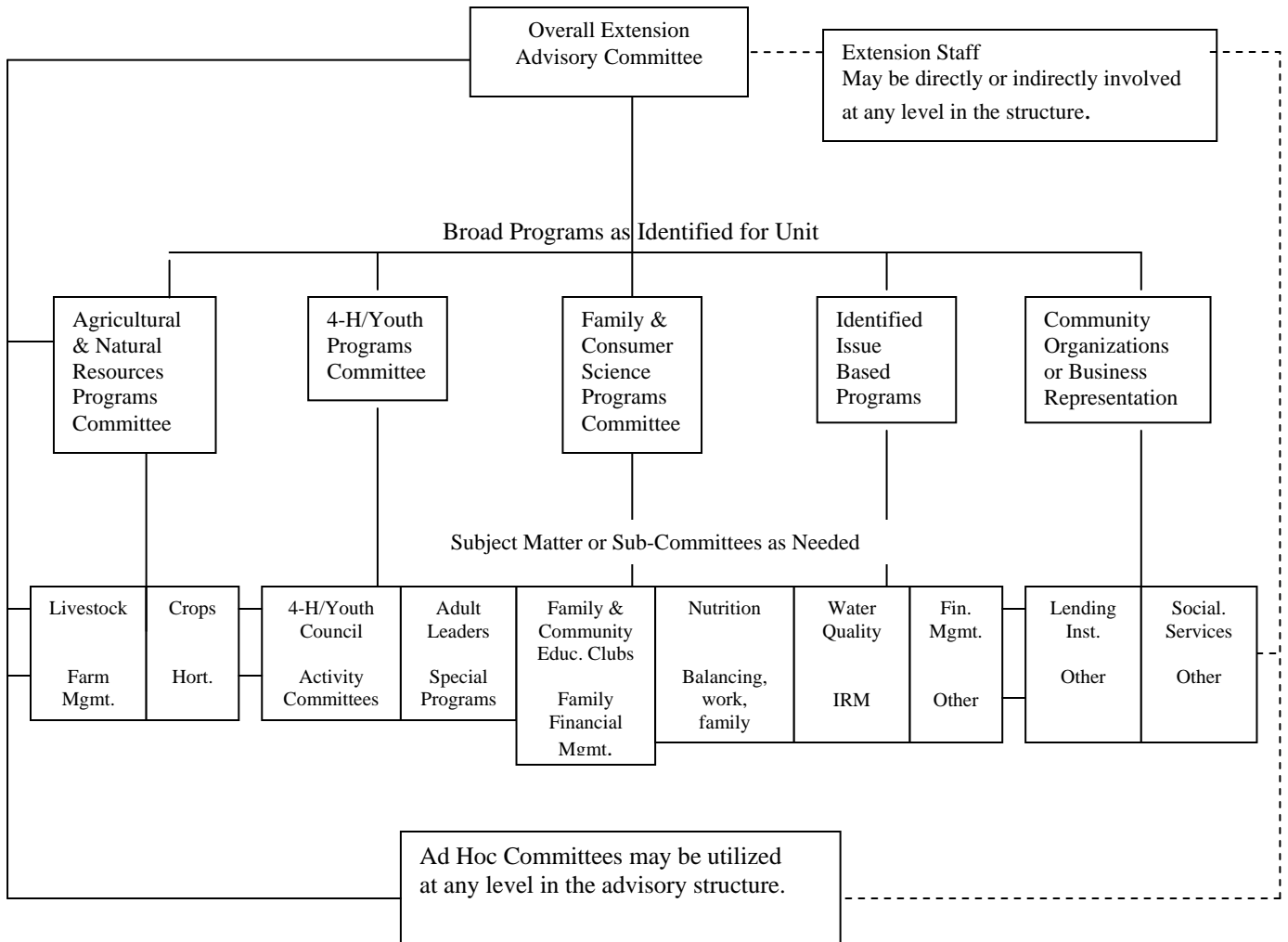
### ***Program And/Or Issue-Based Committees***

A program and/or issue-based committee is a group of individuals who are targeted to a sub-program of the overall county or area program. Historically, such a committee represents the broad areas of agriculture and natural resources, home economics, and 4-H/Youth. Without expanding at this point, the composition of an overall committee often includes the leadership from these broad program areas.

While it is true that categories such as agriculture, home economics and 4-H/Youth have been the traditional program designations, Extension's commitment to more issue-based programming may alter the traditional model. Program committees representing the issues identified by Extension may be more appropriate in the future. This kind of change should be assessed carefully by staff and advisory committee before implementing, since many clientele still associate with agriculture, home economics and 4-H/Youth and may resist an issue-based advisory structure. This does not mean, however, the concept should automatically be rejected since many clientele are forward thinking and might welcome such a change.

Program or issue-based committees should include individuals who have interest and/or expertise in the designated subject area.

Levels of Extension Advisory Committees



## ***Subject Program Subcommittees or Task Forces***

These subcommittees are generally action oriented groups who work on very specific programs. They may be sub-groups of the broader program or issue-based committee discussed previously. Leadership of these sub-groups may be the individuals who make up the broader program committee. The 4-H program probably typifies the subcommittee structure more closely than other broad program areas. Committees are often selected to plan and implement very specific activities or programs, such as enrollment drives, 4-H achievement program, 4-H fair, program areas, 4-H fund raising, etc. It is the subcommittee structure that gives amplification to Extension programming since they are instrumental in the involvement of clientele that may not be reached by direct Extension staff contact.

