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Extension Program Needs of Low-Income Rural Families: Proceedings of a Seminar

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EXTENSION PROGRAM NEEDS OF
LOW-INCOME RURAL FAMILIES:
PROCEEDINGS OF A SEMINAR

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND FOR SEMINAR

Gene Nelson

My first objective is to set the tone for this seminar and define the problem for discussion. The following quote is from the report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, The People Left Behind: "Rural Poverty is so widespread, and so acute as to be a national disgrace. . ."

Let's take a look at rural poverty in Oregon (Table 1). According to the 1970 Census, the total population for the state was 2,043,048. That was split between urban and rural where rural involves everything except urbanized areas (areas with populations of 2,500 or more). About 11.5 percent of Oregon's population reported income below the poverty level. Poverty level income is based on a formula that takes into consideration the size of the family, the sex and the age of the family head, and whether the residence is a farm or not. A nonfarm family of four with a male head would be classified as being below poverty if the income was less than \$3,745.

Table 1. Oregon Population, Urban and Rural, All Persons and Those with Below Poverty-Level Income

Item	Total State	Urban	Rural
All persons.....	2,043,048	1,361,414	681,634
Below poverty.....	234,848	148,018	86,830
Percent.....	11.5	10.9	12.7

In the urban areas the percentage with below poverty level incomes was 10.9 and in the rural areas 12.7 percent. Looking at this another way, 33 percent of Oregon's total population lived in rural areas, but 37 percent of Oregon's population with incomes below poverty live in rural areas.

Now I want to knock down a couple of myths regarding rural poverty for Oregon. The first myth is that this is largely an agricultural problem, that these are small farmers, and we can solve it by better farm management. Looking

at the Census figures (Table 2), we see that most of the rural population does not live on farms. For those that are below poverty, the ratio is 4.6 to 1, nonfarm to farm. Also a higher percentage of the nonfarm rural population was below poverty, compared to the farm population. The rural poverty problem is not a farm problem.

Table 2. Oregon Rural Population, Farm and Nonfarm, All Persons and Those with Below Poverty-Level Income

Item	Total rural	Farm	Nonfarm
All persons.....	681,634	132,793	548,841
Below poverty.....	86,830	15,373	71,457
Percent.....	12.7	11.6	13.0

The other myth involves minorities (Table 3). The poverty problem is relatively more acute with races other than white (27.8 percent of other races living in rural areas were below poverty). However, in terms of absolute numbers there are many more white rural poor in Oregon than other poor.

Table 3. Oregon Rural Population, White and Other Races, All Persons and Those with Below Poverty-Level Income

Item	Total rural	Other races	White
All persons.....	681,634	10,489	671,145
Below poverty.....	86,830	2,911	83,919
Percent.....	12.7	27.8	12.5

It is very difficult to determine the characteristics of this rural poor population. However, I was able to take some statistics from the 1970 Census of Population (Table 4). Comparing all rural families to those below poverty, the mean family size is just a little larger for those below poverty. About 14.8 percent of those below poverty were on public assistance compared to 4.3 for all rural families. The percent of families

with a female head was larger for those below poverty. The percent with heads 65 and over indicates poverty tends to be more of a problem with older people.

Table 4. Characteristics of Rural Families and Unrelated Individuals, Total Population and Those with Below Poverty-Level Income

Item	Total rural	Below poverty
<u>Families</u>		
Mean size.....	3.54	3.60
% with public assistance.....	4.30	14.80
% with children under 18.....	56.60	56.20
% with female head.....	5.40	18.40
% with heads 65 and over.....	15.10	25.70
<u>Unrelated individuals</u>		
% with public assistance.....	5.40	9.20
% 65 and over.....	40.80	48.60

For unrelated individuals, the percent on public assistance again was a little higher for those below poverty. The percent of unrelated individuals below poverty who were 65 and over was 48.6.

Those in poverty represent many age groups, many educational levels, many sizes of families and many situations. We should be very careful of saying that people in poverty have "this characteristic" and "this" is their one problem. We have to look at it in a very broad perspective, looking at all the types of situations that are represented in this population.

Table 5 gives the incidence of rural poverty in Oregon by county. We have the numbers of people and also the percent of people below poverty. Be careful not to look strictly at the percentage or strictly at the magnitude. You should look at both. The number indicates the extent of the problem while the percentage indicates its intensity.

Table 5. Incidence of Rural Poverty by County, Oregon, 1970 Census

County	Total Population	Rural Population		
		Total	Below poverty	Percent
Baker.....	14,919	5,565	1,341	24.1
Benton.....	53,776	18,623	1,984	10.7
Clackamas.....	166,088	62,064	6,474	10.4
Clatsop.....	28,473	13,734	2,014	14.7
Columbia.....	28,790	22,578	2,538	11.2
Coos.....	56,515	27,622	3,052	11.0
Crook.....	9,985	5,884	505	8.6
Curry.....	13,006	10,286	1,501	14.6
Deschutes.....	30,442	13,011	1,638	12.6
Douglas.....	71,743	47,306	6,389	13.5
Gilliam.....	2,246	2,262	198	8.6
Grant.....	7,092	7,076	895	12.6
Harney.....	7,215	3,897	290	7.4
Hood River....	13,187	9,196	1,306	14.2
Jackson.....	94,533	42,249	5,245	12.4
Jefferson.....	8,548	8,548	1,257	14.7
Josephine.....	35,746	17,132	3,228	18.8
Klamath.....	50,021	18,500	2,735	14.8
Lake.....	6,343	3,611	650	18.0
Lane.....	213,358	64,571	7,317	11.3
Lincoln.....	25,755	13,782	2,144	15.6
Linn.....	71,914	43,363	4,958	11.4
Malheur.....	23,169	14,026	2,846	20.3
Marion.....	151,309	49,995	7,553	15.1
Morrow.....	4,465	4,465	513	11.5
Multnomah.....	556,667	14,428	1,212	8.4
Polk.....	35,349	14,552	1,866	12.8
Sherman.....	2,159	2,147	326	15.2
Tillamook.....	17,910	13,954	1,983	14.2
Umatilla.....	44,923	22,781	3,181	14.0
Union.....	19,377	9,732	929	9.5
Wallowa.....	6,247	6,247	976	15.6
Wasco.....	20,133	9,710	1,045	10.8
Washington....	157,920	40,488	3,417	8.4
Wheeler.....	1,743	1,819	201	11.1
Yamhill.....	40,319	23,670	3,123	13.2

