

POSITION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING BY AGRICULTURE AGENT/EDUCATORS

It is the purpose of this paper to assist the county Cooperative Extension agents in identifying their roles and responsibilities in delivering educational programs to youth. The Agriculture and Natural Resources program area recognizes youth as a very important and viable clientele group. The program area recognizes that the 4-H program offers learning experiences in leadership development, responsibility, vocation opportunities, and life skills. Agents are expected to facilitate volunteers' involvement in planning, implementing, and conducting related program events and activities. Agents are expected to encourage volunteer ownership of programs and participation of volunteers at all levels of planning, organizing, facilitating and evaluating project activities and events. Cooperative Extension agents are expected to focus their efforts on educational programming in areas of identified needs of their clientele. Agents need to view both youth and adults as part of their clientele; thus, the 4-H program is an integral part of Cooperative Extension programs that reach both youth and adult clients.

Position Responsibilities to be Determined at County Level

It is recognized that programming responsibilities in youth are generally determined at the county level. These include specific roles of Extension agents in relating to the 4-H program and the 4-H agent participating in other program areas. These roles will vary from county to county and may vary between county groups. Many factors enter into determining the specific role of the agriculture agent/educator and other agents in the office. These factors include, but are not limited to, the subject matter expertise of the agent/educator, the agent/educator's interest, input from the county agricultural education committee and the overall staffing in the county. Since youth are identified as an important clientele group, a fair amount of team effort involving all agents is necessary in delivering educational program to youth in the county. Team teaching by the 4-H youth agent and agriculture agent/educator is strongly encouraged.

Roles of Agents and Educators

The following are suggestions for agents and educators to use as a starting point in discussing their individual roles:

Role of Agriculture Agent/Educator

- 1) Teach subject matter to volunteer leaders and youth when the 4-H agent does not possess the expertise in specific projects. This should be done through 4-H leader training and an ongoing invitation to leaders to attend adult programming activities, 4-H newsletters, and other means.
- 2) Identify resources for 4-H leaders or programs that relate to project committees and key leaders.

- 3) Serve as a resource person/advisor to program-related project committees and key leaders to:
 - a) Determine the educational needs of volunteers;
 - b) Establish priorities and goals;
 - c) Design and implement learning experiences through projects, activities, events, leader training, etc., and
 - d) Evaluate results and impacts made.
- 4) Assist youth agents in identifying resource people and developing networks in respective areas.

4-H/Youth Agents

- 1) Implement the overall volunteer leader project committees and key leaders through the county 4-H organizational structure.
- 2) To initiate and provide the overall leadership in the training of 4-H project committee members and key leaders in planning, coordinating and implementing the activities of their committee.
- 3) Implement procedures for project maintenance including enrollments, literature, reports, recognition and other areas.
- 4) Keep all agents informed of the overall 4-H program goals, opportunities for leader training, awards, project-related activities and other areas.
- 5) To teach subject matter and provide support for other program areas as appropriate or as mutually identified by the county office team.

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