

Creating our Future
**North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Community Listening Session**
Watauga County Extension Center, Boone
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 102 people attended the Community Listening Session at the Watauga County Extension Center in Boone 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?

- I am here to support my agent
- Will what you hear tonight really influence the process? Have plans already been made? Is this a way to schmooze us and make us feel good, but you have already decided what to do? (lots of applause)
- Cooperative Extension has value. I trust and depend on the agents.
- Person who identified herself as former NC DPI person with responsibility warned Extension not to keep reducing districts until there is one person in Raleigh counties can depend on. That happened in her old work with school lunch program and was a disaster.



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"> - agriculture—horticulture *- Education: 4-H, farming techniques - economic development - new research - VAD District program - agritourism - leave our office as it is! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep Extension agents locally, not regionally! - continue providing quality services to local farmers - keep our support personnel in place - evaluate effectiveness of all programs - be proactive in change to benefit the farmers! - personal contact with farmers is essential
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>Identify and prune “fat” from top of apple tree first</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regional offices will not work! - doing nothing will not work! <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Agents would not have time for personal contacts. They would be on the road all of the time or doing paperwork</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equipping young people to pursue dreams of farming - estate planning to keep farms active and in families - food safety - regulations - raise visibility of agriculture - 4-H - agriculture classes at high school and 	<p>Partnership with other entities at the local level (soil and water), Farm Bureau, medical community, partnership for children etc., school system</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Furthers the available money for important programs</p>

<p>community college-level promoted vigorously - educate legislature on importance of farming</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> 1. young people do not always have resources and property to pursue dreams 2. lack of widespread education on food safety regulations</p>	
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>- control regulations - plow under excessive regulations that hinder production of nutritional, safe foods</p>	<p>- excessive paperwork to meet regulations - expensive auditing of records that have nothing to do with growing crops or their safety! - governmental control that does not understand or have knowledge of farming processes</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> - time consuming and expensive - regulating our farms out of business due to excessive regulations and allowing our food to come from foreign countries that have little to no regulations and are still accepted by the government of the United States!</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>- continue research on pests, fertility - cover crops - alternate crops</p>	<p>- administrative staff in centers - community centers like one in Watauga County - afterschool programs</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> - frees agents up</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>- Master Gardener - Upper-level management</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Not enough return on investment</p>	<p>- grants that aren't followed up on - area specialists</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> - no accountability - agents can't do service at high enough level because they are staffed too thin</p>

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>- livestock education - environmental education (K-12) and community - wood products → biomass waste utilization and develop cross-section programs, i.e. tree waste → wood products</p>	<p>- boots on the ground/community contact - person-to-person - classes in special topics that community members travel to</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> High-tech is limited. Personal experts are needed to help navigate</p>
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
	<p>- windshield time for agents</p> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Long travel times don't work to deliver knowledge</p>

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work with young people and agriculture - cooperate more with other agencies, such as Farm Bureau, community colleges, etc. - use technology to get information to the people 	<p>Ideas that Work (Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one-on-one with farmers (personal contact) - more educational programs for families— nutrition, economics, real life skills (families need unbiased help) - farm tours (persons get to see first-hand food being produced) - promoting local food production and promoting local use—restaurants, etc. (all local entities win this way) - Marion Pilot Plant
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p> <p>After school programs</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work (Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rules and regulations handed down by federal and state agencies, without Extension being there to explain and how to implement (rules forced from above without any explanation don't work!) - planning an Extension delivery system for the whole state. Mecklenburg County does not need the same services as Ashe.

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - educate the legislature regarding ag Extension budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cuts to general education budget impact cooperative agricultural services and educational programs - legislature acts as though agriculture isn't part of education - our Agriculture Director has given us support and help with grants—\$500,000 this year alone - assist with mandated food safety methods=education, research, etc. - assist new and emerging farmers who depend upon the latest information and one-on-one with agents, as well as conferences, demos, etc. in field - focus on youth in agriculture, 4-H, FSA - disseminate the latest research on GMOs to farmers - encourage use of safe seed, safe ag practices, encourage organics <p>Our wish list includes: Deeper aspects of sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - permaculture - hillside farming - perennial vegetables 	<p>Ideas that Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-H - local food - teamwork within NCES between growers and educators in community schools - research - agritourism—ag changing from traditional farming to newer models - local agents respond on the ground, in our communities, with <i>local</i> answers to local problems - nutrition education—programs which reach those who are food insecure, teaching home meal prep., canning, etc., home gardening
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organics - medicinal herbs - cider apples <p>Keep agents we have! Find a way to fund new positions in local offices. Our population continues to grow—agriculture will be increasingly crucial to the economy, locally and statewide</p> <p>Reasons Why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic development - community development - sustainable development 	
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - graphic is a planter, not a plow—could be the problem - trim administration at state level <p>Our experience with Watauga County Extension is that they are quite good at self-pruning. They do not implement programs without careful assessment, nor keep ones that are not effective. The Watauga County Extension service is already efficient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep Extension agencies local, not regional, each county has different needs - top-down decision-making - you're not discussing ways to keep ag service budget <i>secure</i> but asking how and where to accommodate cuts <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Too much dilution</p>

