

Creating our Future
**North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Community Listening Session**
Burke County Extension Center, Morganton
November 19, 2013

In November and December 2013, NC Cooperative Extension held 12 regional listening sessions and meetings with its employees and stakeholder groups, including county governments, commodity groups, community organizations and others. Approximately 87 people attended the Community Listening Session at the Burke County Extension Center in Morganton to provide input into the visioning initiative, *Creating our Future*. Dr. Joe Zublena, Associate Dean and Director of NC Cooperative Extension Service, welcomed the participants and shared background information on the changes Cooperative Extension is facing. The goals of the visioning initiative are:

1. Define and focus on our most competitive and needed programs
2. Strengthen our impacts and value to citizens, the counties, & North Carolina
3. Create a financial buffer and gain flexibility to stay aligned to priorities
4. Develop a staffing model that aligns to our new fiscal reality and provides competitive salaries and a better quality of life to our employees

Working in small groups at their tables, participants discussed the questions posed to them and recorded their responses onto paper templates. The instructions provided to the participants and the detailed responses to each question are included in this document.

Participants were encouraged to provide additional input and to continue to monitor the progress of the visioning initiative on the website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative



THE BIG PICTURE

What are the important issues in your community that brought you to this conversation today?

- Keep farming and 4-H in place
- Overregulation of organic farms
- Veterans—those returning from service
- Senior citizens
- I want to get quality information from NCSU (for flower growers association)
- Loss of state budget concerns me. What happened to those dollars?
- People wanted to know...
 - What will happen to vacant positions?
 - What will happen with future vacancies?
 - What about county extension directors?
 - What about now vacant Iredell County 4-H Agent position?
 - Did we lose focus while spending time on big agriculture?
 - What trends/impacts is Extension finding across the state?



PROGRAMS & ORGANIZATION

PROGRAMS: When you think about Extension’s value, where can this organization have the greatest impact in your community and the state? What are the programs/services in your county that Extension must “sow or grow” and tell us why. What are the programs/services in your county that Extension could “prune or plow” and tell us why.

ORGANIZATION: Think about how Extension will have to make organizational and staffing changes to thrive in this new reality. (How might it prune back?) Thinking about the best interests of your county/community, how can Extension partner with you in a new and different way to meet your needs? What won’t work as Extension considers new and different ways to partner with your community?

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - profit agriculture business, including forestry - nutrition education for families - demonstrations, tours, hands on - getting technology to users - teaching the public the importance of agriculture and Extension as a whole - community development and leadership <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agriculture is important to NC economy - Extension responsibility to educate - does it benefit local community? - more and more people do not farm 	<p>Ideas that Work</p> <p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -outside grants (county funds) - lobby Governor for more money - more area agents (better use of agents) - more webinars (can watch anytime) - more write-ups of county demonstrations - more events educating consumers about Extension - agriculture business parks - work with county economic development corporation
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p> <p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having full staff in every county (some positions more important than others to certain counties, i.e. tobacco agent in a county with no tobacco) - get rid of interim reviews, except for agents/CEDs on probation (takes too long to get feedback) 	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p> <p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time delay in filling positions (devalues position) - losing county support (county is strong support) - relying too much on the internet (need human contact) - top heavy administration (need more boots on the ground)
<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <p>1. Community kitchen for food processing and demonstration (sustainability)</p>	<p>Ideas that Work</p> <p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <p>1. Get more 4-H programs back in the schools (reach more youth that are not in organized 4-H)</p>

