

Virginia Cooperative Extension

2009 Situation Analysis Executive Summary

Introduction

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) believes that successful educational programs are based on the issues and needs of the people. A thorough analysis of the situation provides a context for understanding these issues. This analysis determines what situations exist at local, regional, and state levels, and determines which problems are issues of major public concern. Situation analysis provides the foundation and rationale for deciding which issues will receive the time, energy, and resources of VCE in 2009.

Cooperatively Determining VCE Programs

Involving a variety of people in analyzing the local situation helps identify authentic issues, needs, and opportunities for local, state, and national Extension programming. The Extension unit staff, the local Extension Leadership Council, and community members cooperatively determine what questions should be asked, what data should be collected, how the data should be analyzed, and what the information means locally. Involving a diverse group of people who are representative of the population, including both users and non-users of VCE programs, provides a variety of perspectives.

The 2009 Situation Analysis Process

In the fall of 2008, all 107 VCE local units conducted a situation analysis. Recommended steps included:

- Presenting a local demographic profile to stakeholders
- Involving stakeholders in determining local issues and needs
- Involving stakeholders in summarizing, analyzing, and prioritizing issues and needs
- Reporting the analysis to VCE administration

The report to administration asked units to select five top educational issues/needs from a list of 37 created by VCE Associate and Assistant Directors based on organizational capacity. Local units could also add one additional issue/need to fit their local context. Units were also asked to share details of each educational issue, the name of their local unit, and their Extension district.

State Results

The following issues/needs were the top ten submitted across the state:

1. Positive youth activities
2. Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
3. Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
4. Family/business money management
5. Agriculture and natural resources water quality issues
6. Parenting/child development
7. Life skills/decision making
8. Future land use
9. Before and after school youth programming
10. Teen leadership and community involvement

District Results

The following issues/needs were the top in each Extension district:

Central District

- 1 – Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
- 2 – Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
- 3 – Family/business money management
 - Positive youth activities
- 5 – Parenting/child development

Northeast District

- 1 – Positive youth activities
- 2 – Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
- 3 – Family/business money management
 - Aging/caregiving
- 5 – Agriculture and natural resources water quality issues
 - Commercial and consumer horticulture issues
 - Profitable agriculture and natural resource production

Northern District

- 1 – Positive youth activities
- 2 – Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
- 3 – Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
- 4 – Life skills/decision making
- 5 – Family/business money management

Next Steps

Extension faculty will use the situation analysis results in the following ways:

- To share the information with Extension Leadership Councils and other advisory groups to shape Extension programming advocacy and linkages
- To determine the main issues to address
- To conduct further needs assessment to get more precise information on programmatic needs of clients
- To plot current and potential programmatic activities on a importance/capacity matrix to determine which activities to continue, which to refer to others, and which to discontinue (see: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/support/documents/IssueCapacity-ImportanceMatrix.doc>)
- To write programmatic personal action plans for 2009
- To update the state/federal plan of work by planned program teams
- To shape agent professional development offerings
- To develop educational resources for public use

Northwest District

- 1 – Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
- 2 – Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
- 3 – Future land use
- 4 – Career awareness, entrepreneurship, and youth workforce preparation
 - Positive youth activities

Southeast District

- 1 – Positive youth activities
- 2 – Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan
 - Family/business money management
 - Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
- 5 – Affordable housing/home maintenance

Southwest District

- 1 – Profitable agriculture and natural resource production
- 2 – Positive youth activities
- 3 – Agriculture and natural resources water quality issues
 - Diet, health, and nutrition across the lifespan