

*Creating our Future*  
**North Carolina Cooperative Extension**  
**Community Listening Session**  
**Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension**  
**Center, Mills River**  
**November 21, 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 110 people attended the Community Listening Session at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center in Mills River 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](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative)



## THE BIG PICTURE

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

- Partnership with Extension is crucial
- My children and now grandchildren are in 4-H...want to see it continue
- Concerned with the evisceration of 4-H, cuts in state office, closing of camps
- Came because of camps
- Living in the mountains we are stepchildren to Raleigh
- West is extremely interested in this process and wants campus to know this
- We are “just as good as the people in Raleigh”
- Seems Extension needs criteria for making decisions
- We need to support 4-H Dairy program
- The Mountain Research and Extension Center is extremely important to this region...do not want to see it cut...We thank you for your service
- There is a storm of retiring farmers, more people wanting local, organic foods and young people not knowing how to grow food.... Extension is needed to help with this and it will benefit Extension.



## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture has to be a fundamental block to build upon!</li> <li>- food safety</li> <li>- county-state MOU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- education programs</li> <li>- horticulture</li> <li>- livestock</li> <li>- Mxt. Association</li> <li>- Vol. programing</li> <li>- local support</li> <li>- research-based information</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develop relationships</li> <li>- F.B.</li> <li>- agricultural economic development</li> <li>- parks and recreation</li> <li>- association BRAG</li> </ul>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don’t Work
<p>Cut out programs of duplication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- every county is different</li> <li>- change mission</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what do you grow?</li> <li>- vision change?</li> </ul>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>Overall: Cooperative Extension needs help marketing its programs * Youth programs across subject matter (i.e. 4-H livestock programs, 4-H forestry, STEM, life skills,</p>	<p><i>Some cross-county positions with accountability</i></p>

community service, citizenship	
<u>Reasons Why:</u> Strong youth build strong adults	
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
Utilize community assessment external to Extension to guide prioritization process.	Cross-county positions without accountability
<u>Reasons Why:</u> Validate/justify your decisions	

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Web and mobile apps for networking</li> <li>- Enlist and train senior farmer volunteers to supplement the agriculture program—tax credits for contact hours</li> <li>- link experienced farmers with new farmers to enhance hands-on training</li> <li>- require single minimal annual fee for services and/or info. online</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify earmarked funds from all sources? Are there other options? %?</li> <li>- Are we really getting our Extension appointments out of our campus specialists?</li> <li>- Who can provide unified voice for small, local farmers in the political arena?</li> </ul>	(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enlist and train senior farmer volunteers to supplement the agriculture program. May arrange tax—or other—credits for contact hours (high service; low cost)</li> <li>- Update and enhance internet resources. Link Paypal for fee payments. Include research and training publications. (High service. Wider public access)</li> <li>- Community-based, one-on-one assistance, education, and workshops need to be strengthened (CORE of Extension)</li> </ul>
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminate duplication of services</li> <li>- Reduce the burden of reporting and duplication (KISS!)</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> Any pruning has to be balanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elimination of positions UNLESS it is for duplication of services</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> Customer service

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Profitable and sustainable agriculture (provide results of research to farmers = more profit/crop success)</li> <li>2. Local food systems (increase local economy, know your food source, support your neighbors)</li> <li>3. Expand Madison Family Farms, Madison County, TRACTOR, Yancey County, to other counties in the region</li> <li>4. Financial help for New Farmers</li> <li>5. Land link</li> <li>6. “Master Farmer”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Master Nutritionist</li> <li>- Master Parent</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local specialist in Extension               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- production, i.e. apple specialist program</li> <li>- family services in urban counties</li> <li>- counties choose specialist that meets needs of their counties, whether its agriculture production, human/health services, urban consumer agriculture, etc. (one-on-one interactions)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Partnering with community colleges, organizations in the region, high schools, elementary schools (distributes/shares programmatic costs)</li> <li>3. Relying on regional agents to cover special topics, i.e. Aquaculture specialist in WNC</li> </ol>

