



GROWING SOUTH DAKOTA

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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES / SPRING 2014



SDSU Extension 2013 Annual Report

*SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY*





FROM THE DIRECTOR:

It's Not Complicated

"The world is a place of constant change. If we are open and ready to consider everything while remaining unbiased, we will be ready to accept these changes and utilize them to improve our lives." – Daniel Willey

How does a 100-year-old Extension system fit into the age of information overload? Amidst a revolution in technology in which information literally moves at the speed of light, how can a system built by the Model-T generation remain relevant?

In a world where community is defined not by counties, but by satellites and cell towers, how do we stay connected? With search engines so powerful that they track our curiosity as well as our purchasing patterns, what can a small group of "specialists" possibly offer a population rapidly growing in terms of both diverse interests as well as demographics?

While expressed in terms of budget cuts and vocal criticisms, these powerful questions were at the heart of the challenge faced by the SDSU Cooperative Extension Service in 2011. As we wrestled to find the answers, the brilliant core values and mission of the Extension system created in 1914 by the Smith-Lever Act kept emerging as guideposts.

Just as it was in 1914, we knew that for all people, we needed to be viewed as the trusted source of *science-based information* presented in an *objective* and *unbiased* manner.

With those core values in our hearts – and with a re-commitment to the mission of being the trusted source of information for all people, regardless of wealth, status, or special interest – in 2011, we re-created the Cooperative Extension Service renamed simply SDSU Extension.

On pages 2 and 3 of this issue, Associate Director of SDSU Extension, Karla Trautman, outlines in detail the dramatic changes that were made. Basically, we moved information to a web-based learning platform called "iGrow." A select group of better-trained, discipline-focused, higher-paid Field Specialists were moved to eight regional centers. We focused county-based 4-H Youth Program Advisors on a single area: youth.

We committed ourselves to be catalysts in building learning communities around key topics which used community experts and resources as well as those of SDSU. And, we dedicated ourselves to building new partnerships to achieve our mission.

In Karla's article, as well as in the other exciting stories in this issue, you will find what represents a two-year report card on how we are doing. Please pay particular attention to the sidebar on page 2 that describes the feedback we received from a large survey on SDSU Extension conducted by a third party. I believe you will be, as I am, very encouraged.

It is certainly paradoxical, but affirming, that while we are smaller in terms of budget, people, and places, our reach is greater. It is heartening to know that while we have focused

our areas of programming, we have expanded our audience. Our partnership with Mitchell Technical Institute represents an excellent example of how two state agencies can, by sharing space, find synergies to improve service to our stakeholders, as well as reduce operating costs.

It is encouraging to know that by embracing technology, we are now viewed by people from across the state as "relevant." And learning communities, from gardeners to beginning farmers and ranchers, have proven to be a powerful tool to disseminate knowledge and information, trusting not only the inherent knowledge of a university, but also the diverse experiences of interested and talented community members.

Of course, work certainly remains. Problems have emerged as financial resources for SDSU Extension have continued to erode with budget cuts driven by Federal sequestration and unfunded state salary and benefits policy. The demographics of South Dakota also continue to shift, perhaps faster than many of us realize.

These continuing changes have challenged our ability to serve 4-H and youth audiences in our most rural communities. Providing programming of all types to these communities, who continue to provide life-line services to a shrinking populations, is also challenging.

The pace of change in available agricultural technology has been mirrored by extreme volatility in weather and commodity markets, making "uncertainty" a buzzword. But what hasn't changed since SDSU Extension was reorganized a little over two years ago, is our commitment to excellence. We will continue to strive to do our best.

For nearly 100 years, the Cooperative Extension Service of SDSU was the trusted, objective source of science-based information that people turned to with confidence. In 2014, renamed simply "SDSU Extension," we are still described as trusted and unbiased and are turned to by hundreds of thousands of people. It is heartening that we are now also described as "relevant."

In the future, we will not compromise the core values and mission of our forefathers of providing objective, trusted, science-based information, but in addition, we are committed to embracing change as a key strategy for success. As a popular TV tagline for AT&T says: *"It's not complicated."*


BARRY H. DUNN, PH.D

GROWING SOUTH DAKOTA

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On the Cover:

SDSU Extension celebrates 100 years in 2014. This issue provides an annual report of Extension efforts throughout the state and the benefits being produced for South Dakota citizens.

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CONTENTS

- 2 [The New SDSU Extension](#)
Two Years Later, Change Has Brought New Successes
- 4 [Your 24-7 Connection](#)
iGrow.org Makes SDSU Extension Easily Accessible, Responsive
- 5 [SDSU Regional Extension Centers](#)
Your Front Door To SDSU
- 6-7 [Leading The Challenge](#)
Projects To Address Food Security, Financial Knowledge Underway
- 8-9 [Regional Collaboration](#)
SET Grants & Food Networks Initiated
- 10-11 [Encouraging & Empowering](#)
Native American Program Assists Reservations In Striving For Healthy Food, Healthy Communities & Youth Science Programming
- 12 [Evaluating Yields](#)
Crop Performance Testing Provides Important, Unbiased Results
- 13 [Holistic Approach](#)
Integrated Pest Management Offers Array Of Options
- 14-15 [Estate Planning & Ag CEO](#)
Workshop Series Offers Resource For Transition, Business Planning
- 16-17 [Livestock Focus](#)
New Programs Provide Tools For Growth
- 18-19 [Youth Development](#)
Character Education & Positive Decision Making Skills Championed
- 20 [Urban & Rural Efforts](#)
Backyard Biodiversity & Turf Management Programs Offered
- 21 [A Message From The SDSU Foundation](#)

The New SDSU Extension

Two Years Later, Change Has Brought New Successes

"The greatest opportunities are created out of crisis. Crisis forces people to change and change often brings new opportunity." – Chinese Proverb

By: Karla Trautman, Associate Director

October 24, 2011 was a monumental day. It was the start of something very new, yet very different. It was the launch of a new structure for SDSU Extension. The new system, marked by change from a place and person bound system to that of a regional, technology-based system, was implemented due to financial reasons as much as by the need to provide innovative and progressive outreach services demanded by a changing clientele base.

Two years later, SDSU Extension is still evolving as a vibrant and responsive organization, but the success that has been achieved to date is the product of investment – in time, opportunity, context and people.

The context of the reorganization was multi-dimensional:

- The reorganization included changes in professional staffing in which Field Specialists with a Master's Degree in a specialized area were hired to provide a greater level of expertise and leadership.
- The implementation of a regional center concept that features high-tech learning classrooms that utilize videoconferencing to connect learners to each other as well as topical experts in real time.
- The reorganization launched iGrow.org as our web-based learning platform that embraces a 24/7 "virtual extension office" for clientele to access at their convenience.
- And, the importance of youth programming was reinforced with the implementation of 4-H Advisors hired to focus solely on youth development education and volunteer development at the community level.

Our staff has risen to the challenge. They have worked hard to engage communities of learners in vibrant and relevant programs. They have developed strong collaborations and partnerships that support the land-grant mission.

The regional centers are becoming "hubs of learning" as we initiate educational opportunities using technology that facilitates reduced time away from home and long distance travel.

Our 4-H Advisors have strived to establish new working relationships with the youth they serve as well as parents, 4-H leaders and county commissions.

The iGrow.org virtual learning platform is used extensively for routine and critical needs. The site provides access to news articles, publications, video, webinars, weather, markets and a storefront that offers products for sale as well as access to online registration for conferences and seminars sponsored by SDSU Extension.

What 400 Crop & Beef Producers Have To Say About SDSU Extension

In 2011 SDSU Extension underwent a reorganization in response to significant state and federal budget cuts. Every aspect of this reorganization was strategically designed by SDSU Extension staff to meet the changing needs of South Dakotans and continue to fulfill the land-grant mission.

Did SDSU Extension succeed?

To find out, a third-party marketing firm surveyed 400 crop and livestock producers, selected at random from the more than 10,000 throughout the state, explains Karla Trautman, Associate Director of SDSU Extension.

"We needed to know how the changes made to SDSU Extension during the reorganization impacted our ability to support the land-grant mission in providing educational programming to strengthen agriculture and natural resources, families and communities throughout South Dakota."

The SDSU Extension Benchmark Survey discovered that not only was SDSU Extension meeting the land-grant mission, but changes made to the delivery system through the reorganization were in-line with the evolving needs of South Dakota's agriculture producers.

"This survey demonstrated to us that the value the public places on SDSU Extension did not change after the reorganization," Trautman says. "South Dakotans still value us as being a trustworthy, unbiased leader in agriculture research as well as a source of relevant expertise. This has been our legacy for the last 100 years."

Not short and sweet, the producers questioned for this survey spent about 20 minutes on the phone discussing what they thought of SDSU Extension, where they go for information to improve their operations and ways SDSU Extension can better meet their needs. Trautman says the information gleaned will be utilized by SDSU Extension staff in future program development.

"The survey revealed new opportunities to us on ways we can better serve through the land-grant mission," Trautman says. "We are ready and eager to move forward."

To learn more about this survey and view its results, visit iGrow.org.

From January to December in 2013, the site had 324,349 visits resulting in 698,514 page views. Compared to 2012, this reflects a 174.08% increase in site visits, a 224.87% increase in unique visitors and a 113.21% increase in page views.

