"A Good Partnership"

"We have a good partnership." So Elliott Booth characterizes the long-standing relationship between the UA College of Agriculture and the Colorado River Indian Tribes, near Parker.

Booth should know. When he was president of the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association (SWIAA), he worked closely with Howard Jones, former UA assistant to the dean for Native American Programs. Six years ago, Agriculture Dean Eugene Sander recommended Elliott's appointment to CARET, the USDA national Committee for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching.

In both SWIAA and CARET, Booth strongly advocates an increased budget for Indian extension agents as a "No. 1 priority." CRIT already works with one extension agent for agriculture, but they need another full-time agent to work with 4-HYD programs.

Collaborating with the UA College of Agriculture means CRIT can access the knowledge available in all the departments, Booth says. "That's important."

"Agriculture is still the number one priority for our tribes. We're grateful we have people who want to preserve our land, animals and crops for future generations."

Elliott Booth, Colorado River Indian Tribes

Southwest Indian Agricultural Association (SWIAA)

The foremost voice for Arizona Indian agriculture, the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association (SWIAA), had its beginnings in a conversation in 1987. Elliott Booth, from the Colorado River Indian Tribes, and Harry Cruye, Jr. from the Gila River Indian Community (and current SWIAA president), were at a California economic development conference.

"We talked about the need to form an information-sharing organization that would be an advocate for Indian agriculture in Arizona," says Elliott, who served as SWIAA president for its first ten years.

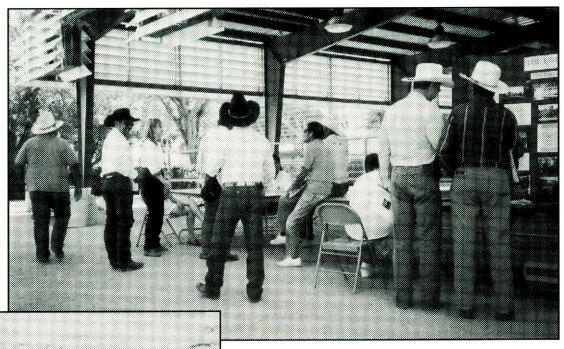
"SWIAA was formed because national Indian groups weren't considering the problems of agriculture. We have to keep on fighting for recognition for Indian agriculture. We're the reason Congress is beginning to take notice," Elliott says.

In May 1988, tribal representatives unanimously agreed to form SWIAA. The non-profit group is governed by a 12-member executive board elected on an annual, rotating basis from four membership categories:individual, tribal organization, associate, and corporate.

Under the board's leadership, SWIAA has testified before Congressional committees and was influential in getting approval for funding Extension Indian Reservation Programs (EIRP) in the 1990 Farm Bill.

SWIAA holds annual elections and meets regularly to provide vital agricultural information for Indian ranchers and farmers. SWIAA and the UA College of Agriculture sponsor annual Indian Livestock Field Days.

To carry out its mission to promote enrolling more Indian young people in university agricultural programs, SWIAA funds the Dr. Roe B. Lewis memorial scholarship. Together with the UA College of Agriculture, SWIAA also sponsors a yearly Youth Education Conference.



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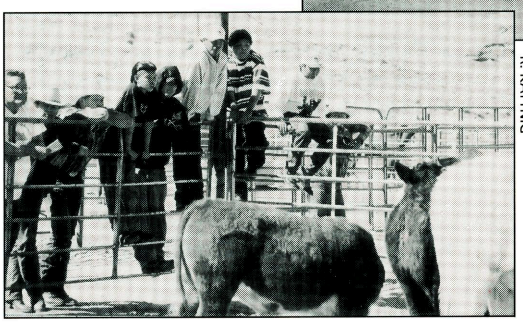

R. KATTNIG

Cooperative Extension and SWIAA are trying to increase funding for additional EIRP agents needed on reservations.

Since its beginnings, SWIAA has worked closely with the University of Arizona and the College of Agriculture. In fact, SWIAA leaders credit Howard Jones, former assistant to the dean for Native American Programs, as being instrumental in the organization's success.

According to SWIAA, "The harmony of man, soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife—our agricultural community—influence our emotional and spiritual well-being. These valuable and renewable natural resources provide sustenance, income, and employment. Carefully managing our agricultural resources on Southwest Indian reservations is vital to our economic and social welfare."

— SOUTH —

Nutrition Classes for People with Diabetes

It's 2:15 p.m. on a hot Thursday in August. The diabetes nutrition class is about to begin on the Pascua Yaqui reservation in Tucson. A beef and zucchini demonstration meal simmers in an electric frying pan as the participants enter the room, some in wheelchairs assisted by relatives. Although today's class has eight participants, normally around 15 will attend, including non-diabetics who attend with their spouses.

