



Texas Agricultural Extension Service

*People Helping People*

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# PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEES

OF THE  
PROGRAM BUILDING COMMITTEE



Prepared by Burl B. Richardson and Mary G. Marshall,  
Extension program development specialists, The Texas  
A&M University System



## THE PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEE AND YOU—THE MEMBER

### **Congratulations to You**



You are a member of an important program area committee of the county's Extension Program Building organization. You were selected because the committee believes you can get things done. You have a definite interest in the concerns of your committee and can make a valuable contribution to the committee's work. And that's not all! As a member, you will be representing the views of *other people* in the county.

In this important leadership role, you will devote some time and talents to Extension educational programs that will help people in your community and the county to improve their quality of life economically or socially. That's what the work of your program area committee is all about—helping people to learn how to help themselves.

### **It's Stimulating and Rewarding**



Being an active member of your program area committee is a rewarding and stimulating experience. People in your community and county recognize you as one who holds a responsible position. You also have opportunities to learn more about the county and its people. In addition, you make new friends from all parts of the county as you work with your committee.

The most rewarding experience of all is to see people benefit from using information they get from educational activities, events and programs your committee conducts. Perhaps you will help producers improve their crop or livestock yields, start a community toward establishing a new water system, help families improve their finances or a young person find a 4-H project. You will have many opportunities to help people as your committee works with the county Extension agents to shape the economic and social growth of people in your county.

## **A Challenge, Too**



Your role on the committee will be challenging. To be an effective member, you'll want to have a good understanding of how this committee works and what you should do. This publication is designed to help you learn:

- The importance of a program area committee
- The role of the committee
- How the committee works
- What you should know and do as a member

## **Why Have Program Area Committees?**



“People centered” describes the educational programs developed through your Texas Agricultural Extension Service office. People support, participate in and benefit from a program which they have helped to plan and carry out. What you know, think and feel is important to Extension. This is why you are needed.

Your committee is one of several in the *County Program Building organization*. Each group has a different area of responsibility, but each is a part of the larger organization. The program building

committee (through its executive committee) determines the scope of the county Extension program. After studying many county situations and identifying major problems, program needs and opportunities, the executive committee creates program area committees. These committees deal with specific areas for which educational programs are needed in your county. Examples include 4-H youth, community development, beef cattle, crops, home economics and others.

Your program area committee is responsible for planning, conducting and evaluating educational programs in a specific area. Consequently, program area committees are vital parts of the larger Program Building Committee. County Extension agents are advisors who help the committee in carrying out its responsibilities.

## **HOW YOUR COMMITTEE WORKS**

Remember when you learned to drive a car? First you had to know what made the car go. Then came the steps in starting the motor. Finally, after some practice, you learned to drive. You also discovered some principles to follow to be a good driver. In a way, committee work is like learning to drive a car. You must know how the committee works and what it must do to accomplish its aims.

The committee's role is divided into these phases: planning the program, carrying out the plans, evaluating results and reporting accomplishments. Follow along to see what decisions and actions the committee should take.

### **Planning the Program**



Good things don't just happen—they are planned. Let's look at planning in two ways: "long-range planning" and "annual planning."

## **Long-Range Planning**

Long-range plans are contained in the county's *Long-Range Extension Program*. The document is prepared every 4 years. Each program area committee reviews the section of the *Long-Range Extension Program* that relates to its areas of concern.

Think of long-range planning as you would a roadmap. A map has useful information about where you can go, the mileage to your destination and various routes you can take to get there. Just as a roadmap helps you make the right turns to reach your destination, long-range plans will help your committee understand the major issues it must deal with in developing educational programs within the program area.

Long-range planning involves making a study of situations in the program area for which your committee is responsible. Members assist in collecting data about relevant conditions. As this information is analyzed, trends, problems and opportunities become apparent. The committee then establishes long-range objectives to serve as guides for planning, conducting and evaluating the educational program for several years. If your committee sets several long-range goals, it also should set priorities among them so that the most important ones receive the greatest emphasis.

Decisions made and information collected during the studies by all program area committees are recorded in the *Long-Range Extension Program*—your “roadmap” for the next 4 years.

## **Annual Planning**

Annual planning involves developing the specific educational activities that will be conducted during the coming year. Annual planning helps your committee decide what part and how

much of the long-range plan it will try to accomplish during a year's time. Annual plans may also include new priorities that are not part of the *Long-Range Extension Program*.

How should the committee make annual plans? Let's take a look at some steps to follow. The committee may need to meet once or several times for study and decisionmaking.

First, the committee must review the facts, problems, objectives and priorities in the *Long-Range Extension Program* before major decisions are made. Members may also want to review current information, such as that provided by Extension agents, specialists and other resource people. Review the results of last year's programs. This review insures that the committee has up-to-date information upon which to make sound decisions about the next annual program.

