



The National Cooperative Extension Service: Funding Need and Impact in Helping People

- ▶ **Background:** The national extension service functions as a part of the Land Grant University System throughout the US in collaboration with the USDA/NIFA and state and local governments. Extension personnel are campus-based faculty and county-based educators that work with various local stakeholders, consumers, and other interested groups to identify the needs, develop and demonstrate solutions, and provide science-based educational materials to all involved. The overall objectives of the Extension Service are diverse and numerous and were recently summarized by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP, www.extension.org/ECOP) as: “1) Strengthening the profitability of animal and plant production systems, 2) Protecting our rich natural resources and environment, 3) Ensuring an abundant and safe food supply, 4) Preparing for and responding to economic and natural disasters, 5) Fostering greater energy independence, 6) Helping families, youth, and individuals be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy; and 7) Enhancing workforce preparation and life skills.”

Extension plant pathology programs provide timely information and training on the diagnosis, assessments of the need for management, and available plant disease control options of food, feed, fiber, energy, and ornamental crops. These are critical for sustainable and profitable production as well as for environmental and human safety. Plant pathologists address local and regional emerging needs, assist producers to comply with federal and state safety and environmental laws, and facilitate registering disease control products for special local needs under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, rodenticide Act, FIFRA.¹

Extension programs are funded primarily through federal formula funds and state and county appropriations. These funds leverage 3- to 4-fold additional funds from other sources, including fees, gifts, contracts and competitive grants. ***The significant reduction in these funds and their buying power in recent years have greatly impacted the capacity of cooperative extension programing and reduced extension personnel.***

- ▶ **Solution:** Stable federal formula funds in addition to competitive grants sources are needed to maintain the services of extension programs in addressing emerging local needs, conducting and implementing the results of translational research, keeping experiment stations open with updated laboratories, and delivering state of the art educational information. Thus, APS requests that funding for extension programs are maintained and increased, where possible. Specifically,
 - Provide an adequate level of federal formula funds to maintain a critical number of personnel and the capacity to respond to local needs and outreach emergency events.
 - Increase opportunities for translational research and outreach on local issues.
 - Where appropriate to the research goals, promote the inclusion with significant financial support of extension activities as components of large competitive grants of NIFA and others.
- ▶ **Contacts and Referenced Publications:** APS Public Policy Board (PPB) members **Jan Leach** (jan.leach@colorstate.edu) and APS Washington Liaison **Kellye Eversole** (eversole@eversoleassociates.com) are available to answer any additional questions.

¹ Everts, et al. 2012. *Phytopathology* 102:652-655 (keverts@umd.edu).