

Extension Stakeholders Meeting Minutes

The East Carroll Parish Extension Service held a stakeholders meeting for members of its advisory council committees on Monday, March 23, 2009. The meeting was held in Plantation Hall at the Louisiana State Cotton Museum on Hwy. 65 in Lake Providence.

The following were present: Staff Members – Associate Director Dwight Landreneau; Regional Director Dr. Bob Hutchinson; Regional FCS Coordinator Terri Crawford; Regional 4-H Coordinator Kelley Hiemstra; Parish Chair/Associate County Agent Donna Lee (ANR); Associate Area Agent Glenn Dixon (ANR); Associate Extension Agent Kris Mayers (4-H); Nutrition Educator 2's Dorris Thompson, Mary Reed, Grace Siggers and Patricia Johnikin (EFNEP); Nutrition Educator Sharon Wilder (FFNEWS); and Administrative Coordinator Sherry Smith; Committee Members – Mark Buntyn, Steve Brown, Francis Lensing, Henry Collins, Deborah Morris, Sr. Phyllis Fuselier, Sr. Constance Hummel, Mark Brown, Gene Edmondson, Eran Robinson, Jason Condrey, Kevana Hayes, Ashunti Chase, Mattie Dixon, Laisca Dixon, Rebecca Thompson, Elaine Chase, Rosie Brown, Emma Jean Bell, Sr. Bernie Barrett, Harriet Bridges and Tierra Lane.

Parish Chair Donna Lee opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. She stated that this is probably one of the most important meetings we have had or will have. She asked everyone to be sure they signed the sign-in sheet. She then reminded everyone that our millage renewal will be on the April 4 ballot, to please vote and that we appreciate your support.

Ms. Lee thanked Ms. Bridges and the Louisiana State Cotton Museum for the use of their facility and she commented that the building is very accommodating. Ms. Bridges stated the building is here for everyone to use.

Ms. Lee then presented a power point of a flyer about our millage renewal. The flyer lists numerous programs that Extension offers in East Carroll Parish. She gave a brief description of what Extension does and reminded everyone that we are here for the public's use.

Ms. Lee then turned the meeting over to Dr. Hutchinson.

Dr. Hutchinson gave an overview of the programs Extension offers in the northeast region of Louisiana. He stated that our programs touch everyone in this parish.

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Dr. Hutchinson informed that LSU is the land-grant university and the flagship university in our state.

The two most important things that the LSU AgCenter does are research and Extension. Most of the research conducted is problem-solving research. Extension Technology Transfer of the AgCenter is taking the research-based information and putting it in the hands of the users.

There are three branch experiment stations in northeast Louisiana. These experiment stations support all the commodities that come out of northeast Louisiana.

Parish staffing is as follows: Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) faculty = 11.5; 4-H faculty = 12.1; Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) faculty = 7.3; and administrative (parish chair) = 0.9. This totals to 31.8 people per parish.

The AgCenter has an outstanding Community Rural Development (CRD) program. Leadership Development, Entrepreneurship and Rural Tourism are big programs in northeast Louisiana.

The cotton entomology specialist and cotton specialist positions are key positions that are vacant for our region at this time.

Research Stations/Regional Faculty staffing is as follows (these are specialists and parish agents): ANR = 22.9; 4-H = 13.1; FCS = 8.3; CRD = 3.0; Administrative (small administrative appointments at parish and regional levels and the regional director) = 2.5. This totals to 49.8 people in the region.

Research emphasis focuses on:

- Crop breeding and genetic improvement
- Variety testing
- Improved cultural practices
- Management of weeds, diseases, insects and nematodes
- Soil and water conservation
- Pest resistance management

All of our research involves an environmental component to develop practices that will allow us to be stewards for the environment.

The Macon Ridge Research Station is identical to the NE Research Station in how it works, but the research results are different due to different soil types.

Dr. Hutchinson then turned the meeting over to Regional FCS Coordinator Terri Crawford.

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Ms. Crawford said the FCS program works with individuals in relation to their food and nutrition. The mission is to enhance the lives of individuals and families. We want all citizens to be healthy.

FCS focuses on three areas:

- Family Resource Management
 - Help educate about financial literacy for pre-K through high school, limited resource audiences and technical college students.
 - Chart Your Course to Home Ownership
 - Financial Security in Later Life
 - Saving and Investing for Life
 - Mass Media Efforts
- Family Development – childcare provider training
 - Parenting Education
 - Parenting Adolescents
 - Character Education
- Nutrition and Health
 - Hunger and diet quality
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Food Safety
 - Master Nutrition – new program to be offered this summer to train community people to work in volunteer areas of nutrition

According to Louisiana's Report Card on Physical Activity & Health for Children & Youth 2008 published by Pennington Biomedical Research Center at LSU, our children are not healthy.

