

PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEES

OF THE
COUNTY
PROGRAM BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Texas A&M
University System



**Texas
Agricultural
Extension
Service**

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This publication is written for members of program area committees, "subcommittees" with specific areas of interest related to the County Program Building organization.

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THE PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEE

AND YOU – THE MEMBER

Congratulations to You



You're a member of an important program area committee of the county program building committee. You were selected because the county committee believes that you have what it takes to get things done. Furthermore, you have a definite interest in the program area of your committee and can make a real 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 be devoting some of your time and talent to Extension educational programs that will help people in your community and other parts of 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 will bring you many stimulating and rewarding experiences. People in your community and in other parts of the county will recognize you as one who holds a responsible position. You also will have opportunities to learn more about the county and its people. In addition, you will make new friends from different 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 learn during educational activities, events or programs which your committee conducts. Perhaps you will help a youngster get his first 4-H project, a family build a new home, a producer increase his yield of

grain sorghum or a community establish a new water system. As your committee works with the county Extension agents to help shape the economic and social growth of people in your county, you will have many opportunities to help people.

A Challenge, Too

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

- Pointing out the importance of the program area committee,
- Defining the role of the committee,
- Explaining how the committee works, and
- Discussing what you should know and do as a member.

Why Have Program Area Committees?

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

Your committee is one of several, each with a different program area responsibility. All program area committees are part of a larger group which usually is called the *county program building committee*. The “central planning group” of the program building committee (either its executive committee or the program building committee itself) determines the scope of the county Extension program. After studying the county situation and identifying major problems, opportunities and program needs, the central planning group

creates program area committees. These committees deal with specified areas for which educational programs are needed in the county. Examples include beef cattle, crops, 4-H and youth, family living, aging and community resource development.

Your program area committee is responsible for planning, implementing 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 to the committees, and assist the committees in carrying out their responsibilities.

HOW YOUR COMMITTEE WORKS

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

The committee's role is divided into the following parts: planning the program, carrying out the plans, evaluating results and reporting accomplishments. Follow along as each of these parts and the decisions the committee must make are discussed.

Planning the Program



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

Long-Range Planning

Long-range plans are contained in the county's written Long-Range Program. The document is

updated every 5 to 6 years. Each program area committee revises the section of the Long-Range County Program that relates to its program area.

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

Long-range planning involves making a study of the county situation within the program area for which your committee is responsible. Committee members assist in collecting data about the program area situation. As this information is analyzed, trends, problems and opportunities become apparent. The committee then establishes long-range objectives to serve as a guide for planning, carrying out and evaluating the educational program for several years. If your committee establishes several long-range objectives, it also should set priorities among them so that the most important ones can be worked on first.

Information collected during the studies and decisions made by all program area committees are recorded in the Long-Range County Program — your “roadmap” for the next 5 to 6 years.

Annual Planning

Annual planning involves developing the educational program for the coming year. Your committee may need to meet one or several times. Annual planning helps your committee decide what part and how much of the long-range plan it will try to accomplish during a 12-month period. Annual plans may also include priorities which are not part of the written Long-Range County Program. How should the committee go about making annual plans? Let's take a look at some steps to follow.

First, the committee must review the facts, problems, objectives and priorities in the Long-Range County Program before major decisions are made. The committee also may have additional

current information to review such as that provided by Extension agents, specialists and other resource people. Review the results of the past year's program. The review helps insure that the committee has current facts upon which to make sound decisions regarding the annual program.

Next, the committee should set some 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 and problems may need specialized help through the educational program. Identifying audiences helps the committee determine the kind of educational program needed to reach each audience.

Here are a few examples:

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● SMALL FARM PRODUCERS | ● PEOPLE IN AGRIBUSINESS |
| ● COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS | ● ABSENTEE LANDOWNERS |
-
- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ● POTENTIAL 4-H MEMBERS | ● SENIOR 4-H'ers |
| ● NEW 4-H MEMBERS | ● ORGANIZATION AND PROJECT LEADERS |
-
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ● YOUNG HOMEMAKERS | ● MOTHERS EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE HOME |
| ● ESTABLISHED HOMEMAKERS | ● HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS |
| | ● ORGANIZED COMMUNITY GROUPS |
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Based on the long-range objectives, major problems and opportunities the committee is working on, committee goals and the 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 during the coming year.