A colorful array of nutritional literature, including food pyramid descriptions, eating guidelines, and recipes, covers one of the tables in the center of the room. Everyone is friendly and upbeat, but they know what they are facing every day.

EFNEP

Diabetes has increased at a frightening rate among the Indians of Southern Arizona: they now have one of the highest incidences of diabetes in the world. Poverty has caused their diet to change over the last century from an abundance of natural, whole foods high in fiber to an emphasis on more processed, low fiber foods high in refined carbohydrates.

The resulting blood sugar imbalance now affects young and old alike among the Tohono O'odham, Gila River, Yaqui, and other Arizona

tribes. The more serious effects of diabetes include blindness, the need for regular dialysis, and possible amputation of gangrenous limbs.

Dietary changes do make a difference, and education can help. The Extension Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), offered through the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, provides eating and exercise guidelines to maintain health in those who are already diabetic, and to help prevent diabetes from developing in the rest of the population.

In Tucson's Yaqui community, Pat Gomez, an EFNEP nutrition educator with the Pima County Extension, offers a variety of EFNEP nutrition classes to people of all ages, including preschoolers, middle and high school students, and adults. Pat, who has diabetes herself, understands how important it is to incorporate the right foods in smaller portions into her diet.


S. McGINLEY

"There are a lot of good recipes out there that we can eat," she tells the group, "even though our Mexican and Indian diets can be hard to control because they contain a lot of starch."

Pat tries to incorporate as many commodity foods as possible into her food plans. Today's demonstration zucchini and meat casserole includes ground beef, canned corn, fresh cubed zucchini, chopped onion and chopped canned green chiles.

Anna Valenzuela, a diabetes support group coordinator from the Yaqui tribe, assists Pat during the class, answering questions and helping with materials. She and Pat serve the meal, and discuss acceptable portion sizes. They use a regular-size serving spoon to demonstrate proper amounts of beans and rice, and paper cutouts for cheese—only a 1-inch square cube is allowed—pies and other foods. Rice portions amount to just half a serving spoon.

"White rice has more sugar, so you can just use less of it and add more vegetables," Pat explains. "We have to really visualize the portions of what we're going to eat. I serve myself on a salad plate and I feel like I'm getting full."

"Make sure you eat five fruits and vegetables a day, but be careful about your water intake in those vegetables if you are on dialysis," Anna adds. All of the dietary information given is based on the food pyramid, altered to reflect diabetic needs and restrictions.

While Pat conducts the class mostly in Spanish, the nutritional literature is available in both English and Spanish. Other classes she teaches in both the Pascua Yaqui pueblo and Pascua Yaqui village may include the Yaqui language as well. Pat works with Yaqui aides to teach five trilingual (Spanish, Yaqui and English) preschool nutrition classes to 100 children.

Pat teaches a variety of nutritional classes to meet the needs of different audiences within the Yaqui tribe. These include courses for seniors; people in drug rehabilitation; patients on dialysis; students in middle school; young mothers in alternative high school; and teachers in the Head Start program.

The mortality rate among Yaquis with diabetes is 2%. Pat believes this low rate is due in part to these nutrition classes, both for the information they provide and the support they foster among people with diabetes.

"The best part is that these classes are free," Pat tells today's class. "I'm learning along with you. It's very depressing sometimes and we have to support each other. All we need is your time, your patience, and your commitment to attend."

"Diversity" Key Word for Tohono O'odham

Ranching, home gardening, commercial farms, 4-H projects, and home economics—the Tohono O'odham Nation and UA Cooperative Extension are working together in this diverse range of programs and projects.

It's easier than it used to be. "We have a new type of relationship," says Noemi Norris, former acting director of the Nation's Department of Agriculture. "The University has accepted the fact that we're different from the rest of Tucson; there's a new sensitivity.

"I like it," she says. "We work together; it's an open highway. We don't like to work with people who give us everything; we like to give back."


L. KINGDON

Noemi Norris

The Tohono O'odham Nation has one tribal cattle herd. "We're trying cross-breeds—Hereford and Angus—and working with UA Extension veterinarian Ed Bicknell. Whatever's needed," as Noemi puts it.

Most of the Tohono O'odham "farms" are actually non-commercial home gardens where families use traditional methods to conserve water. Children in the 4-H youth program work

Continued

Leona Kakar: Ak-Chin's Voice for Agriculture

"Farming is our livelihood," said Leona Kakar a decade ago in the University of Arizona magazine "Arizona Land & People." The current chair of the Ak-Chin Farm Board still believes in the importance of agriculture and, with it, the undeniable need for water.

"It's easy to say that, without water, we'd have no future," she told the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association (SWIAA) recently. "We'd have to leave our farm and go off the reservation to work if we didn't have the water settlement."