Ms. Crawford turned the meeting over to Regional 4-H Coordinator Kelley Hiemstra.

Ms. Hiemstra asked everyone to think of one word to describe 4-H and share it with the person sitting next to them.

4-H is one of the largest youth development program in the United States.

Guiding Principles and Community Service are two major areas that 4-H focuses on.

The intended outcome for youth in 4-H is for them to grow up to be healthy, productive adults.

Ms. Hiemstra then turned the meeting over to Associate Director Dwight Landreneau.

Mr. Landreneau discussed LSU AgCenter's budget situation.

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The following is a statement issued by Chancellor Richardson: "Media reports about 8-10 percent cuts in the state budget have been causing some confusion about the size of the cuts to higher education and to the LSU AgCenter. The cuts to the AgCenter remain as I have previously reported to you. Our directive came through the LSU System from the Board of Regents. We have endured a 4.6 percent midyear cut, and we face a 15.7 percent cut for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, which begins July 1. There remain some unanswered questions about unfunded mandates and other budget items. But the reality is we are planning a 20-plus percent cut to our budget from one budget year to the next."

65% of LSU AgCenter's budget is dependent on state appropriated funding. We do not have a mechanism for tuition to offset dollars not funded.

In the last 15-20 years the AgCenter has downsized by about 300 employees. Numerous positions have been vacated and those positions will not be filled.

At the Revenue Estimating Conference it was shown that we have a lack of revenue coming into Louisiana and we had to give 4% back to the state.

Dr. Richardson, Dr. Coreil and Mr. Landreneau meet every Monday morning to look at any changes affecting the budget.

LSU AgCenter is made up of 85% people.

Some of the programs we offer will have to be eliminated. If the 23.5% budget cut sustains, we will be looking at about 120 less people to serve the needs of Louisiana.

Visit with your representatives and senators to let them know the value of the LSU AgCenter to individuals.

The southern average of local support is 23% and we are asking police juries to increase the 10% they are already giving.

We need your support. Your letters, emails, phone calls, etc., to legislators is important to the LSU AgCenter.

Some of our politicians don't look at the AgCenter as producing jobs until a big organization closes and 1,000 people lose their job.

In comparison to other states, we are not losing our good scientists. Our research is cutting edge that is being mimicked around the United States. There are 4-H programs that are receiving national publicity. And we produce the cheapest food and fiber; therefore, we cannot afford to be 'average.'

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Mr. Landreneau thanked everyone for coming today.

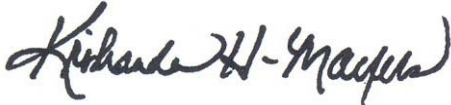
Ms. Lee again thanked everyone for their attendance and informed that the contact information to legislators will be attached to the minutes.



Donna R. Lee
Associate County Agent/Parish Chair
Agriculture & Natural Resources
East Carroll Parish



Glenn E. Dixon
Associate Area Agent
Agriculture & Natural Resources
East/West Carroll Parishes



Krishanda H. Mayers
Associate Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development
East Carroll Parish



Carolyn E. Robinson
Associate Area Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences
East/West Carroll Parishes

DRL/GED/KHM/CER:ss

Attachment 1

It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability.

Contact Information for Louisiana Legislators, Etc.

Governor Bobby Jindal
Office of the Governor
P. O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

To email the governor: www.gov.state.la.us

Scroll to the bottom of the page.

At the bottom, in the center, click on 'Contact the Governor'

Representative Andy Anders
200 Advocate Row, Ste. D
Vidalia, LA 71373
(318) 336-5865
Fax (318) 336-9268

Senator Francis Thompson
P. O. Box 68
Delhi, LA 71232
(318) 878-9408
Fax (318) 878-5650
thompsof@legis.state.la.us

Dr. Sally Clausen
Louisiana Board of Regents
P. O. Box 3677
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3677
(225) 342-4253
Fax (225) 342-9318
Dr. Clausen's Email: sally.clausen@la.gov

Angele Davis
Commissioner of Administration
P. O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(800) 354-9548
Fax (225) 342-1057
Email: doacommissioner@la.gov