

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF A DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

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Not unique.

All in Extension have more educational opportunities than have time and resources to address.

Is why, as an institution, have adopted the “needs assessment and priority programming” approach.

Therefore, the first step to meeting dynamic and diverse needs is the needs assessment.

Operationalized to determine the scope of need (work) by;

- Contacting agricultural leaders (formalized or otherwise) personally/survey
- Referencing statistical trends,
- Historic programming
- Historic support base
- New opportunities
- Professional assessment and,
- Available resources.

Needs are restated in terms of issues, i.e. “What can we do to effect the issue.”

Then, needs are ranked based on what issues provide the greatest opportunity for educational impact relative to what we can practically accomplish given present opportunities and resources. Is determined by answering the question, “Which issues are we likely to be able to make the greatest positive impact on peoples lives?”

A draft POW is presented to decision makers/advisors, then finalized.

Initial POW is dynamic;

Temporary/permanent changes made dependant on the changing environment, i.e. changing educational/ political need, calamites both natural and man-made.

When new or additional information becomes available. Does the leadership speak for all producers? Can additional priority issues be identified and addressed?

Not all work is planned nor a priority. Particularly, individual needs are addressed and can be likened to the mortar that holds the bricks (priority programs) together.

POWs are formally updated annually.

Big “P” little “p” relationship.

Tools of programming; large and small group formal meetings, one-on-one work, team work, leader/multiplier training, distance education options, referrals, telephone, E-mail, snail-mail instructional letters and self study material, media releases and informal support.

Over time the rotation of issues and through the development of coalitions and referrals, most needs are addressed. Other “needs” are addressed through the maintenance of an on-going relationship.

Importance of evaluation, documentation of impact and improving programming approach.