	4. Master Gardener
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
Healthy eating and physical activity promotion and chronic disease risk reduction  <u>Reasons Why:</u> How does this benefit agriculture? Might only benefit health insurance companies	1. Spreading agents too thin 2. Making agents cover areas that are not their expertise 3. Duplicating services  <u>Reasons Why:</u> Quality better than quantity

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
- invest in children - encourage youth to participate in agriculture - continue to promote buying local - farm education - teach money management - need Spanish speakers - better marketing - avenues for service projects - food preservation in Master Gardening? - bullying education	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  - Master Gardeners (clear-cut, organized, people know what is expected of them, available to everybody) - 4-H (there is a history of fun, learning, and you have something to show for it. Useful. Builds self-esteem and teaches you to deal with failure - Food preservation (practical) - Nutrition classes
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
Duplication of services	Too many trips to Raleigh. Folks need to see more than the center of the state

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
- Money management - FCS: Food preservation/preparation - Energy conservation - Food safety regulation - Agriculture: food production (home and commercial) - Environmental stewardship - Agriculture production (livestock, NTFP, fiber, etc.)  <u>Reasons Why:</u> Allow for communities to survive and thrive	- Research-based information to clients - Personal consultation with clients  <u>Reasons Why:</u> There is a lot of broad information available to public, but not all is correct or specific enough or relevant
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
	Restructuring county priorities without "mirroring" the restructuring effort at the specialist level  <u>Reasons Why:</u> Who's the driver? County needs or specialist titles

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
- Increasing support for local farmers - Nutrition education - Community gardens - Research	- Training volunteers - Area-specialized agents - Expand collaboration between the universities
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>

- Master Gardener - Pesticide education	- Handing out “freebies” - Inadequate in-service training
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<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TRACTOR program (Yancey and Mitchell counties)</li> <li>- composting program (entrepreneurial)</li> <li>- developing food outlets for local production</li> <li>- local food hubs—ID and grow regional (~3 counties) to share infrastructure. Example: mobile slaughter facilitator</li> <li>- certified kitchens</li> <li>- distribution at surplus food and food pantries—Gleaning</li> <li>- elementary school gardens</li> <li>- Extension as hub to manage network of community resources</li> <li>- Environmental protection and rehabilitation</li> <li>- Beekeeping, stream bank stabilization, erosion control, pesticides management, invasive species</li> <li>- Extension as food hubs?</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase farm income</li> <li>- Increase local food production</li> <li>- Increase job opportunities for local youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4-H programs are growing in NC, investing in youth accomplished by TRACTOR program, Farm to Table, FFA program, Master Gardener</li> <li>- direct connections with growers/clients. How can you increase personal contact given constraints?</li> <li>- How to leverage skills of Master Gardeners?</li> <li>- Extension brokers sessions like this for the community at large to encourage private formation of co-operatives</li> <li>- Extension as hub of information to private businesses to connect with one another</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> It’s about how you care, not what you know</p>
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don’t Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- less office and computer, more person-to-person contact</li> <li>- how to coordinate with other local resources—NGOs</li> </ul>	

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Master Chef program, modeled after Master Gardener</li> <li>- Expand 10% local campaign</li> <li>- Business education, especially related to small farms, marketing, local foods...</li> <li>- definition—clarification, marketing—of CE purpose and agriculture in general, inc. P.R. about who/what we are and we are not</li> <li>- capturing R.O.I. for programs</li> <li>- systematic way to filter calls/emails that don’t relate to our services</li> </ul>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small farms info (economy—driver, income generation, write off, saving \$)</li> <li>2. Consumer horticulture (economy—driver, income generation, write off, saving \$)</li> <li>3. Local food/market development (economy—driver, income generation, write off, saving \$)</li> <li>4. Youth development programs (investing in future)</li> <li>5. Family/community issues (product quality improvement)</li> <li>6. Certification programs, i.e. BQA</li> <li>7. Frequent environmental scan (don’t wait until outside people are telling you that the programs are irrelevant. More frequent internal examination that is looking forward)</li> <li>8. Agents are very connected across county lines, better than any other county agency, i.e. planning departments, etc.</li> </ol>

