

Combined Animal, Dairy, and Poultry Science Extension Workshop

Introduction

R. D. Reynnells

*United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research,
Education and Extension Service, Plant and Animal Systems, 800 9th Street,
SW, Room 3130 Waterfront Centre, Washington, DC 20250-2220*

Primary Audience: University, Administrative, Industry Personnel

SUMMARY

This meeting emphasized an expanded concept or definition for Cooperative Extension, including cooperation across animal commodities, and addressing cultural issues. This second combined extension workshop recognized the fact that environmental, animal welfare, biosecurity, food safety, societal, and other concerns are not restricted to individual commodities. Effectively addressing these complex issues requires that agriculture present a united front and find ways to cooperate for the common good of everyone in agriculture and society.

Key words: animal welfare, environment, extension, international opportunities, societal concerns
2005 J. Appl. Poult. Res. 14:362–364

DISCUSSION

The Combined Animal, Dairy, and Poultry National Extension Workshop of 2004 marks the second combined workshop, both of which have been highly successful. In 2004, over 325 persons attended the workshop throughout the day. This success came from the high level of cooperation of not only the organizing committee but of other members in the respective professional organizations that provided suggestions to their committee representatives. Extension workshops are characterized by cutting-edge topics and outstanding speakers. This year was perhaps exceptional because of our desire to draw from the expertise from several commodity and professional areas [1, 2]. On behalf of the attendees, I want to express to committee members our appreciation for the

time and expertise they have provided to make our program relevant and a success.

Environmental issues have been of great interest to extension specialists for many years who have provided invaluable educational programs to industry at all levels. These specialists have been available to regulatory agencies as a source of research expertise and practical knowledge necessary in the promulgation of fair, objective, and effective regulations. Over the years, environmental issues have expanded from just water quality to air and related social issues. New concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) regulations have been created that are modifications of predecessor CAFO water quality regulations. We now have air quality concerns that are being addressed by new regulations, which are discussed. Waste management alternatives, including the evaluation

¹To whom correspondence should be addressed: rreynnells@csrees.usda.gov.

of nutrients in the soil, represent the animal system's attempts to fulfill their stewardship responsibilities to environmental protection. Societal concerns are influenced by the size of intensive animal production and media-generated or self-induced visions of "the good old days" by society. However, these recollections do not account for the impact of personal responsibility on the animal production and processing system through societal demands for cheap food. Presentations help address these issues.

Biosecurity has been a part of good management since or before the time departments of animal science were called departments of animal husbandry. The importance of biosecurity (keeping animals away from disease agents and disease agents away from animals [3]) is discussed for normal disease transfer problems as well as intentional transmission of disease agents to our nation's food animals. In all cases, there must be recognition of the importance of a viable disease prevention program—and if disease occurs, minimization of disease transfer is essential. As generally observed by presenters and others [4] this early recognition and mitigation of disease challenges is best accomplished by educational programs and a first responder team of farmer, local veterinarian, county Extension agents, and others, supported by a strong diagnostic system, with the potential for indemnification. An option for dealing with the results of a failure of the existing or proposed holistic system is also discussed.

International opportunities have always supplied participants with a huge return on their investment of time and effort. Today, our involvement in international programs and opportunities to influence regulations is of increasing impor-

tance due to globalization of trade and culture. Neither of these is necessarily compatible with existing cultural values. Trade decisions made by international bodies will have a significant impact on our farmers' abilities to compete globally and on legislation and regulations in the United States. This is especially true for animal welfare or well-being and antibiotic issues and is seen in country-of-origin-labeling decisions that may be of importance to poultry. Educational assignments create opportunities for personal growth and, more importantly, friendships for the United States. Some of these options are discussed.

Extension is changing and downsizing, and assignments are merging with teaching and research. The days of earning promotion and tenure with a "pure" appointment in extension are undoubtedly gone. Today, Extension professionals also need to be sensitive to cultural issues and understand principles of conflict resolution. These issues are often complex, but extension personnel should see the opportunity to intercede as an unbiased third party and assist the individual farmer and neighbors (society) understand the issues creating the conflict. Extension can obtain assistance from other professionals in an attempt to realize a harmonious solution to disputes. Extension professionals should also be aware of opportunities to support niche markets. Niche markets such as organic production and processing are becoming increasingly popular. As taxpayers, these farmers deserve assistance from their county Extension agent and Land Grant University system. One of the more significant developments of the 2004 meetings was the organizational meeting for an organic production and processing multistate research committee, chaired by Jacquie Jacob [5].

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

1. Extension continues to change to fit the needs of industry and society, as constrained by budget reductions and policy.
 2. Opportunities exist for extension in the development of cutting-edge programs to address current and emerging issues, both nationally and internationally, including collaboration with persons outside agriculture.
 3. Extension has made significant contributions as an unbiased third party in the evaluation of agricultural practices through use of science-based criteria. Society will be in greater need of the expertise of extension professionals in the future.
-

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Contact the author of this paper for copies of the on-site proceedings.

2. The 2004 organizing committee was composed of: Dale Blasi (Kansas; American Society of Animal Science; ASAS), Rhonda Vann (Mississippi; ASAS), Tom Troxel (Arkansas; ASAS), Mike Shutz (Indiana; American Dairy Science Association; ADSA), Marcia Endres (Minnesota; ADSA), Bob Peters (Maryland; ADSA), Peter Robinson (California; ADSA), Theresia Lavergne (Louisiana; Poultry Science Association; PSA), Lee Cartwright (Texas; PSA), and John Carey (Texas; PSA).

We continue to depend on James Rock, retired from the University of Connecticut, who has provided evaluation leadership for national poultry science workshops for many years. Evaluation results are available from James Rock (860.885.2826), or the author. PSA Extension Workshop Committee members for 2004 formally submitted topics

and speakers for consideration by the combined workshop committee. They are: John Blake (Alabama), Hart Bailey (Mississippi), Ralph Stonerock (Ohio), Brian Fairchild (Georgia), Matthew Burnham (Texas), and Theresia Lavergne (Louisiana). Moderators are an important part of the program, and the team of Theresia Lavergne, Rhonda Vann, Marcia Endres, and Angelica Chapa (Mississippi) did an excellent job and kept speakers within a minute of their appointed times.

3. Mallinson, E. 2004. Emeritus of University of Maryland, College Park. Personal communication.

4. Norton, R. 2004. Auburn University, Auburn, AL. Personal communication.

5. If you are interested in learning more about this new multistate research committee, contact Jacquie Jacob, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN or the author of this article.