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p>	<p>Ideas that Work</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more utilization of assistive technologies across counties?? - county infrastructure: food hubs & co-ops, farmers' markets, etc. - links with universities <i>in</i> counties - internships and mentorships - other partnerships - Ag foundation fundraising? - land link potential -4-H - A lot of opportunity within public/consumer education—not referring to growers—for homesteaders, hobbyists, gardeners, farmers' market consumers, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teaching self-sufficiency - cross-county collaborations - more workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emails newsletters and listserves - bringing learning <i>to</i> the learner/land - supports alternative schedules through meetings outside of 9-5 - lifelong education - relationships and face-to-face, on-farm contact - strengthens communities - consumer education and 4-H in most counties - supporting local farmers has direct positive impact on state's economy and economic development and community → because "local food" is #1 growing trend in industry - collaborations - workshops - partnerships with complimentary local ag. support agencies - links farmers to funding—grant writing support, etc.
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p>
<p>Cut cutting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pulling ag and nutritious food education in our counties doesn't work—diabetes epidemic, etc. - cutting programs that have positive long-term implications - why isn't Extension approached in an interdisciplinary nature within university system? i.e. nutrition professors/researchers working within Extension purview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCCES being embedded within university - not educating tuition-paying students, Extension educates consumers in community - structural problem: makes Extension marginal in university system, which makes Extension vulnerable when university finances come “under attack” - concern about “Extension” living in college of ed. only
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Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialized agents in program areas relevant to the region (what is important in one geographic region may not exist in another) - Agriculture Extension is critical in supporting, coordinating, and providing education in <i>regional</i> food systems (food systems don’t recognize county lines) - link nutrition education to food system development: an integrated approach (children born today are expected to live 5 years less than their parents! Nutrition is connected to our leading costs and causes of illness and death) - make the good programs → great programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to research - working in the county context - on-site demonstrations - centering on community values and needs
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don’t Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parenting and life skills, etc. food life skills (not top priority because overlapping with other agencies, partnership for children) - trim the apple tree from the top down. The county and COSS agents are the roots of the tree (do we need managers to manage the managers) - refocusing core programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - centralization - Cooperative Extension not cooperating within itself - 4-H competing with FFA—we should look for ways they can work together

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Increase emphasis on protection of water resources</i> (++protection here protects many sites downstream and thus saves \$ and improves quality of life and protects tourism interests) 2. In the mountain counties, <i>tourism</i> brings in big \$\$ an much of this attraction centers around water recreation activities 3. <i>Increase emphasis and organization of Master Gardener program</i> (free and expert help to spread across counties in many areas—to help agents) 4. ++Emphasis on Horticulture Therapy areas: inclusive: children, seniors, physically/mentally 	(Reasons Why in Parentheses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local food movement—very strong in the high country (farmers’ markets are booming) - demonstration projects (catalyst for change from community to community and county to county) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stabilizing stream banks - agricultural plots— what works or not - development ahead of necessity - gardening with kids/youth (kids education in school gardens, nature experience) - water resource protection

challenged population (increased agent \$\$ possibilities to expand outreach in community)	
Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>pruning</i> is best done from the <i>top</i> → <i>down</i> - the <i>small roots</i> take in the <i>most important</i> nutrients and <i>distribute</i> them to the whole “tree” - do we need 2 <i>district directors</i>? - are higher paid educators/administrators producing as much as local agents? Reaching more people, helping more people, bringing in more grants, improving <i>directly</i> the lives of their local population and protecting local environment! <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Removing local agents detrimental to all programs</p>	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raleigh - State Conference (waste of time)