	* What can Extension do better than any other organizations?*
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human health issues not directly related to foods and nutrition</li> <li>- Wildlife-related issues not directly related to agriculture/production</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- resources spread too thin</li> <li>- not expertise areas—working outside of our expertise areas means increased liability</li> <li>- need to scan needs/resources more regularly</li> </ul>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being everything to everyone...diluting resources (it is not working, burnout of staff, makes Extension look redundant and unspecialized)</li> <li>2. Regionalizing staff dilutes the ability of staff to deliver quality programming (too thin = lower ROI)</li> <li>3. Examine “sacred cows” or traditional programs (overusing resources to program on too many platforms, i.e. paper, electronic, phone, etc.</li> <li>4. Territorial/silos—MUST ELIMINATE)</li> </ol>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more collaboration with other economic development agencies</li> <li>- meaningful ways to measure <i>impacts</i> of Extension programs</li> <li>- better fundraising—<i>effective</i> fundraising</li> <li>- helping entrepreneurs to work together and add value to what is produced/marketed</li> <li>- better utilization of social media to help with education, etc.</li> <li>- could partner with other organizations, companies, schools, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- youth development</li> <li>- <i>consistent</i> “branding” for Extension</li> <li>- Extension becomes a clearinghouse for other resources on the web, including out-of-state, private, and other organizations—not necessarily associated with NCSU, etc.</li> <li>- deliver as fast and as efficiently as Amazon</li> </ul>
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- less “doing” and more “teaching”</li> <li>- do away with county lines as barriers to programs/services</li> <li>- better/more efficient ways for reporting</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teach once instead of helping “doing” over and over again</li> <li>- spend more time on task...make more efficient</li> </ul>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- office phones gone = should be 100% mobile technology (should be out and about in the field)</li> <li>- reporting system</li> <li>- free educational programming—fee-based credentials (value attached to fee-based)</li> </ul>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What we do: a central, early “hit” webpage saying succinctly just what Extension Services does in the broadest terms. We think it is underserving and often not appreciated. We need to tell a story.</li> <li>- Investment: exploring reasonable fees for services (*) so valued more. Free sometimes underappreciated with person-to-person not internet. Workshops where experts can come in for sessions.</li> <li>- New: crops, veggies, fruits, that may not be on radar. For instance, Baker Creek Catalog’s array</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boots on the ground: who you gonna call? Extension can be that one to connect people to info., programs, and each other, relationships</li> <li>- 4-H: empowerment, public speaking, beekeeping</li> <li>- Natural Resources: adult education, conservation facilitating!</li> <li>- Classes: such as canning. “Hands On” processes</li> <li>*- Have Extension convene and facilitate community meetings—as a neutral entity—to solve problems, impartially. Role in community for past 100 years as a trusted partner and educator. Ex: like the Institute of Government is for</li> </ul>

<p>of product is “new” to us. Test crops, broaden knowledge of, recipes developed          Capitalize: on 100 years. Why started, timeless reasons, this IS A GOOD IDEA          - Adult Education          - Small Farms Startup: assistance. I feel this exists, but more          - Forums: community conversation between parties—govt., ag., edu., that may not usually have the chance to communicate          - Communication: understandable language? Some material geared for different levels of learning          - Perspective, Point of View: different views          - Mobile Agents in Smaller Offices: not a great idea, but some medical specialists operate several offices with the operator there only MT or with assistance—already done some          - Track: trickle effect of education and assist to later beneficiaries, secondary, tertiary...let public know</p> <p>(* Ian Anderson of the musical group “Jethro Tull” provided free concerts at one point in time but found the audience took drugs and didn’t care about the band playing because it was free and undervalued. Once they charged, the audience stayed sober...because they had a dollar in the process and valued the evening.</p>	<p>county/city government          -Web: valuable resources for farmers, teachers, home gardeners, immediate reference. Web training to quantify use of site may be useful to establish need</p>
<p><b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Don’t Work</b></p>
<p>- Target: more careful focus of “who” it is for          - Big Biz, “Industry”: large business at expense of small parameters. Big is not bad, but big at expense of smaller, mover variable interests squelches creative production and, in some ways, regs and consumer health. Comment on idea to privilege pesticide application. Unbalanced sales, my product, may lead to narrower view of ramifications, bias.</p>	<p>Duplication – look for overlap in process and info.</p>