How does this relate to Extension's role? How well is Extension actually serving these people? The assumption is that we are not serving them as well as we might. From observations in other states and here, disadvantaged people are not inclined to seek help, and the schedules of county agents do not leave time to initiate requests. This means a different kind of program, a different level of resources, and a different effort is required to meet the needs of low-income rural people.

We have called this seminar to look at some of these needs and talk about what might be done from the point of view of the total Extension Service. First, we have assembled a panel to discuss what Extension is presently doing in this area. Next we will discuss the plans that have been made for a pilot program. Then we will break up into small groups and discuss (1) what some high priority subject matter needs might be for this particular audience, and (2) what we need to consider as we deliver programs to this audience.

THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

Marie Bussard

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a federally funded program administered through the Cooperative Extension Service in all 50 states plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The primary focus of EFNEP is to help limited-income families acquire the knowledge, skills, and changed behavior necessary to achieve nutritionally adequate diets.

Funding is from Smith-Lever monies and is based on a percentage plus an allowance dependent upon the total number of economically disadvantaged in each state. Oregon has selected eleven counties in which to conduct the EFNEP program. This selection took into consideration the number of low-income families, their location, and the availability of a qualified Extension Home Economist to conduct the necessary Aide Training Sessions and to manage the evaluation and reporting aspects.

Our biggest units are in Portland, Salem, and Eugene where there are concentrations of limited-income families. However, there are also units in Polk, Washington, Yamhill, Malheur, Baker, Douglas, Jefferson, and Umatilla counties that could be termed "rural programs."

One of the strengths of our program is the paid Nutrition Aide who is selected from the target audience. Experience with, or a special understanding of, minority group problems is an important qualification for the job. The Aide should also be intelligent, reasonably communicative, willing to learn, and have a deep desire to help other limited-income families. There are no education or work experience requirements for applicants.

The Aides attend a three week concentrated training session conducted by the Extension Home Economist. The subject matter of this training program includes: How to make house calls, working with others, keeping records, referral agencies, and pertinent subject matter in food and nutrition. Aides are then assigned to families who have been referred to EFNEP or they may "find" additional families by knocking on doors in known low-income areas. Each week thereafter the Aides confer with the Aide Supervisor to evaluate the week's work and plan their coming week's contacts. They also attend a weekly training session conducted by the Extension Agent to help them answer the problems they encounter and to add to their subject matter background.

We find that our Aides relate much better to the limited-income families than the professionals do. Their knowledge of the culture, problems, and empathy with individuals will gain them access to homes where

the professional would never be accepted. Disadvantaged persons often feel that the professional cannot possibly understand their needs and problems because he has never experienced them. There is seldom such a credibility gap between the Aides and their families.

In working with limited-income families we have found that they are not group oriented. They do not respond to written notices of meetings. They are often suspicious of their neighbors and will not invite them into their homes. Their transportation facilities are undependable and often non-existent. Since they are not oriented to group meetings or time schedules, planning for a meeting time is often unrewarding. As a result of these and other factors, most of the contacts made with families are on a one-to-one basis. It is considered a real success when the Aide is able to get three homemakers together in one home.

One's yardstick for measuring success must be changed. Advances are made in small, almost imperceptible steps, not in obvious strides that are more common amongst the middle-income families. One needs to be psychologically prepared for the fearful hesitancy with which new ideas are accepted, if at all, by those who have suffered many failures. Endless patience and understanding are required to accept the slow rate of change.

In order to have a successful program involving Aides from limited-income families, one must have the program well outlined and carefully planned. Job descriptions should be discussed and agreed upon individually, and frequently. One must provide constant understanding support of the Aide and not expect more than the person is capable of achieving. In other words, close and sympathetic supervision is imperative. Many agents are finding themselves unprepared for the supervisory role they must now play in their profession. This requires support and training for the agent too by their supervisors.

An emphasis on numbers as an evaluation measure needs to be re-examined when working with low-income families. Skills in recruiting volunteers may also need to be developed in order to accomplish the job to be done. Educating community leaders in understanding the different needs of those with limited resources also becomes the responsibility of the Agent if the program is to meet with success. Our middle class value system must be set aside in order for us to be able to deal effectively with the problems at hand. This is often more easily said than done.

There is a tremendous challenge in line for those who take part in education programs directed toward people with limited resources. There is also a great need for dedicated individuals who are patient, understanding, and open-minded. If the commitment is taken lightly or discharged half-heartedly, more harm than help can result. Once begun, it becomes each individual's responsibility to follow through toward a goal that is well defined for the Agent, the Aide, and the limited-income family.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS PROGRAM

John Kiesow

This is a privilege to discuss NYC, but the sharing that we can do here concerning all programs is most valuable. The purpose of the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) program, created in 1964 by the Economic Opportunity Act, is primarily to provide a work experience for disadvantaged young people and help them to continue their education.

