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To: All Extension Employees, Partners & Stakeholders

From: Joe Zublena 
Associate Dean, CALS and Director, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service

Date: October 30, 2013

Subject: N.C. Cooperative Extension Vision & Planning Initiative

I'm writing to provide an update on the N.C. Cooperative Extension Vision and Planning Initiative and to announce the availability of additional resources pertaining to this process. Extension has launched a strategic initiative that will take place at least into May 2014. This process will support and sustain our vision and promise to the citizens of North Carolina, while ensuring that our organization adapts accordingly to our economic realities and the resulting impacts going forward. We aim to have a plan in place in time for our centennial celebration, though it will likely take time to implement the entire plan.

I cannot state enough the importance of this endeavor and the need for participation and feedback from our employees and stakeholders. We've built and maintained a high level of service and success over the past 100 years because of our people, and it's our people that will help navigate Extension through this process to long-term prosperity.

One of our primary goals as Extension leadership is to be open and transparent with our communication throughout this process, and to keep you as informed as possible. In addition, it's critical that we provide you regular opportunities for dialogue and participation, as ownership of this organization belongs to all involved. With these goals in mind, I'd like to share some resources we've developed to keep everyone abreast of our progress and to open channels for two-way communication.

WEBSITE – A website has been created to house information and resources pertaining to this initiative. The website is designed to keep you up-to-date about what's going on and it will serve as an archive for what's been accomplished so far. Please bookmark it and check back frequently.

Visit the website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative.

Currently, the site provides background and details on our initiative goals, the Visioning Committee, meetings & presentations, listening sessions, facts sheets & handouts, and contact information. There is a comments section where you can submit ideas and feedback for this process and our future.

LISTENING SESSIONS – We are holding listening sessions and meetings with our employees and many of our stakeholder groups, including county governments, commodity groups, community organizations and others across the state in November and December 2013. The purpose of these meetings will be to explain our current situation and to seek input as we move forward in the process.

The first listening session is for our employees and will take place at Extension Conference on **Wednesday, November 6, 2013, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** in the McKimmon Center. The complete listening sessions' schedule, and a link to register for the events, is available on the initiative website at www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative. The dates/times will also be added to the Extension calendar that feeds into the county websites and portals for easy sharing.

EXTERNAL ANNOUNCEMENT – Currently, we are just communicating about this initiative with you: our employees, partners and stakeholders. We feel it is important and necessary to get you up to date on the current situation and to address your needs first. We will begin an external awareness campaign – consisting of media relations, social media outreach and Extension promotion – the week of Extension Conference (week of November 4, 2013).

As with other portions of this process, we want you to have an opportunity to be involved and have a voice. We will provide customizable news releases and informational blurbs (for newsletters, websites, emails, etc.) to you during the same period we begin the external outreach. While we will include some local/regional news media and organizations in our efforts, we also understand that you are the ones that have cultivated those relationships at the core of Extension, and we want to position you to be able to discuss this initiative and inform others about it.

Sheri Schwab, associate director of NCCES and director of county operations, continues to provide overall leadership for this effort. Sheri is working closely with Drs. Melton and Stewart, as well as myself, to facilitate these important conversations and ensure progress. Sheri is the primary point person for this initiative, and can be reached at sheri_schwab@ncsu.edu or 919-515-1381.

On behalf of myself and Extension leadership, I thank you for your participation, patience and support during this effort. Remain positive and engaged, and I firmly believe we will emerge from this process positioned for long-term sustainability. The key to Extension's success has always been you – our employees and stakeholders – and now more than ever we need to come together to ensure another century of trusted service and value to the people of North Carolina.

- c: Richard Linton, Dean, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, NCSU
- William Randle, Dean, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, NCA&T
- Randy Woodson, Chancellor, NCSU
- Warrick Arden, Provost, NCSU
- Mary Watzin, Dean, College of Natural Resources, NCSU
- Marvin Malecha, Dean, College of Design, NCSU
- Kevin Howell, Assistant to the Chancellor for External Affairs, NCSU
- CALS Extension Department Heads