

Middle Management Meeting  
August 23, 2011

1. Meeting Called to Order Connie Haskell- Chair
2. Introductions
3. Review of Minutes motion to accept Bobbie Fletcher: seconded by Martha Ray seconded
4. Elect a nominating committee for officers that have to be replaced. The nominating committee will be:
  - Claude Bess will Chair the committee
  - Bobbie Fletcher
  - Louise Moore
5. Volunteers to work on the Wednesday committee night out
  - Darrell Dromgoole
  - Joan Jacobson
  - Norman
6. Review the plan of work previous year
7. Cross Committee assignments representation at every group on Wednesday 1:30 until 3pm. At 3:30 will discuss the outcomes from the committee assignment
8. Words of Wisdom
  - Dr. Celvia Stovall – Thanked everyone for what we do. Value the decisions that we have to make. Passing on comments are very important when reporting to AEA Appreciates the Urban initiatives. The urban populations are going and she appreciates what we have done.
    1. Introduced: Dr. Rosalind Dale from Illinois new Urban Regional Coordinator NC A&T.
    2. Stan Windham Assistant Director for Program Operations and Innovations at Alabama A&M.
  - Dr. Tim Cross – Discussed the need for consistency & quality control. Personnel Accomplishments for Directors  
Dr. Larry Arrington new Chancellor UN of Tennessee Knoxville  
Gain Smith honored with a 4H Center named after him
    - Working on Formula Funding 1862 & 1890 Capacity funding challenging. Developed a Regional White paper (Extension and experience stations) ECOP has endorsed...budget committee endorsed it. Gone to NIFA...sending a message that competitive grants are important.
    - Directors of Extension & Experiment Stations established 5 areas to establish multi state teams. Five issues came from USDA/NIFA initiatives. What do we need to do in the Southern Region?  
Challenge: How do we get our county and field folks involved in

what is happening nationally. Developed a directory of resources for Military (reserve)

- Analyzing a plan for one line funding. There are currently about 30 lines for extension and 30 lines for research. Proposal considers putting one line for each instead of the 60 lines that are currently listed. Look for one number that can be advocated for...then the questions are what happens if the line goes down or up. What are the benefits and costs? Commend the MM on the conferences urban...etc. Everyone appreciates the opportunity to get together with other middle managers. Urban matters are growing as are the needs.

How do we get what we need, show the story, mm are still they keys to getting those involved in reporting. The benefit is what we can we do as a MM group versus on what we can do individually.

9. Cross Committee Assignments- Need representatives from MM to attend the sessions and report back to MM.
10. Martha Sartor explained the PLC representative responsibilities. The PLC Representative brings action items to southern directors and takes information from MM back to Directors. Make sure that the action items are completed and reported. August 20-24, 2009 Florida Hotel and Conference Center, August 23-27, 2010 Memphis TN and April, 2013 Nashville, Tennessee.
11. Report on the April 5-6, 2011 Middle Management Conference Arlington, Texas. Wonderful job and many wonderful discussions and learned quite a bit on reporting impacts. Claude and Darrell produced a conference expense and evaluation report. There were 73 participants. Darrell reviewed the expense report total revenue \$19,315.00 and total expenses 16,416.62. Net profit was 2,898.38. Claude thanked Texas for co hosting and doing the bulk of the planning and ground work. Greg Price: Discussed the public value presentation and extension engagement during the conference. Educational Tours and spent the last day discussing accountability models, impact collection, and reporting impact.
12. Joan Jacobson reported on the urban pre conference: Urban Innovations. Had specialists and agents to discuss their urban initiatives. Environmental, obesity, food challenge hands on activity where bags of products were given and they were challenged to invent a recipe (new 4-H activity to engage boys) Urban food desserts, swamps, urban laboratory, walking school bus (exercise), E-volunteers.
13. Per Claude Bess Chair of the nomination committee. The slate was presented as follows: Charlie Vavrina –Secretary, 1890 Dr. Carolyn Noble PLC representative and 1862 PLC representative Martha Sartor. The motion was made by Dr. Alberta James and seconded by Tony. Motion carried unanimously.
14. Greg Price discussed the MM conference. Discussion on what states would host. KY will host the MM conference in April 2013. Louise Moore, Shelvy Campbell, Jeff (KY), Martha Ray Sartor, Rosalind  
Other discussion items

Who do we invite to the conference? Money is tight so should county directors be invited? Consider that there seems to be a trend on do we need middle managers; Should we invite to throw everyone together at this conference. There are normally 60 to 70 participants at the MM conferences. We should identify 5 people to work together on the committee. The vice chair MM normally chairs the conference program planning meeting.