We have faced a few challenges, however. Of significance has been declining federal funding during the first two years of the reorganization. As a result, we have not fully implemented the original staffing plan of Field Specialist positions, filling 45 of the 65 positions. Fees and sponsorships have been applied to various program initiatives to support the costs of educational delivery, but it has been more challenging to implement cost recovery models for food and family, community development and youth development program areas.

Our ability to provide quality educational outreach will be dependent upon our staff's expertise and creative abilities, but it will also be dependent upon adequate financial resources that blend traditional funding streams with cost recovery strategies.

Favorable Feedback

While a great deal of change has occurred with the SDSU Extension reorganization process, SDSU Extension conducted a benchmark survey in 2013 to learn more about our public perception. The results were exciting and gratifying – a true “aha” moment!

Despite the challenges of the reorganization, we found that the public feels SDSU Extension is still meeting its land-grant mission in new and exciting ways. *To learn more about the survey and its results, see the sidebar article titled “What 400 Crop & Beef Producers Have To Say About SDSU Extension.”*

- > **94%** of respondents surveyed utilize SDSU Extension
- > **86%** of respondents have confidence in the ability of SDSU Extension to provide science-based information
- > **iGrow.org, webinars and mobile apps** developed by SDSU Extension are most likely utilized by respondents age 18-49
- > **Valued Educational Materials** like Best Management Manuals, webinars, educational programs, iGrow.org, weather and SDSU Extension sponsored events are valued by producers

Starting over is not an easy thing. It's challenging, emotional, and a tad bit scary. Yet, it can be exciting and filled with opportunities. The strength of such an experience stems ultimately from a sense of hope for a brighter and more engaging future.

As our College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences Dean Barry Dunn stated in the Winter 2012 edition of *Growing South Dakota*, “with patience and continued investment, SDSU Extension can be the envy of 21st century agriculture, just as its predecessor was in the past.”



**Celebrating Our Past, Building for the Future:
 The Centennial Celebration of SDSU Extension**

SDSU Extension celebrates 100 years in 2014. What a perfect time to reflect on the history which established the outreach arm of the land-grant university system.

It all began with the Smith Lever Act of 1914 which codified into federal law and provided funding for outreach endeavors at the land-grant universities founded by the Morrill Act of 1862. The act was introduced by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia and Representative A. F. Lever of South Carolina to expand the vocational, agricultural and home demonstration programs throughout rural America.

Specifically, the Act stated as its purpose, “In order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, uses of solar energy with respect to agriculture, home economics, and rural energy, and to encourage the application of the same, there may be continued or

inaugurated in connection with the college of colleges in each State, Territory, or possession...”

The appropriation for Cooperative Extension as established by Smith-Lever was unique in that it set up a shared partnership among the Federal, State, and County levels of government. A formula funding mechanism was designed to insure that there was support from each of the levels to help the fledgling system achieve stability and leverage resources.

The ideals exposed by these acts were transformative in the manner in which the land-grant universities saw their role in their state. The move toward a model of cooperative extension education allowed for professional educators to be placed in local communities in order to improve lives.

2014 will be a year of acknowledgement and celebration of the Smith-Lever Act. In South Dakota, we will conduct several activities that will highlight our own state's rich extension history. Look for the summer edition of *Growing South Dakota* to focus more deeply on the historical tradition of SDSU Extension.

Your 24-7 Connection

iGrow.org Makes SDSU Extension Easily Accessible, Responsive



As the digital age has evolved, so too has SDSU Extension with iGrow.org. It is SDSU Extension's virtual office, making it possible for stakeholders and clientele to access reliable, ethical and unbiased information 24 hours a day; 7 days a week. The site was launched during Dakotafest 2011. Content is organized into the areas of 4-H & Youth, Agronomy, Community Development, Gardens, Healthy Families and Livestock. Within these areas, the site originally included 10 communities; today it has been expanded to 30, all featuring the most recent and relevant research-based information published by SDSU Extension staff.

Timely & Convenient Access

During 2013, changes were made to the site along with new opportunities for the system. To better serve the Healthy Families audience, in April changes were made to the structure and new content was published that aligned with current programming. These changes, combined with a coordinated social media presence on Facebook, resulted in a 111.16% increase in page views.

Throughout the 2013 growing season, more than 1,300 growers received the latest production recommendations from SDSU Extension's agronomy experts each week thanks to the electronic SDSU Extension Pest & Crop newsletter. This newsletter was converted to an e-news distribution system in 2013. Based on producer feedback, changes to Crop Performance Testing publications were also implemented making results available soon after harvest.

Local Foods & 4-H

According to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, spending at South Dakota's 61-plus Farmers Markets topped \$1 million in 2013. Through a partnership with the USDA Office of Rural Development, a new community dedicated to Local Foods (<http://iGrowSDLocalFoods.org>) was launched on iGrow in July. The site caters to both producers interested in becoming vendors and consumers.

Even after many changes, 4-H has remained strong and vibrant in South Dakota. For the first time ever, 4-H

families had access to show orders, event results and photos during the 2013 South Dakota State Fair. Plans are in place to continue and improve upon this real-time service during the 2014 State Fair. To stay in the loop on 4-H news, sign up for the 4-H FOCUS electronic newsletter by visiting the South Dakota 4-H community on iGrow.

Response

The devastation of the early October blizzard is still felt across South Dakota as recovery efforts continue. In the face of this disaster, SDSU Extension worked with the Department of Agriculture and the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association to publish resources for ranchers and families on iGrow.org, which was updated multiple times each day with useful information about livestock and families.

Across the nation, news reports and comments in social media asked the question "How could this happen?" In response, David Ollila, SDSU Extension Sheep Field Specialist and Rosie Nold, SDSU Extension Agriculture & Natural Resources Program Director wrote an article titled "Understanding What Happened." This article explained why the storm resulted in such devastating losses. The article went viral through social media and blogs and was viewed more than 55,000 times.

New Best Management Books

Trees! An Illustrated Field Guide became available in November. It was written by one of the Midwest's foremost authorities

on trees, John Ball, Professor and SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist. Covering trees from Saskatchewan to Nebraska, from Montana to Iowa, Ball's guide to the Northern Plains fruit, nut, ornamental, shade and windbreak trees is based on more than 30 years of his personal observations in North America, Europe and Asia. The book is available in the iGrow Marketplace at <http://iGrow.org/store>.

iGrow Soybeans: Best Management Practices for Soybean Production contains the principles that growers need to increase profitability and production. The South Dakota Soybean Research & Promotion Council supported the publication of the book. The first printed copies of the book were distributed during Dakotafest 2013 and have been available at many South Dakota Soybean winter meetings. Producers and industry professionals can request a printed copy of the book at www.sdsoybean.org.

iGrow Soybeans is the first best management book to be both printed and available for download on your iPad through iBooks. The iBooks version features the ability to search within the book and interactive bonuses, such as being able to expand images and tables.

Click & Check Out iGrow For Yourself

iGrow.org provides volumes of research-based information to South Dakotans via their favorite electronic device. To learn more about what iGrow has in store for you, visit iGrow.org today.

SDSU Extension Regional Centers – Your Front Door To SDSU



The eight SDSU Extension Regional Centers can be considered the front door to the educational opportunities awaiting you within South Dakota State University. By walking through SDSU Extension's front door, the staff can connect you to education, research and the exciting opportunities that are a part of your land-grant university.

The SDSU Extension Regional Centers are home to over 40 SDSU Extension Field Specialists. While their desks may be at one of the eight centers, SDSU Extension Field Specialists serve the entire state through innovative collaborations and partnerships as well as through the use of technology. In fact, the SDSU Extension Regional Centers are becoming "hubs of learning" as smart classrooms are utilized to connect learners and experts across the state and region.

Stop by an SDSU Extension Regional Center and say "Hello!"