<p><b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b></p>	<p><b>Ideas that Work</b></p>
<p>1. Youth leadership and community action skills          2. Nutrition programs          - food safety/canning/difference in service industries/industry/citizen          - health          - food prep. training—Health Dept. enforces, but who should train workers? Who should pay? “Servsafe” or food safety modernization act          3. Food security – let the Extension collaborate with growers to organize network to provide access and delivery of food to WNC to reduce hunger          4. Inclusion of Latino community and families and</p>	<p>1. Train volunteers to teach, i.e., school personnel to teach kids to wash hands, etc.          2. CES as collaborators and networkers in local community—co-creating partnership to teach          3. CES is easiest place to effect change for culture          4. Adapt what CES does per rural or urban areas so that public image of CES improves and is valued          5. Networking with County Commissioners and City Council          - have state lead Extension personnel to visit other states that excel in their subject matter field.</p>



other populations in each county  <u>Reasons Why:</u> What if national distribution stops—we have food, but no organized delivery system	Benchmark and best practice
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
1. CES Directors can serve perhaps more than 1 county 2. Start charging industry for services/teaching rendered, i.e. the “Servsafe” training for Wendy’s, Hardee’s, etc. 3. Hand off some of teaching to Social Services or community colleges	1. Expecting agents to function for 3 years without training and/or connection to state specialists doesn’t work 2. Providing critical services to Industry for free 3. Providing free stuff that people would actually pay for, i.e. soil tests  <u>Reasons Why:</u> - programs should have expiration dates - Industry can pay

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  - 4-H: visibility with awareness and involvement (4-H wouldn’t exist without Extension) - Focus more on smaller diversified farms (huge local foods movement) - Food safety: more training (health issues) - More partners: to lower funding-bringing everyone to the table for the same cause (to reduce costs) - Online/social media presence and classes increase	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  - 4-H curriculum to schools (knowledge and marketing) - One-on-one with farmers (relationships) - Utilizing volunteers more (with coordination) - Area newsletters on one subject matter (saves staff time, money, resources) - fees for publications/flyers
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  - 4-H: update curriculum (4-H more effective, outdated stuff) - Servsafe – duplicate service (private organizations offer Servsafe also) - Lots of FCS programs are duplicated in community (many churches and schools offer FCS programs) - Area agents and area offers (combining where 1 agent covers 2 or 3, according to size)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  - Extension as farmers’ market managers (conflicts) - Master Gardeners (sometime causing issues, more work, etc...but are free)

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  1. 4-H (flagship program) 2. Local foods (promote local foods/make affordable) 3. Non-traditional programs (agritourism, specialty crops, etc.) 4. Advertising programs (show community what we do!)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)  1. Agents in field (1 on 1 and face-to-face) 2. Partnership with counties for visibility (good rapport with county officials)

<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Master Gardener Program: Prune (needs revamping so community gets more benefits)</li> <li>2. Horn of Plenty: Plow (no educational value)</li> <li>3. Cook Smart: Prune (combine Cook and Eat Smart)</li> <li>4. Part-time/after hours personnel: Plow (no accountability)</li> <li>5. Staffing (overpaid employees and numbers not what they seem!)</li> </ol>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Current marketing program (people have NO idea what we do)</li> <li>2. We have no identity in our name (name needs to reflect what we do)</li> <li>3. ERS reporting (numbers not consistent)</li> <li>4. Lack of specialist support—what is their purpose? (need to be more accessible)</li> <li>5. Area agents spread too thin to be effective (need “county agents”)</li> </ol>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and expand agriculture programs (food shortages)</li> <li>2. Expand youth agriculture programs (shortage of farmers)</li> <li>3. Find ways to renew interest in FCS programs like ECA via young adults (continued community involvement)</li> <li>4. More area agents</li> <li>5. New and innovative programing</li> <li>6. NCSU publications need updating!!!</li> <li>7. District offices</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- youth agriculture/livestock program</li> <li>- Master Gardener</li> <li>- grower/commodity meetings</li> <li>- area agents</li> <li>- pesticide education</li> <li>- FCS: cut some and add new ones to stay modern</li> </ul>

