

**Strategic Plan Recommendations  
for the  
Extension Mission  
of the  
Kansas State University  
Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

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Overview

Kansas State University is a comprehensive, research, land-grant institution first serving students and the people of Kansas, and also the nation and the world. Included in its overall mission, Kansas State University stresses the importance of enriching the lives of the citizens of Kansas by extending to them opportunities to engage in life-long learning and to benefit from the results of research.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service (K-State Research & Extension) is committed to improving the quality of life and economic well being of the people of Kansas through its integrated research, analysis, and educational programs focused on building a safe, sustainable, competitive food and fiber system and to strong, healthy communities, families, and youth. K-State Research & Extension believes and values integrity, communication, scholarship, leadership, and inclusion. We are dedicated to citizen involvement, engagement, entrepreneurship, and a strong local presence. We are truly about creating “Knowledge for Life”.

To achieve its mission, K-State Research & Extension has focused its work within five core areas: Healthy Communities: Youth, Adults, and Families; Competitive Agricultural Systems; Natural Resources and Environmental Systems; Safe Food and Human Nutrition; and, Economic Development through Value-added Products.

The Strategic Planning Process

On August 24, 2004, a thirty-four member planning committee was assembled and charged to look critically at the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service. They were asked to focus on the question of “What will the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service need to look like in the future to conduct relevant, sustainable, quality educational services and programming?” The committee was asked to provide a series of strategic plan recommendations and the suggested actions to implement the plan for each of the following four key themes:

- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Resource Development
- Education and Information Development and Dissemination
- Constituent Development and Marketing

On December 1, 2004 the planning committee completed its task and provided the following recommendations to fulfill the “Extension Mission” of K-State Research & Extension.

## ***Organizational Structure and Staffing***

### **Background:**

The Extension mission of K-State Research and Extension is governed by Kansas statutes that empower elected county and district councils with the authority and responsibility to assess local needs and conduct a local educational program in cooperation with Kansas State University and the United States Department of Agriculture. We believe a strong network of local extension professionals and volunteers linked to Kansas State University faculty, the national network of the Cooperative Extension System, and the USDA is necessary to conduct high-quality educational programs. This network facilitates quick communication of local needs and results in timely delivery of educational resources and expertise to the local community.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Increase the reach of Extension programs to the underserved and emerging audiences across Kansas.
  - Develop new partnerships with key leaders who are connected to under-served and emerging audiences.
  - Develop and maintain a diverse workforce to reach targeted audiences with culturally appropriate information and educational programs.
  - Expand Program Development Committees (PDCs) to be representative of potential audiences.
2. Provide professional development opportunities to enhance the capacity of Extension professionals' and volunteers' to deliver high-quality, relevant programs.
  - Proactively design a professional development plan for each extension faculty member to address both excellence as an extension educator and subject matter expertise.
  - Create a system commitment to improve professional development in communication, program delivery methods, facilitation skills, organizational awareness, and impact evaluation.
  - Provide support and incentives for staff and faculty to further their formal education and multilingual capabilities.
  - Develop mentoring opportunities that address needs of new and experienced employees.
3. Enhance engagement of local Extension Boards and PDCs with community partners to identify relevant program needs.
  - Survey/inventory potential partners to assist in determining local program needs.
  - Identify and cultivate individuals who will encourage PDCs and Boards to improve representation of potential program recipients.
  - Develop and conduct specific training that empowers Boards and PDCs to more effectively fulfill their responsibilities.
4. Eliminate boundaries that impair the delivery of high-impact educational programs.
  - Form in-state and multi-state partnerships/teams for delivery of comprehensive subject matter program expertise.

- Develop an ethic that all University faculty have an Extension role in the Land-Grant University System.
- Place Extension faculty, as appropriate, in locations to better serve program priorities and clientele needs.
- Increase effectiveness and efficiency of local programming through greater cooperation among local extension councils and district governing boards.
- Recognize faculty and staff for excellence in breaking through boundaries.

### ***Resource Development***

#### **Background:**

We believe K-State Research and Extension has the obligation to provide educational programs that will be available to all persons in Kansas. We believe the resources obtained from federal, state, and local public sources are vital to preserving the quality and integrity of the Cooperative Extension Service Mission to provide educational programming.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Support priority Extension programs through adequate base funding, extramural funds and revenue generation.
  - Enhance grant proposal writing skills/development of faculty.
  - Encourage and prepare faculty to serve on grant review committees.
  - Explore expanded potential funding sources at the federal level both within and beyond the USDA.
  - Seek expanded funding opportunities with all possible local and state agency partners.
  - Utilize foundations/corporations/benefactors/constituent organizations.
  - Build continuing revenue streams through patents and contracting.
  - Develop system-wide understanding of policies and guidelines for revenue generation involving Extension educational programs.
2. Enhance local and state stakeholder/leadership relationships with K-State Research and Extension.
  - Educate faculty on civic engagement strategies to facilitate an appreciation and understanding of governing processes.
  - Identify, build relationships, and develop communication strategies with leaders/stakeholders/partners.
  - Design and implement a plan for receiving communication through constituency listening sessions.
3. Expand educational approaches to address and meet the needs of relevant, priority issues through collaborations and partnerships with external organizations and agencies.
  - Create an organized approach to constituent advocacy for programs and funding.
  - Implement a program to gather grass-root support and advocate for the extension system.
  - Inform policy makers on the importance and value of research and extension.