There are two phases to our program. One is what we call an in-school program with a Summer Extension and the other is an out-of-school program. The in-school program is designed for young people still in high school between the ages of 14 and 18. They must be making satisfactory progress in their high school academic work. During the school year they work up to 15 hours per week. We have a summer component of this in-school program for these same young people whereby they can work up to 40 hours per week up to a maximum of 234 hours, or roughly six weeks of fulltime employment.

Our out-of-school program is for young people who have dropped out of school. Ages here are 16-17 and we can accept about 10 percent who are 18 or above in our program. They can stay on the program for six months, beyond that time they must be enrolled in some kind of training program and/or be making satisfactory educational progress. They can work 32 hours per week in the program and this is a year long program with no change between winter and summer efforts. The young people are paid \$1.60 per hour. We recruit them, give them the initial orientation, certify them as being eligible, and match them up with a work place. All the work sites are public agencies or private non-profit agencies who do the on-the-job training and counseling. At the present time we are not permitted to operate with businesses who are making a profit. The program is operated in 24 Oregon counties, primarily rural. Extension NYC operates primarily in the eastern part of the state with a budget near \$1 million.

There are five other major NYC projects run by other groups in Oregon so all of the counties are covered with a total NYC budget of about \$4 million last year.

We have one Extension Agent in each county designated as responsible for the NYC program. Beyond that we range from 11 to over 30 education aides depending on the time of year.

At the present time the NYC program is housed with the 4-H and Youth development program. We see this as an appropriate place to be housed

because it is an opportunity for us in the 4-H program to have a concerted effort with "older" young people and this certainly is one objective of the 4-H program. NYC is helping us meet one of our stated objectives in the 4-H program; namely that of helping young people find a meaningful or viable career.

We have been able to use NYC enrollees both in the Extension office as secretaries, as aides to work on plots or other kinds of demonstrations, and in cooperating with the ethnic program, particularly in operating some of the day camps and other kinds of special programs. Many of our staff members in the counties use the enrollees to help run and operate the NYC program. For example, they may have one education aide and one or two NYC enrollees to do the secretarial work for that program. We see NYC as being a very viable part of our Youth Extension program. We realize that it will take additional time for our professional staff, but I would also submit that through this program we have been learning ways to staff to diminish the amount of professional time necessary to run the program.

We have received just this past year some special money earmarked for Youth work related to urban and community resource development. At the present time we are gearing up to do some rather intensive NYC work with urban low income audiences. This work will be done primarily in Polk, Marion, and Yamhill and in the model cities area of Portland. Most of the money will be going to the hiring and use of professionals and aides. In fact in Portland they already have their aides recruited and are starting their training program next week. Bill Winkenwerder is giving leadership from the Central Staff level.

The other aspect of this new money is community resource development with an emphasis on youth. We've tentatively identified Willamette, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson (including Warm Springs), Coos, Curry, and Lincoln counties. George Wyatt will be providing leadership for the youth portion.

The third thing I wanted to talk about a little bit was some of the innovations being introduced. The use of para-professionals is becoming quite important. Last summer we had some 1,600 enrolled on our payroll in NYC. They were all recruited, placed, and worked during this 90 day period in the summer. Practically all work was done by the education aides, so I would just say to you that it is a concept that will work and the resistance (if there is resistance) is more within us as a professional staff than it is within the types of aides or para-professionals we might be using.

Another recent thing that has happened in NYC that we're hoping can be used extensively in other areas is this whole concept of practicum students. As a result of interests on the part of college students in getting out into the field, colleges and universities are expressing an interest in our ability to use practicum students. We find now that we can pick up and use practicum students through the universities to do much of the NYC staffing. For example, in Jackson County this year we are using four practicum students to staff our NYC program. They come on for a semester -- it takes about 3 weeks

to train them -- and then we get about 3 months of productive work from them. Union County is using two practicum students this year, one in NYC and one for Seed Certification and other kinds of Extension work. So I think we should not overlook this as one possible way of staffing.

We're working in a very concerted way in these programs with the State and U.S. Forest Services, parks and recreation departments, libraries and museums, Post Offices, Weather Bureau, Mental Health, Children's Services, Welfare, Employment, and military bases-installations. We're getting a lot of fringe benefits out of this in terms of the delivery of our total Extension program.

Just an idea or two to quickly summarize. One of the most serious problems that we face right now for young people is unemployment and I'm not talking now just about low income youth. Recent reports by the Department of Labor clearly show increasing unemployment for youth. One of the things they were indicating is that perhaps we should have a lowering of the minimum wage for young people. Now this sounds contrary to the best interests of young people but if the wages get too high, employers are less interested in hiring youth. One of the things I would like to see us work towards would be getting more jobs for all young people regardless of income level. I think employment experience is a very definite developmental need of young people. We know in Extension if we can get to a developmental need or crisis area that we can reach young people. I believe one way we can reach "older" young people is to get right to one of the most serious problems that they face today, i.e., finding a meaningful job. I think much of their self-identity and their feeling of self-respect in a community comes from a job. This may be one of the reasons that we're having some of the kinds of problems we have today with young people because they don't have that identity.

So in conclusion, I think in our program we need to relax the age limit, we need to be able to hire youth for more hours, we need more slots, and we need to be able to use the businesses who are working for profit so we can expand the areas where we place young people.

THE RISE PROGRAM

Pat Fullmer

RISE is a little different kind of program than you've been hearing about. The letters stand for Reach Independence and Security through Employment. RISE is a first step program designed to help remove barriers for some people who are trapped in poverty. All the people in the RISE program are on welfare and all of them are below the poverty level; for example, a family of four on welfare gets less than \$3,000 a year. This program is funded by the Children's Services Division of the State Department of Human Resources and all RISE trainees have to be on welfare by federal regulation. RISE is connected with the federally funded work incentive program (WIN). WIN used to be a training program, but now it is almost entirely a job placement program.

