



A partnership of the University of Wisconsin-Extension
WISCONSIN ASSOCIATED COUNTY EXTENSION COMMITTEES, INC.

Winter/Spring 2008

405 Skyline Drive, Eau Claire, WI 54703, (715) 835-9813

2008 WACEEC State Conference, “Cooperative Extension: Gateway to the Future,” features new 1½ - day format



The 2008 WACEEC State Conference, “Cooperative Extension: Gateway to the Future,” will be held June 17 to 18 in Stevens Point. This year’s conference features a condensed two-day format starting on Tuesday, June 17. An orientation for new WACEEC members will be held at 9 a.m., and the general opening session is at 10 a.m. The WACEEC Annual Business Meeting is at 11 a.m., with tours offered in the afternoon. Tuesday evening features the silent and live auctions. Wednesday features workshops and the Year of Service Awards Luncheon. The event will conclude after the awards ceremony, with an optional tour to Point Brewery. More conference information, including registration materials, will be mailed to you in mid April.

Message from the President:

CARET provides time with legislators in D.C.

Traveling from the airport to the conference hotel, the Washington Monument points skyward like a giant exclamation point that further emphasizes the nation’s Capitol. Washington, D.C. is everything political. Under the dome of the Capitol, our nation’s decision makers converge to determine public policy and establish the federal budget that funds services that our citizens value. It is here that

members of
CARET (Council
for Agricultural

Research, Extension and Teaching) joined the constant streams of individuals who hope to influence the budget and policy decisions being made daily in the halls of the U.S. Congress.
(Continued on two)



Colleen Bates

(CARET continued...)

CARET is a national grassroots organization of lay person from the constituencies served by the land-grant colleges of agriculture. Members serve at the pleasure of their deans.

Wisconsin has three CARET members: R. Bruce Allison, owner of Allison Tree Care, Inc. in Verona; C. Pete Knigge owns a robotic dairy farm operation in Omro, and myself. I serve on the CARET Executive Committee.

Wisconsin's CARET members are passionate about the impact research, education and teaching have in our state. We visited with our representatives in the House and Senate. It is an effort to put a public face on local programming in our communities. We communicated the unique role that Cooperative Extension has in the areas of agriculture, economic development, public health and youth development.

The President's FY 2009 budget proposes to cut or eliminate funding for three research programs in USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. Title VII of the Farm Bill includes the allocation of federal monies for the formula funds used for Smith-Lever, Hatch, McIntyre-Stennis and other forest and animal research funding. The President's \$62,940,472 cut in research funding would trigger a further reduction of \$83,107,262 in matching funds from states. The total cut is more than \$1.4 billion. The budget reduction for research would result in the loss of 2,063

positions. Wisconsin's portion of the reduction would represent a loss of \$1,759,660 in federal funding and \$4 million in state match, which would be a devastating blow to bio-research.

Our message to restore proposed cuts to the FY 2009 budget was well received. We will continue to communicate with our representatives as the Farm Bill makes its way through the legislative process. Please share your concerns about the future funding of research, education and teaching with Congress. The Federal partnership is critical to Cooperative Extension's future.

WACEC members to join PILD delegation

Ten WACEC members will be going to the Public Issues Leadership Development conference April 28-30 at the Key Bridge Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. Participants will learn how to communicate with public decision makers, learn how to connect the Capitol with local communities, learn about public issues partnerships and will spend a day on the hill with members of Congress and their staff.

Attending PILD this year are Peggy West, Milwaukee County; Pamela Meyer, Waukesha County; Cathy Cryor Burgweger, Green County; John Rendall, Portage County; Bernadette Krentz, Waushara County; Dee Kittleson, Bayfield County; David Scholz, Price County; Susie Maresh, Manitowoc County; Marilyn Schuh, Calumet County; and Guy Gooding, Oconto County. Also joining them are two youth representatives, Neil Jackson of Lincoln County and Nolan Lendved of Sauk County.

