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Community Engagement: Nine Principles

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Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	5/29/15
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Weekly Average</u>			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	143.09	158.63	159.41
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	*	284.70	**
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	*	229.80	**
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	233.44	259.20	259.11
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	108.72	64.57	79.71
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	115.46	67.83	85.11
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	156.00	137.67	150.05
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	361.04	361.53	356.20
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Daily Spot Prices</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	6.38	4.52	4.46
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	4.43	3.51	3.42
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	14.81	9.45	9.14
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	7.70	7.41	6.73
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	4.09	2.76	2.69
<u>Feed</u>			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	220.00	190.00	*
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	120.00	72.50	*
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	105.00	120.00	120.00
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	185.00	178.00	160.00
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	57.00	58.00	51.00
* No Market ** Limited offerings for adequate market trend			

Although community development has its roots in nearly a century of practice and research, it is only since the mid-90's that community development researchers realized that to address larger and more complex societal issues, community members need to be more involved in the development process. One such awareness for greater involvement stemmed from Putnam's wake-up call in "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" (1995) where Putnam cited American's declining civic engagement and social networks. What has since evolved is the theory and practice of Community Engagement.

Community Engagement, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is "the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people." (CDC, 2011). A more recent definition states that community engagement "means people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future." (Born, 2012). In both instances, collaboratively working together toward a common issue or future is key to the community engagement process. The goals of community engagement are to build trust and relationships that lead to long-standing collaborations and, ultimately, positive impacts that improve the lives of the community members.

In Principles of Community Engagement (CDC, 2011), nine key principles are needed that will

help leaders and organizations form effective engagement processes and partnerships. These principles are divided into three categories: What items to consider prior to starting, what items are necessary for engagement, and what items are needed for successful engagement.

Before starting to work with a community:

1. **Defined purposes, goals and populations.** Researchers and organizers need to clearly state what the purpose of the community activity is to be – is it fact finding and program development or is it issue identification and shared decision-making to address emerging issues. Determining in advance who is engaged in the process also helps to set the parameters of engagement. Are participants based around geographic boundaries, racial/ethnic groups or age groups? Is there a virtual community that shares a common interest? How can other organizations assist with the process and contribute to the shared effort? This early work will evolve as more individuals and organizations determine their roles and find value in the engagement activity.
2. **Know the community.** It is important to do the research and learn about the community, its culture, social networks, economic conditions, demographics, history and experiences. What has been the community's prior experiences working with organizations? Is there a perceived benefit or cost associated with the engagement activity? Assessing the community's readiness to participate and knowing their assets and strengths can help with consensus building, communications and decision-making. It can also help to build a foundation for meaningful partnerships.

Items necessary for engagement:

3. **Go to the community.** Engagement is a community process and the community will have greater opportunity for success if its members are an integral part of the development and implementation process. First, meet with key leaders and groups in their surroundings to ascertain their concerns, issues and barriers to participation. Depending on the goals of the activity, a small group of key stakeholders may be the most successful approach. However, expanding the group to include formal and informal leaders, diverse populations,

age groups and interests can enhance community support and buy-in. Sharing of the engagement goals, benefits and costs will help to build the community trust and gain support for on-going partnerships.

4. **Look for collective self-determination.** Community and individual self-determination is central to the community engagement process. Researchers need to help communities identify their own issues, name the problem, develop action areas, implement strategies and evaluate outcomes. The engagement process can be complex, with multiple factions providing diverse views and ideas. However, if community members can identify with the issue, feel it is important, have influence and make a contribution, they are more likely to participate in the entire engagement process.

Succeeding in the engagement process:

5. **Community partnerships are critical.** Opportunity for effective engagement includes equitable community partnerships and transparent discussions on power and decision-making. Partnering individuals and organizations should help to identify co-learning opportunities, contribution levels and how they will gain from the engagement partnership.
6. **Respect community diversity and culture.** Diversity can be related to economics, education, employment or health. Culture can be defined by language, race, ethnicity, age, gender, literacy or other personal interests. Diversity and culture may affect individual and community participation in the engagement process. Processes, strategies, and techniques should be used to engage individuals so that participation barriers are minimized and community cultures and norms celebrated.
7. **Mobilize community assets and develop capacity.** Community assets will vary depending on the individuals and organizations present. Individual interests, skills and experiences, as well as, social networks are assets that can be built into the engagement process. Other assets such as facilities, materials, and economic power can also be used to imple-

ment actions. Working in partnership with individuals and organizations to build additional skills helps to sustain long-term collaborations and outcomes.

8. ***Maintain flexibility.*** The community engagement process can lead to changes in individuals and their respective organizations. New relationships may emerge through the creation of new alliances, social networks and assets. Engaged communities may also lead to changes in programs, public policies and resource allocations. Having flexibility to adapt and change with the community issues and needs is important to long-term collaboration.
9. ***Commitment to collaboration.*** Community engagement may be short-lived and centered on a specific initiative. However, long-term partnerships have the greatest potential for successful outcomes that affect complex societal issues. To sustain progress, partners should develop strategies to maintain collaborations and progress.

Community engagement is part of a continuum of community involvement. As collaborations mature and grow, the ability to address complex issues also grows. This development requires time, mobilized resources, and possible changes in policies, program and practices. The long-term outcomes are increased potential to address long-range social, economic, environmental and other factors that affect the well-being of the community and its members.

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC/ATSDR Committee on Community Engagement. Principles of Community Engagement, Second Edition. Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. Accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/phppo/pce/index.htm>

Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital, Journal of Democracy, 1995. Accessed at: <http://archive.realtor.org/sites/default/files/BowlingAlone.pdf>

Paul Born, Community Conversations: Mobilizing the Ideas, Skills and Passion of Community Organizations, Governments, Businesses and People, Second Edition, Toronto. 2012

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