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Aberdeen

13 Second Ave. SE, Aberdeen SD 57401

Phone: 605-626-2874

- > **Kim Dillivan:** Crops Business Management Field Specialist
- > **Laura Edwards:** Climate Field Specialist
- > **Karelyn Farrand:** 4-H Youth Character Education Field Specialist
- > **Mark Rosenberg:** Agronomy Weeds Field Specialist
- > **Karen Slunicka:** Family Resource Management Field Specialist
- > **Marj Zastrow:** Nutrition Field Specialist
- > **Jessica Ness:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Lemmon

408 Eighth St. W., Lemmon SD 57638

Phone: 605-374-4177

- > **Robin Salverson:** Cow/Calf Field Specialist
- > **Paul Thares:** Community Development Field Specialist
- > **Jocelyn Barnes:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Mitchell

1800 E. Spruce St., Mitchell SD 57301

Phone: 605-995-7378

- > **Jack B. Davis:** Crops Business Management Field Specialist
- > **Jim Krantz:** Cow/Calf Field Specialist
- > **Megan Nielson:** 4-H Youth Livestock Field Specialist
- > **Kenneth Sherin:** Community Development Field Specialist
- > **Sara Jorgensen:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Rapid City

1530 Samco Road, Rapid City SD 57702

Phone: 605-394-1722

- > **Leacey E. Brown:** Gerontology Field Specialist
- > **Anitha Chirumamilla:** Entomology Field Specialist
- > **Sharon Guthmiller:** Food Safety Field Specialist
- > **Adele Harty:** Cow/Calf Field Specialist
- > **Mindy Hubert:** Small Acreage Field Specialist
- > **Rutendo Nyamusamba:** Agronomy-Crops Field Specialist
- > **David Ollila:** Sheep Field Specialist
- > **Mary Roduner:** Consumer Horticulture Field Specialist
- > **Shannon Sand:** Livestock Business Management Field Specialist
- > **Peggy Schlechter:** Community Development Field Specialist
- > **Paulette Morse:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Pierre

412 W. Missouri Ave., Pierre SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-8120

- > **Ruth Beck:** Agronomy Field Specialist
- > **Amanda Bachmann:** Consumer Horticulture Field Specialist
- > **Andrea Knox:** 4-H Youth Development & Resiliency Field Specialist
- > **Aletha Scott:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Sioux Falls

2001 E. Eighth St., Sioux Falls SD 57103

Phone: 605-782-3290

- > **Anthony Bly:** Soils Field Specialist
- > **Ashley Gelderman:** Swine Field Specialist
- > **Heather Gessner:** Livestock Business Management Field Specialist
- > **Lindsay Hadlock:** Community Food Policy Field Specialist
- > **Lavonne Meyer:** Food Safety Field Specialist
- > **Connie Strunk:** Plant Pathology Field Specialist
- > **Christine Wood:** 4-H STEM Field Specialist
- > **Christina Zdorovtsov:** Community Development Field Specialist
- > **Christina Van Ruler:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Watertown

1910 W. Kemp Ave., Watertown SD 57201

Phone: 605-882-5140

- > **Pete Bauman:** Range Management Field Specialist
- > **Tracey Erickson:** Dairy Field Specialist
- > **Karla Hernandez:** Forages Field Specialist
- > **Paul O. Johnson:** Agronomy Field Specialist
- > **Nikki Prosch:** Health & Physical Activity Field Specialist
- > **Audrey Rider:** State 4-H Events Field Specialist
- > **Warren Rusche:** Cow/Calf Field Specialist
- > **Jan Rounds:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension Regional Center in Winner

325 S. Monroe St., Winner SD 57580

Phone: 605-842-1267

- > **Bob Fanning:** Plant Pathology Field Specialist
- > **Ann Schwader:** Nutrition Field Specialist
- > **Sharon Klein:** Administrative Assistant

SDSU Extension FRTEP Office on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation

BIA Education Building, Eagle Butte SD 57625

Phone: 605-964-4955

- > **Marcella Gilbert:** Community Development Associate

SDSU Extension FRTEP Office on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

7958 Lakota Prairie Drive, Kyle SD 57752

Phone: 605-455-1299

- > **Jason Schoch:** Community Development Associate
- > **Jonathan Rohrer:** 4-H Program Advisor
- > **Kirsten Clifford:** EFNEP Nutrition Assistant

SDSU Extension FRTEP Office on the Rosebud Indian Reservation

211 E. Second St., Hattie Marcus Building, Mission SD 57555

Phone: 605-856-2198

- > **Rachel Lindvall:** Community Development Field Specialist
- > **Kathi Her Many Horses:** 4-H Program Assistant
- > **Marietta Kloppel:** EFNEP Nutrition Assistant



Leading The Challenge

Project To Address Food Security In Isolated Communities Underway

“Food deserts” – communities located more than 10 miles from a supermarket or other source of fresh, healthy and affordable food – exist in the United States, and are a reality in more than half of South Dakota’s counties.

A six-state, federally funded research project called “Voices for Food” has been launched to address this issue and will seek community-based strategies to increase the availability of and access to nutritious food in rural communities with high poverty rates.

The \$4 million, five-year grant was announced Feb. 27, 2013 at a press conference held on the SDSU campus. SDSU is the lead institution for the multi-state collaborative project with Suzanne Stluka, Food and Families Program Director with SDSU Extension, serving as principal investigator. The project and funding will also include university researchers at Michigan State, Purdue, Nebraska, Missouri and Ohio State, who will be working with communities in their respective states.

Lindsay Hadlock, a SDSU Extension community food policy field specialist, explains that the grant and its approach are unique because it will be applied across multiple states and tap the expertise of multiple disciplines – including nutrition, community development, agriculture and youth.

Ultimately, the focus of the grant is to develop and implement sustainable solutions that will increase availability and access to healthy food choices in these rural communities.

The approach is also focused on ensuring the strategies put in place are maintained even after the funded research project concludes. Stluka states, “We are eager to see local changes that will increase the availability of healthy food choices over the long term. We won’t always be there, so we want communities to find and develop solutions they will be comfortable maintaining long after we’re gone.”

Implementation Underway
Community demographics and infrastructure have been studied and in

the spring of 2014, four communities in each of the six participating states will be selected – for a total of 24 communities – to participate in the Voices for Food program.

Once those communities are announced, food councils will be established in each of the 24 communities with stakeholder representatives. These councils may include representation from farmers, school administrators, business owners and tribal members.

Stluka notes that involving stakeholders from the community is what makes this approach different. She says, “We’re doing more than educating the individual. Our goal is to work with the residents of rural communities to understand what they see as opportunities to increase food access.

More about the ‘Voices for Food’ project

Each community selected in the Voices For Food program will have funding available during the term of the grant to implement its food access initiatives. Efforts may help establish a food pantry, provide consumer education or boost a farmers’ market, according to Suzanne Stluka, who oversees the grant.

The hiring of a full-time Extension coach in each of the six participating states to work with the selected communities will also be funded through the \$4 million grant.

Additionally, Extension program specialists will work with the communities and food councils in areas such as: identifying assets that they possess to move towards healthier food access, engaging youth and youth partners in healthy food access, and connecting the ag community and industry with these issues.



If you want to make a bigger impact, you've got to work with the community. This will open the door for us to work in a bigger area."

Hadlock explains that the food councils will also form a link and work closely with the participating communities to identify solutions so everyone can have access to affordable and nutritious food. Councils may work with food pantries to provide support or change the way food pantries operate.

Throughout the project, SDSU Extension and the partner universities will play a key role in providing guidance to the food councils. Extension coaching and nutrition education resources for food pantries will be shared and discussed as development of community food pantry solutions are identified.

One component that all selected communities must agree to implement is a guided client choice model for their food pantries. Stluka explains this means people are allowed to make their own choices about which foods they use rather than receiving pre-bagged selections at the food pantry. The hope is that through education and an offering of a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy and whole grains, food pantry clients will learn the importance of making healthy food choices.

"We want to involve and empower the food pantries and their clients so that a system of offering and choosing healthy foods is created and sustained – even after the grant project is completed," Hadlock emphasizes.

Over the course of the five-year grant, results from the various communities will also be developed into a "tool kit" with the intent of transferring that knowledge to other rural communities to implement once the grant project is complete.

Editor's Note: USDA funds for the Voices for Food grant come from the 2012 Agriculture and Food Research Initiative's Food Security program, which supports research that will keep American agriculture competitive while helping to end world hunger by increasing domestic and international food accessibility.

Fostering Financial Knowledge

Webinar Series & Online Course Offer Learning Opportunities

Financial topics related to budgeting, saving for retirement, health insurance and other aspects are important for everyone to understand. To help South Dakotans have access to that information, SDSU Extension has created a series of financial education webinars titled "Growing Financial Wellness."

Funded through a two-year grant from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation through a partnership with United Way Worldwide, SDSU Extension launched the free webinar series in October 2013 with twelve webinar sessions offered on various financial topics during the fall and in spring 2014. New webinars will be presented for fall 2014 and spring 2015. *(See sidebar for listing of topics offered.)*

"The goal of these workshops is to provide South Dakotans high-quality unbiased financial education opportunities," says SDSU Extension family resource management specialist Carrie Johnson, who has overseen the program and is often a presenter for the webinars. She shares that the webinar series is patterned after a similar program that was conducted by Montana State University Extension.

Johnson says a goal of the webinar program is to determine if online financial education works well in rural states.

Johnson notes that the webinars are designed for anyone interested in learning more about personal finance topics. She emphasizes that there is no cost to participate in the series and no products or services are sold or recommended during the series. Individuals can participate from the comfort of their home or office, or host locations are also offered at the West River Ag Center in Rapid City and the Regional Extension Centers in Sioux Falls and Pierre.

Along with Johnson, SDSU Extension field specialist Karen Slunicka has also been involved with the program as a

webinar presenter, and guest presenters are also featured on the webinars for certain specialty topics.

Johnson reports that 140 people have participated in one or more of the fall webinars. Evaluations are held at the end of each block of topics, and Johnson says feedback has been positive. Follow-up evaluations will be conducted this summer to determine if participation in the series leads to behavior change.

One request that came from the evaluations was for an online, self-study class related to the financial topics covered in the webinars to be offered for individuals to take at their own pace. That has been developed and is now available via the iGrow portal. Individuals who complete the class will receive a certificate at the end of each module.

