

Using UW-Extension Trends Analysis Documents

Cooperative Extension self-directing teams and other groups have created the trends analysis documents that follow. They are provided to help lay a foundation for the situational analysis that is being done at the county level. The trends should help frame the analysis at the county level by suggesting regional, statewide, national and international factors that may significantly impact local conditions. The trends documents may be used either as a total group or as individual documents. In an effort to facilitate your use of the materials, each trend analysis has been provided on a single sheet of paper.

Each document provides:

- A description of the subject area under consideration
- Names and contact information of group/team members
- Names of external partners included in the development of the analysis
- Summary of the significant trends in topic area
- Relevance of those trends to county program
- Sources of supporting data
- Primary contact person

The trends analysis documents will also be used next fall when a group of Cooperative Extension county and campus colleagues gather to examine the entire identified county needs and concerns. The Trends/Concerns Analysis Group will make recommendations on the:

- Scope of collected needs and concerns
- Need for additional resources
- Creation of additional teams/theme groups
- Redirection of current team/theme groups
- Study of emerging needs or trends

These documents were distributed at the May 1999 All Staff Conference. They are also available on the Internet at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/stateplan/trends.html>

Trends Analysis—1999

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Community Development Aimed at Sustainability

Increasingly, communities recognize the need to balance land use, economic development and quality of life issues. Citizens no longer think only about jobs and income, but also about affordable housing, health care, green space and community character in making decisions about growth.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Wisconsin continues to have low unemployment rates, between 2 and 4 percent. Economic growth can be restricted by a shortage of qualified workers. There is an increasing recognition of the need to integrate job demands with the labor supply, with a focus on the need for increased training to improve job skills and job development.

Also, access to good schools, health care, affordable housing, outdoor activities, green space and other amenities are becoming key features in the ways that companies decide where to locate business. Communities will need to show that they are good places to live as well as good places to work. Likewise, communities are setting aesthetic standards and expectations for new businesses in order to maintain and enhance the community livability and quality of life.

Tourism remains a dominant economic force in many Wisconsin communities. Retail is the largest component of tourism spending in the state. Many downtowns and business districts have found that selling to tourists is an effective strategy to boost sales and maintain viability in a market of increased competition and changing consumers. Downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts continue to face difficulty finding a niche for themselves and coexisting with new commercial developments that are typically located on the outskirts of town. Downtowns are typically centrally located in communities and are accessible and convenient to the local population. As they are often rich in history and character, they provide opportunities for economic restructuring resulting from the proper mix of retail, services and other building uses.

Relevance of trends to county program:

The trend toward balancing economic development with quality of life issues will provide many opportunities for county Extension faculty to become involved in assisting community decision-making processes. The future of community development will require input from many stakeholders. Extension faculty can utilize both process and content skills to help communities make right decisions regarding future growth.

Extension can also help businesses with regulatory and environmental issues, so that they can be economically competitive and at the same time be good neighbors as well. Extension can also help communities wrestle with important issues including housing and health care, which will need public policy discussion in order to be successfully addressed in many Wisconsin communities.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Paul Voss, Applied Population Lab and Department of Rural Sociology, for demographic information
www.ssc.wisc.edu/poplab/aplhome.htm
- Bill Ryan and Bill Pinkovitz, Center for Community Economic Development, for market development information
www.uwex.edu/ces/cced
- Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center for environmental information
<http://shwec.uwsp.edu/>
- For web site information, see the Cooperative Extension web page.
www.uwex.edu/communit.htm/

Primary contacts for questions:

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People and the Environment

People are part of the environment. Every person should be able to enjoy the benefits of clean air, clean water and a healthy environment at home, at work and at play. People can use, conserve, protect and restore natural resources—land, air, water and biodiversity, in ways that ensure long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for ourselves and future generations. The more materially oriented the desired lifestyle of an individual or a community, the more resources are needed to support it. Individuals and communities work to balance the way we want to live with the real quality of our lifestyle and our community.

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Land Use Self-Directed Work Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Wisconsin's economic and population growth is increasing pressure on environmental and natural resources. Of Wisconsin's 15,000 inland lakes, 90 percent have suffered some degree of degradation. Of Wisconsin's wells, 14 percent contain herbicide residues. During the 1980s, vehicle miles of travel in Wisconsin increased by more than one-third.

Land use shifts have also been severe. In 1992, 25 percent of all farmland sold in Wisconsin was diverted from agricultural production. In Burnett County, nearly half of all residential property and 10 percent of agricultural property is owned by nonresidents of Wisconsin. A little more than a quarter of residential property in Door County is also owned by nonresidents. Between 1990 and 2015, Wisconsin is projected to have a population increase of more than 24 percent.

Four of every ten Wisconsin acres are forested. Two-thirds are privately owned and landowner's intentions are often not known. Wisconsin counts 189,004 companies in the forest products industry and the numbers these businesses employ have increased by one-third since 1970. Total land area classified as forest declined by about 4.7 million acres in the last 40 years, but the area of forest land "stocked" with trees increased.

Recreation spending has increased and tourism is increasing. Recreational home development affects natural resources—septic systems or other waste treatment systems are not cared for, public access to lakes is locally divisive and recreation sparks differences of opinion about the use of local resources by business and leisure users.

A Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource report on biodiversity found that all major biological communities have been significantly altered in function and size through ecological simplification (changes in species composi-

tion, structure, function and processes within ecosystems), fragmentation of the landscape and environmental pollution. Most of Wisconsin's presettlement native communities have disappeared, but most individual species are still present. The DNR recommends ecosystem-based planning and management with an emphasis on preserving the ecological structure and functions of major community types.

Environmental stewardship is routinely ranked as a top education need whenever county leaders are asked to prioritize local issues. Environmental quality is highly valued in surveys of public attitudes. People favor paying more if it means benefiting from improved environmental quality.

Environmental health and particularly children's environmental health is a new priority for health professionals and public health and environmental agencies. Environmental health problems arise from lead, mercury, PCBs, pesticides and other toxic chemicals that have found their way into air and water. Children are particularly vulnerable to health risks due to how their bodies use nutrients, air and water in the process of development.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Competition for land, water and air is causing major conflicts in land use statewide. Extension faculty are being called on to provide facilitation and organization process assistance to help communities sort through the variety of stakeholder interests in land use decisions. Communities also need university-based content assistance to make informed decisions regarding growth and environment. Managing residuals such as solid waste and animal waste will require research-based technical solutions and wide spread education to be more effective.

Extension can provide training, information and support for natural resource-based businesses in their role as members of the local economic, social and environmental community. Extension can provide opportunities to apply responsible stewardship practices as people use natural resources in their personal, community or work life.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Cooperative Extension
www.uwex.edu/communit.html
- Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)
<http://shwec.uwsp.edu>
- Local Government Center
<http://www.uwex.edu/lgc>
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
<http://uwex.edu/ces/ag/>

Primary contact for questions:

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Public Economics and Local Governance

The resource base available to local governments to provide services to citizens is shrinking. A tightening resource base coupled with increased mandates will challenge local governments to be more efficient in managing resources in the future.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

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Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association, League of Wisconsin Municipalities and Alliance of Cities

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Economic growth is helping many local governments with tight budgets, but not all. From 1985 to 1995, the equalized value of the top ten Wisconsin counties grew from 80 to 152 percent. However, the bottom ten counties grew from 13 to a minus 20 percent. Many counties struggle to maintain services with a shrinking resource base.

So called "devolution" of governmental responsibility continues to move issues into the realm of local government decision-making. At the same time, Wisconsin population is growing and changing, requiring local government officials to make new decisions about governmental services, including schools, health care, affordable housing and infrastructure. Conflict over governmental decision-making regarding public policy issues continues to grow.

Pressure to change the way state government helps to fund local governments is increasing. Recently there have been movements to reduce state aids and add ways local governments can tax. Critics of these proposals say this would create inequities in revenue and services between various parts of the state.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Extension is a major provider of governmental education to local officials. More than ever, these officials will need assistance in understanding the fiscal and social implications of public policy decisions. Extension faculty can provide a forum for helping communities understand the ramifications of local decisions, and can also provide training to assist local officials in understanding how to govern efficiently and effectively.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Local Government Center
www.uwex.edu/lgc/
- Applied Population Lab Data
www.ssc.wisc.edu/poplab/aplhome.htm
- Cooperative Extension
www.uwex.edu/communit.htm/

Primary contact for questions:

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Organizational Development Demand

There is an increasing need to build organizational process competencies in Wisconsin communities. Issues being faced are more complex and diverse and the organizational capacity for dealing with these issues and developing workable solution has not kept pace.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Strategic Planning Team

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Wisconsin Towns Association

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Wisconsin's population growth and change is fueling increased demands on community decision-makers. Demands for community services, land use controls, local government programs and economic development are causing conflicts among stakeholders regarding community directions. To address these issues, communities need to develop a shared vision and mission and an understanding of the external and internal environments in which they must operate. Increasing organizational process skills in communities can assist with sorting through the complex issues they face and in developing and implementing unique and creative solutions to address these issues.

Devolution of governmental authority is also causing communities to grapple with new responsibilities regarding economic and community development, environmental protection, human services and other widespread community issues. Today's new leaders recognize that they must make decisions today that will effect their citizens for years to come, and that how they go about making those decisions can be just as important as the decisions themselves. They need increased skills and competencies as issues become more difficult to address with shrinking resources available to address them.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Increasingly, Extension faculty is called on to assist communities in addressing complex and conflicting issues. Extension faculty can assist communities with organizational process approaches to help them identify alternative courses of action and understand the implications of community decisions. All program areas have the opportunity, and may be expected, to work with community groups to assist them in important future decision-making.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Applied Population Laboratory Data
www.ssc.wisc.edu/poplab/aplhome.htm
- Local Government Center
www.uwex.edu/lgc/
- Cooperative Extension web page
www.uwex.edu/communit.htm/

Primary contact for questions:

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Commercial Fruit Crops

Wisconsin's commercial fruit crops include cranberry, apple, tart cherry and strawberry. Cranberry is one of the most valuable horticultural crops in the state, with about 15,000 acres in production. While the total value of Wisconsin fruit production is low in comparison to the meat and dairy industries, fruit crops contribute significantly to our state's agricultural diversity and stability. Some commercial fruit production occurs in virtually every Wisconsin county, although the acreage in production may be quite small.

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Fruit Crops Self Directed Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Food safety and the expansion of the cranberry industry are major trends affecting fruit production in Wisconsin.

Incidents of microbial contamination of fresh and processed fruit, such as apple cider, have been heavily reported in the mass media in recent years. In response, the federal government instituted new labeling and processing requirements. Some requirements, such as pasteurization, may not be affordable for small family-owned orchards. Another food safety issue relates to calls for replacing broad-spectrum pesticides with alternatives that are healthier for humans and the environment. The Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 is likely to bring a radical reduction of some chemicals frequently used in the fruit industry. In addition, resistance to some pesticides is developing.

Although they are expensive to establish, cranberry farms are economically sound farming operations. Markets have been solid for more than 20 years, and returns to the grower have been very good. For these reasons, there has been considerable expansion in acreage, and many new growers have little experience in cranberry production, or in any kind of farming. In addition, because of restrictions on development in wetlands, expansion into upland sites presents many unknown challenges in water usage, cultivation and pest management. Finally, overproduction has resulted in declining prices, and some new operations may be over-committed and financially stretched.

Relevance of trends to county program:

All counties have some commercial fruit production and will be affected by these trends. However, much of the fruit industry is widely dispersed in the state and few counties have substantial fruit production. Most Extension fruit programming has been conducted statewide, with greater specialist involvement and less county involvement in both planning and instruction. However, some counties have been more active in fruit programming, and greater involvement by other counties is welcome. All of the trends outlined above are being addressed on a statewide basis through annual conferences, workshops and field days, and through state grower organizations including the Wisconsin Apple Growers Association, the Wisconsin Berry Growers Association, the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association and the Wisconsin Tart Cherry Association. Some counties have their own fruit grower associations, with county faculty involved for educational purposes.

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New and Emerging Farm and Agricultural Markets

As conventional agricultural markets have evolved and major agribusiness firms have merged, the prices paid to farmers for their products declined. As prices have declined, so too has average net farm income. The notion of shifting away from producing raw commodities to value-added agricultural products offers a way for farmers to capture a larger share of consumer food dollars.

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New and Emerging Markets Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Conventional agricultural markets have changed and major agribusiness firms have merged. As a result, the prices paid to farmers and average net farm income have declined. Since the mid-1970s, prices of farm inputs have risen at four times the rate of increase in prices paid to farmers for their production. The resulting "cost-price squeeze" has caused a severe contraction in net farm income.

No matter what the size of the operation, Wisconsin farmers see the need to increase the market value of the crops they produce. Some look to add value to raw commodities through processing and marketing. Others are exploring alternative crops, organic farming, direct marketing of crops and livestock and an identity-preserved variety of traditional crops (high-oil corn, for example). Shifting away from producing raw commodities to producing value-added agricultural products offers a way for farmers to capture a larger share of consumer food dollars.

One of the biggest challenges for these enterprises is marketing. Buyers are out there, but they tend to be a relatively small (but growing) segment of the marketplace. It takes time, energy, skills and resources to find them. Farmers need to learn to conduct market research, target market segments, follow industry and consumer trends and develop a brand identity and a marketing strategy.

Farmers also may want to consider cooperative strategies to achieve economies of scale and scope.

Relevance of trends to county program:

County-based faculty is increasingly being called upon to provide assistance to local farmers who are exploring alternatives to conventional commodity production. Often, the needs of these farmers go beyond technical and production information. They also need assistance in developing marketing plans and in networking with other farmers. The Emerging Markets Team will provide county faculty with a place to find the resources they need to work with their increasingly diverse local clientele.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

Supporting data can be obtained from the Emerging Markets Team by contacting either of the team co-leaders. After Farm Progress Days, July 13, 1999, a web site will be available at

- www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/

Primary contacts for questions:

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Farm Management Education

Management decisions on farms are becoming increasingly critical as the cost of implementing management changes and the cost of reversing them increases. Each decision requires a farm manager to consider many factors. The amount of information available increases the need for a methodical approach to all areas of decision-making, especially financial decision-making.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

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Farm management associations, farm record associations, loan officers, technical college system, high school agriculture instructors and professional farm advisors

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Farm managers will have access to more financial data. They increasingly use computers to enter their own financial data and to track information on the Internet. Vendors provide more data through computer billing and records transfer. Soon, farm managers will pay for and obtain records of their purchases without paper. This detailed financial data could be the genesis of better decision-making.

