

## **ADVERTISING IN/ON EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS/WEBSITES** **Specific Guidelines and Points to Consider**

The goal of newsletters and websites is to communicate effectively with and educate readers. Sponsorships/advertising should get in the way of that purpose. Sponsorships and ads are used to help recover costs and/or provide additional fiscal resources so that we can continue to deliver quality programming. Do not let sponsorships and ads detract from the educational goals of Extension.

To clarify policies and procedures related to sponsorships and advertising in newsletters and on websites, Extension has developed the following specific guidelines and general points of consideration.

Guidelines for Advertising in and Sponsorship of Extension Newsletters and websites:

1. Alcohol and tobacco ads are prohibited in youth-related publications.
2. Ads supporting a religious or political agenda are prohibited.
3. Ads should relate to the programming efforts of Extension.
4. It should be clear in all information distributed about advertising/sponsorships that Extension has the right to refuse to print material that is not related to our educational purpose or provided by individuals who are not-in-good-standing as leaders or member of Extension programs.
5. Acknowledgement by the county commissioners before embarking on a publication sponsorship program is required.
6. The use of a disclaimer is required. An example of a disclaimer for a website can be found on the CSU Extension website (see first page bottom link). There are additional examples for printed material on the website under Staff Resources – Organizational/Employee Resources – Mailing Standards.

Additional Points to Consider

1. Consider the appropriate balance between the education found in the publication and the fund raising/advertisement. What is the appropriate balance? Establish this ahead of time. Establish guidelines on what you will publish that might include:
  - a. Advertising space is limited and will be available on a first come, first served basis.
  - b. Advertising will not exceed 10% (or some other appropriate %) of the total newsletter space.
2. Consider whether it will cost more to solicit and print the ads/sponsorships than the income generated from the sponsorship/ads. How will you manage this?

- a. Would it be more cost-effective to consider classified ads related to Extension's 'business,' rather than paid advertising? Most publications that offer advertising have a full time staff to solicit and work with advertisers.
  - b. Would it be more cost-effective and easier to seek 'sponsorship' rather than 'advertising?' Having to deal with only one organization/business per issue might decrease the amount of time necessary to spend on the process.
  - c. The appearance and quality of the publication may become an issue with some advertisers. Are you willing to increase cost to accommodate increased expectations? If not, establish guidelines in writing in advance. These might include:
    - i. All advertising will be printed in black and white.
    - ii. The \_\_\_\_\_ County Extension office has final approval on all ad copy and layout. (In this case, advertisers would not have to pay if you reject their ad)
  - d. Consider appropriate pricing. Will you look like other similar advertising opportunities in the area (other publications that might have the same demographics as Extension's)? Look at similarly targeted publications, with similar demographics/circulation. [For example, the CO Gardener in El Paso County (state circulation of 30,000, El Paso County circulation of 3,000), with a similar audience as our horticulture programs, sells on a one-time, ½ page ad in black and white for \$802, in 4-color for \$1,044. The Rocky Mountain Hose Expo charges \$400 for a ½ page black and white ad in their program (circulation 10,000), \$600 for 4-color.]
  - e. Pricing should be established from the beginning through the use of a 'rate sheet' which clearly states what rates will be charged for various sizes and types of ads. At the same time, procedures and guidelines for advertising must be agreed upon up front. Ad specifications must be outlined. Do advertisers have the right to require certain wording, colors, layout, and timing? Do they have final approval of their ads/ How will this delay the printing process? What happens if an advertiser cancels an ad? Is there a deadline for cancellations? Payment/account terms also need to be agreed upon in advance. All of this requires staff time to develop and monitor on an on-going basis.
3. Consider whether you want Extension, your county, and your program to be associated with the company/product? The issue of whether Extension will continue to be seen as 'unbiased' becomes a concern. Consider whether you would need to offer sponsorship of the newsletter to all the XXXX in the county (i.e. banks, feed/fabric stores, implement dealers, etc.), or could you approach just one? Again consistency and written guidelines are the key. Also consider how your regular supporters (for 4-H, achievement night, the fair, the livestock sale) will react to a 'single' sponsor for your publication. Will the 'ill will' created do more harm than the dollars generated will do good?
  4. If you are using a non-profit bulk permit for mailing, you need to be sure publications follow the rules required by the US Postal Service in Publication 417 – Non-Profit Standard Mail Eligibility.
  5. If soliciting more than \$2500 in advertising, contact Colorado 4-H Foundation, Inc. to avoid duplicate solicitation.

6. Consider whether 'poaching' may become an issue. Are you soliciting from potential sponsors/advertisers who cross county lines? Might another county also be approaching the sponsor? If this is a possibility, check before making the contact.