Now the committee can select the educational methods and activities it will use to teach 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. So a variety of methods and activities should be used.

Here are a few examples:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| ● SHORT COURSE | ● APPLIANCE FAIR |
| ● TOUR | ● HAY SHOW |
| ● RESULT DEMONSTRATION | ● YOUTH CAREER DAY |
| ● WORKSHOP | ● BEEF-A-RAMA |
| ● CLINIC | ● CONSUMER DAY |
| ● FIELD DAY | ● ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR |

Your committee should schedule target dates for each activity.

Finally, the committee should plan how it 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 is the *action phase* when you and other members of the committee help carry out the committee's plans.

Your committee will be working 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 activity or event a success so that people in your community will benefit from it.

Prior to *each major activity*, your committee should meet well in advance to plan and prepare for conducting the activity. During the meeting, your committee will need to arrive at many decisions about the 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 task. A few examples are as follows:

| BEFORE | DURING | AFTER |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SELECT RESOURCE PEOPLE TO DO THE TEACHING | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GREET PEOPLE ARRIVING | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• COMPLETE THE EVALUATION |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACQUIRE MEETING FACILITIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KEEP ATTENDANCE LIST | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MAKE THANK-YOU CALLS OR SEND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION TO SPEAKERS, SPECIAL GUESTS AND DONORS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROVIDE PRINTED PROGRAM | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASSIST SPEAKER(S) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CLEAN UP FACILITIES |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DO ADVANCE PUBLICITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXTEND WELCOME AND STATE PURPOSE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARRANGE FOR FOLLOW-UP PUBLICITY |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROVIDE EQUIPMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCE SPEAKER(S) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OBTAIN SPEAKERS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT MATERIAL | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARRANGE FOR REFRESHMENTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SERVE REFRESHMENTS | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EVALUATE ACTIVITY | |

The activity will be most successful when all committee members work to carry out their assignments. The chairman will assign tasks to each member. In addition, each member should encourage people to attend activities developed for them.

Evaluate the Program

How did it go? Was each activity successful? Did the individuals 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 each major activity the committee conducts. The committee also should spend time during one meeting each year reviewing its work and total program results. What changes or improvements have people made or what new knowledge have they 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 central planning group of the program building organization informed of its plans and accomplishments. The central planning group must know what each program area committee is doing and what has been accomplished so it can review the total Extension program. Since the chairman of each program area committee is a member of the central group, he is responsible for reporting. However, the chairman may ask one or more committee members to assist.

In this way the central planning group can determine how well the 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 also should make an annual report of

the year's accomplishments and future plans to the county program building committee so all committees will know the results of the total Extension program.

Your committee's work should be kept 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 the committee accomplish its goals. You will need to help identify resource people and ask for their assistance.

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

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| COUNTY USDA AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES | TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION |
| VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTORS | AREA COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES |
| PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT | AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY ASSOCIATIONS |
| BANKERS | VETERINARIANS |
| SCHOOL OFFICIALS | MINISTERS |
| SCHOOL COUNSELORS | LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS |
| YOUTH DIRECTORS | UTILITY COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES |
| FAMILY COUNSELORS | FOOD STORE MANAGERS |
| SCHOOL LUNCH SUPERVISORS | INSURANCE AGENCIES |
| COMMERCIAL HOME ECONOMISTS | BUILDING CONTRACTORS |
| RETAIL CLOTHING PEOPLE | PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES |
| HOME APPLIANCE DEALERS | SCHOOL NURSES |
| VOCATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS INSTRUCTORS | DENTISTS |
| LAWYERS | CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE |
| DOCTORS | GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON AGING |

These resource people can assist your committee in person or in the form of written information. They can help the committee in all phases of its role, such as helping plan the long-range and annual programs, teaching people at the committee's planned activities or providing helpful methods of evaluating the program.