Information technology will play a key role in facilitating a more coordinated management system. Distilling available data into useful information for decision-making is the task of managers and their advisors.

There will be less money available to fund the work of farm financial advisors and the number of these advisors will decline. Travel time and mileage are a significant cost. Many advisors will use electronic means to access a farm manager's data to save the expense of making a trip. The move from paper to electronics will eventually allow the farm manager to enter data directly on-line. For example, farm financial information would be collected on a specific web site, managed by and accessible to only those advisors the farm manager designates. In the future, the industry will turn increasingly to the Internet or other forms of electronic media to do business.

Relevance of significant trends to county program:

The farm manager's demand for quick access to decision-making information will require the advisor to have Internet access to farm manager's financial data and/or whole farm planning information. County educators will need to learn to assist their citizens while at a remote location. This assistance may be similar to a help line, except the county educator would first access the same data the farm manager is viewing.

Electronic access to the farm data will allow more agents to specialize or work in county clusters.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Farm Management Education Team
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/Teams/busmgt.htm>
- Center for Dairy Profitability
<http://www.wisc.edu/dairy-profit>
- USDA Economics and Statistics System
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu:80/usda/>
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/>
- USDA Economic Research Service
<http://www.econ.ag.gov/>

Primary contacts for questions:

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Grain Cropping Systems

Grain crop production and use will remain an integral part of Wisconsin agriculture in the years ahead. Crops such as corn, small grains and soybeans are produced on nearly 6 million acres in Wisconsin and have an annual market value of nearly \$1.5 billion. Although a large proportion of these crops supports the dairy and livestock industries, a significant cash grain industry also exists.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Grain Team

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Grain farmers and farmland owners, agriculture businesses, other educational groups, farm lenders and bankers, crop commodity groups, government agencies and private interest groups

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

The trend toward fewer and larger farms will continue. Producers will need up-to-date crop production and management information and skills to insure agricultural profitability. Land use issues and environmental protection will grow increasingly complex.

New developments in precision farming, biotechnology, pesticides and equipment are arriving at the farm gate at an unprecedented rate. Farmers are offered a bewildering array of new technologies and can be overwhelmed by the choices. In addition, the current grain price crisis means they must carefully analyze these new tools to make sure they are affordable and effective.

University researchers are also challenged by the rate of release of new technologies related to genetically engineered plants, profitability, food safety, pest resistance management and precision farming. They have little time to evaluate their appropriateness for farmers prior to their release. Products are often marketed and distributed quickly in an attempt to recover investments in the early phases of adoption. Farmers must learn and re-learn, usually at great expense, management of these technologies as new and improved versions are released.

New technologies traditionally came from university research programs. Today more are developed by private industry. The research base for these technologies often is not available to UW-Extension, but farmers still turn to UW-Extension for an objective opinion. The recent downward spiral of prices received by farmers makes our assistance even more critical.

Relevance of these trends to county program:

The partnership between local agents and county-based Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs) will continue to grow in importance. Increasingly, agents will be asked to focus a variety of university resources on specific problems, to coordinate the efforts of county-based CCAs, to organize and deliver group instruction that enhances the value of using CCAs and to access and retrieve research and information. State specialists will need their assistance in forming external advisory committees of farmers, commodity organizations and related agricultural supply and service organizations.

County faculty will be involved in on-farm research and diagnostic training exercises for farmers. They also will make results available to farmers and keep specialists posted in relation to emerging needs or problems. They will participate in evaluating the impact of programs and materials.

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Forage Crop Production and Utilization

Wisconsin's dairy industry developed and prospered because the state's climate, soils and topography are well suited for the production of forage crops. Today, Wisconsin dairy farmers have a competitive advantage over regions of the U.S. where forage must be purchased and shipped long distances. Alfalfa, cool season grasses and corn harvested for silage are the main ingredients of the state's dairy ration. Perennial forages also protect surface and ground water resources by limiting soil erosion and nutrient runoff.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Forage Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Forage production is changing to meet farmers' needs for more efficiency and productivity and to address environmental concerns and reflect new research discoveries.

As farms become larger, operators rely more on custom contractors and on purchased or contracted forage. Many farm operators now store hay in large packages. High moisture hay crops and corn silage are being stored in horizontal silos such as bunkers or bags. More forage acres are growing corn for silage rather than alfalfa. Forage establishment methods are changing as well.

Many operators are turning to management intensive grazing systems to lower costs, become more efficient and protect the sensitive environment in the non-glaciated part of the state. Forage crops play a growing role in soil conservation and nutrient management planning. Growing alfalfa in rotation with row crops is the only way producers can meet tolerable soil loss goals.

New varieties of alfalfa and corn silage are being developed by private industry and new hybrids and varieties appear on the market with limited university testing or knowledge of economic viability. Often these products are released to the marketplace at a fast pace in an attempt to recoup invested dollars quickly.

Relevance of trends to county program:

The profitability of the dairy enterprise is directly related to the profitability of the forage enterprise. Farmers will need educational programs to learn to maximize forage profitability in both traditional and grazing-based systems. These efforts should help producers maximize yields, lower cost per ton, determine cost of production, improve utilization by livestock and evaluate production alternatives.

With new products and technologies being released to the marketplace at an unprecedented rate, farm operators will need quick evaluations of their economic viability as well as updated management practices for these new products. These evaluations should be conducted both at the university level and in on-farm research trials. County Extension agents and Certified Crop Advisors will help develop and coordinate these efforts.

The public demands that surface and groundwater quality be maintained or, in some cases, improved.

County Extension education can demonstrate the importance of forage crops to protect water resources by reducing soil erosion and water runoff, improving soil structure and utilizing soil nutrients.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/>
- 1997 Agricultural Census
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>
- Team Forage Web Page
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/teamforage/>

Primary contacts for questions:

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Land Use and Agriculture

Agriculture intersects with community land use planning in two important ways. First, the issue of farmland preservation surfaces both at the urban/rural fringe and in rural areas facing development pressure. Second, there are increasing community conflicts over the siting and expansion of large livestock facilities. Existing educational resources are inadequate to provide effective guidance to local decision-makers on these issues.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Land Use and Agriculture Self-Directed Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Declining prices for farm products and rising costs of production have led to reductions in the level of real net farm income on Wisconsin farms since the early 1980s. These conditions have forced farmers out of business, discouraged young people from entering farming and led to an increase in the size of commercial farms.

A small but growing segment of very large livestock farm operations with significant non-family hired labor has raised significant concerns—some legitimate, some based on conjecture—among traditional farmers, rural non-farm residents and urban environmental groups.

An increase in the number of small, non-traditional farms in the state will reshape the landscape of many rural communities and present new challenges to local government land use decision-making.

A growing number of state residents have moved from cities and suburbs to single-family homes or loosely clustered housing developments located beyond the boundaries of incorporated cities and villages. In addition, demand increases for recreational or vacation property. Both trends cause the price of farmland to rise, making it difficult for entering farmers to buy a farm and encouraging mid-career or retiring farmers to sell their lands for non-farm development.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Recent changes in farming and pressure from non-farm development lead to an increasing number of community conflicts over land use and agriculture. These conflicts may arise when a town or county decides to develop a more comprehensive land use plan to shape the kinds of development that occur in their jurisdiction. In most cases, community members generally agree that farmers and farmland should be protected from outside development pressures. However, local governments often are unaware of the policy options available to promote farmland preservation or the tradeoffs involved in each approach. Similarly, when communities are suddenly faced with a proposed large-scale livestock facility, there is often great pressure to adopt new land use policies to restrict such farms, but less certainty about which policies would be most practical, effective and desirable. In both cases, Extension county faculty can provide objective information and guidance to local governments.

Sources of supporting data:

- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
www.nass.usda/wi/
- Program on Agricultural Tech Studies, UW-Madison
www.wisc.edu/pats/
- American Farmland Trust
www.farmland.org

Primary contacts for questions:

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Risk Management

Wisconsin is a leading agricultural state, and its agricultural economy is important to the economic welfare of the state. As the complexity of agriculture increases, agricultural producers are exposed to increasing risk. If they are to be competitive in a national and global economy, producers and agribusinesses must improve their ability to identify, evaluate and manage risk.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Risk Management Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Farms are larger, more specialized and enterprise intensive. As a result, producers invest more capital, take on more debt and increase their financial risk.

Market prices for agricultural products are more volatile. Producers who do not manage price risk may experience cash flow problems when prices are low. This is a major concern for dairy producers, who experienced little price volatility until recently. Price support programs have been phased out or eliminated. Producers are expected to use crop insurance and other risk management tools to manage their risks rather than rely on disaster relief.

As farms grow in size and numbers of livestock, environmental risk increases. Producers need to be aware of their impact on the environment and to implement environmentally sound practices to control odors, protect water quality and use nutrients contained in the manure.

Farms are larger and more valuable, making it more difficult to transfer the farm to the next generation. As farms grow and specialize, a variety of business arrangements are being used, increasing the need for business arrangements that meet personal, business and financial goals. Farm families also face other risks such as death or disability of a major owner or manager, disagreement among multiple operators and divorce.

Larger farms are more dependent on hired labor, increasing the need for human resource management skills. In many parts of the state, finding qualified farm employees is difficult.

Producers rely more on investment capital to update, expand or modernize farm businesses. Lenders are asking for complex farm business plans and detailed financial projections to support the financing of farm businesses.

Relevance of trends to county program:

One way to improve the management of risk is to create a team of agricultural professionals to work with farmers. Agricultural lenders, consultants, attorneys, insurance agents, veterinarians, accountants, Extension educators and others can help producers develop risk management strategies.

Extension educators and other agricultural professionals need risk management educational tools and

resources. Some are available, such as the AgVentures units. Others, such as the risk awareness module and market analysis software are in development. Other tools being developed outside Wisconsin will be evaluated to see if they meet the needs of Wisconsin agricultural producers.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/>
- 1997 Agricultural Census
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>
- Risk Management Team Web Page
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/Teams/RiskTeam.htm>

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Wisconsin's Sheep and Lamb Industry

Wisconsin's sheep industry continues a long, slow decline. Currently, most sheep are raised on small farms and as youth livestock projects. The number of sheep raised in Wisconsin has declined to about 76,000 from 212,000 in 1964. While few lamb feed yards exist, interest in marketing wool and sheep milk or specialty cheeses is strong.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Sheep Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

The national sheep and lamb industry is dominated by large range flocks and a few commercial lamb feed yards and packers. Wide price fluctuations have driven many range flocks and larger farm flocks out of business due to unpredictable market prices. Because of the discontinuation of the lamb and wool check-off in 1997, the American Sheep Institute will cease to exist in 1999.

The national market is highly variable and is a commodity market. Niche markets and consumer direct marketing bring more profit due to unique products and consumer preferences.

Sheep flocks are excellent supplemental enterprises for small farms because they require only a modest investment and can be handled by most family members. Sheep are excellent for managed intensive grazing programs since finished lambs can be marketed directly off grass with limited grain feeding. However, little local expertise or infrastructure exists to support the industry. Supplies are available through catalogues, but veterinarian support is limited.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Local Extension education to assist people interested in sheep production might include helping producers evaluate their resources to select their best production system. Other programs at the county level involve coordinated marketing, development of niche markets and environmental protection. With the increase in the number of small farms, small flocks can be a primary livestock enterprise. This would strengthen rural communities and local economies by replacing lost farms with productive, profitable sheep flocks.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/>
- 1997 Census of Agriculture
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>
- Reference Sheep Team Web Page
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/Teams/ShepTeam.htm>

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Vegetable Crops

The processed vegetable industry expects many changes during the next three years—fewer, but larger, companies, inter-company sharing, reduction in available pest-control chemicals because of Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) requirements, slow adoption of genetically modified organisms by consumers and geographic shifts in crop production acreage. Concerns about pest management affect potato growers. The fresh market industry is growing and becoming more complex.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Vegetable Crops Self-Directed Team

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Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Association, Midwest Food Processors Association, Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Linda Gustafson (executive director of the WPVGA), Wayne Wells (Chiquita Processed Food, LLC) and Fred Moh (editor, *Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers*)

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Commercial vegetable production depends on the use of fertilizers and pesticides. However, the public raises concerns about the environmental effects of nutrient and pesticide use, especially groundwater contamination and residues in food. Biologically based IPM, incorporating cultural, biological, biorational pesticides and chemical control methods to defeat pest populations, shows promise as the best solution to pest control problems and to sustaining agriculture through the twenty-first century.

Potato growers are concerned about the size, quality and marketability of their raw product. The Food Quality and Protection Act (FQPA) has caused concerns over current and future alternative pest control strategies. The potato industry also experiences increased need for resistance management, the adaptation and use of genetically modified organisms and the consolidation of suppliers.

Fresh market producers are increasing in number, making their industry more competitive and difficult to organize. Fresh market producers produce many different crops and lack a check-off system to support applied research and Extension programming.

Relevance of trends to county programs:

Wisconsin vegetable growers and agribusiness clientele need diagnostic training and educational programs on pest identification. The Vegetable Team will develop a diagnostic training packet within the next year. The information will also be posted on the Internet. This training material will be available to all county faculty members. The material could be used with commercial or fresh market vegetable growers as well as home gardeners. This information will also be of use to county agents that work with Master Gardeners.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

The materials referenced above are available to county faculty. In addition, the proceedings from Wisconsin's Annual Potato Meetings and the MWVPA Processing Crops Manual and Proceedings are available by contacting one of the Vegetable Team co-chairs.

