

2-1991

## CC302 Revised 1991 New Directions

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# NEW DIRECTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



February 1991

## INTRODUCTION

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has a proud and vital heritage. This partnership of local government, United States Department of Agriculture and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has grown and changed with the educational needs of Nebraskans. We continue to assess current and future issues and plan programs accordingly. Through clientele surveys, interviews, and statewide satellite teleconferences, the present and future concerns of rural and urban Nebraskans are identified. Priority program initiatives are developed to address these concerns. Looking toward the future, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is aligning its resources and cooperating with others to provide educational programs critical to Nebraskans, their families and their communities.



Kenneth R. Bolen, Dean and Director  
Cooperative Extension Division  
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources  
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## NEW STRUCTURE

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension targeted five geographic areas in 1986 to pilot organizational changes. The objective was to provide more staff specialization to meet the needs of clientele in the 1990s and prepare the organization for the 21st Century. Staff from two or more counties in each pilot area were combined into one operational unit. After the new organizational structure was tested, 21 Extension Programming Units (EPU's) were formed and are currently in place (Figure 1).

Extension Programming Units

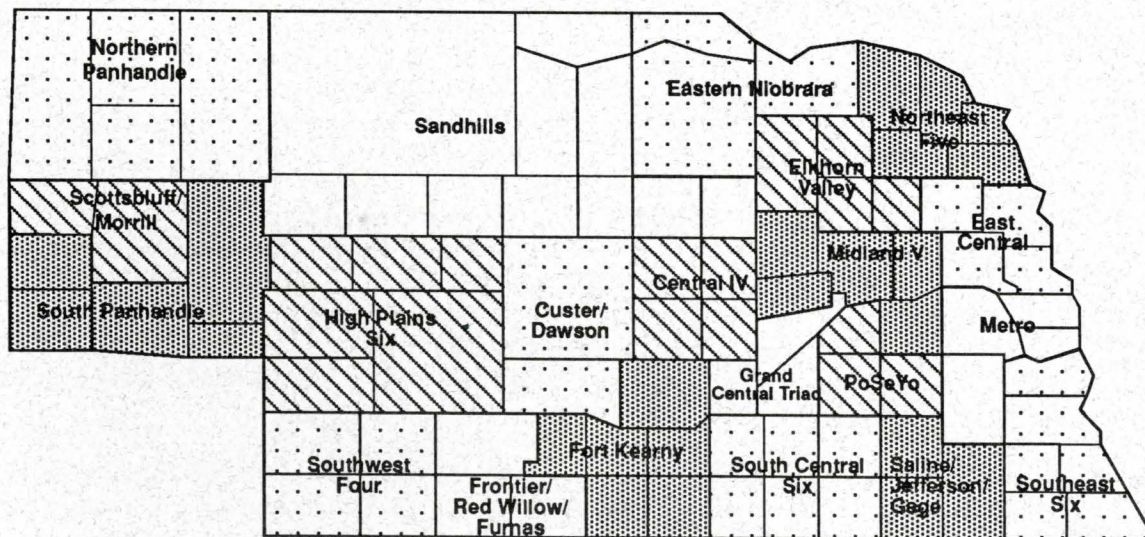


Figure 1

The new program delivery arrangement supports greater depth in programming. The EPU concept enables our faculty to function more as educators with greater depth in subject matter expertise. A number of EPU's have increased their cost-effectiveness and improved leadership to youth programs through restructuring staff arrangements. Several units have combined their funding operations and merged Extension Boards into one local decision-making body. Extension staff in the field are proactive in responding to the critical clientele issues.



## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Cooperative Extension faculty focus on two types of educational programs - core and priority initiatives. Core programs are the major educational efforts central to the mission of Cooperative Extension and common to most units. Core programs are the ongoing program efforts of the system, involving many discipline-based and inter-disciplinary programs. Priority initiatives are current or emerging major issues rising out of one or more components of a core program. The initiatives are "in the spotlight" for a period of time, until a significant impact is achieved, the need has subsided, or the increased allocation of effort and resources results in the program becoming an ongoing part of a core program. Current priority initiatives are:

### ENHANCING WATER QUALITY

Education can help Nebraskans understand the causes and effects of water pollution. Once the causes and effects are known, the necessary steps can be taken to protect the state's precious water supply. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is committed to working with Nebraskans to:

- Provide a safe and adequate domestic water supply
- Reduce nitrates in ground water
- Reduce pesticides and other synthetic organic contaminants in ground water

### REVITALIZING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Nebraska's rural communities are diverse with many different needs. While stimulus and help from outside a community can enhance strategic planning, the primary effort must come from community members. Working at local levels and using the skills available in state and local government, businesses, individuals and other educational institutions, Extension staff members have positioned themselves as catalysts for cooperative efforts in seeking solutions. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is working with others to:

- Promote community self-assessment, planning and action
- Expand community, organizational and youth leadership training
- Enhance the economy through improved management of existing businesses
- Support entrepreneurship in business and agriculture

### INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY

The profitability of Nebraska agriculture depends on the ability of the state's producers to compete in a global economy. Educational programs centered around financial management, marketing, alternative agricultural opportunities and public policy need to be integrated and focused on increasing diversity, competitiveness and profitability. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension staff are helping Nebraska farmers and ranchers increase their profit potential through programs that:

- Integrate marketing and management practices
- Offer public policy education on government agricultural programs
- Increase diversity with alternative crop and livestock enterprises
- Encourage development and use of value-added products
- Promote sustainable agricultural systems
- Increase global opportunities for exporting agricultural products

### STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

During the next decade Nebraskans will face many challenges as society adjusts to technological advances, fluctuating employment and economic changes. Education is needed to prepare individuals and families for changing lifestyles and jobs. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is placing increased emphasis on programs that:

- Promote effective parenting and family relations
- Expand career development opportunities for youth
- Improve financial stability through management of resources, credit and debt



## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Nebraska's production of domestic and municipal waste has increased to the point that many landfills are at or near capacity. Recently, new national standards for solid and hazardous waste disposal require extremely high investment costs to upgrade the majority of the state's landfills. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has begun to develop programs that:

- Enhance the capacities of consumers to safely dispose of hazardous materials
- Reduce the waste stream of domestic goods
- Enable community leaders and officials to make informed decisions about waste management

## **IMPROVING NUTRITION AND HEALTH**

Proper nutrition to prevent health problems and food safety are special concerns of Nebraskans. There is also increased concern on the ability of youth to make healthy lifestyle choices. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is directing more emphasis on programs to:

- Encourage dietary choices that reduce the risk of disease
- Reduce food-borne illnesses through safe food handling
- Promote healthy lifestyle practices for youth

## **YOUTH AT RISK**

Children of all ages are at risk. Youth become at risk from three primary conditions: lack of closeness and trust in relating to adults; lack of perception of meaning in their lives; and lack of confidence in facing life. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is developing programs focused in the following areas:

- Youth advocacy
- Youth outreach
- Youth personal development
- School-age child care

## **CONSERVING AND MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES**

The state's natural resources need to be managed wisely and conserved for future generations. An integrated approach is required for protecting and enhancing Nebraska's land, water, and range resources. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is increasingly involved with programs that:

- Reduce soil erosion
- Promote management practices to conserve water

## **NEW MODES OF DELIVERY**

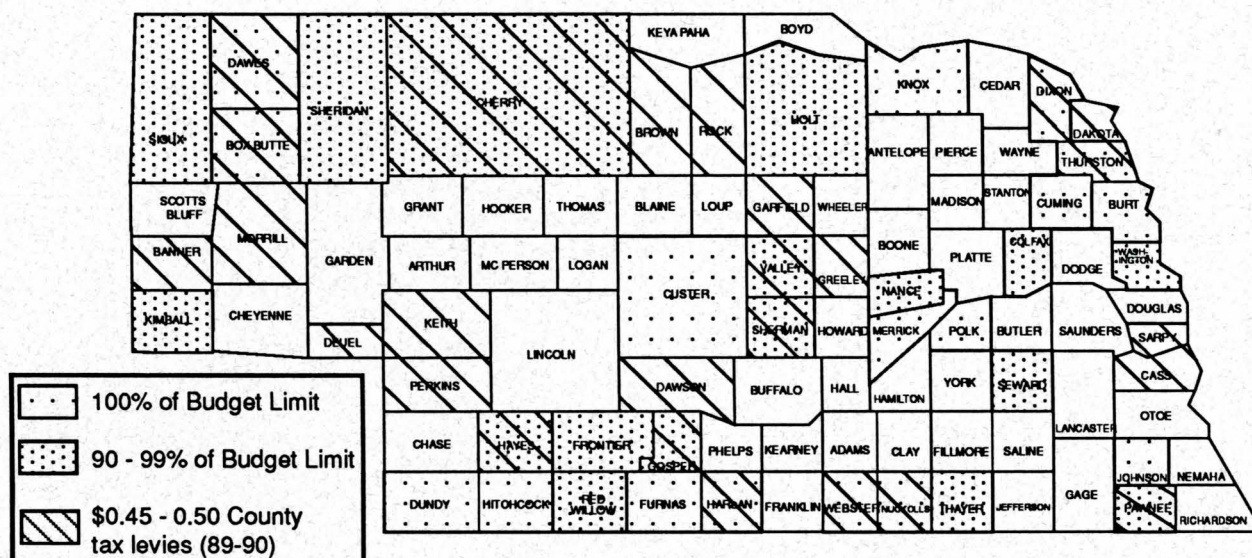
New technology and partnerships are expanding the outreach of Cooperative Extension. New directions are most evident in the development of regional education centers and satellite videoconferences. Cooperative Extension is jointly operating, with the Division of Continuing Studies, a Regional Education Center at Scottsbluff. An education center provides post-secondary educational programs to people unable to pursue their educational objectives under existing circumstances. Credit and non-credit courses are now being offered to a wide array of citizens in the Panhandle area. Construction is planned to begin on a similar education center at Grand Island this year. Discussions are being held with community leaders and other educational institutions to consider the establishment of education centers at Norfolk and North Platte.



## FUNDING CHALLENGES

Extension agents and assistants are hired jointly by the University of Nebraska and the local county Extension Board. Over half the counties in the state are at or near their limits for either or both of the statutory funding ceilings (Figure 2). A State/County Partnership Task Force recently reviewed this funding challenge. The task force was comprised of representatives of county commissioners, county Extension Boards, state senators, community leaders and the University of Nebraska.

**County Extension Budgets and County Tax Levies  
at or near Statutory Limits\***

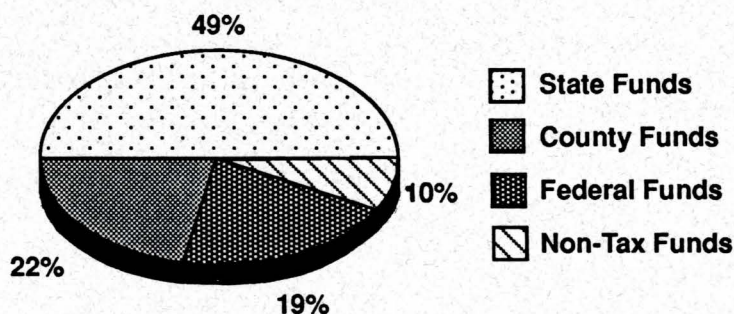


\* County Extension budgets are limited to \$30,000 or 2.1 cents per hundred dollars actual valuation of all taxable property, whichever is greater. County authorities are not allowed to assess total tax levies beyond 50 cents per hundred dollars actual valuation of all taxable property.

**Figure 2**

## PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

The sources of funding for the 1990-91 budget of the Cooperative Extension Division, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln are shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3**

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kenneth R. Bolen, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Cooperative Extension provides information and educational programs to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or handicap.