Specially trained leaders sometimes referred to as ‘key’ leaders can be assigned to work with various subcommittees relieving the Extension staff from attending all meetings within the advisory structure. This not only broadens the scope of Extension, but also provides the opportunity for these ‘key’ leaders to further develop their leadership skills. These ‘key’ leaders also help to expand and multiply Extension’s effort.

## ***Ad Hoc or Short-Term Involvement***

The overall advisory committee, broad program committees and to a large extent, subcommittees are ongoing or long term in nature. This does not mean that all subcommittees should or will be ongoing, but the nature of Extension programming wherein many programs are long term, generally calls for an extended advisory committee or planning committee commitment.

It is very likely certain programs or issues may be handled most appropriately by a short-term committee often referred to as an ad hoc committee. An ad hoc committee may be made up of members of ongoing, longer term committees or selected from clientele-at-large who have a special interest in the program or issue being addressed. When the program has been completed or the issues appropriately addressed, the ad hoc group is disbanded. It would be well for Extension staff to analyze the appropriateness of ad hoc committees which may minimize an over extended commitment to a large number of standing or long-term committees. There is a potential for standing committees to perpetuate their particular group for the sake of the committee members themselves, rather than whether or not the committee is still needed. A specific time frame for some committees could help keep the number of committees at a minimum.

## **Structure of Overall Advisory Committee**

### ***Formally Organized***

As stated in the Extension Handbook quoted earlier, **the overall advisory committee is to be formally organized**. Some staff in the past have relied upon a printed list of names filed in the local office or telephone calls to key individuals as their advisory structure. This may have served a purpose in the past, but does not meet the intent of Extension’s policy requiring a formally structured, active advisory committee. A committee meeting together creates a synergistic affect in understanding the issues and needs of others.

**Several criteria are necessary to meet the requirements of a formally organized overall advisory committee:**

- 1. Members must be officially appointed for specific terms as established for the advisory committee. Appointments should be made official by the local Board(s) of County Commissioners. (Selection of members and county commissioner approval will be discussed under the section on selection of members).**
- 2. The committee must meet formally on a periodic basis.**
- 3. Officers should be elected to carry out the leadership functions.**
- 4. Minutes or written documentation of committee meetings should be kept on file in the local Extension office.**
- 5. Bylaws or operating guidelines should be developed for the advisory committee.**

### ***Representation of Membership***

**Geographical** – Consideration should be given to geographical distribution of people for the advisory committee membership. Geographical representation minimizes the real or perceived notion that Extension is serving a preferential section of the county or area. There is often a tendency to select members from the more highly populated areas, the geographic area more adjacent to the location of the local Extension office or the area preferred by the agent.

Another reason for geographic distribution of membership is the differences found within a given county or area such as types of communities, demographic factors, minority communities, kinds of agricultural production and number of identified communities. These criteria plus others identified by the local Extension staff and regional director should be carefully considered to ensure an equitable geographic makeup of the advisory membership.

**Program And/Or Issue Interests** – Members should be identified for the overall advisory committee who have broad program interests. Individuals will usually have specific program interests or subject matter involvement because of their career or business connections; however, it is important that members look beyond their specific interest to broader community issues and concerns.

Individuals who have expertise in specific program areas but lack a broader view of the community and Extension's multi-faceted role and mission, should be reserved for program committees or task forces dealing with their specific interest. It is acknowledged that identification of such individuals may be difficult since leadership often surfaces from specific, single interest issues. However, through an informal interview process, through observation or by asking other community residents; this problem should be minimized. While it is important to make attempts to have members with a broad community or program interest, generally people participate in volunteer service as a means of satisfying their own needs as well as

offering their time to benefit the broader community at large. Consequently, selection becomes a balancing act between those individuals who may have self-serving motives and those who have a specific interest, but are willing to set aside their own interest in favor of taking a broader approach on the overall advisory committee.

Most overall advisory committees are structured by membership of individuals who represent leadership of various interest groups, i.e., agriculture, home economics, 4-H/Youth and other major interests identified as priority programs at the local level. To bring a broader, more diverse viewpoint to the advisory committee membership, it is recommended that other community interests be included above and beyond the traditional Extension program areas. This broad view should be communicated as an expectation regardless of the individual's interest.

Historically, advisory committee memberships have included farmers, ranchers, homemakers, and 4-H leaders. This type of membership is still very important since these program areas are central to Extension's mission; however, outside interests bring a balance of thinking and 'stretches' program considerations beyond the traditional. In addition to farmers, ranchers, homemakers and 4-H leaders, the following occupational interests are examples which might be considered for membership on the overall advisory committee.

Financial leaders (Banker, Farm Credit, Trust Officer, Financial Management, etc.)

Agri-business (Farm Sales, Chemical dealer, Equipment dealer, Nurserymen, etc.)

Educators Outside Extension (School Administrator, School Counselor, Teacher, College Professor, etc.)

Youth Leaders (Boy or Girl Scout Executive, Future Farmers of America, Family, Career & Community Leaders of America, Boys and Girls Club, etc.)