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Beef Cattle

Wisconsin's beef cattle industry is growing slowly but consistently. Both the number of farms and the number of beef cows have increased since 1987. This trend is expected to continue for a number of reasons—the decrease in numbers of dairy farms, increase in number of small (hobby) farms, return to profitable prices, timing in the beef cycle and increased opportunities with managed intensive grazing.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Beef Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Beef cattle go through predictable cycles of supply and demand. Each cycle lasts 10 to 11 years. The current inventory cycle began in 1990, peaked in 1996 and will decline through 2000 or 2001. The price cycle leads the inventory cycle by three to four years. Prices of feed cattle began to increase in late 1998 so prices should continue to increase through 2002 or 2003. Different industry segments realize profits in a predictable sequence starting with the cow/calf producer, continuing to stocker or backgrounder and to feed yards. Profits can be very high for one segment while another segment loses money.

The use of risk management tools (futures and options) continues to be standard in the industry.

Cow herds will continue to be small, but the number of farms with beef cow herds will increase due to decreases in numbers of dairy farms, increases in small farms, profitable prices for beef cattle, beef cycle timing and increased opportunities with new production systems.

Beef producers show renewed interest in grazing steers on pasture.

The feed lot industry continues to be competitive. Wisconsin has no large feed yards in Wisconsin, but has many small feed yards up to 100 to 200 head. Feed yard managers face challenges of market access, price discovery and access to new technology at a competitive price.

Wisconsin has a niche market for Holstein steers both as feeder cattle and as finished cattle.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Beef producers need assistance in evaluating their resources of land, capital and management to select the production system that will maximize returns. Producers also need to learn how and when to use risk management tools. Both current and prospective beef producers are interested in protecting surface and ground water and reducing soil erosion. They need information on how beef production systems—especially managed intensive grazing—can work to protect natural resources. Finally, beef producers need information and education about access to markets and competitive price discovery.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/>

- 1997 Census of Agriculture
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>

Primary contacts for questions:

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Nutrient Management

Public concern about non-point source pollution of water resources from agricultural activities is increasing. Evidence indicates that most farmers are not using Best Management Practices (BMPs) for nutrients. These trends emphasize the need for effective applied research and education on nutrient management. Nutrient management refers to applying nutrients from all sources in a way that promotes efficient use of nutrients by crops and minimizes nutrient losses that could degrade groundwater and surface water quality.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Nutrient Management Team

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Summary of significant trends in the subject area:

In response to water quality problems such as hypoxia and Pfiesteria outbreaks, federal agencies have initiated programs to improve water quality through nutrient management. These programs include using a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) approach and region-specific nutrient criteria for natural waters, strategies for minimizing pollution from Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and a phosphorus (P)-based approach to nutrient management.

In Wisconsin, concerns about high nitrate (N) in groundwater and P losses in runoff indicate a need for improved nutrient management. The number and size of farms with high livestock density is increasing. Concerns about the effects of CAFOs on the environment and the sociology of rural communities have led to community polarization and the need for education on the appropriate siting and impacts of CAFOs. Recent research shows that lowering P levels in feed could reduce phosphorus in manure.

The state's Non-point Source Pollution Program Redesign expands existing programs for improving water quality by controlling non-point source pollutants. While the program addresses all non-point sources of pollution, agricultural nutrient management is an important component.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Effective educational programs and incentives should be focused at the county or local level to achieve the desired improvements in nutrient management and regulatory compliance with federal and state programs. A key component of county nutrient management education programs will be curriculum developed for the Nutrient Management Through Farmer Education Program. Additional county level educational activities include helping rural communities resolve conflicts related to large-scale CAFOs. In the likely event that a national policy requiring a P strategy for nutrient management is adopted, individual states will probably be required to incorporate this approach into their nutrient management standards.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Extension Self Directed Nutrient Management Team Web Site
<http://www.soils.wisc.edu/extension/SDWT.html>

- Nutrient Management Publications
http://ipcm.wisc.edu/pubs/nutrient_ref.htm
- National Strategy for the Development of Regional Nutrient Criteria
<http://www.epa.gov/ostwater/Rules/nutrient.html>
- Water Quality Criteria and Standards Plan—Priorities for the Future
<http://www.epa.gov/OST/standards/planfs.html>
- EPA's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/TMDL/USDA-EPA>
- Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations
<http://www.epa.gov/owm/finafost.htm>

Primary contacts for questions:

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Swine

The swine industry in Wisconsin faces severe challenges. Prices are low. Processing space is limited. Concerns about food safety have prompted new regulations. The use of antibiotics in feed is under debate.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Swine Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Food safety and the wholesomeness of pork products are a continuing concern of consumers. In response, USDA implemented Hazard and Critical Control Analysis (HACCP) programs for processors. Many processors will purchase animals only from producers with PQA Level III certification. This requirement includes 4-H youth with swine projects.

It is possible that use of antibiotics in feed could be prohibited or curtailed because of concern that microorganisms will become resistant.

Market prices for hogs fell dramatically in the winter of 1998-99. Operations selling fewer than 3,000 hogs accounted for 62 percent of sales during 1988, but only 27 percent during 1997. Nationally, it is expected that about 30 percent of hog operations will fold in the coming year. Those that remain have lost equity and accumulated substantial debt.

During 1998, the U.S. produced 101 million hogs, exceeding available processing capacity and driving prices to unprecedented lows. Many processing plants are old and several are likely to close. Public opposition, environmental restrictions and labor shortages hinder building new processing plants.

Operators of moderate to small enterprises may move toward producing added value, specialty products. Regulations permitting interstate shipment of meat from state inspected plants will be important for reaching urban markets outside of Wisconsin.

Animal feed lot regulations of the Clean Water Act and regulations governing odor, nutrient management and animal welfare are likely to increase. These requirements are likely to have a greater impact on small operations.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Pork Quality Assurance training of commercial and youth project producers is expected to continue. Producers will need more assistance when on-farm food safety requirements increase. Producers also will need education on evaluating production contracts and dedicated production arrangements. They also will need help with business and marketing issues, especially if they process and sell meat locally. It is expected that pork producers will continue to leave the business. They will need business and financial management support as they contemplate their future.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

HACCP, Pork Quality Assurance and food safety:

- <http://www.nppc.org/facts/HACCP.html>
- <http://www.nppc.org/facts/business.html>
- <http://www.nppc.org/PROD/PQA/PQA.html>
- <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/ansci/swinereports/asl-1512.pdf>

Industry structure and economics:

- *Pork Facts 98/99*
<http://www.nppc.org/PorkFacts/pfindex.html>
- "Spot Market Decreasing Fast." *Feedstuffs* pp. 22, 26. March 22, 1999
- Hog Report - December 1, 01/07/1999
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/hogsquar.htm>
- *1999 U.S. Agricultural Outlook, The FAPRI "Briefing Book"*. 1999.
<http://www.fapri.missouri.edu/>
- USDA-NASS Agricultural Statistics 1998. Chapter VII. *Statistics of Cattle, Hogs and Sheep*.
http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/agr98/98_ch7.pdf

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Dairy

Dairy is a key driver of Wisconsin's agricultural economy. It is the state's dominant source of agricultural income. Much of the state's cropping activities are set up to produce feed for the dairy herd and handle the manure.

Managing a dairy operation is extremely complex. Operators have to make sound decisions about nutrition, genetics, reproduction, herd health, housing, milking systems, waste management and a host of other factors. Extension has helped dairy producers solve management problems, and this continues to be the goal of the Dairy Team.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Dairy Team

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

USDA reports show a marked decline in the number of dairy farms over the years. However, USDA data also shows that for the last five years, the number of dairy cows in Wisconsin held at roughly 1.4 million and total milk production was steady at slightly more than 22 billion pounds per year. This stability in cow numbers and milk production is evidence the Wisconsin dairy industry is not in a state of decline even though farm numbers are declining.

More producers are modernizing—moving away from stall-barn dairy systems to parlor-based systems with either free-stall housing or, to a lesser extent, grazing. This change improves working conditions of persons milking cows because it is physically less exhausting to milk in a parlor. Parlors also bring improvement in labor productivity—in an equal amount of time, one person can milk nearly twice the number of cows as in a stall barn. The challenge facing producers is learning a new system for milking and handling cows and making a sizable financial investment in the new system. This change is especially difficult for older farmers approaching retirement.

Another challenge for dairy farmers is predicting how future land use policies and environmental protection regulations may affect their operations.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Much of the work Extension faculty will do with dairy producers in the next decade is likely to involve modernization and the adoption of parlor-based dairy systems. This work will be geared towards parlor-based dairy systems operated with hired labor and managers as well as family members.

As society considers various policies regarding land use, nutrient management and other natural resource issues, dairy producers will undoubtedly look for people who can help them understand and comply with these regulations. They are likely to turn to Extension faculty for this information. Policymakers may turn to Extension faculty for assessments about how certain regulations or restrictions on land use or nutrient management could impact a local dairy economy. In order to perform this role, Extension faculty will need

access to research-based information that objectively lays out the costs and benefits of adopting various policies involving natural resources such as land, water and air.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Center for Dairy Profitability
www.wisc.edu/dairy-profit/
- Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service
www.nass.usda/wi/

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Urban Agriculture/Horticulture

This industry produces more than \$2.6 billion from sales and services annually. In 1998, Wisconsin had more than 1,100 production nurseries utilizing more than 12,000 acres, 1,250 dealers in nursery stock and herbaceous perennials, 13 million square feet of bedding plants, cut flowers and floriculture crops grown under glass and on 723 open acres. Retail greenhouses and nurseries exceeded \$157 million in sales in 1997. Maintenance of 1.2 million acres of turf is estimated at \$1.5 billion annually. Sixty-two sod growers raise just under 7,000 acres of sod annually at an estimated value of \$14 million. It is estimated there are 1,500 fresh market growers in the state.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Urban Agriculture/Horticulture Team

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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Wisconsin Landscape Federation

For a listing of all team members, reference the Ag Hort Team List (CE-Lists on Eudora).

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Rapid urbanization of environmentally sensitive land areas coupled with the dramatic increase in horticultural activity on that land increases the potential for a negative impact on natural resources. Research shows that homeowners use up to six times more fertilizers and chemicals per acre than those in production agriculture.

Consumers are increasingly aware of and concerned about issues such as food safety, lawn care, pesticide use and environmental quality. For example, increasing concern of parents and school officials over children's exposure to pesticides in the state's 3,000 K-12 schools has increased the demand for school Integrated Pest Management Programs. These concerns result in increasing numbers of calls and questions from consumers at Extension offices across the state.

Consumer demand for information and educational training through the Master Gardener Program continues to increase across the state. More than 1,200 Master Gardeners have been trained in the Southeast District alone.

Relevance of trends to county programs:

The horticulture team is undertaking the challenge of providing horticulture research and educational support for the rapidly expanding horticulture industry in Wisconsin. A survey of all county UW-Extension offices indicated that, during the summer, an average of 25 percent of county faculty and staff time is spent answering horticulture inquiries. This percentage is increasing. Many counties lack full or part-time horticulture staff. In counties with horticulture staff, most must limit their response to consumer calls to 50

percent of their time to allow them to work on major educational programs. The statewide trends and the related increase in horticulture demands within counties elevates the need for timely updates to all Extension offices from state staff via the Internet. The Horticulture Team hopes to meet these needs through weekly horticulture updates, web site development and maintenance, training material for commercial clientele and fact sheets. Additional help for counties could come through the training of more Master Gardeners.

Sources of supporting data use by counties:

- Wisconsin Gardening and Commercial Horticulture News
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/sehort>

Primary contact for questions:

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Youth Decision-Making

Recent research suggests that when given the opportunity, youth (and adults) are capable of utilizing sophisticated processes in order to make decisions (Furby & Beyth-Marom, 1992). Traditionally, and typically, adults tend to make decisions for youth, often because they sense that youth may make inappropriate or harmful choices. However when youth are given the means to make their own decisions, they can demonstrate responsible and empowering behaviors. Therefore, it is suggested that youth be encouraged to take more initiative and responsibility for making their own decisions, involvement in their communities and their futures.

Work team members, specialists and external partners participating in the process:

Work Team Members

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Other state 4-H youth development specialists, agents and staff

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

In recent years there has been growing concern that youth, adolescents in particular, have been engaging in risky behaviors. These activities include driving, drinking, drug use and sexual activity. Although adults also engage in these behaviors, it is adolescents who are criticized for their risk-taking behavior. Risk-taking behavior is closely tied to the decision-making process. Decision-making can be defined as the process of making choices among various competing modes of action.

For years 4-H Youth Development Programs have emphasized decision-making activities within their projects, activities and programs. A typical decision-making process includes identifying possible options, identifying potential consequences for these options, evaluating the desirability of the consequences, assessing likelihood of consequences and ultimately identifying the best option.

As previously mentioned, it has been traditionally thought that youth do a poor job of identifying their best available option. Recent research suggests that both adults and adolescents use sophisticated processes for making decisions. However, adolescents may value the possible consequences of options differently than adults do.

When youth are given the freedom to initiate projects that are important to them, they can become empowered, develop empathy for those they work with and demonstrate responsible behaviors, even though their initial decisions may not be the same ones that adults would normally choose.

Relevance of trends to county program:

4-H Youth Development Programs have philosophically believed in the empowerment of youth, however there is much room for continued efforts. Traditionally many community clubs have emphasized youth involvement in club projects and activities, yet well-meaning adults have often directed the efforts of youth too closely. Adults should be encouraged to promote more youth-directed efforts. For example, encouraging youth to come with their ideas for community service projects would help to insure greater commitment. In addition, through involvement in more in-depth experiences, youth are more likely to see logical reasons for the application of theoretical knowledge.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Adolescents as Co-researchers: An Examination of the Effects of a Participatory Research Project on Adolescent Development*, Matysik, G., Thesis, 1998.
- "Adolescent (In) Vulnerability," Quadrel, M. J., Fischhoff, B., & Davis, W., *American Psychologist*, 1993.
- "Risk Taking In Adolescence: A Decision-Making Perspective," Furby, L. and Beyth-Marom, R., *Developmental Review*, 12 (1-44), 1992.
- "Service-learning Primer," Potts, S., in K. Bankston (Ed.), *Prevention Outlook*, Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources, 1997.
- "What Does History Have to Say About a Children's Movement?" Skocpol. T., *Wingspread*, 19(1), 4-7, 1997.

