

Agriculture Program Meeting  
Tuesday, May 12, 2009  
via Centra

Attending: Gary Bates, Keith Belli, Gene Burgess, Mike Davidson, Joseph Donaldson, Tim Fawver, Delton Gerloff, Debbie Joines, Brian Leib (for Eric Drumm), Alan Mathew, David Perrin, Richard Powell, and George Smith.

1. **Travel Improvement Program**

Extension expects to be 100% paperless by July 2009. The Travel Improvement Program system has saved a week to two weeks in processing time. Tim Fawver reminded the group that all FY 2009 travel expense statements must reach the Dean's office for audit by July 3. If you have upgraded to Adobe Pro 9 and have experienced difficulty, a fix is available at the Adobe website.

2. **ATTRA**

Richard Powell shared information on a webinar program presented by ATTRA. ATTRA is funded from a grant from USDA and provides information for those involved in sustainable agriculture. For more information, check their website at <http://attra.ncat.org/>.

3. **How Farmers Learn: Preliminary Results**

Joseph Donaldson shared results of the research project conducted to learn how producers prefer to learn. This project was funded by Southern Region SARE. The study involved focus groups and a questionnaire was also administered in which producers categorized learning methods as "preferred" or "not preferred". Female, value added, and organic producers tended to use the web more often than beef, forage and tobacco producers. Age did not influence preference for online learning. Donaldson will share a fact sheet which summarizes the preliminary results and also share the executive summary and follow up on professional development needs with Dr. Smith.

4. **Pesticide Recertification Registration in SUPER**

**The forms, 318A and 318B will no longer be used, effective immediately.** The same information on these forms comes from SUPER Training/Registration module, as shown by those counties that have already adopted SUPER Training/Registration for completing these forms. This will be a huge time savings for the entire organization, but especially the county offices.

***318B is the "Roster for Private Applicator Initial Certification"***

The agent just needs to create a pesticide certification course/event in SUPER T/R, and run the report (which opens in Excel)

***318A is the "PSEP Private Applicator Initial Certification and Recertification Training Form"***

On the report, the agent just needs to add one column for pre-test and a second column for post-test.

Counties may start using SUPER Training/Registration in place of these forms immediately. For example, counties may create one course/event for pesticide certification and register all participants who complete the training for an entire month's period. Then they would export the participant list and send the file to Dr. Burgess. Joseph Donaldson has developed a tip sheet that he will share with Powell, Stewart and Perrin as they communicate with county personnel. Dr. Burgess will send a memo to all counties about this change.

5. **PAT Database for Inservice via Centra**

Jim Stewart developed a web site for reporting agent in-service training via CENTRA (per minutes for previous Ag Program meetings). The discussion at the May 12 Agriculture Program Meeting focused on the critical importance of having a single reporting system which would prevent agents from having to enter data multiple times. Agent inservice is already reported in SUPER. The specialist will send the agenda to Dr. Burgess. The specialist may send a list of participants from SUPER Training/Registration or Dr. Burgess may access the list himself. He will indicate the number of points earned on the participant list and send it to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Also, in the near future, Dr. Burgess will contact the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to inquire about using the agents' office addresses rather than home addresses for this purpose. (Dr. Burgess contacted TDA following the meeting and Kathy Booker agreed to accept the agents' office addresses rather than their home addresses for inservice training).

6. **Budget Update**

Smith reviewed information previously shared in FYI. As of the beginning of July, Extension will have a permanent reduction in the base state funding of \$2.6 million. However on July 1, Extension will receive federal stimulus funding for two years with final end day of June 30, 2011. Many restrictions will be placed on how funds can be used. This will be a way to transition us to the lower funding for FY 12. We will be looking at ways to reduce recurring dollars and how to best invest the stimulus funds to enhance programs.

7. **2009 Grants and Contracts Information**

Departments previously received information on grants and contracts that are in the system. Concern is that not all Extension grants and contracts are getting credit in the system. Department heads were reminded again to take a look at the list sent in March and compare it against what they know is being done in their departments. If something is missing, let us know so that it can be corrected in the COEUS system. In the future, when you have a joint grant with Experiment Station, be sure the Dean's office is informed so specialists can receive proper credit for work they do.

8. **2008 SUPER Activity Report**

The 2008 SUPER Activity Report included the number of direct contacts reported by specialists. This report is for your information, but as we move into FY2010, it is critical that specialists report what they are doing especially now with the budget situation. SUPER is an excellent tool to document and justify the impact of our programs and SUPER is the way impacts are reported to the Federal government.

9. **Explanations for Unusual Travel**

When travel requests for reimbursement come in with unusual travel, an explanation is needed in the comments section to explain so the travel isn't rejected. For example,

explain why you flew to Atlanta for a meeting instead of driving.

10. **Keep County Offices Informed**

If specialists go out into the state to conduct a workshop, conference, etc., please keep county offices informed so they can answer questions professionally with details of the time, place, etc., for these events.

11. **Out-of-State Travel Approvals**

As of Friday, May 8, out-of-state travel using E funds will no longer be required to have prior approval by the Dean, and will no longer be required to be submitted to the Dean's Office. All international travel will continue to require a T-18 for prior approval by the Dean and in the case of E funds will also require prior approval by the Vice President.

12. **Extension Agents serving as a Co-PI on a grant.**

It is encouraged that agents participate on grants as appropriate. Agents may also participate in the salary incentive program if the grant supports this. Approvals should come from regional directors before an agent participates on grants.

13. **Streamlining Planning and Reporting**

In the near future, Dr. Smith will schedule a meeting with team members to establish State Action Agendas in Livestock and Forage Systems and the Plant Systems.

14. **Next Meeting – June 9, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. (EDT) via Centra**