

*Creating our Future*  
**North Carolina Cooperative Extension  
Listening Session for  
College of Agriculture and Life Science  
Retirees and Donors**  
**McKimmon Center, Raleigh, NC**  
**December 8, 2013**

Approximately 245 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) Retirees and Donors participated in an abbreviated listening session during the CALs Retiree and Donor Appreciation Event 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

Facilitators in eight groups led the participants to answer two questions about future programming and organizational structure individually. Participants recorded their responses on the same templates used in the other listening sessions. Facilitators then led a group discussion to gain a better understanding of participants' ideas. 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](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative)



## 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?

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>Our value to our clientele is in creating, planning and carrying out programs.            Education about Insurance, Medicare, “Obama care” Life and Health insurance, homeowner, liability, umbrella: People are confused, they don’t understand.            We are not selling anything; we are best at educating.            Promoting education and facilitating other people to get an education: Extension began to help people improve their current situation.            Family economics: Keep up with changes (credit, debit, electronic transfers and their changes.)            Volunteer, leadership, development.            Enable people to get jobs: Manufacturing base gone – look to new horizons.            Selection of people on SAC.            Keep 4-H youth development.            More Extension county workers.            Master gardener programs: Strong base with strong connections to leadership at county level.            Environment safety.            Nutritious meal planning: Eat Smart, Cook Smart needs more sustainable funding as agents need supplies.            30 minute meals for families that are affordable.            Enhance the relationship with County and City Government Leaders: Let’s make them real partners.</p>	<p>Small group activities: Probably with short-term emphasis, relationship can build strengths but time limits the commitment of many fathers.            Additional uses for Master programs: Continue to extend Extension thru volunteers.            Use social media more to toot our own horn.            Media exposure: Many families rely on instant answers; we need more ways to provide the answers.            More emphasis on 4-H: Advertising and publicity.            Stop having advisory meeting to give updates: Use meetings to plan.            Area people should be tied close to a subject matter on campus.            Preserve an organization that has a county presence.            Agent delivered programs: Volunteers can coordinate space/logistics, agents need to lead /teach.            Utilize more local people in program analysis and strategy.            4-H: Leadership development, peer support groups.            Citizen advocacy.            Using organized and individual volunteers to programming.            FCS: Source of technical information, need new ways to convey this info.            Continual training for administration in trends,</p>

<p>Youth programs: Young people leave many opportunities and our 4-H program is one that fills a void for many young people.          Leadership and Community Development across all disciplines in Extension:          Leaders who know the process can advocate.          Agriculture production: Need for feeding expanding population.          Cutting edge 4-H Youth Development Program:          Most valued part of Extensions mix- Youth are our future.          Use retirees who do not have to be trained:          Saves orientation.          Enhancing family strengths and access to resources.          Consider making County Government a client as well as a partner.          EFNEP and similar programs.          FCS financial literacy: This is a niche area for Extension; we can serve the needs of all demography.          Use volunteers if applicable: Saves salaries and training programs.          Diet, Nutrition and Health.          Use part time employees: Saves money.          Nutrition education: Poor health is major part of the population.          Leadership development: In all aspects of program in every subject area, etc.          Geographic areas of NC require vastly different programs to serve the people.          Financial management programing.          Human Development education: Families are extremely busy with "life"- need supporting materials to face the needs of the cycle of life.          Programs for families with young children:          Proven success where there is a strong family in place.</p>	<p>populating new technologies etc., they need to know what's coming before everyone else does.          Motivation of ALL EMPLOYEES:          ELIMINATE those without the PASSION to SUCCEED.          Involve local government in the planning and need phase of the process.</p>
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<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<p>Minor Livestock: Goats, bees, etc.            Minor crops.            Over use of electronic means of communicating programs.            "Court " required programs: We are educators not crisis intervention/social workers.            Soil samples: County offices do too much for NCDA; We are running samples to Raleigh on our dime.            Each county should have 3-4 programs that best fit; others should be eliminated.</p>	<p>Do we really need specialists? They are out of touch with what people in counties need.            Agents are creating great programs.            Loss of county based locations and units will jeopardize half of our funding for extension.            "For 4-H Agent press 1"            "For the Agriculture Agent press 2"            "For Family and Consumer Science press 3".            "No Hablemos Español": Our immigrant population needs our programs now more than ever.            Putting the wrong people in critical positions.            Too many administrators at the county level, which takes their time away from the real</p>