Further restriction of the societal rights of youth:

- *The Scapegoat Generation: America's War on Adolescents*, Males, M. A., Monroe, Maine: Common Courage, 1996.
- "What Rights Are Left? Teens Find Their Basic Rights Are Disappearing," Pendleton, T., *Wisconsin State Journal*, pp. C 1-2, November 12, 1996.

Primary contact for questions:

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Agricultural Trends Affecting Youth

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Summary of the significant trends in the topic area:

Quality Assurance—A wholesome food supply has become a major concern for today's consumer. As youth learn about the most basic animal and food production principles and skills, this issue must be at the forefront. Many youth are involved in the production of food through their 4-H projects. They need to be made aware of industry concerns and guidelines for their projects and potential impact on their future careers and roles as educated consumers. Whether plant or animal, the producer must be able to assure a quality and wholesome product. Pesticides, anti-biotics and chemical means of processing foods have all become standard operating procedures in many parts of the food production industry. Most of these practices are tested and accepted, but today's consumer has developed some differing attitudes about some of these practices. Education needs to lead the way for both producers and consumers. The pork industry has implemented a quality assurance program and the thought is that other production areas will soon follow.

Environmental Concerns/Land Use—With a growing population and ongoing housing and industrial development, the best use of land continues to be an issue for many geographical areas in the state and across the nation. Youth need to understand these issues and become aware of the conflict with agricultural production, environmental concerns and land use. In addition to understanding the issues, youth will, through their projects develop skills of communication, decision-making and problem solving, become informed and articulate spokespersons for their interests and futures in agriculture.

Responsible Animal Ownership—Certain factions of society continue to question the integrity of animal production and handling procedures. The care and nurturing of an animal is a special experience for young people. Youth need to be aware of appropriate methods and techniques as they raise and care for their project animals. Educating youth to not only follow good animal husbandry procedures but to also understand and be able to articulate the reasons for certain types of care and management is an ongoing need.

Genetic Engineering—As new and different strains of plants and animals are developed through genetic engineering, it is important that youth understand these changes and what it means for the future of agriculture. Whether the issue is cloning of animals or insect control through the introduction of a new predatory species, informed youth who have had some project-related experiences and understand at least the basics of ag production will be able to develop their own opinions about the ethics and application of new genetic developments.

Agricultural Safety—It is a proven fact that agricultural occupations are among the most hazardous types of work. In addition, rural youth are not only exposed to dangerous situations in an agricultural work site, but on a farm, the work site and home are the same environments. Numerous chemicals, ATVs, man-

made ponds and lawnmowers are just a few additional safety concerns for youth located in any rural setting, not necessarily on a farm. Laws have been recently passed regarding youth and the operation of farm machinery on public roads. All of these issues have led to an increased interest, both publicly and politically in rural youth safety. Increased awareness and education of safety procedures and development of skills that enable youth to identify potentially dangerous situations through experiences in agricultural projects will continue to move this issue in a positive direction.

Relevance of those trends to county program planning:

Concerns for youth and their development will surface as issues for communities and counties. Many of our counties are rural and have an ongoing clientele with ties and interests in agriculture. The 4-H community club and special interest groups are a natural setting for education regarding agricultural trends that affect youth. Many counties will offer educational opportunities in the agricultural areas for youth and these trends will keep the ongoing programs moving ahead and addressing the current societal issues.

The changing look of agricultural careers also offers relevance to the program planning. Today's agriculture has more than 200 rewarding and challenging careers. Agriculture employs the most people in the nation and Wisconsin. It also has the most openings for employees each year. Of the approximately 22 million people working in agriculture, about 8 percent are involved in traditional farming. The remainder work in agribusiness, communications, education, processing, distribution, marketing and sales as well as dozens of other occupations which service the farmer and/or total agricultural industry. The USDA predicts that there will be 48,000 employment opportunities annually. However, data suggests there will be slightly more than 45,700 qualified graduates to fill these positions.

Today's agriculture is much more than production agriculture. It is an advanced and highly technical specialized field. It involves everything from computers to combines to research and education. Youth need to recognize these changes and opportunities. Through career awareness programs and project education related to future careers, this will be possible.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Quality Assurance
www.nppc.org, www.nbc.upenn.edu
- Responsible Animal Ownership
www.aif.orgs/links.htm
- Genetic Engineering
www.agriculture.com
- Agricultural Safety
www.cfaite.org, www.nalsusda.gov

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Youth and the Arts

While arts education opportunities are continually “under fire” due to decreasing budgets, the need for creative experiences in education increases. Current research in brain development suggests that involvement in the arts is crucial to early childhood development. Continued involvement in the arts has been shown to have a positive effect on school performance.

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

There is an increasing awareness among educators regarding the place that the arts can play within the total curriculum. Recent brain development research suggests that involvement in the arts (i.e., music, drama, visual arts) is important to overall human development. Moreover, involvement in the arts can lead to increased academic performance at school. The arts are viewed as various forms of multiple intelligence and recognized as important means of learning and forms of expression. However, despite this knowledge, schools often continue to encourage the acquisition of certain academic skills at the expense of these other forms of intelligence. Simultaneously, because of decreasing budgets, many states, including Wisconsin, have chosen to fund narrowly defined standardized assessment of academic areas, including reading/writing, math, science and social studies. Consequently, educators are increasingly forced to teach to tests, rather than concentrating on educational practices that would carry over into life-long learning.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Strong out-of-school programs, such as 4-H, are needed so that youth will participate in experiences that will carry over into life-long learning in the arts. Specific “life skills” that are developed within arts programs include communication, positive self-esteem, collaboration, critical thinking, understanding one’s abilities, strengths and limitations and self-discipline.

Even as faculty and staff positions supporting the arts have dwindled, Wisconsin 4-H Arts programming has grown. Statewide programs (i.e., Arts Leadership Lab, Drama Company/Teams, Showcase Singers, Art Team and Photo Team) remain strong. New programs have emerged—4-H Arts Camp and “Applause!” New curriculum continues to emerge with Wisconsin personnel assisting in national arts curriculum initiatives, including Theatre Arts Discoveries, Art-in-a-Box, National Photography Curriculum, a newly developing communications curriculum and the National Arts and Crafts Curriculum for after-school programs. Even the new “Tech Corps” has found a place for developing leadership within two arts programs—Arts Leadership Lab and Arts Camp. Local county and district interests, in many ways, echo the same strong interests in the arts in 4-H, as shown by the high enrollments in 4-H art project areas.

Additionally, the arts have been found to be natural forums for providing leadership development experiences for youth and adults. Arts Camp is an experience for middle school-aged youth which is planned and staffed by teen leaders. Leadership development is an integral part of the pre-training of these teens.

Even though many county programs do provide positive art experiences for youth (music, drama, and

speaking festivals, county fair exhibits, workshops), these experiences need to be sustained and enhanced. At the state level, there is an expectation that youth and adults who attend arts experiences lead similar experiences in their local communities.

Emerging areas of need include after-school, out-of-school and home-school programs. UW-Extension specialists and agents are able to assist in identifying arts resources and training experiences for families involved in these programs.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman, D., Bantam Books: New York, 1995.
- *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*, Gardner, H., Basic Books: New York, 1993.
- National Arts and Crafts Curriculum for After School (K-6) Programs (in development).
- *What Kids Need to Succeed*, Benson, P.L., Galbraith, J., Espeland, P., Search Institute, Free Spirit Publishing: Minneapolis, MN, 1998.

Primary contacts for questions:

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Growing Up in a Changing Society

During the next 15 years, the proportion of the population made up of teenagers is projected to increase by 23 percent. At the same time, the demographic composition of American's youth is also changing, with projected increases in the minority composition for preschool age children through young adults. Blacks have constituted the largest minority population and as the ethnic diversity of America's children continues to grow, the proportion of Hispanic children will increase most rapidly in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups. By 2020 more than one in five American children are expected to be Hispanic and the Asian American population is also expected to continue its rapid growth. These trends bring with them serious implications, including concern over the growing disparity in terms of access to technology. In 1998, for example, the portion of the U.S. with a personal computer was 36.6 percent with white households being twice as likely (40.8%) to own a computer as Blacks (19.3%) or Hispanics (19.4%). This gap holds across income levels and increases to nearly three times as high for online Internet access.

In addition, changes in family structure continue to have an effect on children and youth as more and more of them are affected over their lifetimes by the impact of divorce. Currently, rising proportions of children live with only one parent. Growing up is further complicated by the fact that one of every four youngsters under six lives in poverty, a factor that is related to the statistics on child abuse, addiction, teen pregnancy and violence.

Children of every economic, social and racial group are growing up with little confidence in society's institutions, with few if any healthy adult role models and with little or no opportunity to succeed or to even believe that success is possible for them. Yet at the same time, several different sets of data collected at different points of time over the last decade have examined the way adolescents use their discretionary time. They concluded that for the most part U.S. teens are spending very little time on activities that build their characters, strengthen their ties to society or provide them with the necessary skills to succeed in school and in the labor force.

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Major studies indicate that adolescents are not using time productively. In addition to watching an average of two and a half hours of TV each day, youth report spending much of their time hanging out in malls and other neighborhood hangouts. When old enough, they work at relatively low-skill jobs that require minimal interaction with adults and do little to prepare them for more complex and demanding jobs in the future. Additional data indicates that the percentages of eighth, tenth and twelfth graders who smoked daily, drank heavily or used illicit drugs have increased during the 1990s.

Tenth grade students devote on average only one-half hour per day to homework. Less than 20 percent read for pleasure each day, only 25 percent work daily on hobbies, arts or crafts and just 5 percent use personal computers. Other studies have found that in the same age group less than one-third attend religious activities, only about a fifth participate in youth groups, organized recreational programs or weekly classes outside of school in music, art, language or dance. The same studies show that only one in 14 volunteers or performs community service activities.

Young people whose parents have relatively low levels of education or family income and who would seem to be most in need of organized skill building and character nurturing activities have been found to be least likely to engage in such activities.

Relevance of trends to county program:

In the wake of trends indicating that school enrollments will continue to rise into the next century, forcing a demand for increased access to quality education and social services, there is clearly a need for UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development to identify new strategies for helping to engage students in their schools and in constructive activities outside of the time they attend school. 4-H can continue to play a major role in providing opportunities for youth to spend time in constructive group activities, such as community service efforts, arts and communication activities, environmental improvement projects and the like.

As communities continue to grow more diverse, it will become increasingly important for UW-Extension to be able to respond to the needs of minority youth and their families. To appeal to youth from diverse backgrounds, culturally and ethnically relevant programs need to be designed which take into consideration the special needs of families with lower education and income levels. Special attention needs to be given to addressing the growing disparity between children of affluence and children whose economic status prevents them from participating in many of the programs and opportunities that comprise the 4-H program—particularly in terms of access to technology.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data*, United States Department of Health and Social Services.
- *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well Being*, 1998.
- *The Coming Teen Wave*, Louv, Richard, Connect for Kids.
- *Falling Through the Net II: New Data on the Digital Divide*, United States Department of Commerce, July 1998.
- *Monitoring the Future, the Longitudinal Study of American Youth*, National Education Longitudinal Study.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports.

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Youth and Employment

Increasing numbers of young people are entering the workforce and paid employment has become common for many adolescents. Working has been shown to be associated with both positive and negative consequences for adolescents. Working may increase responsibility, self-image and independence. Often, though, the first jobs available to young adolescents are routine, boring and lack positive interaction with adults. Due to Wisconsin's low unemployment rate, minimum-wage service sector workers are in high demand which often means teens who are in these positions are asked to work long hours each week. The implications for teens that work long hours can include poor school performance, increased drug use and problems with the law.

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4-H Youth Development, Family Living Program and Community Resource Development colleagues

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Young people are often eager to enter the work force to earn spending money. In fact, the income youth make today no longer goes primarily toward family support as it once did. Many parents believe youth will learn responsibility and time management skills through employment. Work can have positive effects on young people, from teaching punctuality to working effectively with others. Yet, when teenagers work more than 20 hours a week, these useful lessons tend to be diminished by the negatives.

Studies have found that teenagers who work more than 20 hours a week experience detrimental effects in their school, family and personal lives. Adolescents who work half-time or more report higher levels of emotional distress, substance use and earlier ages at first sexual intercourse. Other adverse consequences of long work hours include fatigue, sleep deprivation and less exercise. Teens who work long hours also spend less time with their families and on homework. Consequently, school performance often suffers when work hours are long.

Data from UW-Extension's Teen Assessment Project reveals that seventh to twelfth grade students who work 20 or more hours per week receive lower grades, drink alcohol more frequently and get drunk more often than seventh to twelfth graders as a whole population.

Child labor laws set minimum age limits for minors who work. Wisconsin law regulates the types of work a minor may perform to ensure minors don't perform hazardous work. State law also limits the number of hours per day and per week as well as the times of day that minors may work. On school days, 12-15 year-olds may work a maximum of four hours and 16-17 year-olds are permitted to work five hours. During the school week, 12-15 year-olds may work a maximum of 18 hours and 16-17 year-olds may work 26 hours.

In addition, children and adolescents are injured on the job at a rate almost twice as high as for adults. Work-related deaths of workers 17 years and younger are highest in agriculture, followed by retail trade and construction.