Next, the committee should set goals about what and how much it will try to achieve within a year. In some cases, different categories of people with different interests, needs or problems may need specialized help through the educational program. Identifying potential audiences can help the committee determine the kind of educational program needed to reach each audience. Here are a few examples:

- Small farm producers
- Commercial producers
- Potential 4-H members
- Organization and project leaders
- Young homemakers
- Civic leaders
- Established homemakers
- People in agribusiness
- Absentee landowners
- Senior 4-H'ers
- New 4-H members
- Women employed outside the home
- Organized community groups
- Extension Homemaker Club or study group members

Based on the long-range objectives, major problems, committee goals and potential audiences involved, the committee next seeks to determine the subjects or information people need to learn. These findings will be the content of the educational program activities. Now the committee can select the educational methods and techniques to convey the information people need to learn. The more ways people are exposed to information, the more likely they are to learn and use new knowledge. Therefore, use a variety of methods. Here are some examples of educational methods:

- Short course
- Workshop
- Field day
- Clinic
- Youth career day
- Demonstration
- Equipment show
- Commodity fair

Schedule target dates for each activity as part of annual planning.

Finally, plan how you will evaluate the year's program, even before it begins.

## Carry Out the Plans



This can be the most exciting part of your committee's role. It's the *action phase* when you and other committee members help carry out the planned activities.

Your committee works closely with Extension agents and resource people, such as Extension specialists, in carrying out the program. You'll want to take an active part in helping make each event successful so that people in your community will benefit from them.

Before *each major event*, your committee should meet well in advance to prepare for con-



ducting the activity. Your committee needs to make many decisions about details of the activity. A good way to do this is to identify the things that should be done *before*, *during* and *after* the activity. Then decide *who* will do each thing. A few examples of important things to be done to assure program success are these:

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select resource people to do the teaching</li> <li>• Arrange for meeting facilities</li> <li>• Do advance publicity</li> <li>• Provide equipment</li> <li>• Print a program agenda</li> <li>• Arrange for refreshments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet people when arriving</li> <li>• Keep attendance list</li> <li>• Assist speaker(s)</li> <li>• Extend welcome and state the event's purpose</li> <li>• Introduce speaker(s)</li> <li>• Distribute handout materials</li> <li>• Serve refreshments</li> <li>• Observe and evaluate activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the evaluation</li> <li>• Make thank-you calls</li> <li>• Send letters of appreciation to speakers, special guests and donors</li> <li>• Clean up facilities</li> <li>• Arrange for follow-up publicity</li> </ul>

Events are more successful when all committee members work to carry out some part of the activity. The chairperson assigns tasks to each member. In addition, each member should encourage people to participate in activities developed especially for them.

## Evaluate the Program



How did it go? Was each activity successful? Did the people you tried to reach participate? Did participants learn new information and ideas they can use? These questions are important and can

be answered by evaluating the program. The committee should spend time during one meeting each year in reviewing its work and total program results. What changes or improvements have people made? What new knowledge have people learned and put to use? Can the work of the committee be improved in the future? If so, how? This kind of evaluation is essential for future planning.

## **Report the Committee's Work**



The program area committee should keep the rest of the program building committee informed of its plans and accomplishments. The executive committee must know what each program area committee is doing and what has been accomplished so it can review the total Extension program. The chairperson of each program area committee is responsible for reporting, as a member of the executive committee. However, one or more committee members may be asked to assist.

In this way the executive committee can determine how well the total Extension program is improving the economic and social conditions of people in the county. It can then make adjustments or additions to the program when and if needed.

The program area committee should also make a report of the year's accomplishments and future plans at the annual meeting of the county program building committee, so all committees will know the results of the Extension program.

Keep your committee's work before the public to gain support for and participation in the educational program. What you do is important and people need to know about it!

## Resource People Can Help



Resource people have capabilities and knowledge that are important to the committee's program area. They can help to accomplish the committee's goals. You can identify local and other resource people and ask for their help.

Extension specialists are key resource people on which your committee can rely. County Extension agents can obtain the assistance of specialists. Other kinds of resource people from agencies, organizations and groups are:

- County USDA agency representatives
- Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
- Vocational agriculture instructors
- Agricultural commodity associations
- Veterinarians
- Bankers, financial representatives
- Area college representatives
- School officials
- School or family counselors
- Youth group directors
- Ministers
- Law enforcement officials
- Utility company representatives
- Commercial home economists
- Food store managers
- Insurance agencies
- Home appliance dealers
- Vocational home economics teachers
- Medical doctors, health practitioners
- Public health agencies
- Building contractors
- Chambers of Commerce

These types of resource people can help your committee in person or with written information. They can assist the committee in all phases, such as long-range and annual planning, teaching at planned activities or providing helpful methods for evaluating program results.

# THE COMMITTEE MEMBER'S JOB

## How to Do It



You're the most important part of the program area committee. Like a group of people in a rowboat, the combined efforts of all persons using oars help to make the boat move at a desired speed and in the right direction. No committee can perform its role and be productive without the active participation of *each* member.

Membership will be enjoyable and rewarding when you know what is expected of you. When it's time to act, you'll know what to do and how to do it. You will be able to make valuable contributions to the committee's work.

Here's what you need to know and do to be a productive member and to enjoy serving on the committee. Remember that county Extension agents can help you better understand these responsibilities and provide help in carrying out any committee assignment you have.

