Emphasis Areas and Ongoing Priorities for the Cooperative Extension Section
Ed Jones, 2019 Chair

Overall Theme: Science-informed decisions and policy

The Cooperative Extension Section (CES) is led by Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), a 15-member board representing the five Cooperative Extension regions. ECOP’s role is to identify and implement member-driven opportunities designed to enhance resources, relationships and recognition for Cooperative Extension nationally. ECOP’s work addresses four core themes:
1) building partnerships and acquiring resources.
2) increasing strategic marketing and communications,
3) enhancing leadership and professional development,
4) strengthening organizational functioning.

EMPHASIS AREAS

Capacity Funding (ECOP Budget & Legislative Committee-BLC Chair/ECOP Executive Committee) –
- Build on advocacy strategies to increase federal capacity funding (Smith-Lever and 1890s Extension)
- Promote and expand participation in the Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) program as a major Extension advocacy tool.
- Advocacy messaging will be focused on Cooperative Extension’s value relative to:
  • Science in action – continue to leverage the research and engagement initiatives of Land-grant universities.
  • Proactive, flexible and collaborative action on disasters, threats, emerging opportunities, etc.
  • Extension’s national reach with the opportunity for meaningful local impact.
  • Opportunities to expand high impact programs such as 4-H youth development or water or health.
  • Providing value for federal partners (as the outreach/engagement arm of the federal government).


Collaboration with Federal Entities (ECOP Chair/Chair-elects) – Focus on clarifying roles for Cooperative Extension with federal agencies. Specific examples include NRCS, NSF – Broader Impacts, the Departments of Health & Human Services (CDC, FDA/FSMA) and Housing and Urban Development as well as the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research. Frame these conversations around emerging opportunities in the following areas:
- Nutrition, health and wellness
- Positive youth development
- Water
- Food production and food security
- Community development

Priority outcomes for these conversations include collaboration opportunities as well as programmatic and/or capacity funding.

Farm Bill Initiatives (BLC Chair/ECOP Representative to the BAA Committee on Legislation and Policy-CLP/ECOP Executive Committee) – Engage appropriate parties to address:
- SNAP-Ed/EFNEP:
  - Present a coherent argument to grow funding for SNAP-Ed and EFNEP.
  - Funding directed to LGU-based Cooperative Extension.
  - Seek increases to support 1890’s and 1994’s, as well as 1862s.
- 1890s - change carryover provision language of 1444 to be consistent with the Smith-Lever carryover provision.
- Clarify role of NRCS and Cooperative Extension relative to conservation education.
- Extension Farm Bill training through Farm Service Agency

**Strengthen our Working Relationship with NIFA** (ECOP Chair/Chair-elects/Past-chair) Seek a streamlined, impactful reporting framework that aligns state and NIFA needs.
- Strengthen collaborative relationships with NIFA leadership and NPLs with monthly on-site conversations and seminars (Extension Directors/Administrators invited).
- Explore and provide input on NPL priorities for AFRI-funded Extension projects as well as Extension Director/Administrator participation on these review panels.
- Work with NIFA leadership to strengthen state liaison roles.

**Integration With Key Partners**
- Consider a reciprocal liaison relationship with the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) to strengthen our engagement with urban Extension.
- Invite our 1994 Tribal College Cooperative Extension Service partners to identify a liaison to ECOP.

**ONGOING PRIORITIES**
- In collaboration with ESCOP, review the value of the ESS-CES-AHS Communications and Marketing (CMC) Project to Cooperative Extension and identify the most appropriate path forward (ECOP Chair/Chair-elect).
- Collaborate with ESCOP to strengthen the Land-grant message of accomplishment and impact. Enhance our visibility by strengthening participation in www.landgrantimpacts.org. And, work with NIFA to make the database more useful to our federal partner. (ECOP Executive Committee/National Impacts Database Committee).
- Continue a commitment to collaboration with ESCOP and the ESCOP Science and Technical Committee by establishing/maintaining a strong working relationship with ESCOP Chair. (ECOP Chair)
- Expand strategic alliances that benefit Cooperative Extension with national partners (e.g. NASDA, NC-FAR, NACo, SoAR, CFARE, ESCOP, APLU BAA, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and others).
- Identify ways to support the Issues, Innovation and Impact programs led by eXtension. (ECOP Executive and Program Committees).
- Through the eXtension Foundation Board of Directors, assure that eXtension is an active contributor to the advancement of Extension education across the nation.
- Enhance leadership for and increase participation in 4-H positive youth development through collaboration among Extension Directors/Administrators, NIFA 4-H Headquarters and National 4-H Council through the work of the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee.

Specific initiatives or efforts designed to strengthen Cooperative Extension and ECOP’s operations and value:
- On-board a new Executive Director for the Cooperative Extension System.
- Establish Futuring of Extension, by using a systematic process to be ready for the future.
- Demonstrate ECOP’s value to the members of the Cooperative Extension Section.
- Strengthen ECOP functions by moving from a reporting model to a deliberative, forward-looking, action-oriented framework. Similarly, review the effectiveness of ECOP’s committee structure and consider alternatives.
- Provide opportunities for directors/administrators to improve personal, organizational and system leadership skills, including an annual conference (NEDA) and a monthly Next Generation Extension – Learning for Leaders webinar series.
- Implement national Excellence in Extension and Diversity Awards.
- Partner with JCEP to strengthen national leadership of Extension’s professional associations.