Relevance of trends to county program:

There are educational opportunities for 4-H Youth Development, Family Living and Community Resource Development faculty to work with youth, parents and employers to create positive work environments for youth. Youth can benefit from information and skills related to balancing work, school and personal life, selecting a job related to future goals and money management. Parents will benefit from practical information and suggestions on how to help their teen with work issues and safeguard their child in the workplace. With a growing dependence on youth employees, employers have a vested interest in creating healthy and positive work environments to recruit and keep adolescent employees. Employers will benefit from assistance on child labor laws, safeguards for youth employees to reduce accidents and creating jobs for youth that allow youth to learn new skills, take on increasing responsibility and work with positive adult role models.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- WI Teen Assessment Project (TAP) Data (state and county)

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Culture, Media, Values and Ethics

Children form concepts of right and wrong, as well as what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior, from what they see reflected in the culture around them. For children growing up in today's media-saturated world, much of this information comes from television, the entertainment industry (including films, music and video games), as well as the Internet. In recent years, there has been growing concern that the media is sending messages to children and youth that are inconsistent with positive values and healthy norms and standards of behavior. Increasingly, alarmed parents and educators are voicing their alarm, and words like "ethics," "character," "virtue" and "morality" are in vogue once again. At the same time, concerned citizens are reluctant to allow these kinds of issues to be taken over by politicians.

While many adults are concerned over the powerful influence the media hold in the lives of children, the media's portrayal of young people themselves is skewed. A recent study found that 48 percent of the news media's coverage of children involves reports of crime and violence. Some argue that, as a result, the public lacks a realistic perception of child-related concerns.

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Current statistics indicate that overall, children spend an average 28 hours per week watching television. On commercial broadcast networks, "real life" issues are not regularly portrayed, and a majority of characters—including children—engage in unhealthy, anti-social behaviors that often yield positive results for the characters. Inaccurate portrayal of diversity issues is another problem. A national survey of children from four racial groups recently found that young people are most likely to associate positive characteristics with white characters on television and negative characteristics with minority characters. In general, minority children, especially Hispanic/Latino children, are under-represented on entertainment television.

In the midst of concerns over youth violence, statistics indicate that before age 18 the average child will witness over 200,000 acts of TV violence, including 16,000 murders. In addition to concern over the quantity of media violence, prevention experts point to the false messages media violence sends. For example, according to a national television violence study, perpetrators go unpunished in 73 percent of all violent scenes on TV. Another violence study found that the "hero" commits much of the violence on TV and is portrayed as being entirely justified.

Almost 90 percent of American households own a VCR and, unlike movie theaters, video stores have no uniform nationwide policy restricting minors from obtaining adult material, thus youth are able to obtain copies of adult-rated films. In addition, one recent study found that children who have home video games play with them about 90 minutes a day. When asked to identify their preferences, seventh and eighth graders chose fantasy violence as their top choice.

Only 10 of the top 40 popular music CDs on sale during the 1995 holiday season were free of profanity or lyrics dealing with drugs, violence and sex.

As the number of youth using the Internet continues to grow, many parents are looking for ways to make

sure that experience is a safe one for their children. In the fall of 1998, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley endorsed the creation of an integrated public education campaign to raise awareness, deliver information and provide technological and non-technological tools to empower parents and other care givers to provide guidance for their children online.

Relevance of trends to county program:

4-H can play a lead role in community efforts to combat negative societal and media influences on youth by helping them form healthy concepts of what's right and wrong as well as what's appropriate and inappropriate behavior. In addition to teaching youth pro-social interaction skills, 4-H learning experiences can also target the need for helping children develop critical thinking (and viewing) skills to better prepare them to deal with media influences. 4-H can also take an active role in efforts to educate the community, particularly parents, about these issues.

In addition, in order to help combat the media's tendency to focus primarily on negative youth issues, UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development has an on-going opportunity to help bring children and youth into the center of community life in a positive way. Extension programs can help the public acquire a more realistic perception of children and youth not only in terms of helping to identify their needs and concerns, but also by focusing on their abilities and contributions in a more realistic light.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Action Alliance for Children
- *America Links Up*, Nationwide public education campaign on Internet usage
- *Children Now Executive Summary on Children and the News Media*
- Children's Defense Fund
- *Entertainment Monitor*, December 1995
- *Facts About Media Violence*, American Medical Association
- National Media Policy Clearinghouse
- Nielson Media Research
- "Playing Violent Video and Computer Games and Adolescent Self-Concept," Jeanne Funk and Debra Buchman, *Journal of Communication* 46(2), 19-32.

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Youth Health

While young people face many challenges in their development through childhood and adolescence, no threat is as pervasive as that from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Despite the fact that it is illegal for persons under the age of 21 to purchase or drink alcohol, alcohol is the number one drug problem among young people. Alcohol use is associated with all the leading causes of death among teenagers—traffic accidents, homicides and suicides. Alcohol is also a factor in unprotected sex resulting in unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. Smoking rates among youth have climbed since 1991. Every day, almost 3,000 young people become smokers, and nearly 1,000 of them will die prematurely from diseases related to tobacco use. Illicit drug use by youth has serious and often long-term individual, social and economic consequences. Drug use contributes to crime, decreases economic productivity and requires a disproportionate share of health care services for those affected. Use of drugs is a preventable behavior that, when established in youth, can extend into adulthood.

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Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

Alcohol use among adolescents is linked to a host of problems, including motor vehicle crashes and deaths, difficulties in school and the workplace, fighting and breaking the law. The younger the age of drinking onset, the greater the chance that an individual at some point in life will develop an alcohol problem. Millions of Americans abuse or are addicted to alcohol. Alcohol use frequently begins during childhood or adolescence. Many places in Wisconsin, through culture and tradition, promote or integrate alcohol into gatherings of all kinds.

There are an estimated 3 million underage smokers in the U.S. Cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the U.S. Youthful smoking can have severe, lifelong consequences because a large proportion of those who initiate smoking in adolescence will continue to smoke as adults. Tobacco causes more deaths each year than AIDS, alcohol, drug abuse, car crashes, suicides and fires combined.

The toll of substance abuse can be measured in lost lives and dollars spent dealing with its effects. Each year there are more deaths and disabilities from substance abuse than from any other preventable cause. Of 2 million U.S. deaths each year, one in four is attributable to alcohol, illicit drug or tobacco use.

The cost of dealing with illicit drugs alone approaches \$67 billion annually. Every man, woman and child in America pays nearly \$1,000 a year to cover the costs of unnecessary health care, additional law enforcement, auto accidents, crime and lost productivity resulting from substance abuse.

Illicit drugs and alcohol are partners in crime. The link is visible every day in U.S. courtrooms, jails and prisons. Of the \$38 billion spent on prisons in 1996, more than \$30 billion was paid for the incarceration of individuals who had a history of drug and alcohol abuse, were convicted of drug and alcohol violations, were high on drugs and alcohol at the time of their crime or committed their crime to get money to buy drugs (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse).

Substance abuse can tear families apart, cause pain and injury and lead to domestic violence, failed marriages and child abuse and neglect. The link between substance abuse and domestic violence is well documented. According to a report in the May 1997 *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 92 percent of assailants in domestic violence cases used alcohol and/or drugs.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Many UW-Extension faculty are partners in community coalitions working to prevent substance abuse and towards positive youth development. This work is complex and long-term in nature. Extension can continue to provide support to these prevention efforts by disseminating “best practices” research and technical support.

Effective substance abuse prevention efforts reach beyond direct services to young people. Families are essential to effective prevention and parenting education is a necessary component to these initiatives. Community sectors, such as business, school, media, health care and local government are also critical to providing a supportive environment for young people and eliminating potentially harmful policies and situations. Because substance abuse prevention does require a community level initiative to be effective, UW-Extension is positioned to provide support through 4-H Youth Development, Family Living and Community Resource Development.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Monitoring the Future Survey*, University of Michigan
www.health.org/mtf/index98.htm
- *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children & Youth*, 1998
<http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/98trends/trends98.htm>
- WI Teen Assessment Project (TAP) Data (state and county)

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sorbing material to learning to navigate and how to learn, school to lifelong learning, one-size fits all to customized learning, learning as torture to learning as fun and teacher as transmitter to the teacher as facilitator.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Youth Development Programs Thrive on Interactive Learning—Exemplary Youth Development programs have been living examples of the eight shifts of “Interactive Learning” for a long time. Youth development educators and volunteers in a community-based informal setting have been flexible in order to accommodate the unique needs of youth. 4-H has been noted for providing fun, hands on, interactive learning. Therefore it will be a natural to move into the digital world where youth are encouraged to “construct their own meaning” by using the interactive tools available to them.

Youth as True Leaders—To make this inevitable transition, adults may best turn to the generation raised on and immersed in this new technology. Give youth the tools and they will be the single most important source of guidance on how to make their programs relevant and effective places to learn. Therefore Youth Development programs will need to let youth take the lead. Adults will need to listen in order to facilitate learning communities where youth are in the lead.

Impact on 4-H Project Learning—As web-based learning takes off, and more Wisconsin families have access to high speed modem connections, youth will expect hands-on learning enriched with interactive web-based learning. Youth and adult leaders will need strategies for selecting appropriate web-based resources as well as help on how to integrate web-based learning into traditional 4-H projects. On-line learning will become the norm rather than the exception, but care will need to be taken so that people who do not have access will not be left behind.

Sources Supporting Data for Use by Counties:

- “Educating the Net Generation,” Tapscott, D., *Educational Leadership*, 5, 6-11, 1999.
- “Living in the Future Edge,” Jukes, I. & McCain, T., *Technology & Learning*, 5, 30-34, 1999.

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Youth Violence

While statistics indicate the violent juvenile crime rate has been dropping since 1996, the U.S. Department of Justice warns that in about one-half of all juvenile crimes, victims report more than one offender was involved. Because insufficient detail exists to determine the age of each offender, the number of additional juvenile offenders cannot be determined. Therefore the rate of serious violent crime does not represent the number of juvenile offenders in the population, but rather the number of crimes committed involving juveniles.

Youth aged 12 to 17 are nearly three times more likely than adults to be victims of serious violent crimes. Currently violence is the second leading cause of death among all youth. Among minority youth, particularly African Americans, homicide is the leading cause of death for youth of both genders between the ages of 15 and 24.

It has been suggested that these statistics and others like them can be seen as an indication of our society's collective failure—on the part of families, peers, schools, religious institutions, neighborhoods and communities—to teach youth appropriate norms for acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

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Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

Recent documentation indicates that intentional interpersonal violence accounts for one-third of all injury deaths among children in the U.S. Violence affects the quality of life for young people in other ways as well. In addition to the threat of direct physical harm, violence adversely affects children's mental and emotional health and development. On the one hand, studies report an increase in children's fears that they will be the victims of violence. (A recent study which examined children's worries and fears indicated 56 percent of children aged 9-11 were worried about getting beaten up at school.) There is also a growing tendency for children to view violence as a normal way of dealing with anger and resolving conflict. (In another study, 42 percent of children in grades 9-12 reported being in a physical fight within the last year and 22 percent reported carrying a weapon to school at least once within the last month.)

More and more children experience interpersonal violence at multiple levels in their lives. Child abuse, parents' inadequate child rearing practices, disruptions in family functioning and aggressive interactions between siblings are increasingly common, as is a growing concern over bullying behaviors among young children. Across demographic lines, 40 percent of girls aged 14-17 report knowing someone (including themselves) who has been hit by a boyfriend. In addition, amid statistics indicating that on average children aged 2-17 spend 2.1 hours per day watching television, numerous organizations, including the American Psychological Association, American Medical Association, National Institute of Mental Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, have all issued statements of growing concern regarding the negative impact of media violence on the lives of young people.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Violence Prevention Specialists frequently stress the importance of primary prevention in dealing with the

issue of youth violence. They point out that the best “violence prevention” programs are those which are based on sound youth development principles in order to help youth become more socially competent and reduce at-risk behavior by promoting nonviolent norms for dealing with anger and resolving conflict. 4-H can take a lead role in community violence prevention efforts that focus on helping youth and parents strengthen interpersonal communication, negotiation and problem solving skills.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *America’s Children—Key National Indicators of Well Being*, Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1998.
- Annenberg Center for Public Policy.
- Harvard School of Public Health (Deborah Prothrow-Stith).
- “Interdependence of School Violence with Neighborhood and Family Conditions,” Laub, J. H. and Lauritsen, J. L., in D.S. Elliott, B. Hamburg and K. R. Williams (editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, New York, NY Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- “Social Contexts and Functions of Adolescent Violence,” Fagan, J. and Wilkinson, D. L., in D. S. Elliott, B. Hamburg and K. R. Williams (editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, New York, NY Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- *Television in the Home: The 1997 Survey of Parents and Children*, Annenberg Public Policy Center.
- United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- *What Kids Think About Themselves, Inside Kids*, Nickelodeon, April 1997.
- *Youth Indicators: Trends in the Well-being of American Youth*, U.S. Dept of Education.

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Natural Resources and Environmental Education

As the twenty-first century nears, our attention is focused on the environment and on the use of natural resources. There is increasing interest in sound planning skills which impact a growing interest in outdoor recreational opportunities, such as camping, boating, hiking and back packing, snowmobiling, canoeing, site-seeing, bicycling, animal watching, fishing and hunting. This quest for positive experiences in the out-of-doors generates tourism dollars and helps to assure that a quality environment will be available to residents and visitors of our state.

With community leaders needing to be involved in decision-making at the local level, environmental stewardship is routinely ranked as a top education need whenever county leaders are asked to prioritize local issues. Youth need to come to the table as informed, skilled, knowledgeable contributors in the decision-making process. Youth and adults need to apply an environmental stewardship perspective to all community development activities.

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

In ever increasing numbers, youth and adults are questioning the health of the environment in which they live. It is difficult for them to tell the difference between fact and fiction regarding environmental quality. Thousands of Wisconsin citizens are working directly with natural resource and environmental issues, and many more work indirectly with environmental-related topics through plant and animal programs.

Fishing continues to generate an influx of citizens into certain areas of the state. Fishing and water education programs need to educate youth and adults about the importance of water quality, ecology, wildlife populations, micro and macro-invertebrates and habitat improvement. More and more youth projects focus on leadership and ways to take responsible community-based actions. Informal, environmental education programs at nature centers, environmental education centers, camps, state parks and forests and zoos attract thousands of youth and adults annually. The youth component of the NREM task force report follows the guidelines of the National 4-H Environmental Stewardship Program which emphasizes building on a firm ecological foundation, encouraging an awareness of issues and values, developing investigative and evaluation skills and teaching responsible environmental action skills.