	extension work. Lack of grass roots, plan for advocacy: Rekindle advocacy efforts with local advisory system. When Gov. Hunt put Smart Start in place, there was to be no duplication of services, today they have moved into Extension programs, with this added forcing and staffing are not only duplicating services but taking over ongoing program in counties.
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<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<p>How to grow healthier crops in smaller spaces.            Set up “eligibility criteria” for all counties to offer some service for a fee to wealthy counties.            WRAL: Publicity. Social Media.            Programs/Personnel: Could vary by county/region depending on need, not cookie cutter model.            Master Gardener: Have website link to soil and mulch companies.            Social Media: Use to advertise and reach younger generation to educate about Extension programs.            Mobile Extension Agents: Some programs like life skills.            One agent per county for others, depending on county needs.            Cost recovery for services.            Advertise: Get the word out of available programs so they are utilized.            Different programs based on county needs.            Charge nominal fee for certain programs.            Advertising programs more.            Ways to speak to new audiences: Younger generations.            More ads with local business.            More awareness around how to find local farmers as well as starting your own backyard small garden.            Technology and education.            Classes: Parenting. Sewing and any old skill that is dying out.</p>	<p>The agents I have known are very efficient and hard working.            Evaluate administration: Can work be streamlined in ad area?</p>
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<p>Design intake system to monitor needs and interests of the counties.</p>	<p>Cookie cutter model for all counties: Not all counties need the same services.</p>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<p>Programs that focus on youth: 4-H etc. showing ag is cool!            Specialist doing on-farm tests to gain new information and demonstrations to farmers and agents.</p>	

<p>Encourage group interaction to determine the needs of their area resources available. Areas of need should be identified; they could be supported by closing programs less productive. Focus first on high economic impact crops including livestock. Develop leadership programs to develop human capital at multiple levels: Youth, Faculty, Young Farmer, Community/ Government, Agriculture Leadership. Need for engaged citizens in and with university. To address challenges serve as advocates, lead positive change. Help farmer in understanding vegetation. Targeted educational programs to help producers with cost share programs. Targeted educational programs to help producers with regulating compliance.</p>	
<p><b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Don't Work</b></p>
<p>With the tenure system some employees become complacent: Determine how to make them productive, transfer, fire, introduce new duties, stop programs that are not productive perhaps they have matured. Close programs and redirect funds. Reduce the administrative requirements for specialist to give more time to agriculture work. Combine services and furnish regional extension support.</p>	

<p><b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Work</b></p>
<p>ECA Expansion. Community Resource Development. Youth Development. Targeting limited resource families. Financial management. Focus on issues that will impact us for years to come: health care, aging, financial management, environmental issues, city and farm. Area agriculture agents. To grow an organization you build on your strongest points to grow bigger and stronger. Specialty camps that teach skills. More programs for young families in the area of economics. 4-H youth leadership training. Emphasize families more, without families everything crumbles from without and within. Fruit and vegetable production, food safety. Integrated pest management. Sustainability and safe economical food supply. Meet grower needs in horticultural crop production. Re-brand/ co-brand Extensions original</p>	<p>Elderly food safety. Promote the connection between the University and research and the value NC residents receive at home. Find creative ways to match available county funds. Multi-county positions. Support: Technology, Email, Videos, Conferencing. Need better website with information that ALL consumers need. LESS clicking to get information. 4-H programing. County Director position. Specialized agents with 1-2 subject areas, who can manage, assist volunteers in general. Create apps with Extension info in specific areas so more people get info. Examine closely needs of county and seek to meet those needs. Engage specialist with agent, more resources.</p>