15. Dr. Cross challenged us to do as a MM group versus on what we can do Individually.

- Emerging Issues and Opportunities for MM
- Charles Vavrina discussed that the representative from Cornerstone challenged us to come up with regional impacts or common programming.

No one to report regional impacts.

- On boarding. Hiring and training new employees (agents)
- How to train new agents and mentor with less staff development people.
- Retaining employees
- We need to ask if the individuals are using the developed modules
- How to id applicants that are best hires with different skill sets, competencies, subject matters, knowledge, and diversity; diversity
- How to retrain employees to address emerging issues.
- Best practices on interviewing skills
- Sharing secrets of success for supervising employees that are remotely located
- Words of wisdom document to give to new districts and regional directors.
- Teaching Agents to be involved with seeking Extramural funding
- Agents being involved with specialist and grant writing.
- Alternatives for sustainable funding sources
- General revenue funding: Competitive Grants
- Multi-tasking/ Cross training for Agents to help them. Funding is always a issue
- How can we be strategic in training current faculty and how can we look outside for individuals that can come in and assume leadership roles.
- Hiring and retaining individuals. We hire, train, and industry comes and takes them away.
- New hires versus 2<sup>nd</sup> career hires- on boarding
- Solicit for questions used to interview...share with everyone
- Succession Modeling/Training
- Role for subcommittee...recommendations and strategies for reducing the decline in resources that have been allocated to Extension
- Branding/marketing extension at the local level
- Addressing tension between state and local expectations of programs

16. State Reports Thursday – Budget Updates –Starting Salaries-staffing changes

17. Evaluations – Please complete and return.

18. Connie asked everyone to look at survey results and decide what we need to undertake. Claude discussed the marketing and branding and the importance.
19. Suggestion of a white paper from middle managers to identify the consistent things that we can use or will assist with communicating what extension does. Greg mentioned us working with communication committee to assist with the task.
20. Marketing and branding on a national level. Come up with two or three things that fit and the will work locally and at the state and federal level.
21. Why it is important to keep the cooperative extension as the brand versus the university brand. We need a statement to let them know why the extension brand is important.
22. We have struggled with marketing forever. There have been at least 5 major marketing reviews. No one will take ownership. We are trying to move the marketing piece back to the forefront. We as an organization do not have the power to do that type of marketing. Someone has to take ownership of the marketing.
23. Marketing can be encouraged on a local level, we can do a better job, and we really have not tried. Part of the problem is that our circle of contacts is getting smaller; the number of farmers is shrinking. There needs to be a larger network. There is public value for the whole community by keeping the family, community strong. Others have issues with county logos. Some have to use county logo versus the extension logo.
24. At some point the logo has to go farther than the logo recognition. We have to take responsibility for making sure that agents promote extension and in any presentation they begin for the logo name recognition.
  1. Branding/Marketing: The white paper. Charlie Vavrina and Sherry Schwab, Alberta James will develop the white paper to determine the best way to communicate the brand/marketing of extension.
  2. Remotely supervising. Best Practices and under that several categories on how we do those things or it really will includes how we do our jobs. Collect the best practices and other items for training, mentoring, etc. Put together something for everyone to respond to such as a survey with a narrative to describe the processes or best practices. Decide on the questions to ask. The committee for this project will be Charlie Vavrina and Dan Goerlich, Greg Price, Jeff, from KY, Shelvy). Identify several things and post to the website. Route this document quarterly or during the conference call and ask for ideas from everyone and move on to the next one. The goal is to create document will be Best Practices for Middle Management
    - a. Best Practices in Hiring; Questions for interviews: questions on what you ask and what you should ask.

- b. Conducting Performance Appraisals Remote performance evaluation, how often or what do you do if you do not evaluate every year.
- c. Remotely supervising: suggestions on best practices, ideas, how evaluations are conducted, etc.

Additional topics will be added as needed or requested. Will create a survey and combine the best practices submitted.