<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Too many chiefs and not enough Indians”</li> <li>2. Duplication of agents’ program areas. Example: natural resource agents vs. soil/water</li> <li>3. Retirement packages</li> <li>4. State programming</li> </ol> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> 1 &amp; 2: Wastes time and money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- outdated programming</li> <li>- outdated publications—makes Extension look incompetent</li> </ul>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food preservation</li> <li>- Cooking skills</li> <li>- Recycling</li> <li>- Disaster preparedness</li> <li>- Master Gardeners</li> <li>- Youth development, 4-H</li> <li>- GRG: grandparents raising grandchildren</li> <li>- PR: more/better marketing of Extension</li> <li>- HAACP: food safety training</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unique to NCCE: food preservation, cooking, feeding families on a limited budget</li> <li>- Recycling and Disaster Preparedness may be unique to Extension, depending on county</li> </ul>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster a strong volunteer base—Master Gardener model</li> <li>- Minimize free programs when reasonable to charge fee (keep programs free or low cost for limited resource individuals)</li> <li>- Enhanced use of technology for public access to Extension—website, social media, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- publicity of 100<sup>th</sup> year, milk it for all its worth (to boost public knowledge of Extension)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- regional management of phone calls, technology support (this would free up agents to work more face-to-face)</li> </ul>

- Value resource in <i>some</i> counties—no other agency does it	
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	Must keep Extension presence in <i>every</i> county.
1. Transitional pruning of on-call, full-time, staff to answer phones. Possibly revive Extension Teletip (look for ways to cut costs at county administrative level) 2. Possibly sewing skills (it is cheaper to buy clothes than to make them? Societal benefit?	<u>Reasons Why:</u> If we lose the personal relationships and local partnerships, we will lose Extension!

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on economic benefits of agribusiness and helping young aspiring farmers start and grow farms</li> <li>- specialized agents to serve a geographic area</li> <li>- concentrate on training and “Train the Trainers.” Partner with community colleges to deliver training</li> <li>- Incubator farms to help young farmers start</li> <li>- Utilization of volunteers</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> Aging workforce of farmers. We need young farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Web-based delivery of information and training</li> <li>- regional workshops and conferences</li> <li>- be very intentional about connectivity of resources in the county and developing partnerships where we can eliminate redundancies</li> <li>- focus on programs that have a direct economic benefit and expansion of partnerships</li> </ul>

<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pesticide education</li> <li>- move some positions to ½ or ¾ time</li> <li>- look at duplication of services in every county</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> There are better systems to deliver this. More regionalization to improve economies of scale	More state regulations

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4-H school enrichment program</li> <li>- Food safety</li> <li>- must stay current</li> <li>- add to what we already have in the schools</li> <li>- more research projects organizing local people to do research</li> <li>- test farming to techniques locally but run out of the university</li> <li>- keep dedication to telling the truth/the facts about small farming and agriculture</li> <li>- grow the youth</li> <li>- more outreach for volunteers—make good use of the “baby boomers” who are retiring</li> <li>- paid volunteer coordinator in each county to assist every agent, find help</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- someone who is monitoring regulations (Feds) related to agriculture/food</li> <li>- administrative assistants are critical</li> <li>- every Extension center needs to have signage</li> <li>- our website ought to be seen as the place to go for information</li> <li>- social media</li> <li>- CES employees need to be “stunningly computer literate!”</li> <li>- all offices must have high-speed internet access</li> <li>- every agent should have a smart phone to do their jobs and a way to make payments on the phone</li> </ul> <u>Reasons Why:</u> - fast connection speeds are not always available in rural areas

Be proactive, rather than reactive—need knowledge	- if regional structure is embraced, shape it according to existing planning divisions, i.e. Land-of-Sky
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- get rid of deadwood—old curriculum</li> <li>- don't need uniform programs across the state</li> <li>- Servsafe—let someone else do this</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Administrators, people making the decisions need to understand major differences in land/people/environment/topography, and how that affects programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- don't have too many administrative assistants</li> <li>- our marketing doesn't work—we've been resting on our laurels</li> <li>- website needs to be easier to navigate and better organization to actually find info.</li> </ul>