Community Leaders (Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, Ministers, Social Workers, etc.)

Financial Foundations

Professional Business (Attorneys, Physicians, Public Accountants, etc.)

Community Organizations (Home Owners Association, Neighborhood Groups, etc.)

Inclusion of outside interests not only brings a broader program opportunity to Extension, but gives Extension greater visibility throughout the county or area.

**Balance of Male/Female Members** – The overall advisory committee, and in most cases all Extension advisory groups, should have a balance of male and female members. This balance is especially important on the overall committee since this committee represents the broad, inclusive mission of Extension in that county or area.



Program subcommittees may be predominantly of one sex depending upon the situation. For example, a program committee for home economics may have a majority of female members; however, every effort should be made to include males who are qualified to make program contributions. The same would be true for committees which have traditionally been male dominated. These committees should be reviewed and an effort made to include females as appropriate.

An appropriate balance of male and female members should provide the forum to plan programs which are not perceived to be discriminatory in nature. Staff should review all committees and those found to be of one sex are suspect and wherever possible, adjustments are recommended.

**Minority Representation** – Extension not only has the responsibility to provide educational programs on a non-discriminatory basis, but also to include minority representation on committees. The overall committee should include minority members on a ratio similar to the percentage of minorities in the county or area served. An analysis of the demographics should be made to provide a basis for equitable representation of various ethnic and racial groups. Identification of minority members is often made through existing minority organizations, minority communities, churches, etc.

Minority representation should provide suggestions whereby Extension can address the primary needs of various ethnic and racial groups in the county or area. Selecting a minority or minorities to simply comply with the intent of the Civil Rights Act doesn't necessarily provide members who know and have interest in Extension programs. If possible, minorities should be selected on the same basis as any other member, that is, a person who has program interests and concerns that Extension can address in its educational mission.

**Power Structure Representation** – The power structure in a given community is considered to be those individuals who influence and/or make the major decisions affecting the community. Such individuals may be identified through observation of names which appear frequently in the news media involved with making the main decisions in the community.

A more effective approach is to do a power structure study within the community. This is generally accomplished by asking various influentials within the area who they feel are the most active in the local decision making process. Those names which are surfaced most often in the survey can normally be considered the power structure in the community. Likewise, there may be sub-power groups within various interests, i.e., business, agriculture, education, finances, etc.

It may be beneficial to include individuals identified as 'power actors' in the community since they do influence major direction. Staff should assess the community leadership and power structure. If the advisory committee includes members that are community leaders and part of the community power structure, the advisory committee may have greater visibility. This will have a direct bearing upon the credibility of Extension and accompanying public support.

Since many people in the power structure may not have the time to attend planning meetings, it may be more advisable to include as members those who influence the decision makers and are more inclined to attend committee meetings and planning sessions. This provides access to decision makers without the expectation of 'power actors' taking an active role as direct members of the advisory committee. It should be noted, however, that certain decision makers

may have expressed interest in serving and should not be discouraged if they can actively participate.

The question often arises as to the advisability of a county commissioner serving as a voting member of the overall advisory committee. Some advisory committees in Colorado do include a county commissioner on the membership and while this has no doubt been successful; there is a potential for conflict of interest since commissioners may be involved in making decisions forwarded by the advisory committee. Additionally, through a Memorandum of Understanding with Colorado State University Extension, county commissioners are an administrative partner in the operation of the local Extension program. This may place the commissioner(s) in an awkward position if they were also a member of the advisory structure.

More appropriate models might be to have a commissioner in an ex-officio capacity or simply have a representative from the board of county commissioners as a liaison to the Extension advisory committee. Either of these models provides a close linkage to the board of commissioners without creating the possibility of conflict between administrative responsibilities and advisory responsibilities.

**Size of the Overall Advisory Committee** – It would be difficult to obtain agreement among Extension staff as to the ‘right’ number of members for the Extension advisory committee! This is probably because there is no ‘right size’ since a number of factors may influence the number most appropriate; factors such as size of the county or area, the geographic makeup of the area served, and the number of program areas identified for representation. A small county with a low population base probably does not need as large a committee as a complex, highly populated county or area.

While there isn’t a specified ‘right size’ for an overall advisory committee, experience has shown a large number tends to be inefficient and has difficulty making decisions. On the other hand, a very small committee may not be representative and may be difficult to maintain adequate numbers for meetings and to carry out responsibilities. **Depending upon criteria mentioned earlier, a committee of seven to fifteen is probably adequate. Large counties or area programs may want to expand beyond the fifteen to ensure adequate representation.** If a large committee seems appropriate, it may be advisable to select several members as an executive committee to address certain identified issues which are difficult to handle in a larger group. An area program may select one member from each of the counties represented to initiate an executive committee for the area program.

### **Who Selects Advisory Members?**

There are several approaches to the selection process for Extension advisory committees. However, regardless of the selection process and who initially identifies individuals for membership on the advisory committee, the board(s) of county commissioners should make the official appointment. County commissioner approval and/or appointment gives the Extension advisory committee status similar to other committees and boards appointed by the commissioners, i.e. Fair Board, Board of Health, Social Services, Planning Board, etc. Although the Extension advisory committee is not an administrative group, an appointment by county commissioners does tend to give Extension programs more credibility. Relative merits of various nomination/selection processes are discussed as follows:

## Nomination Selection by Extension Staff

### Positive Aspects

\*Members will probably know staff well and have a good understanding of Extension.

