ISU Extension Web-Based Needs Assessment  
2007-2011 Plan-of-work  
ANR Extension Result

Why we did the web-based needs assessment?
• To increase understanding of the needs of Iowa citizens
• To engage a cross-section of Iowans
• To ensure programming is on target
• To satisfy federal plan-of-work requirements; approval is necessary to receive the $9.5M annually in federal funds

Of interest:
• 3,327 completed assessments
• 18% of respondents were non-Extension users. 60% current users and 22% past users.
• 6% of our respondents were under the age of 24; this was a first try at combining adult and youth
• 72% were female, 28% male

Top 11 responses out of 30 (ranked 4 & 5 on a 5 point scale):
1. Helping youth develop leadership, citizenship and life skills. (81%)
2. Creating new opportunities for current and future generation of farmers (78%)
3. Strengthening agricultural production and processing to boost Iowa’s economy (78%)
4. Strengthening parenting skills (77%)
5. Involving youth and adults as active partners in decisions that affect our lives. (76%)
6. Develop new products that add value to agricultural commodities (75%)
7. Increase support for youth programs that provide youth development (75%)
8. Help rural communities understand how they can grow and prosper (75%)
9. Improve nutrition for all Iowans (74%)
10. Improve the health of all Iowans (73%)
11. Support quality of life through horticulture and natural resource conservation (73%)
Comments:
Written comments were submitted by those who participated in the web-based needs assessment. From an ANR Extension perspective, a brief overview of the main points/messages has been gleaned from the 855 (72 pages) comments.

General Themes:
1. Rural Iowa is hurting economically and socially. A multitude of factors are influencing change. Rural poverty is increasing.
2. Positive constructive comments were submitted that will help all program areas focus.
3. There was real concern about duplication of services in the human science/services area. We must help distinguish between education and intervention.
4. Economic development and rural vitality were the two most often cited needs.
5. Maintaining and improving quality of life in terms of the environment, recreation, jobs, communities, and opportunities for young adults.
6. Increasing the visibility and presence of ISUE was frequently cited to connect programs with current demographics.
7. Many communities are seeing the diversity of their populations change.
8. There needs to be re-dedication to the land-grant mission.
9. Maintaining a strong agricultural presence.
10. Confusion over the role of CEED still exists.

ANR Extension Messages:
1. Our Future Talk materials are right on target.
   - Economic development and rural vitality
   - New opportunities for agriculture
   - Beginning farmers and the next generation of agriculturists
   - Serving new audiences
   - Natural resource management and stewardship -- land management
   - Bioeconomy
2. The Master Gardener program was positively cited many times.
3. ANR needs to decide what we do well, focus our program, and lead.
4. ANR needs to market who we are and what we do.
5. ANR needs to maintain a strong ISU presence.
6. ANR needs more field specialists.
7. ANR needs to modernize and update programs and methods of delivery.

What we learned for ANR Extension:
- Iowans support economic development through value-added agriculture
- Iowans want to explore new opportunities in agricultural development
- Iowans envision a need to assist the next generation of agriculturists
- Rural vitality and quality of life issues are important to Iowans in rural communities
- Iowans view horticultural pursuits and natural resource conservation as important quality of life factors

Miller and Brown, December 5, 2005