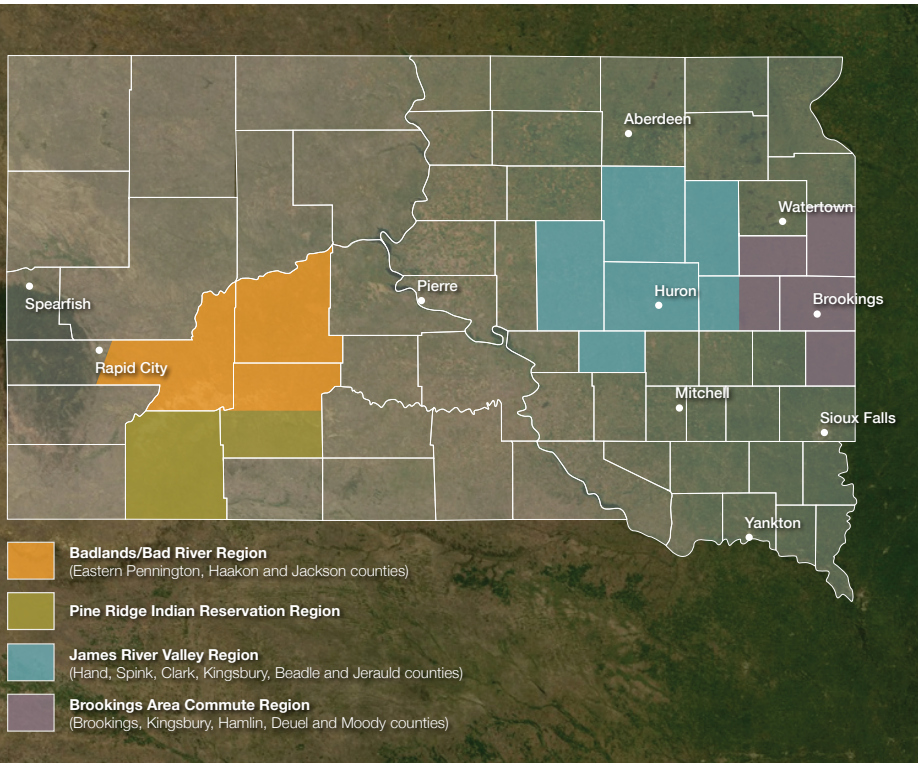
All of the Growing Financial Wellness webinars and worksheet resources are archived on iGrow.org. Under the Healthy Families tab select "Family and Personal Finance." Then scroll to the middle of the page and select the gray "Financial Wellness" tab. The self-study course called Growing Financial Wellness MOOC can also be accessed on this page.

GROWING FINANCIAL WELLNESS WEBINAR TOPICS

- Health Insurance 101
- Flex Spending and Health Care Savings Accounts
- Financial Fraud Scams and Older Adults
- Talking with Aging Parents About Finances
- Insuring Personal Property
- How Much Life Insurance Do I Need
- Retirement Planning for Those Nearing Retirement
- Retirement Planning for Younger Workers
- Credit Scores and Credit Reports
- Savings 101
- Budgeting/Spending Plans
- Ways to Cut Costs and Save

Regional Collaboration

SET Grants Boost Regional Economic Development Planning



Creating, attracting and retaining jobs as a single, rural community is a challenging task. In today's rapidly evolving marketplace, economic development is more likely to be realized when communities and counties work together as a region to assess their resources and then design and implement plans that build on their assets and economic strengths.

Stronger Economies Together – commonly referred to as the acronym SET – is a USDA Rural Development initiative being brought to states like South Dakota in partnership with Extension to do just that.

The SET program allows regions within the state to apply for grant funding to participate in a year of educational sessions that bring regional leaders together to develop a regional economic development plan for their multi-county region. The second year of the grant provides technical assistance to regions working to implement that plan.

In 2012, two South Dakota regions were selected as the first in the state to participate in the SET program. They are the **Badlands/Bad River Region**, which includes Eastern Pennington, Haakon and Jackson Counties, and **James River Valley Region**, which includes Hand, Spink, Clark, Kingsbury, Beadle, and Jerauld counties.

In 2013, two additional South Dakota regions initiated the SET program. They are the **Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Region** and **Brookings Area Commute Region**, which includes Brookings, Kingsbury, Hamlin, Deuel and Moody counties.

Kenneth Sherin, a SDSU Extension community development field specialist in the Mitchell Regional Extension Center, has worked with a group of 15 individuals involved with the James River Valley Region for the past one and a half years. Sherin acknowledges that initially getting communities to start thinking regionally was a challenge, but over time they've begun to build networks among

their business resources, learn about one another's community assets and embrace the regional approach to marketing.

"By becoming more aware of the resources and needs in the region, the benefits of working regionally are being recognized," Sherin reports. Finding ways to keep youth engaged in communities, coordinating marketing of cultural events and places within the region, and developing business networks across the region are examples of topics the region has discussed.

In Western South Dakota, SDSU Extension community development field specialists Kari O'Neill and Peggy Schlechter have worked with nearly two dozen community members involved with planning for the Badlands/Bad River Region. Their group has discussed working together to create business opportunities within their region as opposed to viewing other communities as competitors.

Christine Sorensen, who works with USDA Rural Development in South Dakota, has also worked closely with implementing the SET program in both regions.

"Through this planning process a realization has emerged that economic development for this region is not necessarily about attracting large industries, but about supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, along with promoting the amenities and low cost of living that communities within the region offer," O'Neill says.

She adds, "With all the technology today, there are a lot of possibilities for businesses" – and ultimately, communities can look at developing stronger economies together.

Once SET regions have completed the initial planning process and have developed a detailed plan for their region, they then have the opportunity to apply for a "special assistance grant" that can be used to support more advanced regional data analyses or secure services from individuals with specific expertise needed to pursue implementation of regional goals.

Facilitating Food Networks

Efforts Assist Growing The Local Food System In South Dakota

“Local food” is a buzzword across the nation, with consumers increasingly interested in access to fresh, locally grown products. South Dakota is seeing that same trend.

In 2012, SDSU Extension was awarded a one-year, \$50,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant from USDA Rural Development to focus on “Building Capacity in the Local Food System in South Dakota.” SDSU Extension community development field specialists Kari O’Neill and Chris Zdorovtsov have overseen the program, and report that several successful local foods endeavors have been facilitated in the state as a result of the grant.

Bringing local food producers and resource providers together into a learning community has been a primary focus. “There was a need to assess what everyone was doing related to local foods across the state,” explains O’Neill.

To that end, the South Dakota Local Foods Collaboration was formed to bring several players from across the state together around the topic of local foods. Participants meet quarterly – often via telephone or video conference – to discuss and share ideas and work to increase the offering and sales of local foods.

“This has really facilitated the transfer of information and expertise among different groups,” O’Neill says.

In addition to SDSU Extension, entities involved with the collaborative effort include the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the Value Added Agriculture Development Center, USDA Rural Development, Dakota Rural Action and the Buy Fresh Buy Local South Dakota organization.

Regional networks of stakeholders have also been developed as part of this grant. These groups share needs they want to address, which are specific to that region’s local food system. As examples, a food coop in Vermillion is exploring expanding into a storefront; food producers in Eureka are discussing how to better market and distribute their locally made kuchen and sausage; an online food coop in the Brookings and Sioux Falls area is working to streamline transportation issues.

O’Neill says the regional approach – and collaborating with partner organizations and agencies in the state – has worked well for sharing knowledge and resources with the local foods audience. “With fewer Extension resources across the state, we need to work with partners and we need to do things differently. We’ve found a way to do that and to keep local

foods stakeholders informed and involved. It seems to be working well.”

As the local foods initiative in South Dakota evolves, O’Neill says SDSU Extension and its partners will strive to create an atmosphere that accepts and promotes local food purchasing and consumption. “Supporting each other and working in collaboration can help pull together more resources to create a larger economic impact,” O’Neill notes.

Online Center Established

The grant funding was also the impetus for development of an online local food information center offering one place to find information related to South Dakota local foods. The website, www.iGrowSDLocalFoods.org, went live in July 2013.

Zdorovtsov is excited about the site, noting, “We now have one place that brings all the information together for people interested in local foods.”

Topics related to entrepreneurship, education and community gardens, handling and processing, marketing and sales and regulations and certifications of local foods is being posted by SDSU Extension as well as several of the partner entities to create a library of resources online.



Encouraging & Empowering

Native American Program Assists Reservations In Striving For Healthy Food, Healthy Communities

Bountiful gardens are taking root on many of South Dakota's Reservations. They are the tangible results of the Healthy Food, Healthy Communities program initiated by SDSU Extension, which aims to help individuals living on Reservations provide nutritious foods for their family and community through training that focuses on raising their own food and livestock.

"We're working to empower people to create their own access to nutritious food and the means to address their own issues," explains Shawn Burke, SDSU Extension Native American Program Director.

In 2013 the Healthy Food, Healthy Communities program helped train and mentor individuals and families through the process of establishing, tending and then harvesting 50 backyard gardens.

"Food desert is a term the USDA gives to areas throughout the country where food access is limited; this describes Reservations in South Dakota," Burke explains. He adds, "For many living on Reservations, the only access they have to food is limited to a convenience store where very little fresh food is made available."

