

Board Excellence

Information for Local K-State Research and Extension Board Members

Volume IV, Issue 1 — Winter 2014

From the Associate Director

Happy New Year! I look forward to meeting with board members at the annual K-State Research and Extension Partnership Meetings to be held across the state in January. These meetings are my yearly opportunity to meet you face to face as we review the past year's programming and plan for the future. Meetings will be January 22 in Wichita, January 23 in Lawrence, January 29 in Ellsworth, and January 30 in Scott City. Details about locations and the agenda are available at <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/boardleadership/p.aspx?tabid=504>.

I am especially pleased with the progress we have made in addressing our state's five grand challenges — Water, Health, Global Food Systems, Community Vitality, and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders. We are able to better address these challenges as we move toward greater agent specialization and more in-depth, focused, proactive programming.

Reviewing our impacts in addressing these grand challenges will be one of the outcomes of the Partnership Meetings. See you there!

— Daryl D. Buchholz, dbuchhol@ksu.edu

4-H Volunteer Screening Process Revised

The Kansas 4-H volunteer screening process, originating in 1995, has been reviewed over the past year. Updates were recommended, and changes will be implemented beginning August 1, 2014.

A sustained, positive relationship with a caring adult benefits youth development. Kansas 4-H depends on thousands of adult volunteers to help develop those

relationships, and careful volunteer selection is vital to youth safety.

Steps in the revised process include an application, face-to-face interview, reference check, criminal background check, orientation, and volunteer approval by the local extension board.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.kansas4-h.org/doc16361.ashx>

News from Local Units

In an effort to take a more holistic approach to program planning, the Riley County Extension Council held a joint program development committee (PDC) meeting. Instead of meeting as individual PDCs, members were asked to choose a group to discuss one of K-State Research and Extension's five grand challenges: Water, Health, Global Food Systems, Community Vitality, and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders.

Each group discussed what was currently being done to address the challenge and how to identify and target opportunities within each area. PDC members prioritized educational programs that help address each challenge and worked with agents to write action plans detailing how the work would be accomplished.

As an example, agents and PDC members discussed an existing educational program, ParkQuest, which encourages families to explore their local community. The group developed outcomes focused on each of the grand challenges. The result was an action plan, "Healthy Families and Communities," involving all PDCs.

Board Leadership Modules Enhance Communication, Performance

The Johnson County Extension Board has completed several board leadership modules, with board members leading presentations during meetings. According to Larry Justice, Johnson County board chair, the practice was started two years ago and has proven effective. He reports that reviewing the modules has made the board more effective at communicating ideas and reaching decisions. See:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/boardleadership/p.aspx?tabid=562>

Extension Districts: Strength in Numbers

One of the architects of the Southwind Extension District in southeast Kansas believes the decision to combine educational programming has been a plus for local citizens.

Allen Warren, who served on the Bourbon County Extension Board before being elected as a county commissioner in 2010, noted that residents in each of the district's three counties essentially gained the service of four agents.

"We ended up with six specialists in the district as opposed to two generalists working in our extension office," Warren said. "That right there says it all for me. We always felt we had good extension agents and that they worked hard. But there was more programming than they could adequately manage. Having six specialists is a tremendous benefit for the Southwind District."

The Southwind District has offices in Iola, Fort Scott, and Erie.

Currently 42 Kansas counties participate in 15 extension districts. Read more about districting successes at:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/boardleadership/p.aspx?tabid=613>

Survey Aims to Improve PDC Collaboration

A task force charged with creating stronger program development committees was appointed on the basis of a recommendation from the State Extension Advisory Council.

A statewide survey was conducted among randomly selected agents, and results will be used to improve collaboration between agents and PDCs. The survey was designed to help determine:

- how PDC members are recruited,
- how agents and PDC members work together,
- how to improve the partnership, and
- what resources would be helpful.

A task force update will be shared during 2014 Partnership Meetings.

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Focus on Outcomes

Nearly 600 participants focused on drought-related issues in cow/calf enterprises in a series of 13 producer meetings across the state. Issues discussed included providing safe, economical rations and maintaining range conditions. In addition, K-State Research and Extension educators and scientists offered nitrate testing and nutrient quality analysis of forage samples.

Outcomes included the following:

- Participants indicated they would make such changes as adjusting stocking rates, early weaning, and developing a drought management plan.
- Producers made appropriate adjustments to feeding plans based on forage nitrate results.
- A kit developed by a local K-State Research and Extension unit enabled producers to improve the digestibility of more than 1,220 tons of low-quality forage through ammoniation.