<b>Ideas to Sow &amp; Grow</b>	<b>Ideas that Work</b>
(Reasons Why in Parentheses)	(Reasons Why in Parentheses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more money to the local farmers in hopes for better yields each harvest (support local farmers and crop production)</li> <li>- push for <i>small</i> local produce in areas where it is less attainable (No Farms, No Food)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- accessibility to information quickly through the internet (keep farmers informed and aware)</li> <li>- money towards research for clean fertilization (clean foods)</li> <li>- use of bees to help pollinate naturally</li> <li>- inform people of what his organization does (awareness)</li> </ul>
<b>Ideas to Prune &amp; Plow</b>	<b>Ideas that Don't Work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- administrative cost reduction</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> More money to the people in the field actually doing the research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-harmful chemicals that reside on consumer produce</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> I don't want to eat pesticides, nor does anyone else</p>



## 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?

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**N.C. 4-H'er Elected President!**

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[Headline]

Other Comments: When talking with other states, be sure to check with county staff not just state staff. Things that look good on paper may not work in the county.

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**"4H Youth Making a Difference"**

1. Raising our future leaders!
2. 4H youth reaching out to the community!
3. Public support of 4H across N.C.

Other Comments: If you don't plant the love of 4H in the young children, you will not have a dedicated group of adults involved in our communities.

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[Headline]

Other Comments: Community is the heart of what Extension is- the moment you pull people out of the county and the local community you lose what is the foundation of this organization.

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**State Winners of Edible Home Landscape Competition Announced**

1. 95% of homeowners participating
  2. Neighborhoods co-op to provide safe and healthy local foods for all residents
  3. Volunteers work together to assure that zero hunger exists in ALL towns in state.
- 

**Farming/Agriculture Times**

1. Safe/sufficient food supply
- 

#### **Local Food Still Strong**

1. Now tail gate market, opens in Mills River
  2. S.N. had doubled capacity
- 

#### **County Sees Reduction in 3 Chronic Conditions Due to Extension Nutrition Programming**

1. Reduction in elevated Choles
  2. Families prepare more nutritious meals at home
- 

#### **Cooperative Extension: Personal Education and Technology**

Other Comments: The past 20 years has seen an explosion of the NC Cooperative Extension Service partnering with the public. The service continually updates its research into online. Consultants are available across the state to help apply the research into the home and commercial food production as well as the growing plant production programs.

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#### **Cooperative Extension Still and Invaluable Asset to North Carolina**

1. Assisting farmers with innovative, viable crops
- 

#### **NC Cooperative Extension Doubles Staff Again! To meet increasing demand for locally grown foods**

1. Local farmers now supplying greater than 80% of all food consumed
  2. Healthcare costs continue downward trend as people consume more local vegetables, fruits, and grass-fed meats.
  3. Number of small farms in county at 100 year high
- 

#### **[Headline]**

1. Cooperative Extension Turns Viral
2. Most education available electronically

Other Comments: Help Farmers recognize non economic activities  
Shift financial education/support to SBTOC

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#### **Extension Lower the Average Age of Farmers through its Quality Work**

1. Educate younger audience through 4-H using STEM, education of agriculture in classroom
  2. 4-H'er becomes new young farmers
  3. Young farmers paving new way for agriculture: talks of organic, diversified farms
- 
- 

**Step Back to Get it Back!!  
The Continuation of Extensions Begins with You**

1. More farmers with locally grown products
  2. Healthier lifestyles/family: grow, sale, eat locally
  3. More curriculums in school to educate our future farmers
- 

**Cooperative Extension Best Known Agency in State!**

1. NC has safest food in country due to agriculture agents expertise
  2. 4-H edges out Boy and Girl Scouts combined in total numbers
  3. 10 out of 10 political parties have 4-H as part of their job experience
- 

**Agriculture Extension Agents Continue to Teach Farmers New Technologies that Enable them to Feed our Growing Population**

1. New IPM programs
  2. New fertility programs
  3. New food safety trainings for farmers
- 

**Local 4-H Alumni President of US**

1. Extension help stop famine, teach local farmers how to grow and harvest manna
- 

**N.C. Only Imports 5% of Total Needed Food From Outside Sources!!**

1. N.C. cuts agriculture/farm taxes
  2. Honeybee population surges in N.C. as N.C. bans 80% of all synthetic herbicides/pesticides statewide
  3. N.C. triples funding to Agriculture Research Extension
- 

