

Investing in Partnerships to keep Wisconsin's Agriculture Strong and Profitable

Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension (ANRE)

In 2004, County government invested about \$3.2 million in Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension (ANRE) staff and support, primarily county-university cost-shared faculty and staff.

What does this investment buy? It is very difficult to calculate the total value for these programs, but here are examples of several dividends.

- Research conducted by campus-based state specialists and county-based faculty and staff is made available to farmers, consultants, processors, nursery operators, landscapers, and others involved in Wisconsin's agriculture and horticulture industries.
- For example, milk quality education programs conducted in Dodge County by Bob Kaiser (in partnership with Pam Ruegg, UW-Madison's Dairy Science Department) were able to realize almost \$3000/month in economic benefits from improved milk quality and higher milk prices. And this example is just for two farms in one component of one agricultural industry.
- In many counties, the investment results in incalculable benefits when ANRE faculty and staff use their training in teaching and facilitation to help communities develop effective public policy.
- State and federal funds that pay salaries and support educational programs add at least five million dollars in salaries alone not to mention funds received from grants.
- State and federal funds allocated to UW campus-based ANRE personnel in 2001 totaled \$4 million. In addition, these personnel successfully competed for about \$5-10 million per year in research grants.
- Citizen volunteers, mobilized by the Master Gardener program volunteered 74,725 hours to UW-Extension and their communities. That time, calculated at a modest \$6 an hour, was worth about \$448,350.

Agriculture/Horticulture enterprises are technology-based manufacturing firms that are almost exclusively family-based businesses. Those food, fiber, and flora industries are a critical part of the Wisconsin economy, worth several billion dollars worth in raw and value-added economic activity.

ANRE faculty and staff help families operating agriculture and horticulture enterprises achieve their personal and business goals. They provide technical/management related information based on university research and address many public policy or public works areas including:

- **Environmental quality:** Nutrient management programming leads to whole farm nutrient plans that reduce the threat to water quality and improve farm profitability.
- **Food quality:** Food safety programs for processors reduce the threat of e coli contamination of the food supply.
- **Public policy:** Educational programming on foot & mouth disease resulted in improved awareness of the potential impacts on the livestock industry and farm biosecurity.

The ANRE program draws its strength from the technological expertise of its faculty and staff and from its strong partnerships with applied research programs on the UW campuses. These assets help Wisconsin's agriculture and horticulture enterprises keep pace with the rapid changes in technology and the marketplace. They help keep Wisconsin agriculture strong and profitable.