## Know Your Committee



Since you will be working together as a group, get to know other committee members. Learn something about each one! You will enjoy the committee more if you are well acquainted with the other members. Ask the chairperson or agent for a list of all members' names and addresses.

Understand the purpose of your committee and what its job is. Ask the committee chairperson and Extension agent to explain this if you're not sure.

Know who you have been asked to represent. As a member of the committee, you also represent others who are not members. These may be

an entire community, part of a community or a certain group of people such as another organization in the county with similar interests, older adults or producers in an agricultural commodity.

Become familiar with how your committee operates. Your group may have more specific guidelines which it follows.

Keep in mind that the Program Building Committee has other program area committees, too, and each has a different area of responsibility. Occasionally two or more program area committees might work together on a program. This opportunity comes when two committees are working on similar plans or when combined committee efforts could accomplish more. One function of the executive committee is to assist program area committees by identifying opportunities for combined committee efforts.

## **Committee Meetings Are Vital**



In athletic team competition the goal is to *win*. All team members prepare for the athletic event, participate and follow through on their assignments so that their combined efforts can help the team achieve the goal. A productive committee member (like the athlete) prepares for each meeting, participates in discussions and committee decisions and follows through on specific responsibilities.

## **Before the Meeting— Prepare!**



Have you ever attended a meeting when you didn't really know what would take place? And when you were asked for your opinion, were you prepared to give a good answer? When a meeting is called and you *understand the purpose* of the

meeting, you can be prepared to participate in discussions and decisionmaking.

- *Mark your calendar.* Effective members are busy people. A note on the calendar helps you remember the meeting date.
- *Talk with other members.* Since you also represent others who are not members of your program area committee, get their ideas and suggestions. If the purpose of a meeting is to plan the program for the coming year, ask the people you represent what their needs and interests are. Get their suggestions for program activities.
- *Make notes.* When you are notified about a meeting, the chairperson or Extension agent usually outlines its purpose. Jot down on paper any thoughts that relate to the purpose and details of the meeting. Remember that the chairperson's job is to guide discussion and decisionmaking, not do all the talking.
- *Carry out assignments.* Attend to any other pre-meeting tasks that you've been asked to do. Occasionally you may need to help collect information for planning or evaluation purposes. Understand what is expected of you and be prepared to do it.

## **At the Meeting— Participate!**



- Attend as many meetings as you can—people are counting on you!
- Arrive on time for all meetings so that the committee can accomplish its purpose in the allotted time.
- Be enthusiastic about the committee's work. Enthusiasm is contagious!
- Take part in discussions, committee actions and decisions. Your ideas are important.
- Evaluate proposals before the committee and react to them. Encourage other members to participate in the discussion.

- Listen carefully as other members express their ideas and suggestions.
- Ask others for information on points that may not be clear to you. This helps eliminate misunderstanding that can arise later.
- Help the chairperson to keep the group working on the business before the committee.
- When the purpose of the meeting is to decide how to conduct an upcoming event, be ready to determine tasks to be done and accept assignments *before, during* and *afterward*.
- Consider the needs and interests of people you represent, as well as your own. Help to make decisions for the general good.

## After the Meeting— Follow Through!



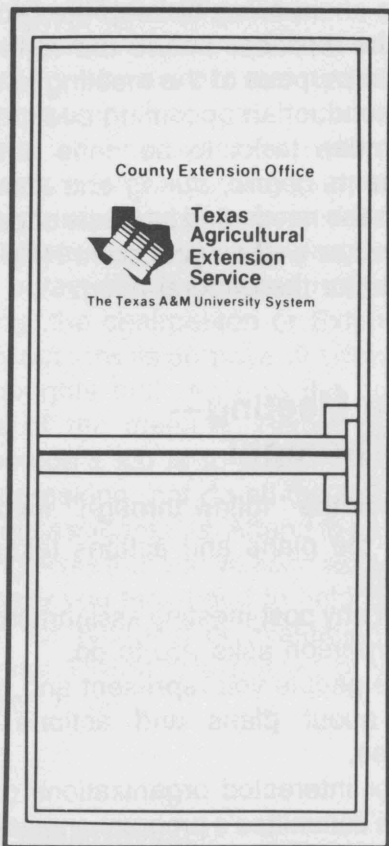
What does the “follow through” involve?

- Support the plans and actions taken by the committee.
- Carry out any post-meeting assignments or jobs the chairperson asks you to do.
- Keep the people you represent and others informed about plans and actions of your committee.
- Tell other interested organizations or groups about the committee’s program and ask for their support and participation.
- Help conduct major activities and events planned by the committee.
- Encourage people to attend the upcoming activities sponsored by the committee.
- Participate in meetings of the larger county Program Building Committee, when it meets as a whole organization.

Successful committee work is never final. Through your successes and accomplishments you will always find new challenges and opportunities to help people in your community and county.



# The place to go when you need to know . . .



. . . about agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth or community development. Drop by or call your county Extension office. You'll find friendly, well-trained agents ready to serve you with up-to-date information, advice and publications. **Your county Extension office . . . the place to go when you need to know!**

*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin.*

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