

Meat Science Extension Programs for Consumers

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and
Extension Meat Specialists At Other Universities

A mail survey was sent to all people on the 1981 AMSA Extension and Industry Service personnel list. The survey contained eight questions related to meat science extension programs for consumers. Nineteen surveys were returned. The responses to these questions constitute the basis of this presentation.

Table 1 indicates that specialists plan from 0 to 75 days per year for work in consumer programs. The average was 25.8 days per year. A full-time faculty member expends 230 working days per year. It should be mentioned that most extension specialists not only have split appointments with extension and either teaching or research, but also have extension responsibilities with producers, processors and/or 4-H.

Table 1. Planned Days (Per Year) Allotted in Extension Plan of Work for Consumer Programs

Range = 0 – 75
 \bar{X} = 25.8

Specialists were asked to list direct consumer meat extension activities. These activities are listed in Table 2. As can be seen, there are a number of activities that specialists get involved with in dealing directly with the consumer. Conducting meetings and demonstrations, writing publications, conducting radio and television programs and answering correspondence constitute the bulk of the direct activities.

Table 2. Direct Consumer Meat Extension Activities

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1. Conduct open (county, area and state) meetings, seminars, demonstrations and exhibits on meat buying, selection, cutting, storage, cookery and nutrition.
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Reciprocal Meat Conference Proceedings, Volume 35, 1982.

2. Conduct open (county and area) meetings and demonstrations on home slaughter, processing and sausage making, including venison.
 3. Conduct shopping center/mall events.
 4. Conduct commodity group and 4-H talks and demonstrations.
 5. Write extension fact sheets, circulars, folders and bulletins.
 6. Write and/or serve as resource person for newspaper and magazine articles and news releases.
 7. Speak on radio programs (live, call-in and tapes).
 8. Appear on television programs (live and tapes).
 9. Prepare video cassettes.
 10. Answer phone calls and letters.
 11. Other (meat mailed in, etc.).
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Specialists were also asked to list indirect consumer meat extension activities. These activities are listed in Table 3. Almost every specialist listed some type of inservice training, conference, workshop or short course for various professionals and paraprofessionals who in turn work with consumers. In many cases, these professionals have had little recent training in the meat area and welcome the opportunity to receive current meat information. I might point out that I have personally observed that when these types of training sessions can be listed for continuing education credit or "clock hours", that the attendance increases.

Table 3. Indirect Consumer Meat Extension Activities

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1. Conduct inservice training, conferences, workshops and/or short courses for:
 - Home economics teachers
 - Home economists in business
 - Food editors
 - Dietitians
 - EFNEP personnel
 - Nursing home operators
 - Restaurant owners and chefs
 - School lunch directors
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4-H agents and leaders
Commodity auxiliaries
Home economics club leaders

2. Answer specific questions from above clientele on a day-to-day basis.
3. Write column for county home economist newsletter.

Specialists were asked which consumer meat extension activity (direct or indirect) has been the most successful (had the most impact). Table 4 indicates that the most successful activity has been the inservice training approach for extension home economists, home economics teachers, food editors, etc. County meetings for consumers and television programs also rank high in terms of impact. In addition, cutting and cooking demonstrations were also ranked high by specialists.

Table 4. Which Consumer Meat Extension Activity (Direct or Indirect) Has Been the Most Successful (Had the Most Impact)?

1. Inservice training, conferences, workshops and/or short courses for extension home economists, home economics teachers and food editors. (7)*
2. County meetings for consumers. (5)
3. Television programs. (5)
4. Cutting and cooking demonstrations. (3)
5. Commodity auxiliaries. (1)
6. Sausage manufacture demonstration. (1)
7. State fair exhibit. (1)
8. Venison skinning and processing demonstration. (1)

*Number of respondents indicated in parentheses. Some gave multiple answers.

Specialists were asked which consumer meat extension activity (direct or indirect) has been the most challenging. Table 5 indicates that specialists feel that the inservice training-conference-workshop-short course approach for extension home economists, home economics teachers, food editors, etc., was the most challenging. Not surprisingly, television was mentioned the second most frequently because of the extra effort required to obtain suitable props (meat) and the time constraints encountered in order to get the message across. A variety of other challenging activities was also listed by specialists.

Table 5. Which Consumer Meat Extension Activity (Direct or Indirect) Has Been the Most Challenging?

1. Inservice training, conferences, workshops and/or short courses for extension home economists, home economics teachers and food editors. (7)*

2. Television (props and time constraints). (4)
3. County meetings. (2)
4. Commodity auxiliaries. (1)
5. EFNEP personnel. (1)
6. Health professionals. (1)
7. Popular press (misquotes). (1)
8. Radio. (1)
9. Restaurant operators. (1)
10. Sausage manufacture demonstration. (1)
11. State fair exhibit. (1)
12. Venison skinning and processing demonstration. (1)

*Number of respondents indicated in parentheses. Some gave multiple answers.