PILD delegates will report about their experiences as the 2008 WACEC annual conference during the business meeting. Also, please remember that money raised at the annual auction pays for PILD travel!



2008 State Department Head Conference

“Indispensable County Investment: Engaging Partnerships”

Sixty-six department heads, nutrition coordinators and a total of 120 Cooperative Extension colleagues met at the recent 2008 State Department Head Conference, “Indispensable County Investment: Engaging Partnerships,” held recently in Stevens Point. The conference provided an opportunity for department heads to hear updates on new realities facing county government and share best practices.

The conference keynote address was presented by Mark O’Connell, executive director of the Wisconsin Counties Association, who spoke about proactive relationships with county partners. After his speech, conference participants heard a panel discussion from four county partners including Dave Brett, Walworth County administrator; Duane Hebert, Barron County administrator; Alan Buechel, Fond du Lac County Executive; and Deb Wopat, Columbia County incoming board chair. Panelists shared tips about how Cooperative Extension can strengthen its partnership with county government.

Workshops also focused on county government relationships, with sessions addressing such issues as communicating with elected officials, demonstrating the dollar value of Cooperative Extension and satisfying the education appetites of our county government partner. Each county office has a department head who is responsible for sharing the leadership of the county Cooperative Extension program, internal relations, resource management and external relations. Department heads also work to identify and negotiate the shared interests of local government with state partners and are an important part of Cooperative Extension’s organization.

Counties complete local priority assessments

Cooperative Extension recently undertook a comprehensive educational assessment effort to identify local issues and to determine program priorities. That assessment has been completed in each of our 72 counties, and the results of these assessments and listening sessions are being used to determine county and statewide priorities and to develop team plans.

Information was gathered within counties through a variety of methods including surveys and focus groups, with an emphasis on hearing from a wide

variety of people. County staff engaged members of their communities in identifying and communicating priority issues of local concern. From these conversations, county Cooperative Extension colleagues identified five to seven issues statements, which are used to determine local programming. Local educational assessments allow us to use our scarce resources of time to best meet local needs. This process of program development provides Cooperative Extension an opportunity to learn more about community needs that lie at the heart of the

institutional mission of educating people where they live and work.

Cooperative Extension works to meet emerging needs of new audiences

Latino dairy workers offered workshops in Spanish

Dairy producers who have added more cows to their herds and need reliable employees trained in modern dairy practices and are turning to Latinos from Mexico and Central America. These new employees may not speak much English. To help, the Hispanic Labor workgroup developed four training modules in Spanish and English. More than 330 workers have attended the modules, and evaluation results show that these participants made great gains in their skill level and knowledge.

Programs for inmates help strengthen families in stress



Many of our horticulture, family living and nutrition educators are working with incarcerated individuals to help them transition back

into society and to help their families cope with the stress of incarceration. Examples of educational programs offered through county jails include nutrition education, financial literacy programs, parenting and life skills.

Foreclosure prevention programming helps people keep homes

The foreclosure crisis in Wisconsin is reflective of the national economy. Milwaukee County foreclosures more than doubled from 2006 to 2007, with 700 in Milwaukee County alone. Homeowners suffer personal shame, credit impairment and extreme financial hardship with foreclosures. To help address this national trend, Cooperative Extension hired a Consumer and Housing Education Coordinator. In 2007, this colleague facilitated 36 classes and organized a statewide two-day conference to provide foreclosure and predatory lending prevention programming. More training will be offered throughout 2008.

WACEC News is published by the Wisconsin Associated County Extension Committees, Inc. WACEC advances the interests of Wisconsin counties in the programs and services of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. For more information about WACEC, contact Colleen Bates, WACEC State President, (715) 835-9813. Members of the WACEC Board of Directors are Colleen Bates, Eau Claire; James Costello, Fond du Lac; Lynn Moris, Bloomington; William Nass, Watertown; Wayne Lato, Gilman; Wayne Plant, Merrill; Robert Browne, Superior; Tom Rudolph, Rhinelander; Melvin Pittman, Plum City; and James Schroeder, Gillett.