It is estimated that more than one-half of American homes have at least one firearm. In addition to addressing the need for education on the safe handling of shooting sports equipment, an important component of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program needs to focus on improving environmental stewardship skills by educating youth and adults about wildlife ecology, including the importance of habitat, carrying capacity and population dynamics.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Environmental stewardship requires an awareness of personal values, the ability to analyze problems and skills to apply environmental knowledge in the home and community setting. Environmental education programs could emphasize:

- Opportunities to explore personal awareness and values (i.e., human need for contact with nature, risk assessment, socioeconomic and cultural perspectives and stewardship)
- Problem-solving skills related to environmental issues (i.e., analysis, critical thinking, evaluation, identifying and reviewing background knowledge and investigation)
- Skills to apply knowledge in the home and community setting (i.e., balancing environmental, economic and social needs, eco-management and restoration, public participation or partnerships, residential and private property management and stewardship skills relevant to particular natural resource topics)

Extension helps people acquire the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about the environment and the use of natural resources. A local education program may address a single environmental topic or provide a more integrated perspective involving various air, land and water topics, surrounding an issue. Issues in each are related to understanding and managing human impact on these resources and related ecosystems.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Natural Resources and Environmental Management Programs in Wisconsin (UW-Extension, 1996)
- Associated programs at UW-Stevens Point, River Falls and Superior produce numerous other resources. The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, located at UW-Stevens Point, has material supporting youth stewardship education.
- Fact sheets, planning guides, audio-visual products and other educational materials have been produced by the UW-Extension Environmental Resource Center. Most are available through Extension Publications or the Extension Coop Media Collection.
<http://clean-water.uwex.edu>
<http://www.uwex.edu/erc>
<http://www.uwex.edu/erc/ywc> (Youth water education resources)
<http://www.uwex.edu/erc/erc>

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Youth Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Strengthening youth citizenship and civic engagement is being increasingly recognized as vitally important for youth, communities and the larger public world. Most young people want to contribute to constructively shaping and improving the world around them, but often don't know what the possibilities are or where to start.

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Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

There is an increasing emphasis on civic values. Building on national trends, DPI has a new citizenship initiative that focuses on building young people's commitment to shared civic values, like responsibility, honesty, high expectations and positive relationships.

There is an increasing emphasis on civic knowledge. The push for standards and competency testing in schools has led to discussions and work on determining what youth are currently learning about history and government at varying grade levels and what they should know.

There are increasing expectations for youth to contribute. Community service is being encouraged and required by more and more schools and youth organizations, and service learning is becoming a more commonly employed teaching methodology. More community-based organizations, boards and initiatives are involving youth as partners in planning, decision-making and on-going work. The number of community initiatives and organizations being founded and run by and for youth is increasing.

Relevance of trend to county program:

UW-Extension staff can provide for youth and adults needing training and resources on citizenship, leadership, service learning, youth/adult partnerships and group process skills to help ensure that youth's civic engagement is as beneficial as possible for both youth and their communities.

UW-Extension staff can build upon on-going efforts to involve youth in ever more substantial roles in our programs and partnerships.

UW-Extension youth programs can complement schools' own citizenship programs by providing additional hands on, real life opportunities for youth to put civic knowledge, values and skills into practice.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Center for the Study of Civic Values
www.libertynet.org/edcivic/iscvhome.html
- Civic Practices Network
www.cpn.org
- National Commission on Civic Renewal
www.puaf.umd.edu/civicrenewal/

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Linking Youth and Community Development

The challenge is to build on the strengths of young people to promote their healthy development. This is only half the issue. The other challenge is to have a positive impact on community adults. Why is this so? Surveys indicate that upwards to half of all adults are scared of adolescents or have low expectations for them. Positive development does not occur under these situations. Ecological theories of development remind us that all adults impact the young person. We need to touch not only those involved in 4-H Youth Development, but those who work in other community settings.

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Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

The aim is to design and implement strategies that promote positive youth development, and concurrently, have a positive impact on groups of adults. This is the intersection between youth and community development. Three trends are noteworthy in this regard.

Involving Youth as Community Leaders—Youth leadership is about challenging young people to make choices, to be involved in decision-making and to take responsibility for their decisions and actions on other community members. Within these parameters, there is much variation across youth leadership programming. Examples include engaging and supporting youth as members of governing boards, assessing and mapping community needs and resources, taking the lead in public presentations and community improvement projects and evaluating and reporting on community issues. Research demonstrates that engagement in “leadership experiences” contributes directly to positive outcomes among youth.

The skills of youth leadership do not develop naturally just because a young person is acting in the community. Adult attitudes regarding youth do not change because of one positive interaction. They change through many contacts over time. Youth leadership, therefore, has to be managed carefully. It needs to be intentional and built into the organization, in terms of structure, design and staff training. Furthermore, managers often need to provide training to staff and community members to remove barriers to youth leadership.

Blurring Boundaries to Integrate the Fields of Youth Service and Community Development—Community service is the most prevalent modality for connecting youth and community development, and it is being institutionalized in the United States. Though it reaches far fewer young people, because of the time and coordination demands necessary to implement it well, service learning is a second approach for linking youth development and community building. Service learning seeks to balance the academic needs of youth with community needs. Students are taught a particular subject, be it math, history or language arts, and then conduct volunteer community service to apply their learning and reflect on the consequences of their actions.

Traditional community development organizations (CDOs) are expanding their missions to focus on youth development. There are more than 2,200 CDOs in urban neighborhoods and rural communities. Close to 100 of these organizations have formed a network to address youth issues, to share information and to replicate successful practices.

Mobilizing Resources to Build Community Capacity—Much has been written and experienced about strategies for managing partnerships in the short run. Sustainability of collaborative ventures has been a tougher issue to resolve. In recent years, it has been suggested that the most effective strategy for sustainability is to build “community capacity.” The goal continues to be to create collaboratives that spark community action, but more importantly, to design initiatives in ways that support the development of a community’s intrinsic capacity to identify and mobilize to address its own problems over the long term. This requires collaborations to become “learning organizations,” with the explicit aim being to acquire and disseminate transferable knowledge, skills, systems and resources to community stakeholders, both organizations and individuals. Additionally, a few foundations and local governments are beginning to support a new wave of capacity-building intermediaries (CBIs) that are designed specifically to provide technical assistance and training around the principles and practices of “positive youth development,” and to garner community-wide support and expertise for these efforts.

Relevance of trend to county program:

These trends pose numerous opportunities and challenges to county agents and their constituencies. Modifications can be made to the traditional club program. This can include creating more options for youth to be leaders integrating strong service-learning programming and increasing adult-youth partnerships for community service.

It is also clear that county planning and implementation will have to be broadened (and, logically, some club activities minimized) to include a sharper focus on strategies that integrate youth and community development.

Forging strong collaborative links with community resource development agents (and other community development organizations) and working together to build coalitions of organizations and residents who are committed to positive youth development is critical. Coalitions can have a stronger influence on local policy and programs than one organization.

Actively becoming resources for the community on youth development, as much as being direct service providers to young people, can involve conducting self-assessments and evaluations of county youth programs through peer review, and working with colleagues to strengthen all youth programs, not simply the club. It can include creating learning communities where people get to share their expertise and insight.

Focusing on community building as much as development entails creating community-wide events that celebrate all youth and all persons who are committed to developing them. Such celebrations can be planned and implemented through adult-youth partnerships.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Building Local Infrastructure for Youth Development: The Added Value of Capacity-building Intermediary Organizations*, Camino, L., Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C., 1998.
- “From Deterrence to Development: Shifting the Focus of Youth Programs for African-American Males,” Pittman, K. and Zeldin, S., in *Nurturing Young Black Males*, pp. 45-58, R. Mincy (Ed.), Urban Institute Press, Washington, D.C., 1994.
- *Some Things Do Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices*, American Youth Policy Forum, Washington, D.C., 1997.
- “Youth Leadership: Linking Research and Program Theory to Exemplary Practice,” Zeldin, S. and Camino, L., *New Designs for Youth Development*, 15(1), 1999.

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Food Quality and Safety

The safety and quality of our food supply is a growing concern of American consumers. Today's food safety issues encompass the "farm to table" concept—from production, processing and manufacturing to purchasing, preparation and consumption. Due to consumer demand, state and federal governments will continue to implement regulations to help ensure a safe food supply.

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Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Concerns about microbial and/or drug residues in food have led to stricter standards in on-farm production and throughout food processing to the point of consumption. In the area of meat products, product Quality Assurance programs and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) programs are being implemented. Seafood processors have already implemented HACCP programming. Added concerns about drug use and drug residues in animal production and possible links to human health make the continued use of antibiotics in animal production uncertain. The emergence of new pathogens is also of concern.

Concerns about the use of pesticides in food production focus both on the wholesomeness of the food products and on the environment. The Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 is a response to consumer concerns about pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables. Consumers will push for Integrated Pest Management strategies to reduce pesticide use. Pesticide regulations will affect all of the plant producing industry, but small producers will feel the heaviest pressure.

Biotechnology issues will include labeling, bio-diversity, human health and the "safety" of the food supply. Food-producing industries will need to address consumer concerns throughout the "farm to table" (production to consumption) food chain.

All those involved with the production of food products from "farm to table," including the consumer, must be more involved in reducing outbreaks of illness from food-borne pathogens.

Relevance of trends to county programs:

Increased regulations in the area of food quality and safety may force small producers, processors and food handlers to change the way they do business. Consumers will need more information as regulatory agencies step up enforcement. Producers will need to know how to meet changing consumer needs. Educational programs across the state will need to be designed to help producers and processors recognize these trends and to change business strategies to meet requirements of major regulations designed to protect the quality and safety of our food.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- The Environmental Protection Agency web site for Food Quality Protection Act
<http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/>
- EPA's Pesticides and Food web site
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/food/>
- EPA-Region V pesticide information web site
<http://www.epa.gov/reg5foia/pest/>
- Food Safety and Quality National Initiative
<http://www.reeusda.gov/pas/programs/foodsafety>

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Increasing Importance of Managed Care Systems in Health Care

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1999 Nutrition, Health and Safety Theme Group: complete list available at:<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/nhs.html>

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

The growing importance of managed care arrangements in health care has implications for those insured, consumer protection and community decision-making.

Health care is one of our nation's biggest industries. Health care expenditures represent 13.6 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, Americans spend more than \$1 trillion a year on health care (Centers for Disease Control, 1998). After the 1993 health care reform agenda failed to produce comprehensive legislation, reform became industry-driven and focused on managed care and this trend will continue.

Not only are employers looking to provide managed care plan options to their employees, but the federal government and states are using managed care arrangements to control health care costs for their entitlement populations, Medicare and Medicaid. Currently, more than 50 percent of all Americans and 15 percent of the Medicare population are in managed care plans. Wisconsin Medicare recipients in seven counties have managed care options and more are expected to be eligible in the next few years. Wisconsin's younger Medicaid and its new BadgerCare populations are, or will be, insured in managed care arrangements. On the political horizon is managed care for the elderly Medicaid population, particularly with regard to the financing of long term care.

The expectation is for continued mergers and consolidations among managed care insurers and health care providers. The concern about physician loyalty in these cases, coupled with current "middle-man" interference in medical decision-making, has fueled the call for a Patient Bill of Rights. This is an important consumer right's trend in health care, an attempt to assure that decisions are made for the benefit of the patient and not the provider organization. It is clear that these kinds of issues will continue to be in legislative discussions until the matter is resolved.

Who has access to health care and who pays for that access will also remain on the political agenda. For the next few years, the focus will be on reforming the Medicare system. At the same time, the numbers of uninsured will continue to climb as more people work in jobs that don't provide health insurance as a benefit. While Wisconsin has one of the lowest rates of uninsured (6-7%), there are also underinsured and underserved populations. Almost 60 Wisconsin locales, rural and inner cities, in Wisconsin qualify as health professional shortage areas. Efforts to expand health insurance coverage to the uninsured and to encourage providers to locate in underserved area will continue to be issues.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Changes in health care systems and consumer needs to interact within those systems invite new challenges. As health care evolves, Extension should enhance educational programming that impacts choices for interacting with care systems, and creating opportunities where citizens can have a voice in the further development of our health care system. The overall issues for consumers, health care systems, governments and communities are costs, access and quality. Helping consumers successfully understand how our health care system is evolving, make decisions that impact families and communities and function in the changing health care environment are appropriate and important roles for Extension. Helping consumers, especially those in vulnerable situations, understand how to utilize a managed care system appropriately will be a critical. The expectation is that active consumer participation will improve ones health status and reduce health care costs.

Consumers will want to take part in town hall discussions and activities addressing health care needs and assets. This is particularly true for rural residents where issues such as shortages of providers, survival of hospitals and nursing homes and availability of home health care and emergency services exist. Such issues impact the survival and vitality of local economies and are areas where Extension should play a role.

There are potential opportunities for county staff to develop new partnerships with county public health, local hospitals, clinics and other health professionals in the development of consumer education on health care issues, decision-making and community health programming.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Up-to-date linkages to relevant health policy sites
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/health/useful.html>
- Centers for Disease Control (1998). *National Center for Health Statistics FASTATS A to Z: Health Expenditures*.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/fastats/hexpense.htm>

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Increasing Consumer Responsibility in Health

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1999 Nutrition, Health and Safety Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/nhs.html>

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

Increases in medical knowledge, the use of medical technology and the changes in health care delivery have created the need for consumers to become better informed about recommended health practices. In addition, changes in the health care delivery system have placed more responsibility on consumers to become more involved in health care decision-making.

The underlying causes of death in Wisconsin are smoking, diet and inactivity, not heart disease, cancer, stroke, etc. (Remington, 1994). Consumers are beginning to understand this issue and, though not always successful, have been seeking ways to address the underlying causes of chronic conditions through lifestyle changes. The desire of an increasingly educated populace to become better informed about self care is fueling new trends toward alternative medicines and techniques. Internet sites are directed toward health and consumer medical advice. There is a resurgence of books on health topics and commercial advertisements. Consumers are overwhelmed with information, some of which may not be based on reliable research evidence.