Specialists were asked which consumer activity they would direct more effort towards if the time and money were available (Table 6). The inservice training-conference-workshop-short course activity was listed the most frequently in a tie with television. Specialists feel that these two activities are extremely well worth the effort and they would like to spend more time doing them. Item 3, telling the positive aspects of meat (satiety and nutritional values) and combating bad publicity was listed third most frequently. No mention was made of how this should be most effectively accomplished, although it is and can be done by a variety of ways. Radio, speaking engagements and demonstrations, and writing publications were listed as activities that specialists would like to be able to devote more time toward. A number of other activities were also listed under this category.

Table 6. Which Consumer Activity Would You Direct More Effort Toward If the Time and Money Were Available?

1. Inservice training, conferences, workshops and/or short courses for home economists, home economics teachers and food editors. (6)*
2. Television. (6)
3. Telling the positive aspects of meat (satiety and nutritional values) and combating bad publicity. (3)
4. Radio. (2)
5. Speaking engagements and demonstrations. (2)
6. Writing publications. (2)
7. Conception to consumption understanding of meat. (1)
8. News articles. (1)
9. Sausage manufacturing demonstration. (1)
10. Venison skinning and processing demonstration. (1)
11. Video tapes. (1)
12. Working with producer organizations in helping them educate consumers at the local level. (1)

*Number of respondents indicated in parentheses. Some gave multiple answers.

Specialists were asked to list any problems which they have encountered with consumer meat extension programs or activities. The results of that question are listed in Table 7. Heading the list was the cost of product to do various programs and the cost of travel. Expense accounts need to be increased. Second on the list was the time, availability and interest of clientele. Some specialists commented that our clientele are becoming more involved in a variety of activities in this day and age and thus getting them interested in meat programs is becoming more and more difficult. The third most frequently listed item under this category was the time of the specialist to conduct and improve programs. When specialists have split appointments and are also involved in meat extension programs for other clientele groups, it becomes more and more difficult to find the time to conduct and indeed try to improve current programs. Appreciation of consumer work and meaningful evaluation of programs were also listed as problems. Two specialists mentioned that their title creates a problem when discussing or debating controversial topics, either in person or in the popular press. Apparently some individuals and groups feel, that as meat specialists, we are already biased towards meat. Other problems in doing consumer work were also listed.

Table 7. Problems Associated With Consumer Education Programs or Activities

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1. Cost of product and cost of travel. (7)*
 2. Time, availability and interest of clientele. (5)
 3. Time of specialist to conduct and improve programs. (5)
 4. Appreciation of consumer work by peers and administrators. (2)
 5. Evaluation of programs needs improving. (2)
 6. The title of Extension *Meat* Specialist creates credibility problems when discussing or debating controversial topics. (2)
 7. Consistency of programs (too much brush fire fighting). (1)
 8. Reaching very few people currently. Need more mass media. (1)
 9. Requests for "how-to" take time away from educational endeavors (understanding why). (1)
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*Number of respondents indicated in parentheses. Some gave multiple answers.

Specialists were asked what types of courses and activities would be helpful to graduate students who anticipate a meat extension career that would have a consumer education component. The courses listed are presented in Table 8. As you can see, the list is quite extensive. There are a number of courses listed and perhaps the question was misinterpreted by some. The intent of the question was to identify those specific courses that a graduate student would want to take only if they knew they were going to specifically be doing consumer meat extension work. Perhaps some respondents

interpreted the question to mean any meat science graduate student or any meat science graduate student interested in extension. In any event, courses in written and electronic journalism, speech, meat cutting and merchandising and processing, meat science courses in general, food preparation and human nutrition were mentioned most frequently. A number of courses were mentioned a moderate amount and biochemistry, logic, business, education, public relations and computer science were mentioned least frequently. Table 8 also lists a few activities which specialists feel would be helpful to graduate students who are thinking of a meat extension career.

Table 8. What Types of Courses and Activities Would Be Helpful to Graduate Students Who Anticipate a Meat Extension Career That Would Have a Consumer Education Component?*

Courses

1. Journalism (written and electronic)
2. Speech
3. Meat cutting, merchandising and processing
4. All meat science courses
5. Food preparation
6. Human nutrition
7. Microbiology
8. Psychology
9. Marketing
10. Meat grading and judging
11. Slaughtering
12. Beef, swine, sheep and poultry production
13. Poultry processing
14. Quality control and sanitation
15. Biochemistry
16. Logic
17. Business
18. Education
19. Public relations
20. Computer science

Activities

1. Take part in extension educational programs (planning and participating).
 2. Work in a food service facility, retail store and a meat plant.
 3. Serve as a teaching assistant.
 4. Work with on-campus 4-H activities.
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*Courses 1-6 mentioned most frequently. Courses 15-20 mentioned least frequently.

The next few slides show some extension specialists in

action. The remaining slides are shots of some extension publications for consumers. I have assembled the publications which were sent to me and have placed them in the teaching exhibit room for your perusal.

In summary, extension meat programs for consumers have

a great deal of variety, are rewarding and are extremely challenging. Many specialists feel that they could fruitfully devote their entire extension effort in the consumer area. While no one is currently doing this, it does indicate that there is a great deal of consumer meat extension work to be done.