

*Applying innovative, science-based solutions to improve food and fiber production and enhance Pennsylvania's communities is the legacy of Penn State Extension. Ensuring and advancing that mission in the future is the focus of extension's new vision for program development and delivery.*

**FACING A CHALLENGING ECONOMIC** climate and the evolving needs of stakeholders and society, Penn State Extension has launched a bold, new plan designed to put the knowledge and expertise of the state's land-grant university to work for Pennsylvania.

The vision complements extension's vital core as a local, county-based organization, by empowering local extension educators and faculty to work as part of a statewide program team, structured around expertise and focusing on addressing the priority needs of defined key industries and audiences. As a team, they will develop relevant, high-quality, research-based information and programs for delivery in the counties wherever they are needed across the state.

Program areas will focus on unique, strategic areas of excellence within the College of Agricultural Sciences and will continue to be delivered through a county-based presence, while also providing universal access to research-based information and solutions through emerging technologies and online communities. With an interdisciplinary, systems approach, the vision prioritizes and focuses programs around the sustainable intersection of three interrelated areas: the food and fiber system, the ecosystem, and the socioeconomic system.

Working in collaboration with diverse, statewide partnerships—including county commissioners, commodity groups, nonprofits, government agencies, volunteers, and clients—this unified, focused structure will enable extension to efficiently bring all college resources to bear in meeting stakeholder needs.

## **THE PROGRAM TEAM APPROACH**

This model shifts from geographic-based programming to audience-based programming focusing on ag sector needs and priority issues. With complementary strengths and expertise, program team members will work collectively to continuously improve program quality and stakeholder satisfaction. The result will be high-quality, consistent educational programs statewide, with maximum impact.

**For stakeholders, the new program team model means:**

- Improved and increased access to specific expertise and comprehensive information, and availability of a broader array of high-quality, consistent educational programs.
- Programs, resources, and expertise more sharply focused on key sectors and issues, such as Marcellus shale, Chesapeake Bay, animal welfare, and others.
- Extension educators and expertise stationed in all 67 counties, strategically positioned based largely on the distribution and concentration of agriculture sectors and issues.
- More direct input into programs and priorities through the implementation of stakeholder advisory groups and program team planning processes.
- Visible points of contact to statewide program teams, providing more interaction and opportunities to enhance partnerships, collaboration, and funding around key issues.
- Universal access to information and programs through diverse technologies and formats, such as face-to-face programs, online communities, web-based methods (websites, webinars, blogs), e-books, and smart phone applications, so stakeholders can access information when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it.

## **PROGRAM FOCUS: COLLEGE AREAS OF EXCELLENCE**

Under the new program model, Penn State Extension will focus primarily on areas in which the College of Agricultural Sciences has unique strengths and proven excellence:

**Food and Fiber Production and Processing**, covering crop production; animal production, health, and welfare; pest prediction and response/pollinators; food safety and quality; food and health science; and farm safety.

**Environmental Management**, encompassing nutrient management; air quality and manage-

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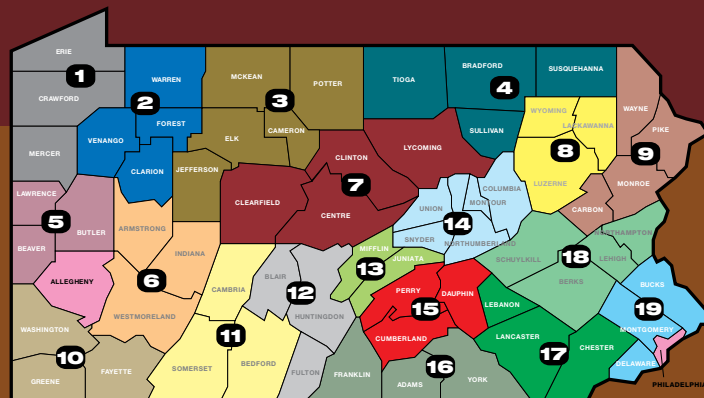
ment; water quality and quantity; conservation best management practices (BMPs); agricultural facilities BMPs; and green infrastructure.

**Economic and Community Development**, including 4-H; energy and Marcellus shale; sustainable farm businesses; ag entrepreneurship/value added; job development; and agricultural economic and policy analysis.

All extension educators and faculty will participate on a program team that will develop and deliver programs across the state and will report to a state program leader rather than a local administrator. The 11 program teams include:

New Extension Teams	Key Industries and Audiences
Dairy	Dairy producers and allied industries
Livestock	Livestock producers and allied industries
Equine	Equine producers and allied industries
Poultry	Poultry producers and allied industries
Field and Forage Crops	Major field- and forage-crop producers
Renewable Natural Resources	Forest-product and allied industries
Horticulture	Tree and small-fruit producers, including grape growers and winemakers; vegetable/mushroom producers; green industry
Family and Consumer Science	Families and consumers
Food Safety and Quality	Food processing, manufacturing, and service industries
4-H Youth Development	Youth and youth leaders
Ag Entrepreneurship and Economic, Community Development	Communities; agricultural businesses and small businesses

All program teams will address relevant high-priority, state-wide issues that cut across disciplines. These include animal welfare and environments, water, food safety, sustainable agricultural businesses, pest prediction and response, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and positive youth development, rural safety and health, Marcellus shale, bio-based on-farm energy production and use, and childhood obesity.



## A COUNTY-BASED DELIVERY SYSTEM

As the new program teams are implemented, Penn State Extension also is modifying its model to provide administrative services for extension offices in the counties, with an eye toward streamlining operations, improving efficiency, eliminating duplication, and maximizing productivity, while maintaining a physical presence in every county to address local needs.

Rather than maintaining a position in each county to oversee administrative services, extension administrative services will be structured around 19 districts, each consisting of two to five county offices. Administrative services for each district—such as information technology, financial processing, program registration, human resources, and communications—will be standardized and centralized under a district director located in the district. A district board will be created, with representation from all of the county boards in that district, to oversee the administration of the district.

The new district structure for administrative services will offer several benefits:

- Continued presence in all 67 counties through strategic distribution of district directors and extension educators in county offices. By maintaining this important county-based distribution network, extension can provide access to state-wide program-team expertise through locally facilitated programs.
- Increased focus on programming by maximizing the number of educators delivering programs. More than 35 former county extension directors now will spend 100 percent of their time on developing and conducting educational programs rather than on administrative duties.
- Increased efficiency and cost savings through standardization and centralization of administrative processes and equipment.

## REINVESTING STRATEGICALLY IN PENNSYLVANIA

The reorganization of Penn State Extension and the College of Agricultural Sciences is designed to strengthen programs and build a more agile organization that is responsive to stakeholder and societal needs. Influenced by budget pressures, we have reduced the number of faculty/staff and county-based extension educators, streamlined or eliminated programs, and refocused on core areas of strength that bring unique benefits to the state. But as funding permits, we're committed to reinvesting in areas of greatest need and advancing our land-grant mission in support of a vibrant food and fiber system, a clean environment, and a healthy population for Pennsylvania.

An **OUTREACH** program of the College of Agricultural Sciences

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