New medical information continues to lend support to the relationship between nutrition and health critical for healthy growth of children. We know that spina bifida can be prevented in newborns when the mother consumes adequate amounts of folate or folic acid through a varied diet, fortified foods or food supplements. Childhood obesity is on the rise. Thirteen percent of children are overweight and the rate has been increasing. Children are not eating the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. Although the trend has been toward improvement, there is still a short fall in the actual consumption of the minimum recommended servings. The American Dietetic Association has stated that children, aged two to 11 years, should achieve healthful eating habits and participate in regular physical activity to promote optimal physical and cognitive development, attain a healthful weight and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Changing demographic trends suggest that new audiences may be interested in health care information. For example, with increasing numbers of grandparents raising grandchildren, there is a need to educate grandparents about child nutrition, health issues and other areas where basic knowledge has changed since these older adults raised their own children.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Expanding health education into communities requires new ways of thinking and a new role for Extension. Health care, individual well-being and the quality of life are put into a broader perspective that looks at nutrition

education for youth, education on nutritional supplements and fad diets, inter-generational programming, alcohol, tobacco and drug education, alternative medicines, spirituality, violence prevention, health promotion and disease prevention.

In the past families looked to their health care providers to help sort through all of this information, but movement into managed care systems demands that consumers adopt an active role in their own health care. Adults and youth must have reliable research-based information, such as UW-Extension can provide, regarding components of a healthy lifestyle, information about diseases, injuries and their treatment.

County staff will develop credibility with agencies and local resources in consumer health education and have the opportunity to gain resources from new partners, share Extension resources and lead collaborative efforts that address issues related to health care consumerism. Such partnerships could include a holistic community approach to building healthier families and communities. The latter could include partnering with local health care professionals to provide training on how to make wise health choices about diet, fad diets, nutritional supplements and alternative medicines.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Health Finder, a gateway consumer health information web site from the United States government; online publications, databases, web sites and support and self-help groups, government agencies and not-for-profit organizations
<http://www.healthfinder.gov>
- Nutrition Webography, links to databases, food clip art, other sites, publications, nutrition curriculum tools, recipes, government agencies related to nutrition and to web site of food science resources
<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Steenbock/services/nutritio.htm>
- Wisconsin Health Policy Network, Wisconsin health data
<http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/prevmcd/network/collab.htm>
- Wisconsin HealthNet Connection, prepared by Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin, Wisconsin health care data, health care directory, clinical data, health event and news headlines
<http://www.healthnetconnect.net/home.html>

Biotech Education

- The Biotechnology Education Program is a joint program between the UWBC and UW-Extension, providing biotechnology education to the public.
<http://www.biotech.wisc.edu/>
- Remington, Patrick, L. (1994). "Public Health: Preventable Causes of Disease in Wisconsin." *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, March.

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Changing Expectations for Cross-Generation Caregiving

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1999 Managing Life's Transitions Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/mlt3.html>

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

Families struggle to provide care to aging family members and to children who cannot be cared for by their parents. Public policy is written with the expectation that family members will care for each other. Families are turning to each other and their communities for support as they cope with these unexpected new roles and responsibilities.

Wisconsin's population is aging. Between 1990 and 2010, the most significant increase in the older population will continue to be among those age 85 and older. Still, while the "young-old" will remain relatively healthy, the "old-old," those 85 and above, are likely to be in need of medical services and long term care placement. More than half of the adults older than 85 and one-fourth of those older than 65 need help every week. Families will provide much of this care.

Families may choose to place loved ones in long term care facilities when they are unable to care for their older family members at home. This usually occurs because of complicated medical problems or because family members are not available. Data shows women are affected more by this trend. Greater geographic distance between family members is becoming more common and will further diminish families' capacities to provide care. Finally, we are already seeing the difficulties experienced by the sandwiched Baby Boomer generation trying to care for both their children and their parents. Issues to consider here include access and costs of long term care facilities, new trends in health care and quality of life for older adults and care of the caregiver. Selection of the "right care" for older adults will require research and advance planning.

Families are also providing care for children when their parents are unable to care for them. The number of grandparents (or other kin) raising grandchildren continues to grow. In 1997, 2.4 million grandparent households had one or more grandchildren living with them. A recent study by Meredith Minkler, with data from the National Survey of Families and Households, revealed that more than one in 10 American grandparents (10.9%) raise a grandchild for at least six months, but typically for far longer periods of time. This cuts across all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups. Currently, about 3.9 million children in the United States (10,500 in Wisconsin) live in a grandparent-headed household.

Recent legislative activity which specify adult relatives as the first foster care option puts grandparents first

in line as potential foster care and adoptive parents for grandchildren who have been removed from their parents' home.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Families will need help and assistance as they move into caregiving roles and assume responsibilities for aging parents or grandchildren. Educational opportunities for families and individuals will center on coping strategies, caregiving, legal and financial management. Families and individuals will look to their communities for support services such as respite care, alternative housing arrangements with support services and changes in laws which allow them to assume responsibility for their grandchildren. UW-Extension can assist communities, agencies and organizations and county government develop plans of action on ways to support these families.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Intergenerational Programs and Resources
<http://www.nnfr.org/igen/>
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Partnership of Wisconsin
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grgp>
- Wisconsin's Family Care Proposal
<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/LTCare/index.htm>
- Wisconsin Aging Programs & Resources
<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/LTCare/index.htm>

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Less Time Invested in Family Life

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1999 Parent Support and Community Partnerships Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/pscp.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Strong families—those that are resilient and adaptive in hard times—need time together for the joint interactions that build cohesion, loyalty and mutual caring. Family time together is also one of the primary mediums through which parental values are transmitted, children are socialized and the quality parent-child interactions that are essential for optimal child development take place.

The last quarter century has seen a major shift in the amount of time family members spend together. Parents are investing greater amounts of time in the workplace, less time in home life. The rates of maternal employment, especially for mothers of very young children, have increased dramatically. Fathers are spending longer hours on the job as well. While the average workweek for American workers dropped steadily for most of this century, it bottomed out around 1970 and has been on the rise since then. Compared to 1970, it is estimated that the average worker today works the equivalent of an extra month per year (about 164 hours).

Who cares for young children when parents invest more time in the workplace? In 28 percent of dual earner families, parents provide the primary source of childcare with one parent caring for children while the other parent works. Research shows that this system tends to be good for parent-child relations, especially for father-child relations, but stressful for marriages. More commonly, employed parents use various types of childcare arrangements. Recent research confirms that when this childcare is of high quality, it supports the development of children and does not undercut the parent-child relationship. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of very low quality childcare still exists.

With children in the early school years, parental employment often results in children who attend school-age childcare programs, or who are unsupervised during non-school hours. Research on preschool, school-aged and adolescent children shows that having too little supervision by parents can be problematic leading to more accidents, higher rates of delinquency and deviant behavior (such as drug use) and poorer academic outcomes.

Even when families are at home together, trends in family life have reduced their interaction. The average child watches about 27 hours of TV per week. Research confirms that TV viewing replaces family conversation and interaction. Increasingly, video games occupy children's time.

What explains the shift of time from home life to the workplace? Many families work longer hours because it is necessary to avoid poverty and maintain a standard of living. Average family incomes today

(adjusted for inflation) are not much different from 25 years ago, even though maternal and paternal employment rates have increased dramatically. Changes in the welfare system now require that all parents work, regardless of income or family circumstances.

Changing values also appear to play a role. Expectations concerning the amount of material goods needed seem to be ever increasing and some families are working longer and harder to generate the income needed to maintain this higher standard.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Communities may wish to address:

- Helping families select among childcare options; how to distinguish higher from lower quality care
- Helping increase the availability and quality of childcare programs
- Helping employers and other institutions understand the time needs of families; develop family-friendly policies that are responsive and flexible
- Helping families prioritize, organize and make better use of available family time; providing parents and other caretakers with the support and knowledge that will help them make the most of the time effectively raising and monitor their children

Sources of supporting data for use by counties.

- "Early Parenting," Patterson, G.R., et al. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior. *American Psychologist*, 44(2), 329-335.
- "TV," Condry, J. (1989). *The Psychology of Television*. Erlbaum.

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Food Security

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1999 Encouraging Family Self-Sufficiency Theme Groups: complete list available at: <http://uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/99efss1.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

The vast majority of U.S. and Wisconsin households are food secure, defined as having physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. The first Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey by the U.S. Bureau of the Census was conducted in April 1995. This nationally representative sample of 45,000 households found that 88 percent of all U.S. households were food secure. Ninety-three percent of all Wisconsin households were food secure, by these measures. But, about 11.9 million U.S. households experienced food insecurity at some level during the year.

Primary causes of food insecurity are limited income and difficulty in accessing food. Other factors include low literacy, poor health, lack of transportation, living in remote locations, lack of accessible food stores and social barriers, such as the stigma associated with accepting food assistance. Groups particularly vulnerable to food insecurity include the homeless, poor children who fall through gaps in the service system, some female-headed households, the working poor, some elderly and central-city residents and those living in rural communities.

Questions remain regarding the impact of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 and W2 on household food security. Enrollment in welfare programs is in decline. However, without an accurate statewide reporting system of food pantry usage, community meals and food poundage distributed by food banks, it is difficult to assess the impact. Communities and local decision-makers are crucial to collecting this information.

One result of welfare reform is the shift toward community-based solutions. Wisconsin has lead this effort with the expansion of the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP). WNEP operates in 53 counties, partnering with more than 1300 community-based agencies. Plans for expansion to an additional five counties are currently underway.

Relevance of trends to county program:

Households facing food security challenges would be better able to provide adequate and nutritious meals for their members if they had the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their food dollars and choose healthy foods. A research project funded by the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA in 1997 explored the food choices of low-income families through 28 focus groups. The majority of focus group participants reported that they do not always plan meals or plan for the use of their food dollars. These trends are

relevant to the work of Cooperative Extension as we plan and conduct educational programming for limited resource audiences. The recent trends in prevalence of food insecurity and its relationship to the welfare reform environment point to the need for ongoing research and assessment of household food security. A major limitation of national studies is their inability to accurately measure food security in particular local communities. Most assessment tools focus on households and can be tailored for use in local community studies. Assessment of local food security can complement local efforts to track food pantry usage, food bank donations, and meal site participation rates. A local assessment of food security and emergency food program usage can raise community awareness of hunger issues and provide a basis for collaborative solutions that involve both the public and private sectors. Research studies can also focus on assessing the impact of particular educational interventions targeted for low-income households.

The trend toward more local/community-based solutions to food security problems is relevant to Cooperative Extension because Extension is in a unique role to encourage consistency of educational messages that enhance household use of their limited food dollars. As a part of USDA, Extension can collaborate with sister agencies with the goal of integrating educational efforts around common and consistent themes and educational messages. At the same time, its partnerships with more than 1300 local agencies and groups, allows Extension to train staff and volunteers in the development and evaluation of community-based nutrition education programs.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Gundersen, Craig, Michael LeBlanc and Betsey Kuhn. "The Changing Food Assistance Landscape: The Food Stamp Program in a Post-Welfare Reform Environment."
<http://www.econ.ag.gov/epubs/pdf/aer773/>
- Interagency Working Group on Food Security (IWG) U.S. Action Plan on Food Security: Solutions to Hunger.
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/summit/usactplan.pdf>
- USDA, FNS, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation. "Who Is Leaving the Food Stamp Program? An Analysis of Caseload Changes from 1994-1997."
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/menu/research/Published/fsp/fsp.htm>
- USDA, FNS, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation. "Household Food Security in the United States in 1995," Sept. 1997.
- USDA, FNS, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation. "Understanding the Food Choices of Low Income Families," May 1997.
- UWEX, CE "Wisconsin Nutrition Education Plan," October 1, 1998-September 30, 1999.

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Changing Support Systems for Economically Vulnerable Families

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1999 Encouraging Family Self-Sufficiency Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/99efss1.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

In the wake of welfare reform, families with economic hardships may not understand services for which they are eligible and communities may not understand the extent and nature of remaining economic hardship.

Public assistance caseloads have plummeted in recent years. For instance, the number of Wisconsin families receiving AFDC fell from more than 70,000 in January 1995 to approximately half that number in August 1997. One year after AFDC was replaced by a new work-based program W-2, only around 10,000 families were receiving assistance.

These numbers do not tell us about the level of economic hardship that remains among families. Leaving welfare can be a sign of success, but alternatively may reflect an inability or unwillingness to comply with program requirements, or a lack of awareness of services available. Do we focus on caseloads? On economic well being of families? On employment rates? On measures of family functioning?

Research has tracked the incomes of families that left welfare in the years leading up to W-2 and found that most had at least some employment. The percentage of families that escape poverty decreases with family size—34 percent of parents with one child, 22 percent of those with two children and 14 percent of those with three children. More recently, the Department of Workforce Development released an interim report tracking families that left welfare during the early portion of W-2's implementation. The majority had been employed at some point, 62 percent at the time of the survey. They also documented evidence of hardship among these families. Since leaving welfare, 37 percent reported getting behind on rent or housing payments, 27 percent had had their phone disconnected and 32 percent had had a time when they had no way to buy food. Counties report increased demand for emergency services and increasing reports of growing demand placed on food pantries.

Many families do not understand the various benefits and services for which they may be eligible. Research by the Institute for Wisconsin's Future found that, in Milwaukee, many W-2 participants reported that their caseworkers had not informed them about various peripheral services such as food stamps and child care assistance. Likewise, a recent survey in LaCrosse found that many low-income families were not aware of the availability of a subsidized child care program. The state has recognized that many W-2 participants lack of awareness of peripheral benefit programs and has launched a major childcare outreach campaign.

The devolution of welfare has had an unintended consequence on health care coverage—a precipitous

decline in Medicaid enrollment. More than 100,000 individuals, half of these children, have been lost from the Medicaid rolls since 1996. A number of statewide efforts are developing to address the issues of identifying and enrolling these families either in Medicaid (for which many are still eligible) or in the new BadgerCare program.