- 25. Urban Task Force: Joan Jacobson gave the report. Charlie Vavrina discussed the initial Urban Task Force. Discussed we need to be on the front of the urban development. Charlie asked that everyone get involved in the Urban Task Force and do their part in building an urban network of urban extension workers. Charlie Vavrina, Joan Jacobson, Celvia Stovall and one person from each state was selected. Charlie asked for an urban person from each state. Urban representative from VA Cindy Marshall, Tennessee Connie, WV Rosalind/Sherry NC; Tim for FL: Joan for Texas; Alberta for Arkansas; Cindy for VA; Dixie Farrell & Patricia Knotts, MS; WV Shelvy; AL Dr Stovall.
- 26. Greg Price suggested that there should be a platform to build a listserv for county directors to share ideas, learn from each other etc. Sherry suggested a way to help dialogue between the directors to get them talking and sharing. Rosalind will get some information from her Illinois colleagues to share with MM.
- 27. Greg Price reviewed the plan of work – changes were made and ready for submission.
- 28. Ann Adrian was here to discuss E-xtension regarding the specific practice for Urban Programming. Demonstrated the website and gave advice in regards to content for urban audiences.
- 29. There is a community of practice on E-xtension regarding urban integrated best practices. E-xtension. We can actually create a community of interest. Also look at: [People.extension.org](http://People.extension.org). Craig Wood at UK could give ideas on how best to move forward on community of practices.
- 30. Dr. Alberta James will locate the contact to get MM meeting on Agenda. Meeting in Orlando next year 2012.
- 31. Quarterly Conference Calls for 2012 scheduled for 9 AM Central Time. November 1, 2012; February 7, 2012, and May 8, 2012.
- 32. Greg Price reviewed the informational items and action items for MM.
- 33. Charlie asked for suggestions on regulating agent articles, u-tube loads, county materials, etc. Best practices were shared between committee members.
- 34. Cross Committee Reports for committee members
  - 1. Report on Climate Change: There will be a Land grant representative on the board External team. Nothing for middle managers to address at this time.
  - 2. Report on Community Based Food Systems: Look at funding, looking at food systems in their county.

3. Farm Worker Health, Safety, and Management: Growing populations of Latinos in the states. Latinos normally work on farms. Key points 1) make sure we are aware that the Latino population will pick up and take off in many areas. In several areas the population has increased by 200%. Is there a way to have a clearinghouse to help house the information. There is a USDA site that houses this type of information.
4. National Indicators. Not much discussion distributed the material. NIFA indicators are grouped under the NIFA objectives. Centered on the NIFA goals. Come up with a few issues that can be measured. Come up with common measures so that the information. What is the best way to get outcomes where the information can be aggregated?
5. Obesity – came up with 3 to 4 core indicators for childhood obesity. We can aggregate some of the indicators. Curriculum; obesity in physical environment; obesity in research; obesity in technology...smart phone app to help kid record their calories, or what they have eaten.
6. New resources for funding: Being Competitive. Need to be proactive building relationships on the front end not just when we have a grant. Need a relationship at the state level. Mentioned all state offices that extension can work with.
7. Social Marketing: Driving the Content. LSU is working on a live program where the director will discuss the usage of social marketing to heighten the level of extension's use. Virtual advisory committee meetings and a panel discussed the Smith Lever cuts and how they used social media to get the word out. How do we measure success through social. Spoke about Google Plus. PUGHCENTER.com download report on social media. Building a relationship 1) know audience 2) select community carefully 3) DO not worry about content at beginning 4) Tell good stories 5) Give it away 6) use videos and pictures 7) build a demand. Social media is another tool to put in toolbox on how you deliver research based information. Unlimited potential to get information out but pitfalls in keeping their professional and personal sites updated. Develop policy on how to use it properly.
8. Working with Military families. There is an official /NIFA/USDA relationship since 1987. 17% of US citizens live in rural communities 30% to 40% of those are from rural communities. USA has a goal to get 100,000 new farmers every year. Military families working with family member's parenting skills, finance skills, nutrition skills, network literacy as the network grows additional concentration areas will be added. The DOD has looked at refining the content social media, building relationships...community that reports etc. Military family environmental scan done to see what programs to look at the scan. MM talks about possible programming offered to communities. They have mobile veteran clinics that go out to assist others. Partner with FCS to offer some programming with them. Vocational Skills or teach other skills to returning serviceman. Send the parents and kids to camp so 4H can work with the kids and FCS can work with the adults. Agrability program will be expanded and increased.