\*May be of value when advisory committee is first organized since staff are the key players and be aware of potentially good members.

### Negative Aspects

\*Members may not adequately reflect the needs and interests of the county or their community.

\*May try to please the staff rather than address the issues.

## Power Structure

### Positive Aspects

\*Power structure people usually make the important decisions in the community or county.

### Negative Aspects

\*People at this level may not participate in meetings at the level of Extension advisory committees.

## Election

### Positive Aspects

\*Members may get more support from the community since they were elected.

### Negative Aspects

\*Election may result in a popular vote rather than representing the identified interests.

## Selection by Commissioners

### Positive Aspects

\*Advisory committee may receive more political support since they are selected by commissioners.

### Negative Aspects

\*Selection may reflect biased opinions of certain county commissioners.

\*Extension could become a political 'football'.

## Public Solicitation through News Media

### Positive Aspects

\*May surface individuals not otherwise identified who may have genuine interest.

### Negative Aspects

\*May surface individuals with an 'ax' to grind which may be detrimental to Extension.

## County Commissioner Approval and Appointment of Nominations Submitted by Staff and Advisory Committee

### Positive Aspects

\*Members are selected based upon input of staff and current advisory committee who should have the most direct contact with the community and are familiar with the voids as a result of members going off the committee.

### Negative Aspects

\*Committee may be perceived by some as being self-perpetuated.

The last option probably fits Colorado's needs as well as any selection model. The county commissioners should have the discretion in this model to reject a recommended member(s), if in their opinion, an individual(s) would not appropriately represent Extension or the county. Conversely, the commissioners should have the option to appoint someone other than the ones recommended if they feel such an appointment is in the best interest of the county Extension program.

## Operating Procedures

### *Bylaws*

While a set of bylaws for any organization does not assure a successful organization, bylaws do provide standards for continuity of operation. Bylaws also tend to formalize an organization, which in the case of an Extension advisory committee may help to reach the goal of Extension administration in making the committee a formal organization. Since bylaws are intended to set the boundaries of operation within the organization, careful thought should be given to the contents before final adoption. Having the appropriate 'content' agreed upon prior to adoption should minimize conflicts arising in the future. Provision should, of course, be made in the bylaws for revision as change occurs within the advisory structure.

Most any set of organizational bylaws could be used as a model in preparing bylaws for the Extension advisory committee. The major elements within a set of bylaws should include the following:

\*Name of advisory committee, i.e., county, area, etc.

- \*Purpose and major duties of the committee.
- \*Geographical boundaries served.
- \*Membership structure.
- \*How members are selected.
- \*Terms of membership and how members are rotated.
- \*Officers and their major duties.
- \*Attendance expectations, i.e., minimum number of meetings.
- \*Frequency of meetings with designation of annual meeting.
- \*Subcommittees as appropriate.
- \*Provision for amendments to the bylaws.
- \*Other items as needed according to the county or area needs.

Since bylaws are guidelines for an organization, some individuals may become bound by the 'bylaws' and become inflexible in moving the group ahead. If actions of the committee begin to violate the provisions of the bylaws, it is then the opportune time to explore appropriate revisions of the bylaws.

### ***Job Descriptions***

Considerable material has been written in recent years regarding the use of job descriptions for volunteers. Some feel this is formalizing the process more than necessary and may discourage potential volunteers from participating as a member of the advisory committee. On the other hand, there may be value in a job description since it places in printed form the duties of the volunteer role. The use of the job description or at least a printed list of expectations should provide a clearer understanding of the role of an advisory member.

A job description could be an informal document given to the volunteer or a formal document signed by the volunteer. The local staff will need to evaluate whether or not job descriptions are appropriate for their given situation. If job descriptions are not used, new members should at least be given a document in some form which clarifies the duties, since volunteers often claim they were not made aware of what was expected.

## *Interviewing Prospective Advisory Members*

A practice becoming more popular with organizations who utilize volunteers, is to interview prospective members. This can be a time consuming process, but may well be worth the effort since advisory members generally are committing several years to committee membership. An interview by the Extension staff and/or incumbent advisory members may establish the prospective member's interest and commitment prior to appointment, and the expectations set forth for membership.

The interview also allows the prospective volunteers an opportunity to evaluate the commitment before they make a final decision. A job description or list of duties could be used in the interview process to help the volunteer make a clearer assessment of the commitment he or she is about to make.

Interviews may have another benefit in emphasizing the importance of the assignments in much the same way a job interview does for a prospective employee. The interview process may be organized on a formal basis or simply an informal visit with the individual. The level of formality in an interview process is probably not as important as the need to interface with a potential advisory member before the appointment is finalized. Often people are simply asked by telephone or in writing if they will serve, leaving too much to conjecture and room for misunderstanding.

## *Membership Terms and Rotation of Members*

**Provision should be made for specific terms based upon a rotational system.** Many advisory committees are organized initially without a rotation of members which results in a self-perpetuating committee. Without a rotation system, it is generally awkward to bring new members with 'fresh' ideas on the committee. Attrition is not an effective method to bring new members aboard.