He continues, "The benefits of eating traditional foods are well understood in Indian Country. We're encouraging people to produce food for their own use, as a way of increasing the availability of locally-produced food on the reservations."

Burke reports that a highlight from the Healthy Food, Healthy Communities partnership and capacity building effort is the Soiled Hands Society on the Cheyenne River Reservation. This society is made up of several individuals and organizations interested in local food production and utilization. Other partnerships include Sinte Gleska University, Oglala Lakota College and the Intertribal Agriculture Council.

Training has been provided through workshops and hands-on demonstrations. Activities are dispersed throughout Reservation communities, to increase access in areas that are often unserved by educational programs.

"There is a great desire among many who live on Reservations throughout the country to develop self-sufficiency. Content has included gardening but also small livestock production, bee keeping and greenhouse/high tunnel systems. It's

an overall locally-driven effort toward food sovereignty," says Burke.

He adds that the program hopes to develop gardeners who will eventually turn their home gardens into commercial ventures. "The program has dual purposes – to increase the number of home gardeners, but at the same time train individuals who have been through the program to take their gardens to the next level and market their produce. It's a longer term objective.

"Creating an environment of trust is essential to successful programming on Reservations," Burke says. "We are looking at the big picture and long term outcomes with our partners, in terms of improved access to food, improved nutrition, and entrepreneurship. These communities have a lot of experience with programs beginning and then going away. Extension is not going away."



STIMULATING SCIENCE PROGRAMS, TOO

A “Summer Science Enrichment” initiative also took root and was offered to Native American youth in 2013. Two of the programs were offered on the Pine Ridge Reservation and another was offered through the Ateyapi Youth Mentorship Program in Rapid City.

4-H youth development field specialist Kathryn Reeves laid the groundwork for the programming in the spring of 2013 by visiting with Reservation school administrators and after school program coordinators to assess their interest and needs.

Reeves was able to team with two after school programs on Pine Ridge and provided science-based curriculum and materials for science enrichment that was offered for daily sessions in June. A total of 70 hours of science programming was offered during the month. A SDSU Extension science intern helped facilitate the curriculum delivery and transferred equipment between the two schools, while the coordinators of the summer programs were responsible for taking ownership of the programs.

“We want those we work with to take the lead and take ownership of these programs so that these efforts will be continued and sustained,” Reeves explains. She calls SDSU Extension’s role one of a facilitator.

“We’ve tried to make it a win-win effort,” she adds.

Topics covered in the summer sessions included everything from ecology and water conservation to flight and rocketry, aerospace and wind, physics, forensics and engineering. Most of the activities allowed for hands-on engagement with experiments. In total nearly 50 Pine Ridge youth were reached between the two different locations.

In Rapid City, working with the Ateyapi Youth Mentorship Program through Rural American Initiatives in the public schools, a relationship was also developed to build science programming into their efforts. Part of the students summer programming included field trips within the Black Hills, and Reeves then developed science-related programs to tie to those activities. Topics included grasslands, volcanoes, photography, wind and more.

Reeves says she hopes these efforts are helping plant the seeds for after school clubs to take root and grow. She is also hoping to see mentorships built between Reservation high school students and the after school science programs.

For 2014, Reeves says a 4-H Youth Advisor is now in place on the Pine Ridge Reservation and she will continue to work with that individual to keep the relationships with tribal schools growing and providing them science resources. “We want to provide support, but we want them to lead the way,” she concludes.



Far left: Students participating in the Rosebud Boys and Girls Club got to “play in the dirt” as they planted their own garden.

Center: A high tunnel, which was a joint effort between SDSU and Sinte Gleska University produced a successful bounty of flowers and food.

Left: Volunteers like Carmelita Sully of Sinte Gleska University were actively involved in tending some of the demonstration garden plots.

Evaluating Yields

Crop Performance Testing Provides Important, Unbiased Results

Which seed variety will perform best and is suited to specific environments? That's a question farmers ponder each year as they make their seed selection decisions. The SDSU Crop Performance Testing program is in place to help provide yield and performance data for farmers to base their decisions on.

Providing farmers with local and unbiased yield results on seed varieties sold in South Dakota is the focus of the program, explains Nathan Mueller, SDSU Extension agronomist. It's a cooperative effort between SDSU Extension and the SDSU Agricultural Experiment Station, and in 2013, 652 varieties or hybrids from nine different crops and 63 public or private entities were tested in field trials throughout South Dakota.

Mueller further explains, "Although seed companies run their own seed trials throughout the state, this program acts as an unbiased third-party to provide additional information to South Dakota farmers."

The nine crops tested in the SDSU Crop Performance program are corn, soybeans, spring wheat, winter wheat, oats, field peas, sorghum, sunflower and flax. Trials are set up in fields across the state to test seed performance locally so farmers can get a clear picture of how varieties perform in their soil type and growing conditions.

The environment into which a seed is planted has as much to do with production as anything," notes Randy Englund, executive director of the South Dakota Wheat Commission. "Our growers need to see how a seed will perform locally and base

their purchasing decisions on that - not how it performed in Kansas."

This year, the Wheat Commission used Checkoff dollars and helped fund a portion of the Crop Performance Trial, which focused on wheat varieties. The United Sorghum Checkoff and the SD Pulse Council help fund sorghum and field pea trials.

When setting up trials in farmers' fields, Mueller and his team ensure that all varieties are treated the same. The test plot is away from the edge of the field, and SDSU Crop Performance Testing staff plant all the plots using the same equipment. Because the plots are within the cooperator farmer's fields, they receive the same fertility plan, herbicides and pesticides as the rest of the farmer's crop. Cooperator farmers keep record of their management practices and share these with Mueller.

Trials are also conducted on three SDSU Agricultural Experiment Station Research Stations in eastern South Dakota.

Seed varieties or hybrids tested in the trial are sent in by private as well as public seed providers. In 2013 more than 63 private seed brands, distributors, and land-grant institutions enrolled their seed in the trial. Each corn, soybean, sunflower, wheat and winter wheat variety entered in the trial has an entrance fee paid by the participating companies to help cover costs of the program.

"This gives farmers a chance to look at private seed company wheat varieties along with those developed at our land-grant university," Englund notes.

As harvest results come in each fall, yield results from each variety and test plot are posted on iGrow.org for the public to view. Mueller encourages growers to monitor this information as it is posted each fall and to compare yield results as they prepare to make seed choices for the following year.

"Margins on the farm are tight. If a farmer can improve yields by even several bushels an acre by planting a variety that performs better in their growing conditions, that can have a significant impact on their bottom line," Mueller points out.

Bancroft farmer, Steve Weerts, is one of several farmers who volunteer to host performance trials in his fields each growing season. Weerts says, "I enjoy seeing results from what I do each day. Harvest is a time when you can see how the decisions you made at the beginning of the year work out. Of course, Mother Nature plays a role in that too," says the fifth-generation producer, who farms with his dad, Eugene and uncle, Erland.

Once his yield results are in, Weerts cross checks how the seed variety from his fields fared against seed variety results from SDSU's Crop Performance Testing program. Based on what he discovers, Weerts modifies future seed purchasing decisions.

"We think there is a lot of value in seeing how different varieties perform in our area," Weerts says.

In addition to Mueller, the SDSU Crop Performance Testing team includes Kevin Kirby, Shawn Hawks, Bruce Swan, Chris Graham, Kathy Grady, and Lee Gilbertson. To view results from the 2013 Crop Performance Testing program visit, iGrow.org, click on the Agronomy tab and look in the "Resource Library" or view their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SDSUExtCropTesting.

The SDSU Crop Performance Testing launched their Facebook page in February 2013, which has now connected with stakeholders in 216 communities across South Dakota. Pictures, planting progress, crop condition updates and harvest results are all posted for stakeholders to view and follow.

Holistic Approach

Integrated Pest Management Offers Array Of Options

When it comes to crop protection, SDSU Extension encourages growers to consider an array of control options, explains Darrell Deneke, SDSU Extension Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator.

“There are several different types of pest and disease control available to farmers; from cultural, mechanical and biological to chemical,” Deneke says. “Through IPM, we don’t discourage the use of pesticides. However, we do encourage growers to consider utilizing other control methods as well.”

The idea, Deneke explains, is that if growers combine control methods, they not only reduce their chemical footprint, but they may end up with a better, more cost-effective outcome.

“Growers work within tight profit margins. If we can provide them with effective control options that are less expensive than pesticides to keep a pest below threshold levels, then it’s a win-win,” he says. “However, if a pest reaches a critical threshold level, then the best control option is likely pesticides.”

Control options Deneke refers to include: cultural; planting a pest-resistant crop variety, or altering planting or harvest dates; mechanical; tilling or mowing to create an insect barrier; biological; using

a pest’s natural enemies to control it and chemical; through the responsible use of pesticides.

Playing an integral role in SDSU Extension outreach since the early 1950s, IPM is not a new concept. In fact, Deneke says IPM has been part of most field management plans for years. “Most farmers don’t even realize it, but through crop rotation, they have been using integrated pest management for years. Crop rotation is an effective option that breaks up the life cycle of certain pests or weeds.”

To provide South Dakota’s growers with information on the latest control options, SDSU Extension trains agronomy professionals annually during field schools and update workshops.