<p>2. Small fee-based programs and partnerships (sustainability of programs already in place)</p> <p>3. More marketing! People still don't know what Extension is.</p> <p>4. Mandating education, nutritional/financial, to people receiving government assistance (teaching people to be more self-sufficient)</p>	<p>program, fills in the gap for kids not involved in sports, band, etc.)</p> <p>2. Master Gardener program, plant sale, cattlemen, beekeepers, mushroom program</p> <p>3. Add-value programs</p> <p>4. More demonstration—hands on—classes like cooking, canning, sewing, quilting, etc. (people need to learn by doing)</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
Does not apply. All Extension programs are relevant	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <p>1. Cross-county agents (inhibits their effectiveness and client relationships)</p> <p>2. Farm city not using local foods and resources</p> <p>3. Programs “in a box” (programs need to evolve and change with time and/or with the community)</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agents do have the expertise and are available for assistance <i>and</i> needs to continue - agents get involved in establishing and managing farmers' markets - strategic planning, both at the state and local levels - improve our marketing of ourselves/programs - expansion of the local food initiative, including home food preservation practices - youth leadership skills, FCS, 4-H - streamline dollars in the county that are still available for positions lost <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for sustainability - for research-based information, as it is trustworthy 	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cross-county agents—specialized skills available (agent in area for advice) - advertisement of programs being taught, including traditional media and social media (reach more people) - agents teach and utilize volunteers (teach one, then he/she can go teach others)
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - could we do without County Directors in every county? (money should be put into research and education rather than management) 	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meetings without a specific purpose (people won't return)

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - #1, conventional agriculture, i.e. farming - 4-H - Master Gardener - communication <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home gardens - cattle - grains: soy and corn - apple orchards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitation - link with association - bee, cattle, nurseries, goats, FFA - Raleigh resources—info, soil test, etc. - Agriculture in classroom/school resource <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - productivity - education - engage volunteers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fruit - beekeepers - nursery stock - poultry area - economic *- 4-H - afterschool programs, education-science-related - summer camps—science - homemaking - homeschool for relational - nutrition - Master Gardener - community vision of beauty—landscaping 	
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FCE—weight loss, breast feed - non-agriculture programs <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wastes money

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rural vs. urban structure—evaluate and have limited programs - partner with NCDCA with pesticide training and turn it over to them - Servsafe to health department - programs that no one else does - do what our mission is and proceed - develop program/research and hand off to other organizations/partners - fee-based services (tier program) - go back to Agriculture Extension - wake-up-to agriculture, farm-to-fork, farm safety (EMS farm bureau) - online services and programs → (direct to NCSU) new technological methods of research transfer <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all counties not the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - livestock agents - horticulture agents - 4-H - funding models and line item from leg - current Extension leadership organizational format
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - duplication of programs - educate county governments about CES - inventory programs - 100 counties = /state - servsafe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poor public communication (some counties) - how is funded? <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offices too busy

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)
1. Healthy eating/active living (obesity/chronic disease)	1. Extension having a presence in the county (we develop personal relationships/trust)

<p>2. Earn a living with agriculture (we need food) 3. Buy local/Goodness Grows (provides jobs, provides food security) 4. Marketing Extension/branding (needs to be a common message) 5. Value of education for youth (dropout rate) 6. Understand the value of education in youth and adults (better quality of life)</p>	<p>2. Youth development: communication skills/leadership skills (everyone needs these skills to succeed) 3. Quality volunteers (work share wisdom)</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)
<p>1. Water quality/natural resources (other people do it)</p>	<p>1. Developing relationship with ethnic groups (trust/communication) 2. Uneducated trainers (can't transfer skills)</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>1. More 4-H and FFA in the schools, focus on younger students and building interests 2. Important to keep the face-to-face contact and maintain access to agents 3. Expand visibility through a variety of ways—written materials, web/internet, demonstrations, classes hands-on</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> 1. sustain growth so as to have farmers in future. Less dependence on foreign foods and brings in money locally 2. solve problems real time, agriculture agents are key 3. maintaining and growing family values/people learn in different ways</p>	<p>1. more demonstrations, meetings, workshops (opportunities for interaction, sharing) 2. Extension instills responsibility in young and old through their programs, i.e. Master Gardeners, 4-H, farm days 3. increase information about organic options for the backyard gardener</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> builds a sense of community</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>1. use common sense solutions rather than overregulation and bureaucracy driven solutions 2. Reinvent homemakers club—increase volunteer focus</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> 1. use talents of local farmers/etc. and their knowledge 2. build capacity</p>	

