Reports

Extension Happenings 1991

Mary Witt

The Extension Division of ASHS runs on the expertise of many persons. For someone wanting to be heard, the ASHS Extension Division has a knack for listening,

The Division Vice President is chosen by the general membership each fall--Helen C. Harrison (Univ. of Wisconsin) will serve 1991-92 and Douglas C. Sanders (North Carolina State Univ.) will serve 1992-93. An Advisory Committee chaired by the Vice President introduces issues and keeps their concerns on the table before the Extension Division and the ASHS Board of Directors. Twelve at-large members serve staggered 3-year terms on the Extension Advisory Committee, with each new Vice President appointing four members annually. The Advisory Committee meetings are open to all ASHS Members. Everyone is encouraged to participate in an advisory capacity all year long, and

especially at the Annual Meeting, when the setting is right for bouncing ideas off colleagues and refining them to reflect regional and national appeal. The reason for 12? Making sure Members show up! Luckily, that has not been a problem for the past couple of years. Paul Smeal (Virginia Polytechnic and State Univ.) gets the credit for starting the Extension Advisory Committee, and it works well as a sounding board for Members.

I appreciated the input of ideas by many colleagues during my tenure as Extension Division VP. A few of the initiatives of the past year include:

- *Endorsement of individual state Specialists* to obtain interstate and well as intrastate review of the Cooperative Extension Service bulletins prior to printing. A bulletin referee guide could be standardized easily across the country if necessary, because all university Specialists are concerned that quality bulletins are written in a style that communicates reliable information to target audiences. I am aware of a system in place at the Univ. of Georgia that accomplishes this. Perhaps other

administrators/faculty have instituted similar systems. The following points are included in the Univ. of Georgia's review policy for extension bulletins and may serve as a guide for other states wishing to initiate such a policy:

- 1) Is the manuscript appropriate for a Cooperative Extension Service bulletin?
- 2) Is the title appropriate?
- 3) Do errors of fact, calculation, or interpretation occur?
- 4) Is the manuscript unnecessarily short or long? Should certain sections be expanded, condensed, or omitted?
- 5) Would the main points of the publication be clear to its target audiences?
- 6) Are illustrations or tables clear? Are they necessary or do they duplicate other parts of the publication? Do graphs and tables present duplicated data? If this occurs, recommend which is preferable for retention.
- 7) Are literature citations pertinent? Is extraneous literature cited? Has any recent information on the subject been overlooked?

The reviewer recommends one of four categories: accept without change; accept with minor revision; accept with major revision; reject. The Extension Division encourages its members to incorporate something similar to the Univ. of Georgia's effort and to sell the idea to their administrators as a valid method of evaluating extension publications.

- *Endorsement of ASHS Headquarters' staff initiative* to procure hardware and software systems for handling electronic information. The diversity and specificity of horticultural information concerning the culture of thousands of plants is needed by extension specialists (and other teachers of horticulture). The Extension Division encourages the Society to store titles, abstracts, and electronic copy of state-reviewed Extension publications in the ASHS database, which should be accessible to all Members. This would be a source of information for a potentially large audience. Specialists or agents who have their publications placed on the national ASHS database should consider this a personal and professional award for excellent work.

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• *Promotion of regional efforts by state Specialists*, including the development of regional publications, regional in-service training for county agents, regional grower meetings, etc. The increasing demand for sophistication of educational programs makes the regional efforts more and more critical. Extension persons need time to become experts in a defined area, and, with regional cooperation, this should happen more easily.

• *Definition of what constitutes excellence in Horticultural Cooperative Extension*. Extension persons need to describe aggressively what is meant by scholarly achievement in an extension program. A policy statement on quality and excellence in extension would have many applications. Members of the Extension Division increasingly are alarmed by difficulties in obtaining university promotions for extension persons. Jack Rabin (Rutgers Univ.) is charged with preparing this statement.

• *Establishment of "Blue Ribbon" publications, videos, and computer programs* on the national level. The Education Division already has in place a review/evaluation process for edu-

cational materials, primarily videotapes and slide/tape sets. Also, the ASHS Southern Region gives "Blue Ribbon" awards for outstanding publications in the region each year. These two efforts work, and could serve as models for Division awards on the national level in all areas of educational material produced by Extension persons.

• *Initiation of "County Agent Award for Excellence in Horticultural Programming"*. The Division already sponsors an award for one outstanding project on a national level by a Specialist. Members believe that having an award for county agents will be one way to stimulate interest in agents becoming ASHS Members.

• *Advertisement for 1-day registration fees* for the ASHS Annual Meeting. The Workshops that have been hosted at the past two ASHS meetings appeal to many persons (many non-ASHS members) who may participate if they could do so on a 1-day basis. Extension Division members would like to see 1-day fees advertised clearly. It may be important in recruitment of new Members for ASHS.

Not all of these ideas have met Board approval, but your opinions about them are important to current Division Vice President Harrison. Let her know what you think.

What can you expect from the Extension Division at the 1992 ASHS Annual Meeting in Hawaii (31 July-6 Aug.)? Going right along with the national extension initiatives, two proposals for Workshops (or Colloquia) are on the board: 1) "Waste Management" (contact Wayne McLaurin, Extension Horticulture Dept., Barrow Hall, Univ. of Georgia Athens, GA 30602), and 2) "Going Global-The Marketing of Horticultural Crops" (contact Mel Garber, P.O. Box 1209, Univ. of Georgia, Tifton, GA 31793).

It has been a great year. A tremendous round of applause from the Extension Division to Jack Kelly (Michigan State Univ.), John Gerber (Univ. of Illinois), Mike Neff (ASHS Headquarters), and all Associate Editors for spearheading *HortTechnology*. Extension Division members like the mission statement of the publication and look forward to the intercommunication that it will foster among all Divisions.

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