Many people are "mandatory WIN referrals"; a man who is physically capable of working or a woman head of household who has no children under six. Mandatory WIN referrals are expected to be placed in jobs but many are not presently capable, for non-physical reasons, of holding a job. This may be a woman who has raised five children but never worked outside the home and she is at a point now where she is expected to go out and start earning a living. Many of our RISE candidates have literally not been outside of the walls of their house for years, except to go to the grocery store. The case workers for these people do a lot of coaxing to get them to come to RISE. In talking to the trainees we find starting RISE can be an extremely frightening experience.

A high percentage of RISE trainees have not completed high school. The average educational level for one men's program was third grade. Our women's programs as a whole have probably been around an 8th to 10th grade education level. We're working with an entirely different audience than the one for which Extension materials are normally developed. The reading level of our candidates is very low. They are not used to reading, most have not read a book in many years and do not usually read magazines. They have multiple problems. First of all they were not successful in school. They have not been able to be a success in holding down a job. Most of the women have not been successful in their relationships with men. (We had one program where, out of 17 women in the program, 14 had had their first child at age 13.) We're talking about women who have had multiple divorces, and multiple living arrangements. They have not been a success as parents. The children often have physical problems; the rate of physical illness and mental retardation is high in this group. The children have multiple social problems at school. The rate of dropouts of the children in this group is very high. So we are dealing with people who have rarely had a success in their life, a very high risk group.

RISE is not a continuing program. It is on a county by county basis and the county identifies clients that they feel can benefit from RISE. The RISE program attempts, within six weeks, to have some impact on many problem areas. It is an extremely intensive program for a very short period of time. We deal with the educational problem in an attempt to help as many of them obtain their GED (graduate equivalent diploma). We try to help them find what kinds of jobs they might like, might be able to do well in, and what kind of training then is necessary for them to get to the point that they could hold the job. There is a great deal in the program on grooming because many of the women have not been outside of their houses in years. Overweight is a problem; diets are often poor. RISE gives nutrition training, and help on time and energy management. We do quite a bit of work with home management.

When RISE first started there was a lot of interest in training the women to be able to go out and do housework in other homes, but the emphasis has changed since it is almost impossible to support the family on that kind of job. Home management is still important; if a woman is expected to be a mother and manage a home and work she has to be able to do at least one or two of them fairly skillfully.

We don't teach people to type, we don't teach people how to be a file clerk, we don't teach specific job skills. But a great deal of emphasis is placed on the things that employers take for granted, such as being there on time every day, being prompt, being neat. The things that most middle-class people take for granted and learn in natural ways most of our RISE candidates have not had an opportunity to learn.

In the biennium that we are just at the end of now, we will have had 20 RISE programs in 16 counties. Our funding is about \$115,000. This money covers Extension's cost for the program which are the local coordinators' salaries, rental of the training house, mileage and other expenses. Public Assistance pays some additional costs. The average person on public assistance receives some limited medical and dental benefits. For instance if a person's teeth become so rotten that they have to be pulled, welfare will pay that, but they will not pay for getting new teeth. And a person without teeth is not employable in many jobs. During the training program on RISE, through some training related support funds, we can help people get glasses, teeth, or other items that they need to have to become employable.

RISE projects encounter many problems. We've had some RISE programs in the winter where we've had low attendance rates because people didn't have coats to wear in a snowstorm. Some trainees have stayed home because the children didn't have shoes to wear to school. Many of them haven't been out of the house and don't know how to use the resources of the community. They may not know where they can go to get their inexpensive clothing. Many of the women have severe weight problems and do not have foundation garments. If a person isn't reasonably decent looking they are going to have a hard time finding a job. And, again, this is a group of people who had uncomfortable experiences, when they've had any experiences, in social groups. I think because it's such an intensive program people just sort of roll through all of these problems and come out at the end.

RISE has been, we feel, a very successful program. It is very easy to prove it out in dollars and cents. In one early program, there were 19 women enrolled. A year later 5 were employed and those 5 were earning a total of \$19,500. Prior to RISE they had been receiving in welfare grants a total of \$7,207. So you can see that they have very much increased their personal standards of living. It was an annual savings of over \$7,000 to the state; the program itself cost about \$5,000.

However, cost is only one measure of success. RISE is a first step toward employment and ultimately RISE trainees may be completely self-sufficient. We have uncovered two cases of cancer that would not have been uncovered otherwise. One home visit that the coordinator made, a baby was discovered severely suffering from malnutrition and needing immediate hospitalization. The child might have died. So there are a great number of successes in addition to the ones that we can prove out in dollars and cents.

One thing that we find in running the RISE programs is that many of the communities in this state have no social service resources. We're running a program in Reedsport. Extension is not located there, nor is an Employment Service person located there. There is one Children's Services Division case worker, but all of his supportive services and people are over in Roseburg. There are just so few resources that are available to help people not located in county seats or one of the larger cities within the county. Perhaps Extension can be of more help in such communities than in others with multiple resources.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY, AND COMMITMENT

Russell C. Youmans

I'm going to talk briefly about a couple of Community Resource Development (CRD) programs. In all fairness we have not addressed this issue of low income explicitly with the community development program.