Relevance of trends to county program:

There are potential opportunities for county staff to work with W-2 agencies, community groups and others to discover the extent to which economic hardship exists in their counties and develop plans to assist families facing hardship. County staff may work with W2 agencies to make participants aware of benefits and how to best use their limited income and cope with the special stresses placed on parents by work.

County staff may develop new partnerships with county public health and social service departments, local hospitals and others that are seeking ways to identify and enroll low-income families in programs, including Medicaid and BadgerCare.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Department of Workforce Development, issues monthly county-level information on W-2 caseloads, recent research report on experiences of families leaving welfare
- Institute for Research on Poverty, UW-Madison, periodic reports related to welfare reform in Wisconsin
- Health Policy web site that includes updated information on Medicaid and BadgerCare
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/health/updates.html>

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Continuing Crisis in Affordable Housing for Low-Income Families

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1999 Encouraging Family Self-Sufficiency Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/99efss1.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

Despite six years of continued economic growth, millions of families still struggle to secure decent affordable housing according to a 1999 report entitled "Waiting in Vain: Update on America's Rental Housing Crisis" published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. According to the report, rents increased nationally by 6.9 percent between 1996 and 1998 while inflation only rose 3.9 percent. During this period the number of housing units affordable to low-income households dropped by 19 percent. The number of families across the U.S. either live in severely substandard housing or pay more than one-half of their income for rent is at an all time high of 5.3 million persons. Many of these people are in households with at least one full time wage earner, with the greatest growth occurring in the suburbs.

The only comparable data for Wisconsin is from the 1990 U.S. Census. It reported that more than half (54.7 %) of the state's low-income households paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing and housing expenses consumed more than half the income of nearly a quarter (23.6%) of all Wisconsin low-income households. Recent data gathered by the Department of Administration, Division of Housing for emergency shelters participating in the state Shelter Subsidy Program, suggests that many low-income Wisconsin residents are facing a housing crisis. This data shows a 9.6 percent increase in the number of persons served between 1997 and 1998. More than a third of these persons are children. During this one-year period, the sources of income shifted. In 1997, 26.6 percent reported income from jobs. By the end of 1998, the percentage had increased to 33.1 percent. At the same time, the number of persons reporting no income nearly doubled increasing from 11.7 to 21.2 percent.

In many counties a comparison of wage levels and housing costs shows a disparity between the two indicating that many low and moderate-income families are likely to be having difficulty finding safe and sanitary housing that they can afford. The federal government has historically been the major source of housing subsidies for low-income families. However, it is increasingly looking to state and local governments and community groups to take on a larger housing role.

Relevance of trends to county program:

An increasing number of communities are recognizing the need to address the demand for housing affordable to its lower-income families. There are opportunities for Extension staff to help with assessing specific local needs, helping to build organizational capacity and guiding the housing planning process. There are also opportunities to partner with existing governments and community groups to provide educational support to clientele of these agencies as they struggle to overcome their housing challenges. Such groups may welcome help with home ownership counseling or tenant education.

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Family Financial Well Being

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1999 Managing Life's Transitions Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/mlt.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

The most recent Survey of Consumer Finances indicates that family debt has been rising steadily since 1989. However, because family assets have also risen over that period, debt as a proportion of assets remains steady at 16 percent. Mortgage (including home equity lines of credit) and credit card debt as a proportion of total debt has grown strongly throughout the 1990s.

Outstanding balances on credit cards doubled between 1992 and 1997. While debt levels are increasing for Wisconsin families, they are 35 percent below national averages. In 1997 the average credit card debt per adult in the US was \$2,234 compared to \$1,440 per adult in Wisconsin. Access to credit cards is increasing at all income levels. Use is growing faster for low-income families.

Wisconsin no longer has limits on interest rates for open-end credit (prior to May 17, 1996 the limit was capped at 18 percent per year). Limits on many non-interest fees (late fees, cash advances fees, etc.) for open-end credit were repealed effective January 31, 1997. This has made open-end credit more available to lower-income families as lenders are able to charge higher interest rates to compensate for the increased risk. The result has been a shift from installment debt to increased credit card debt, especially for lower-income families.

Changes in tax laws and increasing home ownership have resulted in increased mortgage debt. The tax-deductibility of mortgage debt and the lower interest rates of secured home equity lines of credit have encouraged many borrowers to transfer balances from credit card accounts to home equity accounts. Half of borrowers used home equity loans to repay other loans, 37 percent used them to finance a car or truck purchase (Federal Reserve Board).

Bankruptcy rates have increased steadily during the decade. The rate doubled in the past four years in both Wisconsin and the U.S. Nationally, five in 1,000 people filed for bankruptcy in 1997. In Wisconsin the rate was 3.5 in 1,000 (Bank Trends 1998). Top reasons cited for filing bankruptcy include overextended 29 percent, unemployment 15 percent, medical/health problems 15 percent and divorce 11 percent.

The Survey of Consumer Finances also finds the proportion of families who report saving continues to decline for all income levels. Savings rates as a percent of disposal personal income have declined steadily from 5.6 percent in 1992 to negative numbers in the second half of 1998, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Studies of retirement investments suggest investment patterns vary widely. Working Americans are more focused on saving for retirement. Sixty-three percent say they have begun to save for retirement, yet only 25 percent feel confident that they will have enough money. Studies of women's attitudes and behaviors about retirement savings suggest that most women do not know how much they will need to save for their retirement and many lack confidence in their ability to invest their retirement savings.

Relevance of trends to county program:

As families increase their debt loads and decrease their savings, they reduce the chances of achieving their financial goals. They also jeopardize their financial security and increase their vulnerability to unexpected financial emergencies. Educational programs can help families improve their financial well being by teaching financial management skills that help families reduce their debt and increase savings. Money 2000 and Beyond is a new educational initiative being mobilized by Family Living Programs as part of the national initiative dedicated to the goals of helping families reduce debt and increase savings.

Educational programs on retirement planning focus on informed decisions, affecting long-term financial security. As more retirement plans shift from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans (such as 401(k), 403(b) and deferred compensation plans), individuals are faced with responsibility for making important investment decisions. Extension education programs can provide the objective, unbiased information that consumers need to make these decisions.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- *Survey of Consumer Finances* is conducted every three years by the Federal Reserve and reported in the Federal Reserve Bulletin. Data is available from the 1989, 1992 and 1995 surveys. Data from the 1998 survey will not be available until later in 1999.
<http://www.bor.frb.us/pubs/bulletin/1998/199804lead.pdf>
- Egide, Paul D. "The Revolving Credit Market." State of Wisconsin, Department of Financial Institutions. October 1998.
<http://www.wdfi.org>
- "The 1998 Retirement Confidence Survey." Employee Benefit Research Institute. August 1998.
<http://ebri.org>
- "Personal Savings Rates." U.S. Department of Commerce. May 1998.
<http://asec.org.perssav.htm#ss>

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Shift to Technology for Delivery of Services to Low-Income Families

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1999 Encouraging Family Self-Sufficiency Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/efss.html>

Summary of significant trends in topic area:

There is a movement to use electronic transfer of funds (ETF) for federal payments such as Social Security and veterans' benefits. An original plan to mandate this form of payment was modified abruptly in September 1998, in part, because it was learned that many recipients did not have bank accounts to which funds could be transferred. The plan is now to establish Electronic Transfer Accounts (ETA) for low-income individuals who do not have other accounts in financial institutions.

It remains likely that electronic transfer of cash benefit payments will be mandated in the near future. Likewise, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) of Food Stamps and potentially other benefits is imminent in Wisconsin. The use of electronic transfer of funds and benefits can provide cost savings to the government, may increase safety for recipients and offers them the potential for improved management of their resources. However, for many limited resource families this creates new challenges and knowledge needs.

Likewise, access to the state unemployment system is primarily by phone and job information is accessible primarily on the Internet. In the movement to use technology are the realities of the limited resource families being understood, especially what is the reality and access in specific geographic areas? Are assumptions being made about skills, the availability of infrastructure and technology? Are local institutions prepared to offer the ETA (Electronic Transfer Accounts) and other services? Are consumers aware of how to use and manage these new electronic services? Lack of knowledge will greatly impact resources available to already limited resource families.

Relevance of trends to county program:

As local counties plan programs, they need to assure that families are informed and do not endure unnecessary hardship because electronic accounts are not available, that users are not informed on the details and in regard to EBT, that markets are set up to handle these transactions. Counties with significant transfer payments should be especially aware of the implications for their communities and families.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- U.S. Treasury Department (re: ETA, EFT); State DWD (EBT; JOBSNET; Unemployment)
- County: Human Services, Vet Services, Social Security, Job Center, Benefits Officer

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Increasing Local Control of Public Programs that Serve Wisconsin Families

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1999 Encouraging Family Self-Sufficiency Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/efss.html>

Summary of significant trends in the topic area:

Community groups are assuming greater responsibility for planning and development of programs designed to support children and families due to a shift of resources and decision-making from federal and state levels to local communities, the public's heightened interest in raising funding levels for prevention programs and reducing the frequency of crisis situations within families, the increasingly complex nature of family issues, and more empirical evidence that community approaches to problem solving are both efficient and effective. Consequently, broadly diverse community groups are being formed to develop comprehensive planning and program initiatives based on identified local needs and strengths.

The devolution of control from federal and state government to counties and communities is a growing reality, particularly in programs serving low-income and other at-risk families. It reflects the recognition that communities have a responsibility for the well being of all families and that the increasingly complex nature of family issues requires an interdisciplinary response often developed to meet the unique characteristics of small geographical units such as neighborhoods, small towns or counties. Critical decisions about competing views of priorities and approach, gaps in service and who knows what's best for families are being decided locally rather than at the state or federal level.

Increasingly, research provides us with tools to identify children and families with a high likelihood of developing problems before the problems actually occur. Such identification permits educational programs to focus on those families with the greatest need and the least access to existing programs. Targeting programs to specific needs, such as developmental assets of youth or first-time parents, tends to increase the likelihood of successful program outcomes.

New types of local partnerships for the planning and delivery of services have grown from such community based programs as Family Preservation and Support (FP&S), Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Brighter Futures Initiative. Parenting education and support programs have been a frequent theme in Extension led community partnerships, for example, School Readiness, developmental assets of youth, parenting newsletter distribution systems and home-visiting services to targeted families.

This trend is closely tied to a growing body of empirical research that supports the effectiveness of community group problem solving around issues such as child maltreatment, adolescent substance abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency and family instability and stress. Further, many educators and human service providers advocate for the inclusion of people who benefit from the programs and evaluations in program planning and evaluation processes.

Relevance of trend to county program:

UW Extension educators are well positioned to contribute significantly to the implementation of effective community coalitions, partnerships and collaboratives for several important reasons. UW-Extension educators have:

- Access to the body of theory and research about families and community collaboration that provide the foundation for successful interdisciplinary, targeted prevention programs
- Ability to teach effective parent education programs and train others to develop and implement programs that support parents and families
- Expertise to conduct local research to identify real problems and strengths, convince a community about the relevance of an issue, guide development of policies and programs that reflect the values and beliefs of the community and guide program evaluation
- Group facilitation and strategic planning process skills that can increase dialogue, facilitate group decision-making and cooperation among community members and improve planning effectiveness

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- Family Living Program Success Stories on Family Impact Seminars, Family Preservation and Support, School Readiness, Teen Assessment Project, etc.
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/success>
- Parent Support and Community Partnerships Theme Group Plan of Work
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp>
- Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations
<http://www.uwex.edu/li/order.html>
- Fulfilling the Promise—Home Visiting
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/homevisit>
- *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*, by Ellen Taylor-Powell, Boyd Rossing and Jean Geran
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluat.html>

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The Impact of Technology on the Family

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1999 Managing Life's Transitions Theme Group: complete list available at: <http://uwex.edu/ces/flp/tg/mlt3.html>

Summary of the significant trends in the topic area:

In 1994, three million people were using the Internet. This increased to more than 100 million users around the world by 1998 and is expected to increase to one billion by the year 2005. As families become more involved in developing their technology skills, there is a need to adapt to utilizing technology in an efficient manner. In addition, consumers as individuals and families need to be aware that with new technology comes new twists for old scams. The Fraud.Org Internet site reports that fraud has increased 600 percent since 1997. One of the biggest scams relates to web auctions.

New technology also has increased information retention capacity and has implications for family privacy. The ability to collect, transfer and overlay data means that family data may be easily exposed to marketers, researchers and the world at large.

The introduction of the computer chip has resulted in major changes in the household, as well as the work environment. The chip can control the time of when coffee is brewed, stays warm and is turned off for the day. Other kitchen appliances operate more efficiently due to chip controls; laundry equipment regulates cycles, moisture content, and heat. As family members head out the door to work/school, today's design options reflect the vehicle transporting them may contain chips that regulate their driving offering automatic braking or steering and warning of other objects being too close. Even within the vehicle, chips keep the driver in a comfortable environment and indicate when air needs to be added to which tire. Safety, convenience and cost all weigh into the family's decision-making process.

What happens to the family that spends its time in virtual reality verses the one that plans family outings? Can the new technology be used to explore places for the family to go and help members more efficiently make plans so more time is available for them to interact? Will the global exposure to other cultures, ways of living, etc. prove to be an asset or cause discord within the family? The isolation of family members, the lack of regulation of the Internet, the potential of exposure to questionable material and privacy and security concerns are just a few of the major issues to be evaluated by families.

Relevance of trend to county program:

Families need to be informed as to what is available in the market. They need education on use and abuse of these products and services. They need to evaluate what is most appropriate for their life style and life cycle.

Advanced technology presents consumer education the opportunity to provide information to a large number of consumers. However, families often experience overload. As consumer educators, it is

important to not add to the family's information overload but assess needs, assist with their decision-making and encourage all generations to be involved.

Sources of supporting data for use by counties:

- The Fraud.Org Internet site
<http://www.fraud.org/>

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