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funding research (private funding can complicate and create conflict of interest) - supporting small entrepreneurs - connecting <i>local</i> consumers with <i>local</i> producers (to keep dollars within local community and economy) - <i>educating</i> greater population in home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having staff—<i>humans</i>—available to answer and discuss issues, questions - advisory councils steering agents to special needs of community - increase public profile with marketing/PSA budget (interaction, link with new audiences) - user-friendly education materials—<i>publish</i> and

gardening and home food production - <i>youth</i> development programming (vehicle for future and dispersal of education, networking families) - involve and meet needs of <i>retired</i> , as well as <i>minority</i> communities, i.e. Master Gardener - volunteer base needs to continue and stay organized, ECA, 4-H, Master Gardeners	<i>organize online</i> (accessibility) - unbiased presentation of research - classes—Family and Consumer Sciences—tailored to each county (nutrition and health education)
Ideas to Prune & Plow (Reasons Why in Parentheses)	Ideas that Don't Work
- avoid duplications across multiple agencies - fine tune and specialize based on the <i>trends</i> and <i>needs</i> of each county, region—for example, 1 specialized dairy agent serving the region where dairy is prevalent—targeting needs of each region, grant writing, fundraising (one size does not fit all, every office does not need to provide every possible service if it is unnecessary) - Paperwork!!! reporting can prevent serving—streamline reports so county, state, weekly, monthly, annual, are on simplified format	- stretching agents too thin—aside from temporary fixes as positions are filled - cutting any programs that currently have a toehold on public - standardizing programs across all agencies/cookie cutter/duplications

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
- support diverse range of commodities - utilize new communication methods - reach new audiences and populations - work with commodities organizations to deliver information to groups	*- regionalization, county and state—share the good stuff - explore some sort of pay-per-view *- utilize volunteers where possible - Master Gardeners, etc. - why not Master Cooks? - tell your story—or let us tell it for you <u>Reasons Why:</u> It's cheaper to share
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
You don't have to keep doing everything at every location <u>Reasons Why:</u> \$	- do we need 101 offices? - cut out paperwork wherever possible, let people print their own - stop hiring consultants to lead listening programs

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
- family nutrition for all ages - strengthen ECA - be specific in describing organizations - better communication—advertise!!!!!! - opportunities to develop programs about sustainable agriculture - financial literacy education - education about farming and farming practices - what are all these acronyms? <u>Reasons Why:</u>	- joint county projects and programs - cooperation with community colleges and other local organizations, sharing information and programs - more networking between organizations, maybe including “snail mail” <u>Reasons Why:</u> Utilization of resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people don't always know what Cooperative Extension is and what it does! - nutrition is beneficial in all areas—obesity, general health, etc. 	
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prune too much and the whole thing could die!!! - why pay people not to plant?! Convert to sustainable or useable products <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inflation - too many imports - putting farmers out of business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - too much fragmentation - too much specialization—unless shared with other counties!

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
	Having 1 agent for each program area in Burke county helps establish relationships with the citizens in Burke county
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working from the office only—does not provide community outreach and education - multi-county agents do not give the one-on-one time for county citizens <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Cannot establish proper working relationships with people</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continue Master Gardener (people want to go back to gardening) - continue 4-H leadership (nobody else does this) - production agriculture (unbiased info) - public education on all of the above - farmers' markets (have local foods available) - nutrition and food preservation (health and well-being) - pesticide education (nobody else does this) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cannot function without a 4-H agent in each county (program size too large to combine with another county) - continue with nutrition and food preservation (<i>we need it</i>) - cross-county agent (similar county responsibilities, works best where county demographics are similar or the same) *- SHIIP or could be—see below (helps people save money)
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disease medication education duplication - any duplicated services <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Waste of time, energy, and money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECA—could be handled by one agent per district instead of the FCS agent having to do it *- SHIIP could be handled by one agent per district to manage all volunteers *- continue receiving funding through education line item