**Federal Deficit No More**

1. US now grows all its own food and has plenty to share!
2. Technology made in U.S. sought by world

**[Headline]**

1. The first head of California broccoli is sold in NC in 10 years!
  2. The average age of farmers in NC is at an all time low of 35!
  3. Farmer is most common response of 5<sup>th</sup> grades when asked what they want to be when they grow up!
- 

**U.S.A. Has Become Food Independent Again**

1. Most food is produced locally with more farmers making wages similar to doctors and lawyers
  2. Pesticides have become obsolete due to research on crop rotations, cover crops, and soil building
  3. Regulations are lessened to allow farmers to sell more product
- 

**[Headline]**

1. Celebrate the youth in 4-H as they build farms on Mars of the moon
- 

**[Headline]**

1. Life long 4-H'er becomes president of USA-she thanks her local 4-H agent
- 

**[Headline]**

1. NC Governor credits 4-H with the presentation, leadership, and business skills for his success
  2. NC leads the nation in food production by small farmers
- 

**[Headline]**

1. NC cooperative Extension assisted in the expansion of farming through education of the latest agriculture/horticulture technology
- 

**[Headline]**

1. Local agriculture and community gardens keep communities healthy and well fed
2. 100% of NC children at healthy weight



3. Food insecurity at all time low
- 

#### **4-H Alumni Wins Nobel Peace Prize from Service Work in Guatemala**

1. Former 4-H member learned to set goals for himself and always give back to others to make the world a better place
- 

#### **North Carolina Leads the Nation to Stop Hunger Thanks to Extension**

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#### **Mushroom Production Larger than Tobacco**

1. Support specialty crops
  2. Support local farmers for healthy food
  3. Less and less children go hungry thanks to Extension programs
- 

#### **NC Extension Brokerage Responsible for Regional Increase in Per Capita Income, ecological resiliency**

1. Serves as hub for local food producers
  2. Leverages expertise in achieving improvements in water, soil, and air
- 

#### **[Headline]**

Other Comments: Mr. Denver Robinson, Former District Director of Cooperative Extension looked across the table and looked me right in the eye just a few weeks after I went to work as a young extension agent in 1974, and said Johnny, your client won't really care how much you know! Until they know how much you care! How you care is a matter of attitude! And requires personal contact.

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#### **NC Cooperative Extension Receives Presidential Award**

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#### **[Headline]**

1. Center for creative leadership, partners with Cooperative Extension on program delivery
  2. Because of Cooperative Extension we now are a collaboration nation
  3. Cooperative Extension voted most successful change promoters
-

**[Headline]**

1. WNC thrives and flourishes as CES assists others and organizes the local food supply system to erase food insecurity.
- 

**Extension Will Continue Best Health Training**

1. Health will be affected by foods training
  2. Youth training continues through 4-H
  3. Homes and families will always be better with help from NC Cooperative Extension
- 

**NC Cooperative Extension Changes Name to NC Cooperative Education**

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**[Headline]**

Other Comments: Extension get public credit and recognition for what it is contributing to the community.

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**Five Generation 4-H Member Wins Scholarship**

1. Mother recognized as top volunteer in state
- 

**Record Number of Family Farms Thriving in the Mountains**

1. Average age of family farmer is under 30
  2. 90% of mountain population get half their food from local sources
- 

**Google Purchases Extension for \$2 Trillion**

1. Says it will make the agency more data-driven and more profitable
  2. Will expand services by adding 20 smart-robots in each country
- 

**[Headline]**

1. NC farmland sells for more than residential development land per acre!
-

**[Headline]**

1. Cooperative Extension, nimble, concise, and still supplying NC with effective services
  2. Cooperative Extension still an effective demonstrated ROI
- 

**Crop Demand at an All Time High**

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**[Headline]**

1. Easements by farmers on board
  2. Small farms, local business
- 

**[Headline]**

Other Comments: Put more secretaries on Vision Committee. They probably know more about what works and what doesn't in an office. They are always there!

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