

Title: Agricultural Extension Team: A New Model to Enhance Stakeholder Input, Program Planning and Outreach to Agricultural Clientele

Situation

There are over 2.4 million acres of field and vegetable crops across the state of Arizona (NASS 2008), with most of the acreage located in seven of the fifteen counties. A little over 2.2 million of these acres are in field or row crops with the remaining 200,000 in vegetable crops. These crops are produced annually by 1,150 growers, and managed by 220 registered Pest Control Advisors and 820 certified private and commercial applicators. Traditionally, extension has played an important role in providing cutting-edge research-based information to help producers and pest managers improve crop quality, control pests, maximize profits and minimize risks to people and the environment. Meeting the research and education needs of growers and pest managers has become increasingly challenging with the steady reduction in Extension personnel, particularly County Agents focused on agriculture, over the past several years. We currently have three full time extension agents with primary responsibility in field and vegetable crops, three additional agents with partial agricultural responsibilities and 18 extension specialists that work on these crops. This small team of specialists and agents are called upon to continue to meet clientele needs for agricultural research and up-to-date information in these competitive times. In the past, this group of extension professionals has formed focused working groups to meet the needs of Arizona's agriculture industry: the Cotton IPM/ICM working group, the Cross Commodity working group, the Vegetable working group and the Crop Pest Losses working group. We propose here a plan that will integrate the previous efforts of these teams, and in so doing, increase our efficiency, improve program planning, re-focus our efforts through stakeholder input, and enhance communication and outreach with agricultural clientele.

This project falls under the signature program area of Food and Fiber Production Systems.

Goals/Objectives

The goals of this grant are to identify information needs of agriculture clientele statewide; to improve communication between specialists and agents within Cooperative Extension; to enhance program planning; and to provide quality up-to-date research-based education to stakeholders via stakeholder meetings and workshops, e-mail, USPS mail and publications. Program planning will be coordinated among team members to better meet the needs of our stakeholders.

Inputs

Project Leaders:

Erin Taylor, Maricopa County; Al Fournier, Maricopa Ag Center; Peter Ellsworth, Maricopa Ag Center; John Palumbo, Yuma Ag Center; Randy Norton, Graham County; Kurt Nolte, Yuma County

Team Members:

Pedro Andrade, Maricopa Ag Center; Paul Brown, Campus; David Byrne, Campus; Robert Call, Cochise County; Jorge Fonseca, Yuma Ag Center; Rick Gibson, Pinal County; Rob Grumbles, Mohave County; Ed

Martin, Maricopa Ag Center; Linda Masters, La Paz County; Mike Matheron, Yuma Ag Center; Bill McCloskey, Campus; Michael McClure, Campus; Mary Olsen, Campus; Mike Ottman, Campus; Channah Rock, Maricopa Ag Center; Bob Roth, Maricopa Ag Center; Charles Sanchez, Yuma Ag Center; Mark Siemens, Yuma Ag Center; Trent Teegerstrom, Campus; Barry Tickes, Yuma Ag Center; Russ Tronstad, Campus; James Walworth, Campus; Sam Wang, Maricopa Ag Center

Collaborators:

Steve Naranjo, USDA ALARC; Steve Castle, USDA ALARC; James Hagler, USDA ALARC; Lin Evens, PCA

Outputs

Activities:

- Stakeholder engagement plays a key role in agricultural production and pest management. By working closely with stakeholders and providing outreach and education, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension will be able to impact these growers on a multi-disciplinary level. By conducting at least 3 stakeholder engagement sessions this team will be able to collect input from the agricultural clientele and the team will document and prioritize needs of these stakeholders. This information will be used for program planning of new faculty and to help direct research of the tenured faculty. All information collected will be posted on the APMC (Arizona Pest Management Center) website for broader use by other scientists and ag industry.
- Coordinated program planning meetings will be held 3-4 times each year. These meetings will be made up of extension faculty and key stakeholders that have been identified through previous meetings and work groups. During the meetings the team will discuss arising issues in the agriculture arena, future stakeholder meetings, current and future research and other issues that are important to meeting the cliental needs.
- Outreach and education needs will be met in a variety of ways:
 1. A review of existing agriculture and pest management extension publications will be made, including those published prior to 2005. These publications will be sorted according to priority level in terms of clientele needs as determined by the new Agricultural Extension Team at the first team meeting. After the first list is made the team will review the publications and determine gaps in specific program areas and all agents and specialists will make specific commitments to these publications. Kelly Young, research specialist supervised by Erin Taylor, will work with the team in executing the revisions by working directly with each of the original authors when necessary. A total of 6 publications will be updated or written by the end date of this grant.
 2. All new and updated publications will be posted on the ACIS (Arizona Crop Information Site). Clientele will be alerted of the new or updated publications via e-mail through the

ACIS website and through county mailings and e-mail lists. Hard copies of these publications will be made available at extension meetings.