<p>programs.          Migrant labor services.          Extension Conference.          Keep Master Gardener program.          Food safety, home and elderly status.          Food, nutrition and health.          Leadership development programs.          Horticulture agents works alongside Master Gardener's programs seems to be catching on, not all counties have this, volunteers help to get job done.          Raleigh area campus: Using media to increase awareness of all Extension programs:          Facebook, Apps, Twitter.          Own volunteer development, other organizations need our expertise.</p>	
<p><b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Don't Work</b></p>
<p>Basic skills for young adults.          Urban gardening to feed people.          4-H camping.          Use impact from clientele and agents, they have grass roots insight also impact from agencies that use Extension, Family and Consumer Science programs.          Focus on reaching a new generation of volunteer/advocates for Extension.          Do we duplicate information that is available elsewhere?          Community development.          Find better ways to reach the current generation using social media.          Should Extension agriculture drop some crops/animal and agents programs where the industry has dropped significantly?</p>	<p>Reduction in core staff if what we do is working.          Youth: Programs sometimes change the youth that are already outstanding.          Reevaluate all of our programs with minimal participation.          Mobilize organization retirees beyond resource development.          If Extension did not exist, what difference would it make?          Cross-county agents programming.          Too much administration.          Enhance PR in good times not just for crisis.          Single-county staffing to regional staffing.          Joint appointments with teaching for specialist reduce Extension efforts.          If you go to specialized agent positions across counties, get rid of county director positions.</p>

<p><b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Work</b></p>
<p>Personal contacts face to face.          Keep mix of local agents and online information.          Provide technical assistance on new markets.          Community Development.          Increase online education related to specific problem areas.          Fully support personnel even with fewer people.          4-H          Have multi-county programs.          Please keep child development: Young people do not get parenting skills in High Schools.          Regional efforts within state and school.          Programs that reach youth and promote education among youth.          Demonstrate benefits of Extension to those providing funding, tell success stories.</p>	<p>Fewer offices, more focused expertise.          Agent training.          Fee based revenue opportunities.          Develop long term staffing plan that takes in to account economic cycles.          Strengthen partnerships.          Regional multi-county specialty positions.          Modern communications: distance/internet.          Interface meetings with client groups.          Partner with economic developers and chamber of commerce.          Fewer people better supported.          Move more to area based rather than county based.          Participate in economic development planning.          Eliminate ethanol as an additive for gasoline, it</p>

<p>Improve quality of life to make rural parts of state awareness. New plant cultivars for nurseries and new crop plants for farmers. Must communicate the “results” of Extension activities to the powers that be. Best safest and cheapest food supply system in world, what we are doing now is dismantling the “sector” that made it possible. Help industry on how to deal with gout, cost share program. Help farm families deal with ever increasing regulations. Strengthen the flow of research information to those in Extension. On campus facility conduct research, which generate the information to solve agricultural problems in the state. Industry educational conferences related to topics on issues that are wayfaring the industry, maximize the use of personnel and resources to benefit the most people possible per activity.</p>	<p>ruins some engines. Substitute corn as a source of ethanol.</p>
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<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<p>Master Gardener program. Abandoning core land grant mission. Discontinue the Master Gardener program, let the arboretum, weekend gardener, TV and online gardening programs communicate information. In place of 100 county programs, have 50 county programs. Cut all ethanol subsidies period.</p>	<p>Cut expense of operating support and travel funding. Total reliance of internet and computer technologies. Number agents and specialists (regional)</p>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<p>4-H programs in agriculture: Higher agriculture literacy. Leadership Skills life Address natural resources and limitations: Teach conservation Recycling etc. Clean water contamination of rivers and streams impacting clean water. Focus on opportunities for creation of new enterprises. Program focus on environmental sentiments and sustainability goods to: homeowners, youth, commercial agriculture Protecting the environment of NC and US is critical to the physical and emotional health of our citizens and the economy of North Carolina. Leverage resources in adjacent states. Use research to enhance traditional enterprises. Childhood poverty: Establish community</p>	<p>More Cooperative Extension on Campus at NC State: Being active in extension and very important to me. I cannot be active outside my hometown if I am not aware of opportunities to be supportive. Students and faculty could be much more active. To be able to offer 4-H to more people. Leading meetings that inform public of agriculture markets: cattleman meeting at local stock yard, marketing strategies, informs cattleman of ways to best market and profit. Extension is huge, what areas are having greatest impact? How are they being successful? Greater balance of staff that are specialized for each area. Also having a real community type agent. I have seen an agent that was for minority and community work, this is very important for people to be able to be involved that may or may not be</p>



