From the Director for Extension

Mark your calendar for the Zoom Extension Partnership meeting Tuesday, April 23 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. April’s Zoom meeting marks the fourth such meeting since June 2018. One reason for switching to a new format was to have more frequent contact with our local unit partners and to allow more Extension Council members to participate. While the format lends itself to joining from home or another convenient location, board members are encouraged to gather and join as a group to encourage local discussion. The Zoom format is also having a positive effect on state and local unit budgets. We are saving an estimated $18,000 by moving to the Zoom format and are enjoying greater participation by board members.

Agenda items for the April meeting include:
• State legislative and university update
• PILD conference report from State Extension Advisory Council
• State Extension Advisory Council Advocacy Workgroup update
• Being accountable to stakeholders
• Extension programming update

Watch your email for Zoom connection instructions a few days before April 23. I look forward to interacting with you that evening.

— Gregg Hadley, ghadley@ksu.edu

4-H Science Matters

Johnson County 4-H youth encouraged teens to become tomorrow’s science leaders through the “4-H Science Matters” program, a partnership between the National 4-H Council and Bayer. The program paired urban and rural youth with adult mentors and professionals from Bayer. They worked together to identify community needs through surveys and interviews and to identify strategies for how to address those needs.

The issues identified included: food insecurity in Johnson County; lack of awareness regarding zoonotic diseases and prevention; and lack of water conservation knowledge in elementary age youth. With the support of their adult mentors, youth developed strategies to address those issues, including: collaboration with an assisted living community to grow their own food in container gardens; brochures developed and distributed to customers at local agriculture businesses about zoonotic diseases; and hands-on activities created to teach elementary classes the value of water quality and conservation.

By participating in Science Matters, teens were exposed to new areas of study and career opportunities in agriculture and science-related fields. In addition, they used the knowledge and skills they learned to make a difference in their community.

“I learned things about agriculture that I would have never learned about …dressed weight of an animal, precision farming equipment, and more about common problems I face in my community including food deserts, water conservation, and zoonotic diseases.” — 4-H Science Matters participant.
New State Extension Advisory Council Members Elected

Welcome to the new members of the State Extension Advisory Council elected by local boards in January. They are:
- Michael McDermott, Johnson County;
- Sheri Grinstead, Reno County;
- Jennifer Schoenfeld, Thomas County;
- Susan Campbell, Cherokee County; and
- Dean Fitzsimmons, Pratt County.

You can learn more about these newly elected representatives by viewing their bios on the advisory council’s web page of the board leadership website.

To be on the council, members must have served a minimum of two years and currently be, or within the past two years have been, on their local extension board.

They fulfill four-year terms as an advisory group to the director of extension.

The 20-member advisory council meets in February and August. The February meeting in Topeka included visits with legislators. The August meeting location rotates around the state and features different K-State Research and Extension programming. The 2019 summer meeting will be in northwest Kansas.

In April, four members of State Extension Advisory Council will travel to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference. While there, they will visit U.S. House of Representative’s and Senator’s offices. This group educates and advocates on behalf of K-State Research and Extension, communicating how important the federal investment is in allowing us to continue to positively influence the lives of Kansans, and thank them for their continued support.

New Agent Professional Development

K-State Research and Extension administrators, staff, and board members share a common goal when we bring new agents on staff—we want them to be successful. The new agent professional development system works to capitalize on the skills and experience new hires bring to the job while increasing their effectiveness through mentoring and on-campus training sessions.

Research shows that one predictor of a new agent’s success is how well they get to know and integrate themselves into their new work community. A new “Getting to Know Your Community” component has recently been added to the new agent onboarding process. Board members, co-workers and mentors are an important part of this process by helping new agents meet key stakeholders, discover local demographics, and meet with the program development committee to analyze community issues.

The New Agent Professional Development board leadership module has been updated with a new video that provides an overview of the role of each partner in new agent onboarding. It also outlines the topics of the various professional development sessions new agents attend during their first year of employment. The video is designed to be reviewed by a local extension board as they are preparing to welcome a new agent.

Budget Development for Local Units

In January, all local units received comparative budget information for 2019. As boards prepare to develop 2020 budgets, these tables provide useful information on the amounts budgeted by every unit for every line item.

Look at the amount budgeted in each receipt and expenditure line item. How much are other local units budgeting for these items? Other questions for local unit boards to discuss include:
- Is there an equipment-replacement plan with enough budgeted on an annual basis to replace equipment on a reasonable schedule?
- Are sufficient subsistence and travel dollars budgeted for professional development opportunities for staff?
- Are sufficient dollars budgeted for competitive salaries and benefits?
- Does the heavy use of a cash balance (carryover) to fund the budget signal future trouble?

Additional budget development materials for board members can be found in the Duties of the Board - Budget section of the Board Leadership website.