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international opportunities through university/community college (bring agritourism to showcase Watauga County farmers) - digital/online (dispense/expand research—share message of services, success stories) - community ecosystem (recognize new partners, develop greater awareness and support) - transitioning (new methods) - funding (products to meet current demands) - succession planning (turnaround/training for future) - Agriculture (Generations. We need to eat) - professional development - 4-H, align with Cooperative Extension (does your program reflect your community needs of youth/families?) 	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrations and activities that nurture families - on-farm visits - collaborative efforts: internships, BRWIA/HCCOG/ASU/CCCII (workforce development) - skill-building workshops (human development) - partnerships (inform, reduce/eliminate duplication) - health/nutrition education (build a healthy population, including kids)

Ideas to Prune & Plow	Ideas that Don't Work
<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outdated online services (specialists develop updated resources since we will use it more) 	<p>(Reasons Why in Parentheses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - health fair (low impact) - mileage reimbursement cuts limit professional development (can't help smaller farmers in remote areas)

Ideas to Sow & Grow	Ideas that Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IPM program—pesticide management - ground cover management in Christmas trees - fertilization programs for all crops - keep existing farms in operation for younger generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - replace vacant staff positions - every county needs an agent—some specialist agents depending on county - more field staff to work in the field - streamline upper management

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect the 4-H programs, support FFA programs in local high schools - more help to promote local food producers - local food hub to collect and sell locally prepared food <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>common sense</i> - help with compliance with regulations - future of farming is our youth 	<p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>More one-on-one help from farmers</p>
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduce upper management staff - reduce FCS programs—not cooking but growing the crops and produce <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>Need boots on the ground in each county</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - each agent serving 3-4 counties - spend research dollars where they are most needed <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>Too much area to cover to give individual advice</p>

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stay with parenting and caregiver skills - 4-H and youth role modeling, keep youth engaged *- on-farm crop testing *- FFA - leadership development - forestry! - hands on approach—researchers and local farmers - help promote produce growers - look into joint ventures with county—commissioner approval and help funding - economic development: crops? <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>Next generations needs the knowledge to supply our agricultural demand</p>	<p>Ideas that Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow the Tractor Food Hub that is in Burnsville - pesticide certification - educational programs - help promote product - need a commercial kitchen for use in Avery—for canning and value-added products <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>Provide pkg. and supplies to small farms to promote local food and farms ASAP</p>
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create Extension line item *- have money at the delivery end—farmer <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>Have annual budget that is <i>constant</i> and not compete funds</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cutting funds for Extension offices - don't duplicate <i>services</i> <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <p>No one can reach the small farmer like the ag agent in the field—do not spread too thin</p>

<p>Ideas to Sow & Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - natural resources - nutrition - livestock - 4-H - self-sufficiency, independence, life skills: nutrition, youth skills - sustainable agriculture and food system 	<p>Ideas that Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinated effort - hands on, applied, face-to-face - diversity of skills, i.e. pressure cooker - community involvement - community resources like coolers, processing equipment - use of volunteers
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small farms, beginning farmers - constant assessment - education programs at various community sites <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unique regions in Appalachia - remote, outlying areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - youth development like 4-H - ag education like chick hatch - boots on ground
<p>Ideas to Prune & Plow</p>	<p>Ideas that Don't Work</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduce Extension near source of research— need local - focus on populated areas, let community development resources work - top of the apple tree! <p><u>Reasons Why:</u> Remote areas of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consolidation - impersonal service - regionalization, less agent contact - threat of ag illiteracy - public unaware <p><u>Reasons Why:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - farms in transition - lots of small farms



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?

North Carolina Leads Nation in Agriculture!

1. NC Cooperative Extension has helped bring back the agricultural life to North Carolina
 2. Local food products, farmed in NC continue to lead the way in the Nation
 3. NC food producers continue to grow
-

North Carolina Number 1 in Agriculture

1. 20 years ago, NC restructures its Extension Service Agency, focused other agents educating their farmers, 4-H groups, youth, they have seen agriculture become a major source of income in counties and state.

Other Comments: Or we can say we are last in agriculture income, education.

Is Farming Dead?

1. State cut monies, no 4-H, no agriculture programs
2. Not enough farms to feed us
3. China takes over, due to lack of food, due to budget cuts

Other Comments: Is this what our kids have in their future?

