

## **ANRE AND HORTICULTURE WEEKLY UPDATES – A Learning Opportunity**

by Dave Williams, Assistant Program Leader

On Friday mornings, ANRE county and state staff dial in to the ANRE Weekly Update and/or the Horticulture Weekly Update – Wisline teleconferences for agriculture and horticulture. This is a brief summary of what is going on.

The ANRE Weekly Update for agriculture runs from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. The teleconferences run year round except for holidays or other events that may pull faculty/staff away. Each Friday has a different topic presented by one of our self-directed teams. Occasionally, outside presenters and/or stakeholders are invited to participate. Unless they are designated as such, these updates are not just for team members. Everyone who has an interest in the topic is encouraged to participate. These are excellent learning and communicating opportunities.

- State specialists share their knowledge about their research work, the research in the field and generally, about the subjects they know so well.
- Agents and educators learn and improve their knowledge about the topic discussed. In most cases, topics are very timely, corresponding to the growing season and/or pertinent management issues. It is an excellent opportunity to ask questions, hear about resources, learn from each other's experiences and get acquainted with other agents and specialists.
- State specialists learn what is going on in different parts of the state. They learn about research work that needs to be done and/or extension materials that need to be developed.
- On occasion, the time is used by one of the self-directed teams to more formally accomplish team-related work.
- On occasion, there is a special topic such as the fall Private Pesticide Applicator Training Update session. Agents and educators with PAT responsibilities are highly encouraged to participate in this session to learn about the annual changes to the PAT program.
- Sometimes the program leaders will lead a discussion about issues that impact the entire program area.

Every three months, team leaders are asked to submit requests for time and topics. A final schedule of topics to be discussed on future Fridays is then emailed. Prior to the week of the Update, an agenda is emailed with the Friday topic(s) and presenter(s) along with call-in information.

If you cannot participate but want to know what was covered, most counties have procedures for taping.

ANRE Weekly Updates are also an excellent opportunity to identify Extension Respond issues. Remember that we are always on the lookout for emerging issues that could affect agriculture for the Extension Responds project. Some examples of materials shared relate to a predicted increase in the price of natural gas and nitrogen fertilizers and materials to help farmers cope with a summer drought. When you see evidence that a new issue is brewing, please contact your program leaders or Mary Ellen Bell, Sr. University Relations Specialist.

The Friday Horticulture Update is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. during the “growing season,” late April through early October. The highlight of these teleconferences is the regular check-in, review growing conditions, consumer calls and diagnostics relative to the past week. This is often how specialists and other agents keep abreast of the seasonal progress of weed, insect and disease problems. Notes are taken, transcribed and emailed to horticulture staff on the ag-horticulture-list a few days later (contact Karen Delahaut to be added to this list). Similar to the ANRE Weekly Update, Horticulture Updates are weekly topical discussions.

Take advantage of these Weekly Updates. They are an excellent way of learning and communicating with colleagues.