First is the Hitchhike Program. It involves the State Employment Service and the Extension Service together, extending manpower programs to rural areas not currently serviced by the Employment Service. The program currently exists only in parts of eastern Oregon. It is a productive program attempting to identify people who are employable and do not find jobs. The program is also involved in finding job opportunities going unnoticed. In some areas use is made of manpower training programs to upgrade skills so that local residents can move into the employment market. Some of the activities in this program relate to economic development and the development of new jobs. I don't believe we've had any great deal of success in bringing large industry into eastern Oregon but there has been some success in helping some small businesses survive. This may not be significant in terms of employment in the state but it is in terms of the small rural community. Let me stop there with respect to Hitchhike. They've done a remarkable job.

There has been some amount of work done with the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Bruce Mackey and Harvey Meier have had a measure of success in working with small industries on the reservation. They got timely cooperation out of Meier and Frank Stores last year. We hope that things like this lead to jobs on the reservation and some lasting relationships, productive ones, with Extension and the Tribal Council.

Perhaps Bob Wilder wouldn't like it if I said he works with low income employment but to the extent that Bob's work in recreation creates jobs in Oregon's recreation industry, it is providing employment for low skilled people. The wage structure of the industry may not permit rising above the poverty level but nevertheless it provides increased entry level jobs for people of limited skills.

The remaining work in community development is indirectly related to this problem of low income.

Let me now make some general comments about our commitments to working with poor people.

Poverty: Not a Program Area for Dabblers

The poor, the people left behind, can swamp us with program needs, and a major drain will be on our emotional energy if we become involved.

The program will require more attention and more sustained effort to move it along than do our existing programs. The investment in human capital among the poor is less in formal education, health, and social integration. They lack the energy to pursue us for what we can provide. Besides, they have considerable experience that do-gooders have no staying power: we won't be there when the going gets tough.

It is doubly important to conserve the energy of the leadership of the poor. There is limited leadership and to divert them with unproductive programs and deadends is irresponsible on our part. These people don't need highs on an emotional roller coaster provided by lack of program performance regardless of how well intentioned. There is precious little leadership energy to waste, so if we can't stay and deliver -- don't dabble in the first place.

1. I advocate deep involvement and recognize the costs to us as individuals and to the Extension Service. Our ratio of success to failure will be low. This has been the case with programs directed at the poor. A little success is very rare.
2. The needs of the poor go beyond the effects of an educational program. They need action and advocacy. Our isolation protected for academic freedom or objective distance will be tested as the Extension Service is asked to place its reputation and support behind action programs. How will we handle this? We better get to know the action-advocacy groups, public and private, who are effective or can be and work with them. We've done it before, but this will require contacts with a broader range of agencies.
3. We're not going to be the coordinator of all poverty programs. We can identify opportunities for assistance because we reach into the field, but we need to develop the confidence and maturity to take other agencies to the field with us. We also need to have other agencies refer opportunities to us.

With our tie to the University we have access to a broader spectrum of knowledge relevant to human needs than most agencies, therefore, we should be the first to restrain from suggesting quick simple solutions to poverty.

We need to develop the capability to diagnose the nature of constraints facing the family or community resulting in poverty. I doubt if the primary cause for poverty is very frequently bad farm management, though it may be woeful in terms of commercial producers. Ted Schultz suggests that subsistence farmers in traditional agriculture are rational in their management practices, there are no incentives for them to change.*

* T.W. Schultz, Transforming Traditional Agriculture, Yale University Press, 1964.

I would not suggest we reject this hypothesis with respect to the Oregon rural poor. The problems of poverty are complex and frequently of long standing. Several well-trained people will be needed to reflect reliability on the diagnosis in a helpful manner.

This diagnosis is so important because the first attempts at involving the poor must have a chance of high payoff. The programs can't be just excellent programs or generally useful, they need to be "right on". Extension cannot provide all programs, we need to know who can be effective with this audience and this problem.

I am not qualified to say what is needed by the poor. But an Extension program better be flexible, recognized as high risk and high energy, but most important, truthful.

It may be useful to read some things that reflect on the poor's attitude about us -- Tom Wolf's The Radical Chic and Mau Mauing the Flack Catcher is a possibility. This book is a view of do-gooders from the view of the militant poor. Read it for a view of us -- the Establishment.

You personally will be more exposed and tested by the poor. Why do you make the high salary you do? You'll be asked what your salary is and be left to contemplate the facts that allowed the difference between you and your confronter. After some investment, we need to bring the rest of the population into this process, also on a sustained basis. After working in a poor country for two years and being challenged as a CIA agent and as a do-gooder, I see a need to lay it out so the poor can see the incentive that you and I have to sustain effort for those left behind. The poor have difficulty extending faith to a do-gooder whose motivations aren't clear. Individuals with strong clear incentives are much more dependable than those driven by the whims of personal motives. If administrators say that you are to be rewarded as you stay and take risks in your program, that you are there because of your own personal gain, you are to be trusted by the poor more than the case where you simply are there because you want to help. But the institution, OSU and Extension, has to take the risk of failure. Then the poor can predict your behavior and you gain credibility. They know they don't get something for nothing. And we don't need to lead them down the primrose path of believing that we are going to provide something for nothing.

Question: Russ, regarding dabbling, it seems we are in a spot. If we go one step further we are going to get highly involved in the political structure in working with the poor.

Reply: I think that you are going to have to have some personal risks and you better hope that your administrator is willing to take some personal risks and that the institution is willing to take an institutional risk. I don't see any other way if this is the game we are going to play because you get into more than education in this area and you're going to be asked to put things on the line.