## ***Education and Information Development and Dissemination***

### **Background:**

We believe the integration of research, technology transfer, and Extension educational programming provides a sustainable model to fulfill our mission. We believe the integrated network of local, regional, and campus-based expertise is vital to the quality and relevance of applied research and the timely delivery of information to constituents. We believe the ultimate outcome of Research and Extension programs must be to improve the quality of life and economic well being of people living in Kansas.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Enhance grass roots communication to guide and influence Extension programs to address relevant local issues and reach new audiences.
  - Formalize a process to improve utilization of PDCs.
  - Empower PDCs to expand partnerships with other agencies and organizations.
  - Develop processes for needs assessment and feedback from community members.
2. Optimize delivery of educational programs through utilization of appropriate technology.
  - Maintain balance between face-to-face educational experiences and distance learning.
  - Produce web-based educational programs.
  - Market and provide educational experiences in locations appropriate for the targeted audience.
  - Provide in-service education/certification opportunities for professionals.
  - Create learning centers in locations convenient to diverse audiences.
  - Help communities to access and expand appropriate use of technology.
3. Strengthen engagement of Extension professionals in discussions of community-based issues.
  - Increase civic involvement/engagement of extension professionals.
  - Educate community about Extension's potential to aid community problem solving.
  - Increase volunteer involvement for building connections to diverse audiences.
  - Increase Extension's involvement in the development of local community leaders.
4. Create partnerships to ensure the targeted programs are reaching the intended audience and achieving the intended results.
  - Utilize community partners to plan and improve programs.
  - Evaluate effectiveness of partnerships in program delivery and intended outcomes.
  - Create linkages and partnerships within K-State and with other research institutions to facilitate a faster delivery of applied research results.
  - Increase rapid response capability to address broad citizen interests and needs.

## ***Constituency Development and Marketing***

### **Background:**

We believe the K-State Research and Extension brand should convey quality, research-based, relevant information and educational programs that enhance the quality of life and the economic well being of people living in Kansas. We believe people living in Kansas expect opportunities for personal development through Extension programs provided by local volunteers, agents, specialists, the land-grant university system, and USDA.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Enhance the public image of K-State Research and Extension as a premier information and educational resource.
  - Structure the KSU and KSRE websites for easy access from local extension offices.
  - Establish “answer center” via e-mail or website.
  - Use standardized header/footer on public/written communications.
  - Conduct market research about KSRE public image, awareness, and utilization.
  - Develop and implement a plan for standard signage of offices.
  - Promote K-State Research and Extension at all KSU events.
  - Increase contact with government/political supporters through local stakeholders.
2. Create and increase program delivery to nontraditional, under-served, diverse audiences.
  - Hire personnel with diverse experiences/backgrounds.
  - Recruit and use volunteers with diverse backgrounds.
  - Identify non-traditional public event opportunities for promotion of K-State Research & Extension.
  - Conduct audience research to determine program needs and appropriate educational approaches to serve diverse audiences.
  - Identify opportunities for conversational language courses through distance education.
  - Partner with and involve schools in establishing/enhancing educational programs.
3. Enhance communication of program impacts.
  - Educate faculty, staff, and PDCs to evaluate and communicate program impacts.
  - Communicate impacts through condensed reports to community leaders, stakeholders, county commissioners, legislators, and congressional leaders.
  - Provide training for constituencies/volunteers to enhance advocacy for KSRE.
4. Communicate to all staff, the importance and relevance of their contributions, and the necessary teamwork to fulfill the comprehensive mission of K-State Research and Extension.
  - Recognize and reward teamwork accomplishments for faculty, staff, and volunteers.
  - Provide new and existing Extension professionals with teambuilding skills.
  - Utilize the 5-year program plan for appropriate development of teams in order to accomplish program delivery.

- Provide communications across the system to “set the tone” for the importance and relevance of high performance teams.
5. Seek collaboration with external constituents.
- Create opportunities to communicate with other groups/organizations.
  - Encourage faculty and staff participation in community and civic organizations.

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