It is relatively simple to initiate a rotational system when establishing a new committee. If membership is a three-year term, one-third of the members can be appointed for one-year terms, one-third for two-year terms and one-third for three-year terms. Those appointed for one and two-year terms could be re-appointed for another three-year term, making five years the maximum period of time to serve. Three-year terms seem appropriate to Extension advisory committees; however, other terms would also be workable. **Whatever the length of terms established, a policy should be made as to the maximum time a member may serve in consecutive years.**

A committee which has been established for some time without a rotational system may be more difficult to restructure. However, to assure new people are brought into the membership, a restructuring should take place. Current members can draw or volunteer for one through three-year terms. Those with one and two-year terms could be considered for another three-year term unless all members have long tenure and a decision is made to adhere to the initial terms. This would result in a quicker turnover and allow for new membership at the time of the restructuring.

A rotational system will force effective members from the committee which is the reason often used to avoid a rotational system. However, most committees provide for a member to be

reconsidered after being off the committee for at least one year. This does allow effective members to be reconsidered.

The positive aspect of the rotation provides the opportunity to replace ineffective members or those who do not participate in regular meetings. Bringing new members to the committee not only brings new ideas to the Extension program, but exposes more individuals in the community to the role and mission of Extension. It is extremely important to establish membership terms with a system of rotation of members and adhere to the established policy.

### *Scheduling of Meetings*

**Regularly scheduled meetings are necessary to bring formality to the committee.** A committee without meetings can scarcely be called a committee! Interaction of the members and the Extension staff brings continuity to the group, consensus on direction of the local program, and builds leadership within the group. Most groups are not effective until a level of maturity has been reached in which members feel free to express their ideas, feel comfortable with each other and have respect for divergent points of view.

The number of regularly scheduled meetings during the year depends upon the nature of the county and area situation and the identified needs. **It is unlikely, however, that an advisory committee can be very effective with less than quarterly meetings.** One or two meetings per year does not provide adequate interaction of the group or ample opportunity to address the prescribed needs identified by Extension for the advisory committee function.

Some advisory committees in Colorado are meeting on a monthly basis or bi-monthly depending upon the magnitude of the program and interest of the group. A model which may reduce the number of meetings of the entire group is a structure of subcommittees that might meet and report back to the entire committee. Or, as indicated earlier, an executive committee may be formed to reduce the number of meetings of the entire committee.

**Meetings should be scheduled such that advisory members can plan and anticipate their attendance.** A preset day of the month or quarter for the upcoming year is beneficial both to the participants and the Extension staff. A preset schedule reduces speculation and tends to emphasize the importance of advisory meetings.

### *Officers*

**In formalizing the advisory committees, it is essential that officers be elected.** Election of officers places the leadership within the advisory committee. Staff should work closely with the officers but not dominate the actions of the committee.

A chair should be selected along with a vice-chair. Secretarial duties should be handled by a member of the committee. However, staff is sometimes asked to serve in that role since clerical staff in the local office may be available to type minutes of committee meetings. In any event, **minutes of meetings should be recorded and kept on file at the local Extension office.**

There is much to be said about meeting notices being sent by the chair of the committee. This again places the leadership within the group and members often respond more readily to the

chair than to the local staff. The Extension office is generally asked to prepare the notices and other correspondence for the signature of the chair. Advisory committee letterhead stationery is suggested to give identity to the committee. This helps to identify the mailing as business of the advisory committee and not be confused with other official Extension mailing.

The committee chair should work closely with the county/area director or designated Extension personnel in developing meeting agendas and other functions.

### **Suggested Advisory Committee Roles:**

There are a number of roles which seem to be appropriate for a local Extension advisory committee. For this reason, it is important for the group to meet often enough to exercise these roles.

#### ***Linkage to Local Community Needs***

One of the most important roles for the overall advisory committee is to link their local community needs to the resource potential of Extension. While it is true that staff may have the 'pulse' of the county or area, they probably do not have a close touch with all of the communities or their specific needs.

The people who live in the community should have a better feel for the needs through contact with neighbors, business people, and community leaders. They can surface these needs through their membership on the advisory committee. It may not be possible for Extension to address all expressed needs forwarded by individual advisory members; however, these needs can be discussed and considered along with other priorities.

If adequate linkage is to be established throughout the county or area, it becomes even more important to have good geographical distribution of the membership.

#### ***Setting Program Priorities***

Since clientele demand for educational programs is generally greater than local Extension staff can possibly deliver, the advisory committee can be especially helpful in sorting out those programs to be identified as the priorities for the Extension staff. When program priorities have been established for the year or extended period of time by the advisory committee, staff then have a support base for the programs they are emphasizing. This can be helpful when some clientele are critical of the direction taken by Extension. Advisory members can be extremely helpful in explaining to others why Extension has chosen certain priorities and how a citizen's advisory committee input influenced those priorities.

Priority setting should be a cooperative agreement between staff and the advisory committee. While advisory members may have a feel for the local situation, they may not be aware of broader issues including state and/or national initiatives. The staff should give leadership to sorting out program input from all levels from within the Extension system and assessing how local, state and national initiatives interface. Quite often the initiatives at the local, state and



national levels are similar in nature and may 'fit' very closely in establishing the local direction and preparation of the plan of work. On the other hand, there may be local issues which the advisory committee feels strongly about which do not match state and national initiatives. There should be flexibility in the planning process to accommodate these local needs as long as they do not conflict with Extension's educational mission and policy.