“Today’s farmers rely on their agronomists for field input and treatment recommendations. Training these professionals is the most effective way to reach growers because they work with growers on a one-on-one basis,” Deneke says.

About 100 agronomy professionals representing over 250,000 acres throughout the state attended field schools and update workshops in 2013. Hosted at research farms across the state, SDSU Extension staff and SDSU faculty provided research-based information and IPM recommendations in the following areas:

foliar and root borne diseases in corn, soybeans, wheat and sunflowers and timing for proper fungicide treatments; new and emerging insects and timing of treatment for insects; herbicide timing and programs; resistance management and fertility management.

“We’ve become very pesticide dependent, which has increased pest resistance issues in crop fields. Pesticide resistance is one of many reasons agronomy professionals and the farmers they serve need to look at all IPM options,” Deneke says.

Throughout the winter, SDSU Extension also shares IPM options with growers through state-wide meetings. SDSU Extension partners with South Dakota Independent Crop Consultants, the South Dakota Agri-Business Association and the SDSU Plant Science Department to host the field trainings and update workshops.

Right: Paul Johnson, Agronomy Field Specialist, Watertown Regional Center, presents information at the IPM Field School.





Estate planning can often feel daunting to farm and ranch families. How do they go about the process? What tools exist for estate transfer that best fit their operation? Who are professionals that offer expertise?

Since 2006, SDSU Extension has been helping address that need by offering a program focused on estate planning and farm transitions titled “Sustaining the Legacy.”

Heather Gessner, a livestock business management field specialist with SDSU Extension explains, “We have really focused on being a resource for farm and ranch families who are working on estate planning.”

She shares that a 2005 needs assessment survey conducted by Extension across the state revealed that estate planning was the top-ranking concern among both crop and livestock producers as well as agribusiness and industry professionals.

Gessner points out that the average age of farmers and ranchers in South Dakota is over 55 years-of-age. And, the next generation, producers in the 35-45 year-old age group, decreased over 40% from 2002 to 2007. In addition, another statistic indicates over half (52%) of family farm and ranch operations in South Dakota do not have an estate plan.

To help foster a future generation of farmers and ranchers, Gessner and her Extension colleagues developed the multi-day Sustaining the Legacy program and have been offering it several times a year throughout the state since 2006. The program aims to provide the tools necessary to help families start estate and transition plans. The South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council has been involved as a sponsor of the program since it was launched.

Gessner shares that the program includes four facets – the first of which is a focus on communication. “We define personalities and talk a lot about communication and listening skills,” she explains. Developing a process for family meetings and developing goals is also discussed.

Secondly, the program covers the various tools that exist to create an estate plan. Topics covered include: wills and probate, trusts, life insurance, long-term care insurance, business structures and many more.

Because every family operation and their goals are unique, Gessner emphasizes that everyone’s plan will be different, saying, “You can’t implement your neighbor’s estate plan.”

The third aspect of the program is face-to-face meetings between farm and ranch participants and industry professionals (insurance agents, lawyers, funeral home directors, financial planners, estate planners, Department of Social Services staff, Department of Ag staff, etc.). The goal of these sessions is to provide participants information about the many tools available to create an estate plan and/or transition plan and ideas on how to apply those tools to their own operation. “It really gives participants a chance to visit with these professionals and learn what services are offered to better accomplish the goals of their operation,” Gessner says.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, SDSU Extension staff like Gessner follow up with participants after they’ve completed the Sustaining the Legacy workshop series. Gessner says, “This is not a splash-and-dash program. We really strive to establish a relationship with the participants and continue to be a resource for them to come to as they work through the estate planning process.”

Overall, SDSU Extension’s efforts are having a positive impact on estate planning efforts by families. Follow-up survey results from 2008-2012 participants (a total of 279 family operations with 82 responding

to the survey) showed 80% have started their estate plan and 74% have started a transition plan. For estate plans, 39% of participants consider their plan three-fourths or more completed, with 15% declaring it fully completed. For transition plans, 34% consider their plan three-fourths or more completed, with 16% indicating full completion.

Through the survey, participants also indicated specific changes made. For instance, 51% indicated they updated their will and 48% created a trust. Other actions included modifying life insurance policies and gifting assets, completing funeral planning, adding retirement accounts and selling assets to heirs. Over half of

“Thank you for offering the estate planning classes. Without the classes we would have put off our estate planning. The classes were very interesting. Doing our homework was a challenge. At times we thought of “burying our heads in the sand” and letting our children figure it out. Paying excessive taxes kept us on track.... We have and will continue to recommend these estate planning classes to our friends and family.”

survey respondents also indicated that they improved their communication with family members and estate planning professionals.

Editor’s Note: Heather Gessner was named a national Search for Excellence in Farm and Ranch Management winner at the National

Association of County Agricultural Agents Conference in 2013, for her leadership with the Sustaining the Legacy program. For more information about the workshop series, contact Gessner at the Sioux Falls Regional Extension Center, 605-782-3290, heather.gessner@sdsstate.edu

SDSU
Extension
AG CEO STEP



TAKE THE
NEXT
STEP



Ag CEO Training Enhances Farm & Ranch Business Skills

To provide the next generation of South Dakota agriculture producers with the business skills essential in today’s agriculture industry, SDSU Extension developed Ag CEO in 2012. The educational program is now offered several times a year throughout the state and is designed to teach farmers and ranchers – especially those who are just beginning in the industry – to use a systems approach to farm business planning.

With rapid changes occurring in agriculture, there is a need for producers to improve on record keeping and be financially knowledgeable in operating future farms and ranches, explains Shannon Sand, a livestock business management field specialist with SDSU Extension.

Strategic planning, calculating breakeven costs, developing budgets and

creating benchmarks to analyze short and long-term financial performance, along with progress toward production goals, are the main focuses of Ag CEO – and are key business principles for establishing a profitable and sustainable operation, notes Sand.

Additionally, the Ag CEO program is fostering connections between new producers with seasoned and successful producers and agriculture leaders, as well as creating more awareness among ag producers for the knowledge and research base found within the university system.

As a result of their participation in the AgCEO program, past participants have shared these comments:

- During the drought, livestock numbers had to be changed due to the availability of hay, forage, and other feedstuffs, and we had the information to make a better informed decision.”

- “At this point we are using daily/monthly costs to help us with decisions and we are using our projections more effectively to finish the year and begin plans for the next year.”

The Ag CEO program is geared toward beginning farmers and ranchers, but is available to any producer. The format features four weekly sessions held within a community, typically for two hours in the evening. A fifth session is offered to producers wanting to complete the requirements for the FSA Borrower Training. The AgCEO program is open to crop and livestock producers; a fee is charged for participation.

To date, more than 150 producers in the state have participated. To learn more about AgCEO, email shannon.sand@sdsstate.edu or call 605-394-1722.

Reinvigorating An Industry

SheepSD Program Provides Tools For Growth

With sheep numbers declining across the nation, efforts to help producers enter the sheep business and expand are being explored. In South Dakota, a new program was launched in 2012 called SheepSD. With leadership from SDSU Extension and funding from the American Sheep Industry (ASI), the three-year program is designed to help beginning sheep producers gain knowledge and experience to be successful in the sheep industry.

Dave Ollila (*pictured at right*), an SDSU Extension sheep field specialist based in Rapid City, has spearheaded the program which has 17 participants. Over the past two years, SheepSD has offered educational programs related to flock nutrition and health, breeding strategies, lamb and wool marketing and other topics. The participants have also visited sheep and wool operations and attended industry symposium in the region, and they have been encouraged to develop

mentorships with established sheep producers.

In just two years, Ollila reports, “All sheepSD participants have been impacted through the programming and have modified or changed their sheep management practices as a result.” Specifically, 12 of the original 17 SheepSD participants have significantly expanded their flocks – some by 50 head, some by hundreds – and are demonstrating a genuine commitment to the sheep industry.

Ollila adds that the mentor relationships are progressing with more than half of the participants able to identify a “go-to” established producer that they rely upon for support.

One mentor-mentee relationship was so successful that the pair has already established a transition plan allowing the new generation – who is not a family member – to take over the existing sheep operation from a retiring producer in 2014.



Ollila says the SheepSD program has provided the opportunity to bring sheep people together, and he says feedback has indicated they are appreciative of the effort.

New Beef Conference Launched

The Northern States Beef Conference hosted by SDSU Extension in collaboration with NDSU Extension Service and the University of Minnesota Extension made its debut in January 2013. The event was initiated by SDSU Extension cow/calf field specialist Warren Rusche and state beef specialist Julie Walker to offer current industry market and research information to beef producers in eastern South Dakota and the surrounding region.

Held in Watertown, SD, the one-and-a-half day event included presentations by more than 15 regionally and nationally recognized beef industry speakers as well as a trade show with nearly two dozen industry exhibitors representing animal health, feed, equipment and building sectors.

More than 150 people attended the inaugural Northern States Beef Conference representing the three host states as well as Iowa and Nebraska.

Surveys completed by participants at the end of the conference showed that the average producer in attendance managed a 336 head cow/calf herd. Several of the attendees also backgrounded an average of nearly 400 calves and had feeding facilities with the capacity for 3,400 head.

