

Understanding UNH Cooperative Extension

UNH Cooperative Extension Mission Statement:

UNH Cooperative Extension provides New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy.

UNH Cooperative Extension Statement of Values:

We value ...

Our position ... as a primary outreach unit of the University of New Hampshire, one of the nation's few comprehensive land, sea and space-grant universities.

Our formal partnerships ... at the county, state, regional and national levels, enabling us to serve New Hampshire people.

Our collaborations ... formal and informal working relationships with University faculty, community and statewide organizations, and regional partners.

Our responsibility ... to involve citizens in identifying the needs of diverse audiences and provide educational opportunities to meet those most important needs not being met by other private or public efforts.

Our accessibility ... engaging learners where they are, when they are available, providing diverse educational opportunities that enable people to make informed decisions.

Our accountability ... a dedication to New Hampshire citizens and decision-makers, insuring that our educational efforts remain relevant, efficient, grass-roots based and continuously evaluated.

Our staff ... well-educated, informed professionals with expertise, a desire to work collaboratively as a team, and committed to accomplishing our mission through applied research, innovative delivery methods and new technologies.

Our volunteers ... their knowledge, contributions and commitment to our mission.

Our quality of life ... New Hampshire people working together to strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy.

UNH Cooperative Extension Vision Statement:

In 2006 we envision UNH Cooperative Extension as ...

A comprehensive educational component of an engaged University, well-established and utilized as a lead UNH outreach network.

A strong, vigorous organization recognized and supported by the public and decision-makers for addressing identified needs and producing cost-effective impacts.

A dynamic organization with the flexibility to access and re-direct financial and personnel resources to address critical and emerging societal and environmental needs.

An outreach system consisting of Cooperative Extension staff on campus and across the state, UNH faculty, volunteers, state and regional partnerships, and the national Cooperative Extension System.

An organization with incentive and reward systems recognizing its staff for accomplishments and impacts.

An effective organization whose staff members possess these professional qualities:

- A commitment to working together in multi-disciplinary teams that can include Cooperative Extension staff, University faculty, volunteers, professionals from other organizations, and others.
- An ability to articulate clearly our public's research needs to appropriate University faculty.
- Expertise in program development and delivery, group facilitation, teaching and networking.
- An ability to balance base programs with initiatives addressing critical and emerging issues.
- Expertise in research-based outreach with a commitment to continuing education and professional development.
- A commitment to its catalytic role in developing local leadership and empowering communities to identify and resolve issues.

UNH Cooperative Extension - State of the Unit:

Part of the nation-wide Land-Grant University System, UNH Cooperative Extension is a major outreach program of the University of New Hampshire. It provides a direct link between UNH and people throughout the state. In partnership with local residents and volunteers, Cooperative Extension plans and conducts educational programs addressing needs and issues important to NH people.

Cooperative Extension's broad goals as identified through a statewide needs assessment and reflecting partnerships with other agencies, organizations and academic departments are:

1. Foster Development of Competent Individuals and Strong Families
2. Strengthen New Hampshire Communities
3. Conserve and Sustain Natural Resources
4. Strengthen the Economic Impact of Agricultural, Forest and Marine Activities

Cooperative Extension is a network of 180 full and part-time professional and support staff located in New Hampshire's 10 counties, and at the main UNH campus in Durham, and the urban campus in Manchester. Cooperative Extension designs and conducts educational programs in the areas of Natural Resources, and Youth, Families and Communities. A variety of methods are used to engage the public in an interactive process intended to deliver information, research and programs. These include individual and group contact, computer networks, satellite downlinks and two-way interactive video.

Teaching and research faculty from all UNH schools and colleges work in partnership with Extension specialists to address the state's priority needs. Currently 20 of Extension's 34 campus-based specialists are located in academic departments to maximize the potential for integrating teaching, research and outreach. Efforts are underway to increase this number. In addition, approximately 5,000 volunteers also work with Extension staff in conducting educational programs throughout the state.

UNH Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan
2001-2006

A Brief History of Extension:

In 1862 the Morrill Act, commonly called the Land Grant Act, provided federal support in the form of grants of public land to any state that would establish colleges to teach agriculture and mechanical arts, without excluding other scientific or classical studies.

In 1897 the Hatch Act allowed for the establishment of Agricultural Experiment Stations at one Land Grant College in each state. This is important because this act established agricultural research as a recognized function of the Land Grant University.

Farmer's Institutes became one of the primary means of disseminating research findings of the Experiment Stations to general audiences and Agriculture and Home Economics teaching faculty served as institute resource persons.

Demonstrations became the medium by which experiment station programs were delivered and the term "demonstration agents" was coined to identify personnel engaged in this effort.

In 1906, the first County Demonstration Agent, W.C. Stallings, was hired in Texas. Private funding spurred the spread of agent hires and home demonstration agents were soon added to address topics of interest to homemakers.

In 1907, the first 4-H Club was organized in Mississippi. In 1909, the 4-H Cloverleaf was first used. In 1911, the Cloverleaf was adopted as the 4-H national emblem.

In the early 1900's extension work began to flourish and the single most important piece of legislation became law in 1914, the Smith Lever Act.

The Smith Lever Act of 1914 provided for mutual cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture and Land Grant Colleges in conducting agricultural extension work; it specified that the work... "shall consist of instruction and practical demonstration in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications and other wise ..."

As the nation's needs continue to change, Cooperative Extension's role has changed to meet them and regardless of the labels given to Extension programs, it is the people served who are important. Extension's overall objective will be to continue to plan, execute, deliver and evaluate learning programs consistent with locally identified needs. Extension will help people acquire the understanding, capabilities, attitudes and skills essential to solving farm, home, environmental and community problems.

Pennsylvania State University
Cooperative Extension