To expand input into the priority setting process, the staff and advisory committee should consider a broader needs assessment by mail or telephone to a random sample of the county or area population. Such an assessment is useful when the advisory committee and staff begin to establish the major program emphasis. The list of program ideas can be narrowed down through the use of a system called the 'Delphi' process wherein advisory members list in priority their top five choices. This process is continued until the list is narrowed to what is felt to be the very highest priorities. Other methods may also be used such as the 'nominal group process' or simply listing in priority order various programs surfaced by the group.

### ***Futuristic Projections***

In addition to setting program priorities which are normally made for one to four years, the advisory committee can play a role in looking into the future. This is often referred to as 'strategic planning' because the process involves looking into the future and attempting to establish a vision for the organization or program. In other words, what might be the direction of Extension five or ten years into the future? How will things such as societal changes, demographics, the economy, population shifts, agricultural production and marketing, etc. affect Extension's role in the future? While no one can be sure of what the future holds, the 'brainstorming' of ideas and possibilities will help keep Extension on the forefront of new developments and relevancy for the future.

### ***Evaluation of Programs***

Evaluation of educational programs is key to the continuing credibility of Extension. Staff are charged with formally evaluating major programs in an attempt to identify the impact of their efforts. The advisory committee can serve as one source of input in the evaluation process. Their input may not always reflect an accurate account of the program impact, but should certainly be considered when evaluations are documented. Advisory members may have informal feedback gained through contact with recipients of the programs offered, which may not have been communicated to the staff.

An advisory committee which has been active in setting program priorities and planning programs will generally have a keen interest in helping to evaluate the results. Staff should be open to their feedback and incorporate it as appropriate into the evaluation process. Advisory members can also be helpful in surveying clientele through mailed evaluation instruments or through telephone surveys. Good evaluation will provide the basis for future programs and priorities. In addition to providing evaluation input on programs, the advisory committee may also be asked to provide input to performance of Extension staff.

### ***Support Base for Extension***

In addition to the roles of assistance in planning, setting priorities, and evaluating programs, an advisory committee can play a major role in being an important support base for Extension staff and programs. By comparison, an Extension staff without an advisory committee support system is much like a ship without a rudder.

Without a support base, Extension can be a lonely existence and staff may find it difficult to make substantial progress within the community. As a publicly supported institution, Extension will always have its critics; however, a well-informed advisory committee that believes in Extension will help answer the critics.

Additionally, an advisory committee can support Extension by helping to educate those who make political and financial decisions at local, state and national levels.

### ***Budget Assistance***

In recent years, advisory committees have taken a more active role in assisting staff with preparation of the local budgets and presenting the budget to boards of county commissioners or other funding authorities. As local citizens and taxpayers, members of advisory committees (or other constituents) are in a better position to present budget needs than the Extension staff. Staff are often thought of as self-serving in presenting budget needs since their employment is dependent upon the budget being requested. If the committee has been active in planning and evaluating programs as well as being the recipients of Extension programs, members can effectively present budget needs and justify the expenditure of public funds. Staff should be prepared to answer questions about the budget request and be a backup to the advisory committee so that facts are clearly and correctly presented.

A number of case histories can be cited in Colorado over the past decade, where advisory committees have been instrumental in not only preserving potential budget reductions, but have assisted in acquiring budget increases. Advisory committees along with quality programs have been key factors in maintaining and enhancing strong support for Extension at the local level. In most cases, boards of county commissioners have responded positively to citizen input when budgets are allocated.

In times of scarce resources, it becomes even more essential to have strong advisory support because of the intense competition and demand for public support for an ever growing number of governmental agencies and programs. Extension must appropriately justify how its programs are important and have impact on the citizenry since decision makers are faced with limited resources. Extension must be a justifiable expenditure when county commissioners must allocate resources to social services, public roads and bridges, law enforcement and other needs. Advisory committees can be the most effective tool in 'selling' the merits and value of public fund expenditures for Extension.

### ***Legislative Contact***

In addition to local support, advisory members also play a key role in keeping state legislators advised of Extension's program impact. Many advisory members know legislators personally and feel comfortable in discussing Extension with them. Staff should also interact with their local legislators keeping them updated on program impact; however, staff alone cannot be as

effective as clientele in keeping Extension a priority in the minds of those who make funding decisions.

Every county or area should have a strategy for effectively involving advisory committees in an ongoing process to educate legislators about the impact of Extension upon the citizens of Colorado. This might be done through personal contact, advisory meetings with legislators, a legislative luncheon (breakfast, etc.), mailings of program results, etc. One model used in Colorado is to have the advisory executive committee meet individually with each local legislator prior to the legislative session. This may not be possible in some of the counties where a large number of legislators represent the district; however, it appears to be an effective method to interact with legislators. There are many approaches that advisory committees can take to report Extension accomplishments to legislators.

It is important that whatever activities are planned, they should be throughout the year rather than being reserved for the legislative session. The best time to make Extension visible to the local legislator is prior to the session when he or she is in the home district and more accessible.

If all legislators were made aware of the local impact of Extension by the advisory committee and staff prior to the legislative session in January, the need for contact during the session would be minimal. How the legislator views Extension's impact on the district he or she was elected to represent will have a great deal to do with the 'corporate' decisions made by the General Assembly.