Since their 1988 water settlement, the now-profitable Ak-Chin farm has been using Central Arizona Project (CAP) water for irrigating their 16,500-acre farm, near Maricopa. The water rights were fought for and won after heroic efforts by Kakar and her brothers, Richard and Wilbur. It was a battle that pitted them against federal and state government opponents.

Leona has continued her involvement in Indian agricultural issues. Always active in SWIAA, she has served as a member of their Board of Directors and as Board treasurer. She also has served on the advisory committee for the UA Maricopa Agricultural Center.

A reverence for land and water is part of the Ak-Chin tradition. "Go to the river and introduce yourself to maintain your contact," is the way Leona Kakar puts it.

"Without water, we'd have no future. We'd have to leave our farm and go off the reservation to work if we didn't have our water settlement."

Leona Kakar, Director, Ak-Chin Farm Board

on home and yard beautification. They're learning how to catch storm water and how to work with native plants. "And, we hope to involve 4-H in beautifying tribal administration buildings," Noemi says.

"We'd like to go into larger planting areas, but we want to do it the O'odham way with dryland farming, along with new irrigation systems."

The Nation has four farms on the Western side of the reservation—the Papago, Vivo, Gila Bend, and Garcia Strip, which has Central Arizona Project (CAP) water. What they grow depends on the farm, but usually it's cotton and alfalfa for hay. They're also trying watermelons and corn.

"We're trying to diversify," Noemi says. The Nation gets technical assistance from the University of Arizona, particularly Pinal and Pima County extension agents.

Julie Adamcin and Bob Peterson, Pima County 4-HYD agents, are very active in tribal 4-H projects, says Noemi. For example, Julie is working to take 4-H'ers to Arizona's State Capitol to learn about the legislative process as part of their citizenship project. Incidentally, they'll meet with Noemi's daughter, 11th District Arizona State Representative Debora Norris.

Right now, a one-day "Teen Maze," featuring a life-size game board on the topic, "Sex; Are You Ready?" is an important project. "Teenagers will learn to make decisions by seeing consequences and alternatives," Noemi explains.

Extension home economics programs continue to be strong. "People need a good home environment, but our schools are no longer teaching these skills, and the effects are starting to show up."

For example, young people know about nutrition, but they can't cook or can. They need to learn about parenting and sewing. "Home economics projects used to appeal to older people, but younger ones are showing up now.

"We're trying to take up the slack," Noemi says.

Native American Research and Training Center

ahsc.arizona.edu/fcm/nartc

Established in 1983, the Native American Research and Training Center (NARTC) has been active in a number of national health and rehabilitation related research and training activities in behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives. The primary mission of the Center is to conduct research and training projects that help improve the quality of life of Native Americans with chronic diseases and disabilities within a context that emphasizes culturally sensitive and culturally appropriate methodologies.

Current NARTC research and training activities include projects in disability and rehabilitation, diabetes, cancer, substance abuse, and leadership.

"We're Looking For Help"

Paul Soto talks in mystical terms about what the Cocopah Tribe wants to do for the Colorado River.

"We're known as the River People," says the tribal planner, "and we want to take care of our river. We're looking forward to getting help from the university."

"We want to bring indigenous plants back. We want to establish a habitat for better hunting and fishing. We want to harmonize people and the river, attune ourselves to harmony with the earth and mountains, and get some sense of what we can do. We have the responsibility to protect the land."

His tribe has a history of subsistence farming that, Soto says, they'd like to get back to. "We want to use our land most efficiently—use less water, recycle it and still make a profit."

— SOUTHWEST —

Diversity Camp

Plain, ordinary sticks can be pretty amazing—when they're used to play games that bring people together and share cultural memories. That's what happened at 4-H Day and Diversity Camp for Yuma County Cocopah Indian young people.

In one game, the chosen sticks were angled, somewhat like a golf club. A ball was buried on

C. RUSH

a volleyball-sized court. Two teams competed to dig up the ball with the sticks and move it around the court. It's a traditional game Cocopah youngsters used to play—and enjoyed learning all over again.

Around the campfire that evening, even the adult counselors joined in another stick-game with a long tradition. Eight sticks were wrapped in leather and hidden in someone's hand. Which way were the sticks pointing? They guessed, just as long ago, adults had guessed in all-night games used to trade goods—or gamble.

Carole Rush and other organizers tried to bring a diverse group of young people together to learn more about their own and other cultures. Increasing a sense of trust and providing

C. RUSH

a basis of belief in nature and the environment was the serious purpose behind the games and other activities at Diversity Camp.

Several Yuma groups worked together to organize the camp. As extension 4-HYD instructional specialist, Carole arranged for the campsite, bought insurance, and found a $500 grant for miscellaneous expenses. The Boys & Girls Club furnished food and the transportation van. The Cocopah Tribe supplied another van and materials—and most importantly, the 20 camp-going children between the ages of 10 and 13.