PLANS FOR A PILOT PROJECT TO EXAMINE

THE NATURE OF RURAL POVERTY

Robert Coppedge and Gene Nelson

Project History and Objectives

Now we would like to discuss the plans that we have for further work in this area, but first let's bring you up to date. In November Assistant Director Jerry Nibler appointed a committee to look at the problems of the small farmer. The concern was expressed by the committee that in the rural areas it is difficult to distinguish between the small farmer and the rural resident. It can be a matter of just a half an acre or fifty dollars of farm sales. The concept of a farm is somewhat elusive. So based on that it was decided to expand this pilot effort to consider all rural people. The pilot program terminates at the end of this fiscal year. We want to see how much we can accomplish within that time period. There are two primary objectives. The first is to learn more about low-income problems, i.e., learn more about the people that are in poverty in rural areas. The second, to provide assistance to the low-income rural people. Aspects of both research and action are included.

In learning more about the low-income rural audience we have some specific tasks involved. First, we must identify who the low income people are, i.e., their characteristics. We need to categorize or classify them; we need to think about what some of their like interests are. The different categories will depend on age, education, and source of income. Next, we must determine the educational needs associated with each of these categories or types of audiences. Then finally we will specify some alternatives or make some recommendations regarding Extension programs that could be designed to meet these needs.

These are the objectives; I think they sound somewhat ambitious, particularly when we are talking about terminating June 30.

How does this plan differ from some of the approaches that we talked about with our panel? I think the primary difference here is that we're trying to take a total Extension approach to the problem of rural poverty. We are attempting to think about this problem from the point of view of all Extension, not just from the view point of one department or discipline. We will be involved in working with small farmers as well as other rural residents in this project.

Surveying Three Target Areas

Before beginning it should be noted that poverty is not equivalent to low income. The notion of poverty is illustrated by the term as defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, in which factors such as size of family, place of residence, number in family, sex and age of family head and similar factors are taken into account in determining whether or not individuals or families are existing in poverty circumstances. The concept of low income refers only to the absolute dollar amount of income available to an income earning unit such as an individual or family.

In this study we are considering three counties, Josephine, Lane, and Yamhill. In each county we decided to concentrate on one small rural area in which to conduct a survey to determine characteristics of the population, both farm and nonfarm. The small areas selected for study were Census County Divisions (CCD's) as delineated in the 1970 Census of Population.

In Josephine the CCD selected was Cave Junction. The Cave Junction CCD is located in the southwest corner of Josephine County with the southern border being the California state line. As noted (Table 6) the CCD has a population of 2,866, of which approximately 21 percent are below the official poverty level. Persons in families below the poverty level number 495. Of the 164 unrelated individuals below the poverty level, 37 were under 65 years of age and 127 were over 65 years of age.

Table 6. Selected Poverty Statistics for Study Areas of Low Income Project

County	Josephine	Lane	Yamhill
Census County Division	Cave Junction	Badger Mountain	Sheridan
Principal Town	Cave Junction	Veneta	Sheridan
Population of Town	425	1,490	1,940
Population of CCD	2,866	6,938	3,280
Persons below poverty level (bp1)	613	916	519
Percent of population bp1	21	13	16
Persons in families bp1	495	723	394
Unrelated individuals bp1			
under 65 years	37	79	50
over 65 years	127	114	75

SOURCE: Valde, Gary, and Robert O. Coppedge, Income and Poverty Data for Racial Groups: A Compilation for Oregon Census County Divisions, Oregon State University Extension Service, Special Report 367, September 1972.

In Lane County the CCD selected was Badger Mountain, which lies directly to the west of the Eugene-Springfield area and includes the small town of Veneta as well as Fern Ridge Reservoir. Total population in the area is 6,938, with 13 percent below the poverty level. Though the percentage below the poverty level in the Lane County CCD is lower, the absolute number of persons below the poverty level is greater than in the other two divisions.

In Yamhill County the decision was made to conduct the survey in the Sheridan CCD, which includes the community of Sheridan. The total area has a population of 3,280, of which 16 percent is considered below the official poverty level. The Sheridan CCD lies to the east and south of McMinnville.

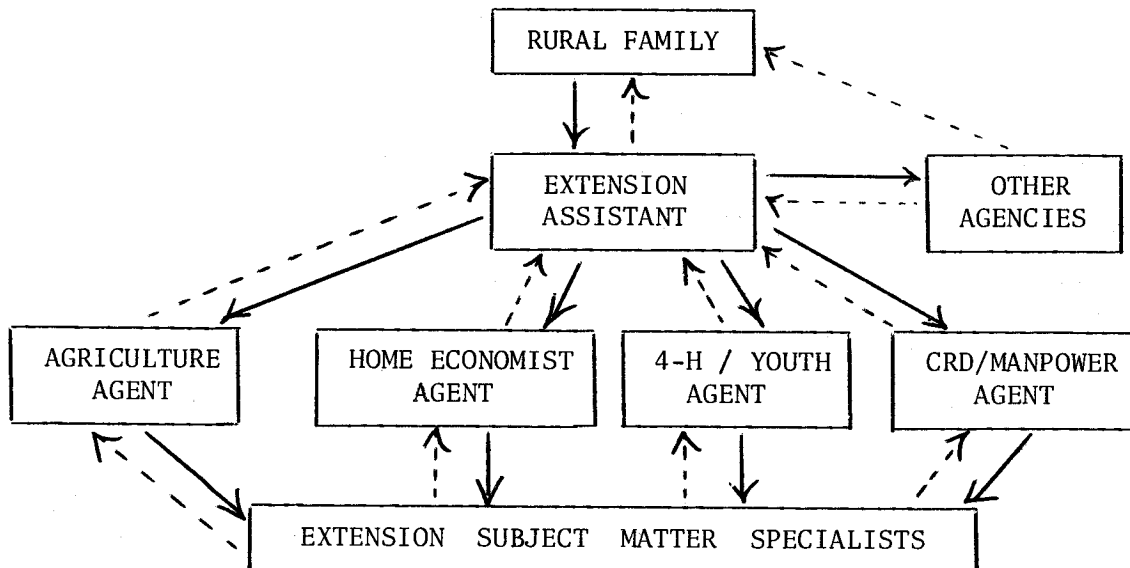
A personal interview survey which will be conducted in the area, the questionnaire is designed to get basic information on the family and on the farm operation, if any. Size and type of farm and farm income are to be ascertained, as are some indication of the problems which the interviewee considers important. Also included on the questionnaire is a section pertaining to contact with certain public agencies such as Farmers Home Administration, State Employment Service, County Health Department, Community Colleges, or the County Extension Service. Exposure to the Extension Service is to be determined by number of contacts and by general extension program areas.