If advisory committee members are to be effective in this role, they must be kept informed of program impact and results so they can intelligently communicate with legislators. This is the responsibility of the local Extension staff.

As appropriate, advisory members can also be effective in contacts with decision makers at the national level, i.e., United States Senate and the House of Representatives since they also represent local sections of the state and may be acquainted with local advisory people.

## **Maintaining Advisory Committee Interest:**

### ***Involvement***

Maintaining the interest level of the advisory committee members can best be described by the word 'involvement'. A non-involved committee will eventually lose interest since members will feel they are not making a contribution. If a committee is involved in the various roles discussed earlier, a viable level of interest should be maintained.

Individuals who agree to serve on a committee not only want to contribute, but generally are seeking some personal satisfaction from their contribution. In the Journal of Extension issue, Fall, 1987, Gamon says, "*Convenient, right-sized, action-oriented, personally rewarding – these are time tested, never-fail guidelines for successful councils or committees. Essentially, they involve looking at the advisory council or committee from the member's viewpoint. Structure the experience of serving on an advisory council so that it's profitable and worthwhile from the*

*member's point of view. The result will be a council that's enthusiastic and supportive from the professional's point of view – real friends indeed.”<sup>4</sup>*

### ***Keeping Committee Informed***

Keeping the committee informed is a key factor in maintaining interest. This can be partly satisfied through regularly scheduled meetings, but should not be limited to meetings. Mailings from the local office are important and might include the following:

- \*Minutes of prior meetings.
- \*Personal update letters on progress of programs.
- \*Copies of newsletters for various programs.
- \*Copies of program evaluation results.
- \*Copies of news clippings regarding Extension activities.
- \*Updates of state and national issues affecting Extension.
- \*Updates on the various budget situations.

Telephone contact or informal meetings with the leadership of the advisory committee may also be useful in keeping lines of communication open.

### ***Recognition of Members***

Time and effort advisory members devote to volunteer service should be recognized. Recognition can be exercised in a number of ways. Probably the greatest personal recognition an advisory member receives is to know they are a part of a successful Extension program. Committee members take pride in a program they helped to develop and have observed the positive benefits. This kind of recognition, while intangible, is important in re-kindling the interest of advisory members.

Some tangible ideas to recognize advisory members might include:

- \*A letter of appointment from the staff and county commissioners.
- \*Send letter of appreciation each year of service.
- \*Schedule luncheon or other informal social event to recognize them.
- \*Present certificate of appreciation.
- \*Invite members to attend special events scheduled by Extension.

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<sup>4</sup> Julia A. Gamon, “Advisory Councils – Real Friends”, *Journal of Extension*, Fall 1987, p. 43.

- \*Ask members to present awards at activities such as the 4-H Achievement Program.
- \*Publish names of advisory members in educational materials sent out by the office.
- \*Have county commissioners recognize advisory member(s) at an appropriate event.
- \*Recognize members in newsletters for their contribution to the Extension program.
- \*Prepare advisory committee letterhead stationery with member's names printed.
- \*Present 'plaques' or 'certificates' to members leaving the committee.

### ***Orientation of New Members***

Orientation for new members starts with the selection process as potential members are solicited. Some orientation takes place as potential members are interviewed or through a written job description or a list of roles assigned to the advisory committee.

An Orientation Handbook or printed set of guidelines would be useful in educating new members about their advisory role. A handbook might include such items as follows:

- \*Purpose of the Committee.
- \*Roles and duties assigned.
- \*Set of bylaws.
- \*Copy of latest Plans of Work and Contribution Reports.
- \*Facts about the county or area which influence Extension.
- \*Extension Program Highlights Report.
- \*List of current membership and the area they serve along with addresses and phone numbers.
- \*Fact sheet or information about the structure of Extension. (Module 1 of the Working With Our Publics Handbook includes this kind of information).<sup>5</sup>
- \*List of local Extension staff and their program assignments.

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<sup>5</sup> Working With Our Publics. In-Service Publication for Cooperative Extension, Module 1, "Understanding Cooperative Extension: Our Origins, Our Opportunities", published by the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service and the Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1988.

An orientation meeting for new members could be scheduled to introduce the handbook and to outline the major components of the advisory committee responsibility. This allows members to ask questions and interact with staff and/or incumbent advisory members.

The importance of orientation should not be overlooked since it cannot be expected that advisory members will be effective contributors if they are not aware of their role. A corollary is that of a new employee who doesn't know what duties he or she is expected to perform on the job! In addition to orientation of new members, staff may want to consider ongoing training for the advisory committee, depending upon identified needs.

### **Evaluating Effectiveness of the Advisory Committee:**

A periodic assessment of the advisory committee is recommended to measure how well it is fulfilling the purpose and roles established for the committee. An annual assessment may be useful; however, this may be more often than necessary depending upon size of the committee, participation of members, and how staff perceives the need for an annual review.

The committee may elect to make a self-evaluation of their effectiveness based upon participation of members, attendance at meetings, involvement in program planning, program evaluation, attainment of goals, etc. If the committee does not initiate its own evaluation, staff should make an internal assessment to determine how well the committee is functioning.