THE COMMITTEE MEMBER'S JOB — And How to Do It



You are the most important part of the program area committee. Think of the committee as a group of people in a rowboat. The combined effort of each person using an oar helps to make the boat move at a desired speed to reach an objective. No committee can perform its role and be productive without the active participation of *each* member.

Committee work will be enjoyable and rewarding if you know what's expected of you. When it's time to act, you'll know what to do and how to do it. Thus you will 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 are advisors to the committee. They can help you better understand these responsibilities and provide assistance in carrying out committee assignments.

Know Your Committee

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

Make sure you understand the purpose of the committee and what its job is. Ask the committee

chairman and Extension agent to explain this if you're not sure.

As a member of the committee, you also represent other people who are not members. Know who you have been asked to represent. It may be an entire community, part of a community or a certain group of people, such as producers of an agricultural commodity, senior citizens or another organization in the county with similar interests.

Become familiar with how your committee will operate. Your program area committee may have more specific guidelines which it follows.

Keep in mind that there are other committees and each has a different area of responsibility. At times two program area committees may work together on an activity or program. This opportunity comes about when two committees are working on similar plans and activities or when joint committee efforts could accomplish more. One function of the central planning group is to assist program area committees by identifying these opportunities for joint committee efforts.

Committee Meetings Are Vital

In athletic team competition the objective is *to win*. All members of the team prepare for the athletic event, participate in the event and follow through on their assignment so that the combined efforts of team members help achieve the objective. The productive committee member (like the athlete on the team) prepares for the meeting, participates in the meeting and follows through on assignments and other responsibilities.

Before the Meeting - - Prepare!



Have you attended a committee 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, make sure you understand the *purpose*

of the meeting so that you can be prepared to participate in the discussion and decision making.

- *Mark your calendar.* Good committee members are busy people. A note on the calendar will help you remember the meeting date.
- Since you also represent others who are not members of the program area committee, talk with some of them to get their ideas and suggestions. If the purpose of a committee meeting is to plan the program for the coming year, ask the people you represent what their problems, needs and interests are.
- When the chairman or Extension agent notifies you about a meeting, he usually will tell you the purpose of the meeting. Jot down on paper any thoughts that relate to the purpose and details of the meeting. Remember that the chairman's job is to guide the discussion and decision making and not to do all the talking.
- Attend to any other premeeting tasks assigned to you. Occasionally you may be asked to help collect information for planning or evaluation purposes. Understand what you should do and be prepared to do it.

At the Meeting - - Participate!

- Arrive on time for all meetings so that the committee can accomplish its purpose in the allotted time.
- Be enthusiastic about the meeting. Enthusiasm is contagious!
- Take part in the discussion, decisions and committee actions. Your ideas are important.
- Listen carefully as other members express their ideas and suggestions.
- Encourage other members to participate in the discussion.
- Ask the chairman or another member for information on points that may not be clear to you. This helps eliminate misunderstandings that can arise later.

- If necessary, help the chairman keep the group working on the business before the committee.
- When the purpose of the meeting is to decide how to conduct an upcoming activity, be ready to determine tasks to be done and accept assignments. You might be asked to introduce a speaker, keep a registration list of those attending, serve refreshments or greet people.
- Consider the needs and interests of people you represent on the committee, as well as your own.
- Evaluate proposals before the committee and react to them.

After the Meeting - - Follow Through!



What does the "follow through" involve?

- Supporting the plans made or actions taken by the committee.
- Carrying out any postmeeting assignments or jobs the chairman asked you to do.
- Keeping the people you represent and other individuals informed about plans and actions of your committee.
- Telling other interested groups or organizations about the committee's program and asking for their support and participation.
- Helping conduct major activities or events planned by the committee.
- Encouraging people to attend upcoming activities, such as tours, workshops, shortcourses or other educational events sponsored by the committee.
- Participating in meetings of the larger county program building committee if you also are a member of this group. Refer to the program building committee's standing rules.

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

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

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.

5M—6-81, Revision

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