<p>gardens in intercity.          Work with children and families how to grow, cooking after school programs.          Address childhood obesity: poverty at daycare center level.          Teach children how food is grown, how to grow it and healthy food (pyramid)          Conduct training on a regional multistate basis rather than county and state funding.          Hire for technical scientific expertise that does not exist otherwise in the state.          Enhance youth development programs that target toward minorities or underrepresented communities: All bright young minds should be nurtured, no matter what walk of life they come from.          Emerging areas where people may need more help to be successful.          Practical training for senior adults to use electronic skills: to help promote better mental and emotional health, could impact all the senior population in the whole state.          Extension programs related to water management:          We are blessed with plentiful water resources, which is scarce in many regions; we need to make maximum efforts of water preservation. Work with federal partner, national priorities. Help constituent groups with enhancing their technology base with appropriate training.          Programming of educational agriculture in suburban cities and areas.          This tends to be a large source of question as to what agriculture really is and they don't understand. If we provide enticing and good educational programming that ignorance and apathy may be reduced.          Prioritize based on research findings: would keep Extension effort current.</p>	<p>normally active because they are overlooked often.          Implement an area agent model for serving commercial agriculture, multi-county responsibilities: deploy more agents with a specialty in one or more crops, more efficient.          Develop metrics to determine impacts of programs: determine success of programs.</p>
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<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<p>Greater emphasis in the Ag/LS manufacturing sector: value added, post-production contributes 80% of the Ag sector gdp. Manufacturing commerce will attract companies to North Carolina, return citizenry to work.          Look at the areas where industry has taken over such as poultry and let industry finance that area.          Use research people but not Extension:          If you have limited resources this is not the neediest area.</p>	<p>Redundant staffing due to number of counties: More effective model.          I question the merit of using this venue as a forum for feedback on Extension's future.          4-H as a home school babysitting service: must be more parent-driven.          Not rehiring when agents move or are no longer in office. It takes agencies a very long time to rehire and during this time the office suffers and so does the county.</p>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<p>More 4-H programs.          Programs to keep young people on farms.</p>	<p>Regional Specialists work with producers, contract growers.</p>



<p>Provide better wages to workers.          Too many people don't know we exist, get out in the community.          Programs to help improve the farmers, I fear the farmer.          Teaching people farmers grow food to keep this country from being dependent on other countries.          Maximize production help to minor crops.          More support for brand new young farmers, who are trying to hang on and learn how to survive as a profitable farmer.          Visibility in counties.          4-H Youth: Home economics, consumer science and nutrition.          4-H: Working more with students that do not have an agricultural back ground.          Programs compatible with specific area.          Have county agents as more "bands" or instruction at individual farms without affecting vet duties.          Provide safety equipment to workers working directly with pesticide plants and crops.          Maintain strong Consumer Science programs that change with the times.          Programs for farm workers since they are the ones in the fields.          What happened to the home demonstration agent?          Programs based on community needs.          Keep people informed on new ideas.          Make farming more appealing to young people thru 4-H or how?          Loosen restrictions on grey water reuse, first designation B/W, black &amp; grey.          Educate homeowners and business about how to safely reuse grey water.          Go green and sustainable education.          Invest in storm water BMP education.          Production specialist.          More introduction of Extension to kindergarten to high school students.          Keep the program strong.</p>	<p>Maximize the use of the multi county agents and specialists.          Give emphasis to more regional specialized programs.          Extension workers need continued training on how to deal with the changing needs of the community.          Involve people from the county to determine what county needs are.          Provide demo programs.          Grass roots program.          State admin should mirror county representative.          Building a connection between different aspects of extension.          Way to determine effectiveness of programs already in place.</p>
<p><b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Don't Work</b></p>
<p>State Extension needs pruning.          Reduce or delete social service type programs.          Focus on agriculture, not what others do.          Provide more marketing and networking to program.          Green power, biomass use.</p>	<p>Training extension agents, better bachelor's degrees for agents.          Extension cannot compete for funds for social services activities with local county fund allocations.          Statewide program.          Organic farming not productive, it will not feed world by this technique.          Top down administration.</p>