Participants also revealed positive feedback via the surveys, including:

- 100% of respondents agreed that the value of the conference outweighed the costs of attending (such as registration fee, travel and time).
- 86% planned on making some management changes to their operation based on information presented at the conference. (*See sidebar highlighting intended management changes.*)

He explains, “As the sheep industry has contracted and decreased in numbers, there are fewer banking officials, feed representatives and even veterinarians who are familiar with the sheep industry.” Because of SheepSD, Ollila and others have spent time visiting with bankers and others to provide them a better knowledge of the industry.

Looking to the future, Ollila says SDSU Extension will strive to continue working to help the state’s sheep producers address three major components: 1) developing stable and consistent markets for lamb and wool; 2) securing access to financing; and 3) improving predator control.

Ollila says the key to many of these challenges is simply helping producers become aware of the programs and resources that exist. One example is the state and federal programs available for predator control.

“SDSU Extension is a connector – a link – to help folks understand or be aware of the resources that are at hand to help them be successful... Once they are aware of those resources a light bulb goes on and they are able to be more productive and efficient,” Ollila concludes.

The SheepSD program was mirrored after the BeefSD program which is offered for beginning beef producers in the state. For more about both programs, visit iGrow.org and click on the Livestock tab.



Rusche explains that the Range Beef Cow Symposium is coordinated biannually by SDSU Extension along with the University of Nebraska, Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming, but when it rotates to South Dakota it is held in Rapid City. Thus, Rusche and Walker felt there was a need to hold a similar beef conference in the eastern part of the state on alternating years from the Range Beef Cow Symposium.

Rusche reports that comments from participants have indicated interest for the next conference. With the every-other-year schedule for the event, the conference and trade show are being planned for December 2014 or January 2015.

Pictured above: More than 150 people from five states attended the inaugural Northern States Beef Conference held in Watertown, SD, in January 2013.

Producers Plan Management Changes

As a result of attending the 2013 Northern States Beef Conference held in Watertown, participants indicated the information presented would prompt them to consider management changes to their operation. They shared their comments in a post-conference survey, and the four most common changes being considered by attendees were:

- 1) changing reproductive management practices for heifers and cows;
- 2) making more-efficient use of grazing resources, including cover crops;
- 3) changing ration and feeding practices to control costs;
- 4) altering marketing plans and taking other risk management steps to better enable their business to withstand unexpected shocks.

Championing Character

Opportunities Offered For Youth, Communities

“Improving character traits and being a better person is a lifelong process. It’s something we can all work on day-to-day,” notes Karelyn Farrand, who is a 4-H youth character education field specialist with SDSU Extension.

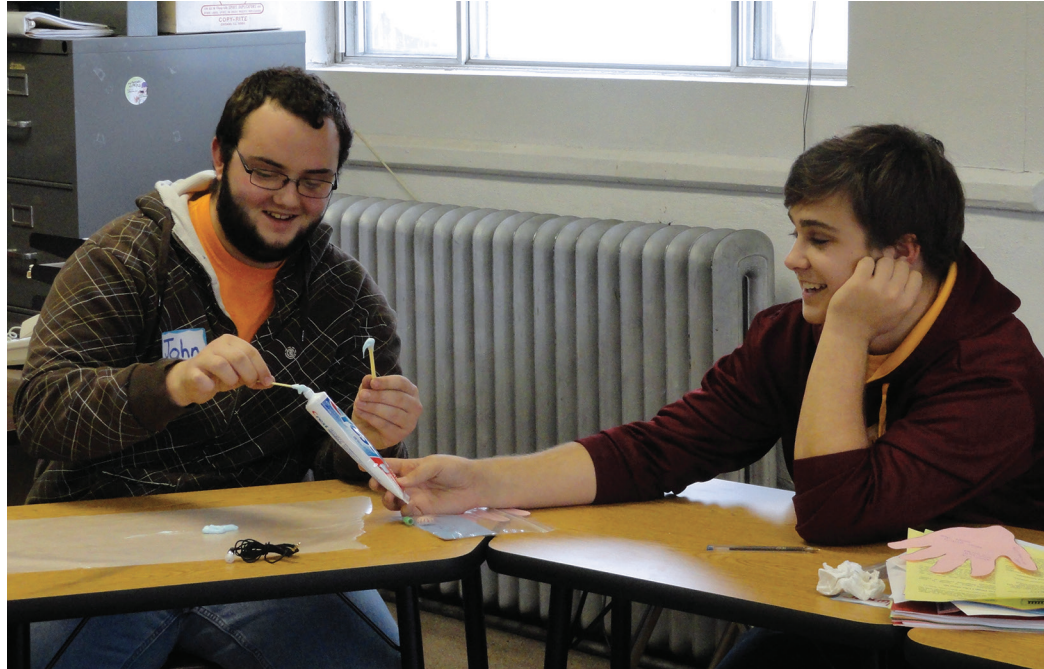
Since joining SDSU in 1999, Farrand has been encouraging inclusion of character education lessons and trainings in schools and communities across the state. She’s proud to report that through a variety of program efforts character education reaches over 40,000 youth in the state annually.

Initial program efforts focused on the CHARACTER COUNTS!™ curriculum and the Six Pillars of Character™ – Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. While that curriculum is still utilized, in recent years Farrand’s work has been broadened to a general focus on character education.

She explains that this allows for more resources to be used to fit the evolving needs of the audiences she serves. Traditionally that has been providing classroom resources to schools – which continues to be done, but it is also expanding to include more opportunities for teens to be part of the character education lesson delivery process.

Farrand says this includes opportunities for teens to participate in different levels of training and then take on a leadership role to share character education lessons and activities in an elementary classroom, at school assemblies or as part of a community event.

One facet is the “Teens as Teachers” T.E.A.M. model – which stands for Teens Educating through Advocacy and Mentorship. With this approach a group of 4 to 8 teens apply to receive training to deliver a specific curriculum to elementary youth in their community. If specific requirements are met for the program, the teen teachers have the opportunity to earn a certificate and potentially scholarships from the state or local sponsors.



Similarly, the Hometown Heroes program honors students who are selected by their school for exemplifying good character in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Farrand says these students also have the opportunity to participate in sharing character education messages and lessons with elementary students and peers to earn scholarships for their efforts.

All in all, she says the goal is to promote character education programming in schools while also allowing teen teachers to reconfirm their own character qualities and leadership skills.

In the future, Farrand says other content areas, such as Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) are looking at replicating the successful student delivery models being used by the state’s character education program.

Additionally, Farrand says she is continuing to look at adapting materials to the audiences she serves. She indicates that there is growing need for inclusion of character education training in community efforts and in the workplace.

To continue reaching out to counselors and educators, partnering with existing conferences that serve that audience is being evaluated. Farrand says a virtual

character education conference may also be a future possibility.

“We are at some transition points with our programming. It never stays the same, we are always trying to meet the needs of the people we serve.” Farrand is currently working with a learning community across the state to assess the character education needs for the future.

Ultimately, she says, “The goal is to provide the tools for raising youth who are the business and community leaders for tomorrow.”

Left: In November 2013, Wessington Springs sophomore students participated in the “SD 4-H CC! Six Pillar Teens as Teachers” training. They learned the “Don’t Toothpaste” concept to share with elementary students.

Below far left: In January 2014, Burke’s High School Teens as Teachers (TAT) discuss how to implement the *Take A Stand* curriculum in their elementary school. The *Take A Stand* curriculum offers students conflict management tools to help prevent bullying.



Above center left: Wessington Springs students learn the importance of every person in a team by simulating a “Well Oiled Machine.”

Above: Culminating the Teens as Teacher training in Wessington Springs, high school students lead an elementary CHARACTER COUNTS! assembly on Respect. The students demonstrated the importance of using Respect on the school bus.



Programs Help Students Develop Positive Decision Making Skills

Preparing adolescents for a successful future is the focus of two evidenced-based youth and family programs offered by SDSU Extension and the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Grant. Both programs are designed to be preventative and help youth develop skills for making wise choices, explains Ann Michelle Daniels. She is a SDSU Extension family life, parenting and child care specialist on the SDSU campus and oversees both programs.

Life Skills is a drug and alcohol prevention program delivered through school counselors, teachers and administrators who have received training and certification from a nationally certified Botvin LifeSkills trainer. SDSU Extension helps schools with the materials and teachers needed for this program. Currently it is being offered in both the Sisseton and Lake Andes schools.

Daniels explains that the Life Skills program is designed to teach kids about the dangers of drug and alcohol use and to provide resources to help them if substance abuse affects their family. “The Life Skills program has been shown to instill some preventative groundwork with young people,” she adds.

The second program available is called **Strengthening Families 10 to 14**. It’s a program that is offered statewide and is designed for students to attend with a parent. The focus is on preventing teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, while also reinforcing parenting skills and building family communication and resilience.

Daniels explains it as a “family skill-building” format with weekly sessions for

seven weeks. Each two-hour session is led by three certified facilitators and includes hands-on activities and discussions. Because of the interactive format, the program is limited to 8 to 10 families per session.

Used nationwide and in several other countries, Daniels says the curriculum has been shown to be effective in: delaying the age at which kids experiment with drugs or alcohol; lowering aggression levels and reducing conduct problems in school; and improving teens ability to handle peer pressure as well as communicate with their family.