Agriculture, Youth, and Food Preservation Stronger than Ever!

Other Comments: Thank you for coming out to Watauga and facing some difficult questions. I know it would have been easier to stay in Raleigh. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

More Revenue to Fund Cooperative programs

1. Need more lobbyists
 2. More emphasis in school system about fanning through programs like 4-H
 3. Educate population on why cooperative positions need to be fully funded and staffed
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[No Headline]

1. NC keeps rewards of investing in the future of agriculture through Cooperative Extension, 4-H and youth programs.
2. NC realizes that focusing efforts across county likes and cutting unnecessary upper administration benefits consumers at the ground level.
3. Failure to focus on investing in agriculture and our youth creates economic failure and a locally induced depressed depression.

Other Comments: Focus on education:

Small communities for agents to serve. Continue 4-H, FFA, and youth education. Promote community service through research and demos. Provide funding and staffing foe after school. Promote local A and H fairs. Continue funding for staffing in agents and support.

[No Headline]

1. Farm productivity at all time high thanks to efforts by extension
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The Final Endowment Finances the Last Agent in Cooperative Extension

1. All CES positions saves in state from future budget outs
 2. Program goals met through alternative funding
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[No Headline]

1. The nation was saddened today as the Cooperative Extension Service, after 120 years of helping all of America's citizens, died because of continuous budget cutting by ill-informed politicians. It was so like killing the goose that was still laying golden eggs.

Other Comments: Solar flares cause interruption in farming. Officials hope it doesn't last long enough to cause mass starvation. Since farming now relies on drones, robots, and other electronic devices, helped by Cooperative Extension, they will step in to help with this situation.

NC Leads Country in Textiles, Food, and Farming

1. Cooperative Extension sited as source of pulling leadership, innovation, and resources together in this accomplishment.
 2. Took budget cuts to a new lead and turned a downturn into an opportunity to bring resources from NC State University, NCFT and T University, NC Departments of agriculture and Health and leaders in the local movement together to turn states economy around.
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Childhood Obesity Drops

1. The incidence of childhood obesity drops 50% over 20 years due to Cooperative education efforts led by the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Other Comments: Extension unites and energizes efforts between public health, local physicians, public education, and universities as well as agricultural outlets, and keeps them honest.

[No Headline]

1. Cooperative Extension Service steps up to the plate to meet ever increasing demand for high quality food!
2. Local processing plants provide better alternatives for healthy eating.

Other Comments: We must be a part of a “spoke” in the wheel of change or be run over by that wheel. Be proactive not reactive!

[No Headline]

1. Avery County still has a viable agriculture income. Not all land sold to tourists. This happened because of information from agriculture extension.
2. Avery County, a beautiful county that draws tourists because of its agriculture board landscape and enterprise.
3. Local people still able to live a good, productive life because of new agriculture enterprise introduced by local agriculture agents. Booth on the ground has paid great dividends we survived.

Other Comments: What did the Smith and Lever Act say was extension mission- how can you disseminate agriculture, home economics, and 4-H education without the agents making personal contacts. Computers will not reach the people that need this information most.

Cooperative Extension Still Existing

1. Agriculture is “still” proving to be the mainstay of civilization. Farming is providing all of the food for people.
 2. Education, relating to new research, has changed the pace of farming. Technology has produced many new kinds of food.
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NC Has the Strongest Food System in US

1. NC Extension creates an economic impact that is 10 times due to food system sales, education, and development that is locally and regionally based.
2. Farmers have grown because they are earning living wages
3. Youth and families eat more healthfully, contributing to lower health care costs, freeing more state money to enhance Extension services and research.

Other Comments: Please balance and align research with practice priorities. Protects local extension!

A Great Success Story

1. Provide up to date, economical information
 2. Provides a public face to research
-

Agricultural Extension Continues Strong in Educating Local Communities

1. Western North Carolina, cleanest water in the United States, leads with their clean water initiative.
 2. Youth lead the way in healthy lifestyles and local food.
 3. NC Master Gardeners lead the way in horticulture therapy.
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Watauga Watershed Rates Number 1 East of Mississippi River

1. Largest trout ever recorded in Watauga
 2. Hellbender off endangered list
 3. All waterways now have buffers
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Watauga Watershed Leads State Clear and Protected

1. Hellbender off endangered list
2. Rain gardens-tourist must see
3. Local foods-growing top state

Other Comments: Health improved county-wide leads state.

