

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION—NORTH CAROLINA'S APPROACH

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The objectives of North Carolina's educational program in environmental quality are threefold: (1) We continually seek to create awareness of environmental issues; (2) we assist our clientele with the identification and consideration of alternative problem solutions; and (3) we assist in developing legislation by making the university's expertise available to legislative committees and then strive to educate our clientele to adjust to legislative changes. Our third objective may be somewhat unique in extension programs although we believe it to be a most important one. Educating our clientele is traditionally an extension approach while assisting with legislation is not.

## ORGANIZATION

Last year we completed *Impact 76*, the third five-year plan for extension programs in North Carolina. Five areas were selected for emphasis in this plan: agriculture and natural resources, family living, youth, community resource development, and environmental quality. We added this last subject because of the tremendous interest in it and our own feeling that we needed to get organized and get our staff committed to respond to the need.

In developing *Impact 76*, we appointed a committee consisting of both extension and non-extension people. This committee served as the focal point for setting targets and suggesting program approaches at the state level and also served as resource people for county staffs in preparing the five-year plan. In addition, most counties appointed a citizen's advisory committee to suggest program priorities in environmental quality at that level.

We have followed this initial effort by appointing two additional committees. The first is a committee of twenty-one extension specialists representing eighteen different departments or sections. This extension committee is responsible for coordinating our total program in environmental quality and serves as the extension focal point for establishing an official position on matters relating to it. We look to this group for agent training, publications, and statewide activities and events in this area.

The other committee is a task force of our State Rural Develop-

ment Committee. The State Committee had earlier appointed a Task Force on Rural Housing that worked so well we thought we would try the same approach again. The task force has forty members and draws its membership from lay organizations, the university, state government, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We feel that such broad representation is needed for us to tap some of the resources needed in meeting environmental issues. This task force has participated in a series of four regional planning workshops around the state with the Rural Development Panel. Subcommittees have been formed to carry out specific subject matter assignments.

While these three groups are our main coordinating thrust in environmental quality, other organizations also play an important role. We have established an Agricultural Chemical Advisory Committee that is responsible for formulating the university position on questions in this area. We have a similar Animal Waste Disposal Committee that coordinates activities of several departments working in this area, sponsors joint activities, and in general presents a united front in speaking on questions of animal waste.

#### PROGRAMS

To avoid a simple cataloging of programming efforts in environmental quality, I will return to the three objectives listed for environmental education in North Carolina and cite one or two examples of program content for each objective.

Beginning with the last objective, to assist in the preparation of environmental legislation and the interpretation of legislative changes, the two committees on Agricultural Chemicals and Animal Waste have played the major role. The Animal Waste Committee has held district and county meetings with farmers, agents, and Soil Conservation Service and Farmers Home Administration personnel. In some cases these have been workshop-type meetings to discuss the latest research findings; in other cases, the public has been invited to a general educational meeting. The state legislature has appointed a legislative research committee on environmental problems with a subcommittee on animal waste control. Members of the committee are meeting now to make recommendations on legislation that will be considered in the 1972 General Assembly.

The Agricultural Chemicals Advisory Committee meets to advise the School of Agriculture administration on a position in all matters relating to farm chemicals. Representatives of the committee met with legislative study committees in the last General

Assembly to help draft the North Carolina pesticide law. We feel their participation not only served as an educational platform with some legislators but provided the state with more palatable pesticide legislation.

As an example of the second objective, assistance with problem solutions both technical and economic, we have conducted a number of training sessions for our own agents, for other agency personnel, and the general public. Typical was the Air Pollution Workshop held at two locations in the state for 135 people. This was a joint effort of the Cooperative Extension Service and the Environmental Education Program funded under Title I of the Higher Education Act.

Another activity just getting underway was undertaken in response to a problem expressed by many counties. Those counties that have already organized campaigns to remove junked, or more appropriately, abandoned, automobiles have been besieged by calls. We have offered a packet of materials that consists of: (1) state statutes covering removal of automobiles, (2) a sample contract between a city and a salvage company for junk car removal, (3) a step-by-step how-to-do-it approach used by one county that has already completed a successful job, and (4) a general information publication by General Motors on this subject. While this is a rather simple problem solution, it is one that many people feel quite strongly about; it represents tangible program results, and it opens many new doors for extension programs.

The remaining objective of our program is to create awareness and to increase understanding of environmental problems. One way of accomplishing this is to offer a canned presentation in the form of a slide-tape set that can be used in a variety of situations. Last summer we put together an 80-slide, 23-minute presentation titled "Keeping North Carolina Livable." We have sold forty-four of these sets to extension offices, to departments on campus, and to the Water Resources Research Institute, and six have been retained for lending from the film library on campus. The three key things we try to get across are: (1) the reasons why we have environmental problems, (2) the sources of environmental pollution, and (3) a positive approach showing what some North Carolina communities are doing to meet environmental problems.

This series is being followed up by a report to be issued as a Southern Public Affairs publication titled "Environmental Waste: Causes and Solutions." This bulletin will focus on the economic alternatives for paying for environmental cleanup.