In each county an Extension Assistant will be hired who will have two responsibilities. The first will be to conduct the interview process and the second will be to work with people with identified problems. It is anticipated that each interview will require approximately 30 minutes.

Assisting Low Income Families

Because this is a pilot program with limited resources, the decision was made to go into these three small geographical areas and study them very intensively rather than try to cover all the state. I want to mention again that if there is anything unique about this project it is that we want to involve programs of the entire Extension Service. We believe that most all of the Extension Service should relate to this problem in some way.

I have tried to picture here in a flow chart how an Extension Assistant or aide would relate to the rural family and the Extension Service in the second phase of the project, i.e., assisting low-income families. I want to dramatize that he is relating to all the Extension Agents in the office according to their various specialties depending on the type of problem the rural family is experiencing. This is in contrast to the specialized aide working with one program, say EFNEP. The Extension Assistant is a generalist. He finds the problem, establishes the communication with the family, and then relates the problems to the Extension Agents or other agency personnel. They provide information, education, and solutions then that might go back directly to the rural family or through the Extension Assistant. So the Extension Assistant in this scheme establishes communication and helps determine problems so that the education can begin.



_____ problems and concerns
----- education and assistance

Another dimension here is that the Assistant also relates to other agencies, such as the Employment Service. For many kinds of problems, the other agency is going to be the one to handle it and provide the solution. So the Extension Assistant refers the problem to the other agency which then provides the assistance or education to the rural family. Although this is our present conception of the program, we have much to learn.

We still have the Extension specialist involved in this. The specialist might find that there are different types of subject matter that might be called for and also different methods of presentation. The Extension Agent will likely need to provide different types and forms of information--different from that presently available--to the Extension Assistant for the rural family.

This is what we think is needed to establish communication with the rural poor. Agents simply don't have adequate time for this now. They don't have time available to go out and actually make that personal contact with the rural family that could benefit from Extension input but due to attitudes and lack of knowledge does not seek out this help.

PROGRAM NEEDS AND DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS:

DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS

Group 1

I will start with educational needs of the poor as we discussed them in our group, but with qualifications. Needs vary from one income and cultural group to another, and a categorization should be made before we begin to talk about needs. In spite of this we went ahead and used the shot-gun approach.

The first need I guess falls under the general heading of remedial education. Perhaps poor audiences need some education with regard to group processing and functioning. The second general area in terms of educational needs we titled agency education, i.e., helping agencies become aware of problems related to the poor and create the awareness of adjacent agency service. The third general area in terms of needs involves educating our target audience to agency service. Fourthly, Extension has perhaps an obligation and responsibility to educate our local power bases, County Courts, city councils, Chambers of Commerce, service groups, etc., and our traditional Extension audiences that there are in fact poor in Oregon and that they in fact have very critical needs. We need to respond to them.

The considerations for delivery are interrelated with the needs. We need to rely on the needs of the target audience as identified by that audience. Seven considerations are summarized. There are some interrelationships but these are not sorted out.

First, we should leave our assumptions and middle-class biases behind us. Second, it is suggested that the education approach be tutorial instead of a classroom. Thirdly, we as an organization need critically to establish credibility with the target audiences and this demands a lowliness on our part to empathize. Fourth, since a commitment for Extension to do anything beyond June 30th is non-existent in terms of a formal commitment, we must be cognizant of the risk related to offering more than we can deliver. Fifth, we need to employ a very important extension method that has proved legitimate over the years--involvement of the audience in the decision-making process that affects them. It was suggested that the one-shot approach is not effective particularly in establishing credibility, and that we must establish rapport if the survey is even to have meaning and importance. And finally, we dealt at a cursory level with the argument that was expressed at least once this morning and we hear very often in the field, that many poor do not want to change. It was suggested that this perhaps was due in part to the fact that there is no real incentive to change, that the risk of change to the person was too great, and what little security they do have we're asking them to give up.

Group 2

We broke needs into family living, general, and agriculture. In family living we identified resource management education (money skills, time, energy, and so forth).

Under general, we saw a need to assist people in organizing their activities and be more efficient in allocating their time.

Nutrition and health education was considered a definite educational need because what the family can do really depends on their health and general nutrition.

Nobody wanted to call it child development, but how to prepare the children for taking their place in society is a critical need. Many of these families have little in the home to provide education from the time of birth until the time the child reaches school, at which time he is behind other students.

A list of job opportunities off the farm would be helpful. In other words, if they want to live on the farm or small acreage, we can direct them to off-farm employment opportunities.

If there are no skills, then training referrals for new skills is necessary. Then in agriculture, you need to acquaint them with the services that Extension can offer. They're not familiar with Extension and they don't know if Extension has help for them in the field of agriculture. An inventory of resources and discussion of feasible enterprises would be especially useful. They also need some help in production credit and developing marketing abilities.