An assessment form might be developed based upon factors established for the operation of the committee. The example on the next page might be helpful in preparing an assessment form.

The score on the assessment sheet may not accurately reflect the effectiveness of the committee, but will provide a basis for identifying the strengths and weaknesses. The items with low scores could well be the basis for setting goals for improvement in the future. By keeping the assessment forms on file from year to year, the staff over time can compare evaluations to see whether progress is being made with the advisory structure.

### **Summary**

Citizen participation through a formally organized advisory committee is vital to Extension's role and mission in providing appropriate educational programs to meet the needs of local clientele. The future of Extension, will, to a large extent, be dependent upon a strong, supportive local advisory structure.

Advisory Committee Assessment Form

| Criteria to be Assessed   | Evaluation |         | Comments |
|---|------------|---------|----------|
|   | 5-High     | 1-Low   |          |
| 1. Committee represents major geographical areas                      | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 2. Committee represents major subject interests of community          | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 3. Attendance of members at scheduled meetings                        | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 4. Assistance with Plan of Work                                       | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 5. Assistance with budget preparation                                 | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 6. Assistance in presenting budget                                    | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 7. Participation in evaluation of Extension programs                  | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 8. Committee meets on regular basis                                   | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 9. Participation in education of decision makers                      | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 10. Participation in priority setting                                 | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 11. Assistance in publicizing Extension programs                      | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 12. Participation of members at special events scheduled by Extension | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 13. Level of participative discussion by members at meetings          | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 14. Minutes recorded and filed in the local office                    | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 15. Make minutes available for public perusal                         | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 16. Officers fulfilling duties  | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 17. Balance of male/female members                                    | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 18. Minority representation as a ratio of minority population         | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 19. Operating according to bylaws or operating procedures             | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 20. Level of communication between committee and staff                | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 21. Subcommittees completing assignments                              | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 22. Recognition provided to members                                   | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 23. Knowledge of Extension and the Land-Grant System, etc.            | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| 24. (Others as Identified)  | 5          | 4 3 2 1 |          |
| Average of Scores _____   |            |         |          |

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## Working With Our Publics, In-Service Publication for Cooperative Extension, Published by the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service and The Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1988

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### Overview of the Series

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The series *Working With Our Publics: In-Service Education for Cooperative Extension* consists of seven independent training modules. Based upon needs and objectives identified by Extension professionals, the modules are designed to stand on their own as independent instructional packages, or to be used as a comprehensive series. Very briefly, the modules and their authors are:

**Module 1: Understanding Cooperative Extension.** The history, mission, values, and networks that make the Cooperative Extension System and the land-grant institutions unique. Participants will examine their own expectations, values, and skills, in-light of the System's needs, to ensure a good "fit" between the individual and the organization. (Nine contact hours of training developed by David R. Sanderson, University of Maine at Orono.)

**Module 2: The Extension Education Process.** An introduction to, and guided practice in, the premises, concepts, and processes of nonformal Extension education –planning, designing and implementing, and evaluating and accounting for Extension education programs. Both new and experienced staff members who complete this module will understand and be able to apply the programming process as it relates to Extension education. (Twenty-four contact hours of training developed by Richard T. Liles and R. David

Mustian, North Carolina State University at Raleigh.)

**Module 3: Developing Leadership.** How to acquire and exercise leadership skills and how to identify, recruit, develop, and work with community leaders. Intended for all Extension professionals, the module is designed to improve participants; abilities to identify and involve lay leaders in Extension programs and, hence, to develop leadership capabilities among Extension's clientele. (Twelve contact hours of training developed by Lee J. Cary and Jack D. Timmons, University of Missouri at Columbia.)

**Module 4: Situational Analysis.** How to determine the need for the Extension educator's involvement in issues and to understand the economic, social, political, and environmental contexts in planning, designing, and implementing programs. This module is designed to provide both new and experienced Extension staff members with an appreciation of the role that analysis plays in programming and decision making, as well as the skills to identify, collect, analyze, and use relevant data in the Extension education efforts. (Twelve contact hours of training developed by Laverne B. Forest, University of Wisconsin – Madison.)

**Module 5: Working With Groups and Organizations.** Development of skills in working with and through groups and understanding the behavior of groups, organizations, and agencies. New and experienced staff members who complete their

training will be better able to analyze the behavior of individuals, groups, organizations, and governmental agencies. They will gain the skills to build mutually beneficial working relationships, and to deal with networks of influence and key power actors in client communities. (Eighteen contact hours of training developed by Betty L. Wells, Iowa State University.)

**Module 6: Education for Public Decisions.** In-service education in analyzing public problems, anticipating the consequences of Extension's involvement in issues, and working effectively in areas of controversy. Personnel who play a part in deciding Extension's involvement will build the knowledge and skills needed to design, deliver, and evaluate educational programs on public issues. (Eighteen contact hours of training developed by Verne W. House, Montana State University, and Ardis A. Young, Washington State University.)

**Module 7: Techniques for Future Perspectives.** Information and exercises on working with Extension's publics to achieve a proactive stance toward the future through projecting future conditions, analyzing trends, and inventing futures. All participants, particularly those with a background of field experience, will benefit from enhanced capabilities to develop and provide educational programming that helps clients carry out systematic planning for the future. (Twelve contact hours of training developed by J. David Deshler, Cornell University.)