Middle Management Meeting  
August 24, 2011

***Budget Updates, Staffing changes, starting salaries***

Virginia – There is a new Director Dr. Ed Jones from NC. Budget cut about 8 Million. Tough budget lost 5 million restored 1 million. Mandate to hire 25 new field faculties. Filling other vacancies and will fill 40 positions before the end of December 2011. Starting salary for agents is 33K bachelor 36K masters. There are 4 district directors, no director county operations, and 3 program leaders. There is also a vacancy in State AG leader where they are looking to replace. Have not heard anything about additional budget cut and have not hired in 2 or 3 years. They have 107 offices in state about 180 extension agents across the state. Not allowed to hire secretary in the counties when they leave.

Bobby Fletcher Louisiana– Budget hit hard since July 2008, 29% reduction in state appropriate funds. Retirement incentive plans for 80 positions for 80 positions. 64 parishes' the goal is to keep county offices open even if they have one agent and one secretary. Merging 4-H with FCS and discontinuing the early child development program and transitioning faculty into nutrition and 4-H and FNEP focusing on nutrition and health. Had 124 Agents in the state and with change in staffing plan will now have about 95. Trying to get 2 funded 4-H positions, there is a statewide push in each region. Starting salary for agents is \$35 bachelor's \$38 masters trying to increase those starting salaries. 1.5 million in carryover dollars to get through this year. There is about a 300 million shortfall with the current budget.

Georgia – Over the past 3 years had a 26% reduction in state budget. Thirteen months of revenue. The governor has asked every dept to hold back 2% jus to be safe. They do not expect to see cuts and some may get a small enhancement. They have lost several individuals through attrition 90 agent positions, mostly retirements, some early outs. The offered an incentive for those who were rehired within a year. Some counties have picked up 49% of budget. Will fill about 16 positions externally and have had some agents to move from one county to another. ANR and 4H positions are currently being hired. They went to a 6 tier structure, GA has 159 counties. Created a new job classification Extension Associate and Resource Manager (Upgraded secretary position) qualifications are a bachelor's degree or 5 years of experience to assist with operation. They are training these individuals on finding resources, E-xtension, etc. Each assigned a resource agent in the counties. Some programs will be run by 4-H Associate, they will do what an agent does except write curriculum. Several people have been upgrades from secretary and program assistants. Associates 24K Agents bachelor's 34K Masters 40K.

Louisiana – Using an Extension Volunteer Core from retired Extension . They provide an office and computer. They have about 20 retired faculty that are engaged in this program. They are moving all FCS programming into Nutrition only. Currently they have twice as many 4-H agents as ANR agents

Florida - counties pay well over 50% of county budget and most of the extension cuts are coming from county governments. The more urban counties have taken the majority of the cuts. Florida is filling all vacant county positions.

Texas - Counties with 3 or more agents were reviewed. Texas eliminated 32 positions. Counties picked up some of these positions. 60 positions are in danger. As of today Texas has had 10% cut. Texas has started a cost recovery program of \$10 per person participation fee for all programs (or 10% cost) that do not target low income audiences. 4-H enrollment is \$20 per kid.

Oklahoma – They have had a budget cut 15% over three years. Oklahoma did go through a retirement incentive program. Currently they are not anticipating additional cuts. Oklahoma will put two agents and a secretary in a county office for \$16,500.00 in county funding. For a 3 agent the county pays about 90% of the cost.

Kentucky is still maintaining about 400 positions in 120 counties. Have not really cut any positions but are holding a few vacant. About 40% funding comes from the county. Base program is 3 agents. Anything above is the county responsibility. Kentucky has had about 12% cut over three years. They will hold a position open for up to two years unless the county wants to fund the position at 100% until the state funds return at the end of the two year period.

North Carolina - They had a 12.3% budget cut this year. 15% cut the year before. 63 positions cuts (40 agents) in this process. Currently have 5 districts with one vacant director. They are using a new software program for registration. They are using cvent.com and they are having a very good success. It has great tools for agents to manage programs. Penn State is also using it.

Arkansas – They are planning to fill all of their vacant positions. They did have a few vacancies but now we are filling. They have three district and three district directors with no district program leaders. Majority of funding comes from state funds. AK has a fertilizer tax to cover soil samples.

Tennessee - Currently they have a 20% cut. They went through a strategic planning process and make recommendations for staffing plan. This plan cut 60 positions. They currently pay \$29,000 for a BS and \$31,000 for a Master's degree in starting salary.