Overall, Daniels says the Strengthening Families 10-14 program aims to help families be “the best they can be,” with the goal to build youth skills and give parents more tools to help their children become responsible young adults who are making good decisions.

SDSU Extension has trained and certified over 100 facilitators statewide to provide this program to South Dakota communities.

Both the Life Skills and Strengthening Families programs have been funded through a five-year grant from Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR). Other SDSU Extension staff involved with both programs include Andrea Knox, SDSU Extension 4-H youth development and resiliency field specialist; Jessica Kirkham, SDSU Extension prevention coordinator; Tracey Lehrke, 4-H youth program advisor-Roberts county; Stephanie Chambliss, 4-H youth program advisor-Charles Mix county; and Amber Letcher, youth development specialist.



Studying Backyard Biodiversity

Citizen scientists help observe, collect data on state's pollinators

With a PhD in entomology, Amanda Bachmann has a fondness for insects – particularly beneficial ones like honey bees. So, when Bachmann joined SDSU Extension in January 2013 as a consumer horticulture field specialist based in Pierre, she saw an opportunity to involve citizens across the state in collecting information about the native pollinators and other beneficial insects they might observe in their own backyard.

Bachmann notes that there has been information collected nationwide on

pollinator populations, but not a lot of data exists specific to South Dakota. She explains that insect pollinators, like honey bees, are important because they are needed to pollinate many of our fruits, vegetables and flowers, as well as major agronomic crops.

Tracking trends in the number of pollinators observed can help researchers gain a better understanding of pollinator populations and diversity. It can also help engage people in learning more about pollinators and the habitat features that benefit them, Bachmann says.

Thus, Bachmann launched a program called Backyard Biodiversity in July 2013. Through the Master Gardener network in the state, she had 19 volunteers spend 20 minutes weekly observing insects in their backyards over a four-week period. That effort resulted in the observation of more than 550 pollinator visits to flowers and over 400 insects captured in bee bowls.

For 2014, Bachmann hopes to expand the program to include even more citizen scientist volunteers across the state – including youth. Observations will begin June 1 and data will be collected weekly or once every two weeks through Sept. 30. Bachmann is utilizing webinars to train participants, and says since they're recorded (accessible on iGrow), interested participants can access them anytime for reference.

Bachmann is excited to see the Backyard Biodiversity program grow, and says, "It's been a great program to get people engaged in pollinator conservation and learn about adding native plants and habitat features to their yards and gardens to benefit these important insects."

For more information about the Backyard Biodiversity program, email Amanda.Bachmann@sdstate.edu or call 605-773-8120.

OFFERING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE FOR TURF

In South Dakota, mention the word Extension and you're most likely to think of someone offering expertise related to crops and livestock – maybe gardening and 4-H too. But what about turfgrass – as in lawns, golf courses, sports fields and commercial landscaping?

That's the role David Chalmers fills as a turfgrass Extension associate within SDSU's Plant Science Department. Through one-on-one meetings, presentations at conferences and workshops, and educational articles and publications written for iGrow, Chalmers, who joined SDSU in July 2012, strives to be a resource for everyone from home consumers to grounds and sports turf managers, sod producers, golf course superintendents and landscape industry professionals.

No matter the audience, Chalmers says, "We want to help people use their resources wisely – economically, efficiently, and effectively. Extension strives to help people find what works best for them."

With regard to nutrient management of fertilizers, Chalmers says, "That's a part of every presentation I give on lawn care – helping people understand the best management practices of using properly measured amounts to mitigate any issues with surface and ground water."

Dealing with dry times and periodic drought is another topic Chalmers frequently addresses with his clientele.

Looking ahead, Chalmers aims to continue building partnerships with the turfgrass industry and serving as a resource to them. He has been involved in offering programs to the South Dakota Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents of America and the South Dakota Nursery Landscape Association as well as developing continuing education programs for individuals employed in the industry and workshops for lawn enthusiasts.

For lawn and turf related articles visit www.iGrow.org/gardens/gardening and click the Lawn & Turf tab.



Tribute to a "Difference Maker"

The week of January 13 was a tough one for many folks in the SDSU family, especially those in the Natural Resource Management Department. Dr. Dave Willis died in the early morning hours of January 13. Dr. Willis was our department head.

My kids will be quick to point out how frequently I give lectures on how to best live your life. The messages usually include phrases like "treat others well, work hard, be a good listener, be kind, be generous," and the list goes on.

I realize now I could have spared them the torture of my lectures. I could have simply introduced them to Dr. Willis and told them, "Follow this man around for a while, pay attention to how he goes about living his life, and then go try to live yours the same way."

Much of what I do every day is to encourage others to make a difference. It seems appropriate to refer to Dr. Willis and his impact on others. His students, his colleagues and his friends and family are better off for having crossed paths with him. He was thoughtful, humble and kind. He was the definition of a true gentleman. There can be no doubt that he made a difference in this world.

I am grateful that there are people like Dave Willis who provide us with examples of what "difference makers" look like. If you didn't have the pleasure of meeting Dave Willis, my hope is you have someone in your life like him. Rather than asking you to sit through one of my captive lectures on life skills, I would simply ask you to "follow that person around for a while, pay attention to how they go about living their life, and then go to live yours in a similar manner."

MIKE BARBER '97



HEADHOUSE AND GREENHOUSE FACILITY

The work being done at SDSU by faculty and students in the areas of plant science, horticulture, botany, agronomy, range science and biology has long had a profound impact on agriculture throughout our region. Having modern facilities to accommodate such important work is paramount.

In 2012, work that could have potentially been done at SDSU in these areas would have required nearly 23,000 square feet of greenhouse space. Our current facilities total just over 16,000 square feet of usable greenhouse space. This is a clear illustration of the need. It has become clear in recent years that the needs of our students, our faculty and the industries impacted by our work will require SDSU to expand its Headhouse and Greenhouse facilities.

Friends of SDSU and plant science enthusiasts are invited to support this important effort for the Headhouse and Greenhouse Facility.

For more information or to make a contribution, please contact the SDSU Foundation:

Mike Barber, Development Director
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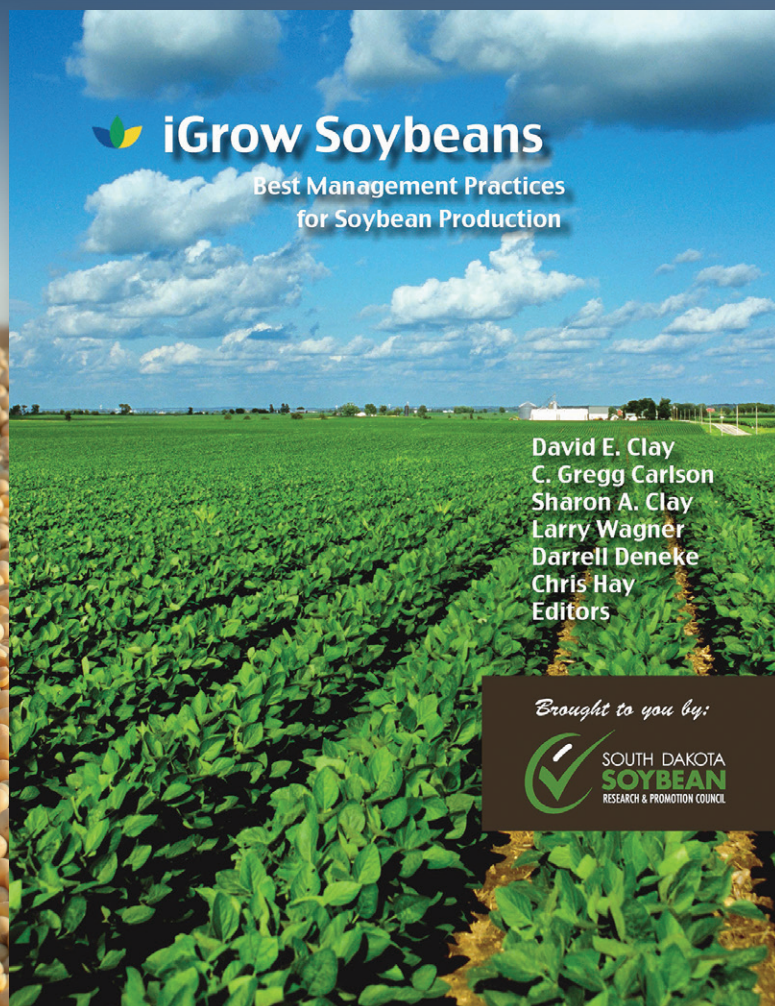
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iGrow Soybeans: Now available in iBooks on your iPad

Featuring Best Management Practices For Growing 100-Bushel Soybeans

The iGrow Soybeans Manual is a culmination of a 5-year research project with South Dakota State University (SDSU), focusing on best management practices (BMP) – from planting to harvesting – for soybean production in South Dakota.

Chapters provide information on Growing 100-Bushel Soybeans; Seed Treatments; Herbicide Resistant Weeds; Starter Fertilizers and much more.



David E. Clay
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The iGrow Soybeans BMP Manual was funded by the South Dakota soybean checkoff.