3. At least 10 extension meetings/workshops will be held across Arizona to deliver information to clientele. These meetings will be held during the different growing seasons and will be topic specific for the growing season.
4. Improved communication among specialists and agents will be achieved through e-mails, conference calls and meetings. This communication among the extension personnel will provide better, more consistent communication with our clientele and will enhance program planning. Posting of meetings, events, workshops, publications, and bulletins on the ACIS website and promotion through the county offices will provide more accurate and up-to-date information to the clientele. The team will come up with a procedure to follow for notifying all clientele and other extension personnel of meetings and workshops.

Participation:

At least eight Arizona counties will be directly involved and over 6 disciplines will be represented on this team. Over 1000 producers, 200 PCA's, 800 certified commercial and private applicators and 2.4 million acres are expected to be impacted by this agricultural extension team. Stakeholder participation will be one of the key driving forces of this teams program planning.

Outcomes/Impacts/Evaluation

Short-term: Stakeholders will provide input on program planning for Cooperative Extension. These stakeholders will help prioritize the needs of clientele and help determine the methods of the information delivery. An updated list of publication revisions will be available and the list will be prioritized according to the needs of the clientele. Better communication among agents and specialists will be developed.

Mid-term: Programs will be developed based on the needs of stakeholders. An increase in crops yields, resource use efficiency, profitability, and an improved knowledge base of stakeholders will be seen and evaluated through surveys at meetings. At least 6 publications will be updated and put into a system to update the specialists and agents on when they will be approaching the five year revision mark.

Long-term: Ongoing improved communication between agents and specialists will be seen. Programs will be implemented and clientele will benefit from new research results. Agriculture production will level out or increase in the number of acres grown across the state. Stakeholders will be more involved in research and provide feedback on a higher level.

Communication of Program Impacts

Updates located on websites such as the ACIS website and APMC website will provide information on new programs. A report on impacts to all the commodity areas will be placed the extension reports such

as the Cotton Report, Forage and Grain Report and the Vegetable Report. Information will be provided to each member of the team to report on their APR each year.

Sustainability:

This team will actively seek other funding sources to sustain and improve our extension efforts to help food and fiber producers in Arizona. A working relationship with the Arizona Research Councils will be formed and the team will send in a proposal to each council asking for future support of this team. Support from federal and state agencies and other grants will be used to fill in gaps in the budget. Each agent will pilot test a cost recovery fee at one meeting in their region. Feedback from clientele will be collected and evaluated based on their perception of paying a nominal fee for attending educational extension meetings.

Budget:

Travel

Mileage	\$1000.00
Hotel	\$500.00
Per Diem	\$500.00
Total Travel	\$2000.00

Salaries

Theresa Smith, Student	\$600.00
ERE (2.0%)	\$12.00
Kelly Young, Research Specialist	\$1757.00
ERE (41.1%)	\$723.00
Total Salary	\$3092.00

Publication Costs

Printing	\$800.00
Copies	\$300.00
Total Publication Costs	\$1100.00

Miscellaneous Supplies \$500.00

Total Requested \$6692.00

Budget Justification:

Travel to team meetings will be required by team members throughout the state. These monies will be used to pay for mileage, overnight stays, and a per diem allowance for those traveling for this purpose. Rates were calculated using the "Maximum Transportation, Lodging and Meal Reimbursement Rates" posted on the University web site.

Salary support will be used for two staff members that will be working with the team to complete the set objectives. Theresa Smith will provide technical support for the ACIS website at 50 hours per year. Kelly Young will provide publication assistance to the team at 100 hours per year.

The publication costs will help cover printing costs of new and updated publications that team members will have on hand for meetings and workshops. The publications will be printed on glossy paper and in color. Copies will be of publications that are made through a printer and are determined by the team that it is not necessary to print them on a glossy paper or in color.

Miscellaneous expenses will cover any additional materials such as books, workshops supplies and evaluation tools. These items could include, but are not limited to, stakes, staples, colored paper, additional audience response cards, reference books and office supplies.