In methods for delivery, the aide concept should be emphasized. The aide should work with low-income families on an individual basis first and maybe later develop some interest in group work. The aide will establish friendship first and then make an appointment to come back and talk about Extension programming and what they have to offer. Then hopefully after a time some brief meetings and some advisory committees could develop to identify the needs of these people.

Group 3

We started out with several different items and then after an hour of discussion we just marked them all out and said that it varies so much from area to area we're not going to try to really define what their particular needs are. We did, however, come up with two general needs that our discussion centered around. One was the general area of family living. Family counseling on money management or financing is needed. It seems this is one of the major areas with which low-income people have trouble. They don't have much money and have less after they pay the creditors. Another area was consumer education, and this could be buying food, clothing, whatever.

The second question was on the delivery system. Our first suggestion is make an extended effort to try to coordinate this whole process with some of the other agencies who are working in this area, FmHA, OEO, and some of these agencies that do have considerable background and should have some knowledge that would assist this effort. The second one would be to adapt to the present Extension ongoing programs. Tie it to your 4-H, EFNEP, RISE, NYC and a few of the others we have been talking about. These programs wouldn't be around unless they were successful. It seems like you've missed a bet if this effort didn't at least involve some phases of 4-H. And of course, look to the local low-income people for guidance as far as delivery system is concerned. We will want to look more toward the low-income people as far as determining not only program needs, but also how to deliver these programs. And then the last one would be training the agents themselves to work with low-income people. Myself, I wouldn't feel too qualified to go out and work with low-income people. So this may be one of the major steps that we would want taken.

There was a certain theme in our discussion; that it would be very important to gain the confidence of these people that you're working with. I think it's not going to be successful at all unless they trust you and trust the program.

Group 4

The one thing that came up first in our group was that our present staff is going to have trouble getting into these places. One of the things we will have to overcome is a general cynicism that these folks have with government and programs. They are probably out there to avoid being bothered and they don't look too kindly on people coming out with a program for their good. We felt that the individual aide concept would work. We thought though that we could possibly bring some small groups together that might have some common interests with some success after the initial contact is made. Bring in some small groups and meet on a basis where they don't have to take themselves into a large group. We also felt that there could be some well designed correspondence courses that would be in their language on some of the topics that could be established, but it would have to be something probably in connection with some leaders from the community. Some very successful work with low-income people was mentioned where they took a leader from their community and did some mass media work on TV. Most of these people have a TV set and by taking a leader, funneling out information into their leader, and letting that person translate it to the way it can get across to the people in the community might be a way to go. The others have pretty much covered the needs. However, one educational need is to get them out of their four walls to teach them some "meeting and mingling" and how to get along with people.

We thought that an inventory of living expenses in rural areas ought to be available. Is it cheaper to live in the country? Maybe they are living under false premises that they are living in the most economical place in the county. Well, some instances were brought up of some conflicts over the programs a few years back where everybody was saying they wanted to get people out in the country. But really, is that the place where you're going to be the best off? At least the decision ought to be made with some educational facts. Also there should be some basic information about what they are getting from government. What about the support of local government? We might develop an inventory of services they are getting from their tax money and how they relate to the rest of the community.

Group 5

Our group stressed money management, whether it is in the home or in the farm business. There was some concern that people be encouraged to remember that they can do things for themselves and we can help them learn to do some things for themselves rather than finding out about where they can go get it free. This was stressed.

Under the list of suggestions on delivery and methods the feeling was that we have to go to them initially. The people who can go to them most successfully are people from that particular group that you are trying to reach. Therefore, the use of aides from the low income rural population will be the key to success. Training of aides and acquainting them with Extension's capabilities is especially important. Somebody in the county Extension office, if not the aide, should be well aware of the full range of community services that are available to low-income people. Another recommendation was that professional Extension staff have some experience going into the field with the aides and visiting these families so that they become really aware at a "first hand" level of the audiences with which the aides are working. Volunteer help from the community is something that should be recruited as well.

There was the feeling in our group that helping low-income people should be a general Extension mission in the long run, it shouldn't be a separate program set off by the side that we are doing extra. I think it was pointed out by someone in the early days Extension was really for everybody in general, and lately we have come to be connected with more specific audiences. But to achieve this general acceptance of work with low-income population as part of Extension work, some education of the Extension staff itself is necessarily important.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM NEEDS

Remedial education

Family resource management (money, credit, time, etc.)

Nutrition and health education

Child development and rearing

Self-concept (a positive sense of self) and discipline

Gardening and food preservation

Clothing and home improvement

Feasible enterprises for the farm or other business

How to obtain and manage credit

Marketing of farm and home produce

Consumer education (shopping)

Cost of living in rural areas (where is it cheaper to live)

Understanding their role in the community and society

How to socialize (meet, mingle, and seek help)

Vocational guidance and training, job opportunities

Acquaintance with agencies and public services available

SUMMARY OF DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS

Define the needs of the target audiences
Forget assumptions and misconceptions about poor and their life styles
First, establish credibility with the clientele group, go to them
Involve audience in program planning, use advisory committees
Must provide incentive or reduce risks of change
Work with individuals first, may develop into small group meetings
Coordinate within Extension and with other agencies, public and private
Train agents, aides, and specialists to work with low-income audiences
Correspondence courses might be considered
Mass media can be utilized
Agents and aides should communicate the availability of community services
Volunteer work should be utilized in the delivery program where possible
Need to provide babysitting or child care service
Rewrite publications and other material for these audiences
Allow for flexibility in delivery to fulfill the interests of the audience
Tutorial instead of classroom education
Be cautious of promising more than can be delivered
Aides need to see opportunity for advancement
Recognize their cynicism toward government and public programs