NC Honored As Most “Sustainable” State

1. Clean Water, abundant water
 2. Abundant, safe, healthy foods
 3. Healthy population, sufficient means to sustain people at all levels
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NC is Food Self-Sufficient

1. After the world economic collapse, NC farmers took the reins to teach citizens how to grow food.
 2. Although many folks in the cities could not make the transition, most people in rural areas were able to start growing their own food.
 3. Cooperative Extension has proven invaluable in helping folks become independent food producers and are gradually developing trade exchanges in their communities.
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Can We All Get Along!

1. We- the Nation and the world
2. Teach us to fish! We will be able to feed us all!

Other Comments: Work multistate, update, and preservate!

Incidence of Chronic Disease Decreased 75%

1. Obesity reduced
2. Diabetes incidence among children drastically reduced

Other Comments: Cooperative Extension has been instrumental in changing behaviors of NC citizens so that they are healthy and production nutrition educating and programs have changed behaviors. I value these changes.

Watauga County Sustains its Population Through Years of Training/ Experimenting/ Developing Regional and International Communities

1. Obesity near zero through WCCE nutrition educational and partnership with outdoor recreation

Other Comments: I value the WCCE, its leadership, stewardship, partnerships, and commitment to community service and partnerships.

Extension Celebrates 130 Years of Helping Local Communities

1. County extension agent teaches youth how to farm.
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The Outreach of Extension Grows

1. Numbers of families served increased 100% across all program areas.
2. Trend of early deaths due to overweight and obesity reversed through partnership of nutrition and agriculture programs from Cooperative Extension.
3. All foods eaten in NC grown locally!

Other Comments: We need to keep county extension programs in each county! Agents serving multiple counties will cause program impacts to drop. Relationships need to be formed locally to keep impacts strong for farmers and families living and working in NC.

Extension is Growing Young Farmers Beautifully

1. Educating youth
 2. Continuing excellent service
 3. Keeping everyone on track with regulations, etc.
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[No Headline]

1. People will be starving because not enough food
 2. Clean water will be the most needed natural resource and the most expensive
 3. People will not know how to survive off the land
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[No Headline]

1. Nobody will know how to grow anything
 2. If you have food in the cellar you will have to guard it with a gun. If they don't take them away.
 3. But not to worry- the big government will take care of us!!
-

Population Reaches 8.5 Billion

1. Farm hand unable to sustain crops, nutrient load of soil at contaminate and toxic levels.

2. Aqua culture is feeling the effects of over harvesting; most fish species are endangered.
3. United government limits child bearing to one male and one female offspring.

Other Comments: -United State Senate still debating on national affordable health care program

-Government says health care web-site to be up and working well

Cooperative Extension Revives Hemlock Population

1. Success with American Chestnuts leads to revival in Hemlock numbers
2. Research leads to startling recovery.
3. Forests regaining structure, wildlife rebounds.

Other Comments: Following concerns over future of NC Cooperative Extension, amazing accomplishments.

Agriculture Grows with Investment in Culture

1. The small farm continues to provide security for our citizens
 2. Native forests continue to progress with private stewardship
 3. Local food free of chemicals may be best path to cure chronic disease
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Agriculture Extension Receives Additional Funding For the 20th Year in a Row

1. Small farms grew 200% in the last 20 years- Extension keeps pace with increased heeds.

Other Comments: In western NC there is still a large basis of small farmers- a basis that is actually growing in scope and scales as well as expertise and diversity of crops/livestock- increasingly very important economically- very bad times a counter productive to cut NC Cooperative Extension.

Youth Discovered Cure For Cancer From Foods

1. Several 4-H youth in the South Eastern Regional Committee for research and development of vegetables have worked together on a discovery of a chemical focused in the Yucca Plant that cures cancer.
2. Youths on the committee represented North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
3. These 4-H youths have been working on this project for the least 6 years through their local Cooperative Extension Agency 4-H organizations and skyped and had web conferences to discuss their programs. The meet-ups were coordinated at and lead

at the individual Cooperative Extension office meeting croons with computers set up by the office agents.

Cooperative Extension Grows Healthy NC Communities

1. Growing small farms/ sustainable agriculture/food systems/ agriculture education
 2. Protecting healthy water and natural resources
 3. Promoting self sufficiency, life skills, nutrition and food preservation
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All 100 Counties Are Now Fully-Staffed at Cooperative Extension Offices

1. Community needs being met
2. Volunteers needed

Other Comments: Continue work/ partnership with Extension and community clubs in promoting, volunteering, and educational programs.