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-H youth and development, tie into programs with ECA - grow local movement starts with <i>youth</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - healthy eating programs - 4-H in every county, with agent - Master Gardener program

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satellite offices in other part of county to hold programs - more livestock agents where needed—specific counties/share - marketing Extension <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Continue the idea of volunteerism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers’ Markets—local food movement - SHIIP - food preservation <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Builds volunteers in community</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don’t Work

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agriculture—everybody has to eat - 4-H - Master Gardener program - promotions, outreach <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> - Extension is the main source of agricultural education - reaches out to all youth and families - local food industry is growing, needs Cooperative Extension info</p>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrate 4-H into schools → NC State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ex: 4-H flag at football games - also partner with local schools (connecting the relationship between the two ~ promotion) - user friendly website - taking programs to ready-made groups
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don’t Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home ec programs - keep nutrition and food safety—cross-county positions - county beautification <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> - younger generations not interested in home ec, but nutrition education and food safety are more important now - need more focus on agricultural education programs than county beautification—adopt-a-highway, etc.</p>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workshops in low “traffic” areas (no one shows up) - “cluster”/“combining” agents



HEADLINES

We want you to envision a hugely successful partnership between Extension and you and your community. Imagine it is 20 years from now, and someone is writing an article about Extension. What is the headline of that story?

Co-Op Extension Budget has Doubled Since 2014

1. Educating consumers
2. NC Youth Education tops Other vs. States

Agriculture Booming in NC

1. Young farmers make up 75% of farm population
2. Farm population up to 15% of total NC population
3. Cooperative Extension plays important role in the growth of agriculture in NC

Extension Service Celebrates Successful Part 20 years of growth

State Legislature Makes Cooperative Extension Top Priority

1. Funding for agriculture and consumer services exceeds all other areas for funding.
2. Every county fully staffed with agriculture and consumer services agents.

Agriculture Saves the Day Again

1. Chemicals in milk found to solve dementia
2. Red dirt has free energy in it
3. Farm tractor 500 draws 300,000 to Kinston

UNC-Chapel Hill Converts to Satellite Campus For NCSU Agriculture School and Research Institute

Extension and Research at NCSU Receives \$200 Million Appropriation From Legislature

NC Ranks #1 in Healthy Eating

1. Obesity lowest in nation
 2. Quality of life attracts industry to NC
 3. NC #1 in food exports
-

4-H Winners Announced

1. Members parents were 4-H club folks as children
 2. Skills have been taught in school
-

[No headline]

1. Services of Cooperative Extension taught in schools
 2. Community agencies share missions
 3. Community development programs at an all time high
-

[No headline]

1. People need to know about the extension existence
 2. What programs are available
 3. Marketing to the younger folks
-

[No headline]

1. No hay suficiente informacion sobre los programas vigentes (There is not sufficient information about the current programs.)
 2. Necesita conectarse con la gente joven (It needs to connect with the young people)
 3. Necesita tambien personal bilingue para minorias que puedan ayudar a educar. (It needs to also have bilingual personnel to help educate the youth.)
-

Cooperative Extension Changes Name

1. Due to demand an wide acceptance for its educational programs, extension will now be called The Universal Extension Service
-

Extension Still Ahead of the Curve

1. Thanks to a group of folks and listening sessions in 2013 NCCE budget grows AGAIN!
 2. Each year NCCE has realized over 1 million in surplus funding and now other states want to copy.
-

NC Extension is leading the food industry with creating a sustainable model for feeding the state

[No Headline]

Other Comments: We the people need a way to give input to upper managers that would help evaluate our extension people. Not all of our agents are equal. Some are great and doing a good job. A few should be dismissed. Perhaps a report card!