Chestnut-Fed Pigs Provide Healthy Meat in Local Food Systems

County Resource Center Hosts Harvest Festival

1. Wood wastes used to build barns, chill refrigerators at food hub, warm administration office, and compost festival waste, including feces and urine, all from previously wasted materials taken to dump.
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Asa Nelson- Farmer of the Year

Other Comments: Asa Nelson, 27, of Boone NC was just awarded young farmer of the year. He attributes his passion for farming to the life he spent as a child growing up on his family's 20 acre farm. His father worked full time and worked the farm with his family on nights and weekends. His mother, an NCSU animal scientist turned nurse, eventually quit her nursing job and went back to farming full time and home schooling him, with the great help of NCCES.

Everyone Farms Thinks to Life-long Agricultural Education Provided by Local Extension Office

Other Comments: This is not the time to cut any of the services of Extension. We are witnessing a revival of local agriculture and a renewal of small communities. We cannot expect that a farmer can go it alone without the support of lifelong educational support. Without Extension's support, these young farmers hardly have a chance. And yet, the renewal of local

farming is exactly our hope of our future. We are on the verge of a new agricultural era; Extension is needed now more than ever.

[No Headline]

Other Comments: NC food needs to be prioritized and integrated into institutions as a 'requirement' or % of total. ->messaging is flawed when NCSU doesn't serve/prioritize purchasing in NC.

This is not the time to cut funds. Find the money somewhere else. Integrate better and use more funding from university.

Number 1 New Jobs for College Grads=Farmin'

1. Agriculture partnership with ASO record numbers of beginning, young farmers.
 2. Farmers are struggling to redevelop soil. (Realistic)
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Local Processing and Aggression sites BOOMING

1. In 20 years, our regional food supplement and self-reliance is going to be depleted if we keep going the way we are.
 2. We need to push for supporting LOCAL SMALL-SCALE, YOUNG FARMERS if we want to be a healthy, vibrant nation. Now is NOT the time to be cutting these programs.
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[No Headline]

Other Comments: The four people at my table were concerned that they had no young person to take over the farming business. What should be done to encourage business agreements among generations? (Too many 40-year olds don't know what their stake is in the farm.)

A New Day for Farming

1. The world recognizes the importance of farming, farmers
 2. Government recognizes the importance of proper regulations for farm products
 3. Cooperative Extension solves problems with Obamacare
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[No Headline]

In 2034, if rules and regulations are not brought under control now, there will be no farmers left in the U.S.

Farmers Storm Capital, Legislators Finally Get It

1. Education, education, education... for our leaders and our young folks
 2. Extend moral Monday to address the fact that the folks who grow our food matter
 3. As a small farmer, my success has been boosted greatly by extension services
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Watauga County Extension Awarded the Prestigious Sustainable Community Award

1. Number one in state in number of sustainable farms
 2. Number one in state in local foods
 3. Number one in state in number of youth remaining on their sustainable farms
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NC Cooperative Extension Faced Extinction 10 Years Ago

1. Strong grass roots support turns tide with legislature action to save it
 2. Legislature understands budget woes of Agency
 3. Stronger than ever due to knowledge of economic impact agency has to local communities and state
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NCCES Celebrates 120 Years

GMO's Outlawed; Seed Seized and Destroyed

1. AMA stands with value of organic diet
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GMO's Responsible for Crop Loss Everywhere Except Watauga County Where our Agents Refuse to Allow Cheap, Crappy Seeds

Other Comments: The science from agriculture schools must trickle down to the farmers to encourage safe food supply.

[No Headline]

1. We need to think about how to incorporate agriculture into our educational institutions from kindergarten to graduate school. Extension can be a model for this by re-thinking the current structure.

Other Comments: More time needs to be spent thinking through how to use the system we have in place and NOT CUTTING MORE CRITICAL programs. Things to look at include: why does

NCES have to live with in the Education Department? How could that change? Or how can this be leveraged and extension can be treated more interdisciplinary? And collaboratively?

Please explore in every community working with your local Parks and Recreation Department to expand programming and possibly pool resources. Contact Executive Director of NCRPA www.ncrpa.net from - Director of Watauga Co. Parks & Rec and current president of NCRPA.