[No headline]

Other Comments: look at programs and stop duplication
Technology will increase and improve over time, agriculture should jump on the bandwagon also and provide information to teach, answer questions from in line.
If programs do not work, dump them.
If other agencies are teaching nutrition then extension does not have to.

NC Cooperative Extension Continues to Help Feed our Nation

Other Comments:

- Through continued assistance to commercial agriculture
 - Through Master Gardener raised bed community garden constitution
 - Through classes and one-on-one assistance for home gardening and food preservation
-

Food Now Available

1. There will be food in the grocery stores on January 3, 2034.
2. Next week we will have a new shipment of rice from China

Other Comments: Looks like funds for agriculture will continue to be cut in U.S. and N.C.

Sophie's 4-H

NC Has a Flourishing Economy

1. Extension lifted North Carolinians from the economic downturn
-

Look at us Now

Other Comments: Tuesday November 19- a group of concerned citizens meet to discuss how to grow their organization on a group of young people who go to the internet. For instant answers rather than learning communication skills in public speaking, leadership, and training skills.

Why won't people seek answers rather than wait for others to solve it for them?

Cooperative Extension Uses Chip in Humans to Teach Survival Skills

[No headline]

1. Research break through: cooperative extension integral in solving world's food demands

Success of Diet Improvement

1. People can grow and prepare healthful food
2. Children brag about their family garden
3. Children learn how to compost

Extension Master Gardeners Feed New York City With Community Gardens

Know it and Growing it!

1. Plan for the land
2. Volunteers for our land

Other Comments:

- Regional groups for best info
- Sharing and growing for future

Former 4-H Students Now Run Extension Service

1. Students inspires to stay in agriculture through successful 4-H program

[No headline]

1. NCSU researcher discovers virus that eliminates the threat of fire blight in apple orchards
2. Funding issues threaten research.

Cooperative Extension Still Needs Money and Cooperation

[No headline]

1. 4 counties sponsor program

Cooperative Extension Receives Nobel Peace Prize

1. Thanks the peace program for in its efforts to promote sustainable agriculture worldwide. Expand nutrition education and increased food purchasing power

Other Comments: 80% of people grow their own food

N.C. Food Store Operating on Short Supply

Despite Slow Economy; North Carolina Prospers: Agriculture leads the way

1. Research based information from land grant university and outreach partners
 2. Extension helps meet the challenge of higher yields from reduces average
-

Cooperative Extension Succeeds Against Odds

1. Positive impacts promote extension programs
 2. Children continue to learn through hands-on experiences with 4-H programs
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Extension Helps Public

1. Able to help NC farmers produce higher yields through research stations, then able to expand to local counties
 2. 4-H has participation rates with local children
-

Everyone is in 4-H; Are You?

1. 4H in every elementary school as a rotating program (like art, music, or gym)
2. Clover is seen everywhere
3. Farmer market every week. Come one, come all.

Other Comments: Why isn't the 4-H flag at NC State Games!?

Looking into: 4H->Extension=\$ or more members

General Assembly Creates Separate Budget for NCCES

NC Cooperative Extension Still Benefits Agriculture and its Citizens

1. More local foods for all
 2. Lowers average age of farmers to 30
 3. Elementary school agriculture IQ through the roof
-

Extension Saves the World

Extension the Spread of the Best Kept Secret

Extension advances into the Future-2034

1. Extending on food supply
-

Duplicates Disposed of to Make Room for More Needed Programs

Other Comments: If duplicated programs are not disposed of, Extensions will not be able to continue. With the money it takes to operate duplicated programs, Extension can fill more open positions.

[No headline]

1. Our new president is proud to have been and still does educate our NC 4-H program.
 2. NC is the leader in locovore participation in the U.S.
 3. Healthy living is at the top of the list in all the U.S.
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[No headline]

Other Comments: Don't be scared to seek the needed funding through the state legislator. You probably have the largest advocacy network in the state use it!
