

The Federal Extension Process

Daniel L. Merkel

Tom Bedell, Extension Range Specialist for Oregon, in a paper entitled the "The Extension Process and How to Use It", presented the Extension role at the state and county level. (*Rangelands* Apr. 1985). I will, therefore, confine this paper to explaining the Federal Extension Service and how you may use it to promote rangeland management.

The Extension Service is the educational arm of the United States Department of Agriculture. It has several organizational units that provide a wide range of educational and informational activities. Some of these are the 4-H and Youth Development, Home Economics and Human Nutrition, Natural Resources and Rural Development, and Agricultural Programs. The units are further subdivided; within the Natural Resources and Rural Development Unit there are Wood Products and Forest Economics, Forestry Management, Fish and Wildlife Management, Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, and Rangeland Management. Each has a Program Leader.

The Program Leader provides leadership and support, within a given area. For example, Rangeland Management assistance is provided to the state range, pasture, and forage specialists working in grazing management. This involves program leadership in rangeland policy development; range and other grazing land program planning, evaluation, and accountability; cooperation with representatives of other agencies, support groups, and individuals in grazing land issues; and development of extension grazing lands information. Much of this work is directed to increasing the awareness of the importance of grazing lands in the United States.

The Extension Service depends on funding from local, state, and federal levels. Approximately 40 percent is from the National Treasury, 40 percent from state monies, and 20 percent from local sources. These percentages do vary by state and program areas.

Unlike other government agencies such as the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or the Soil Conservation Service, the Extension Service is not a straight line agency. The Federal Extension Service operates to provide leadership, support and guidance to the Cooperative Extension Service within each state. These state agencies, however, have no line tie through the Federal organization. As a result, there are differences in Extension programs between states. To a lesser degree, the same independence of program operations exists at the county level in some states.

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The federal funding of range activities within the Cooperative Extension System is provided from two primary sources. First, Smith-Lever funds are transferred to the states for use by the State Extension Director at his discretion. Secondly, the Renewable Resource Extension Act monies are earmarked for activities within forest, wildlife, grazing land, recreation, and related natural resource programs.

A major concern is to insure that, within the current funding constraints, all resources are used effectively to conduct an effective educational program. This means maintaining a high level of cooperation between the Extension Service and other agencies or organizations that have an interest in rangeland management. An example is the funding and use of the grazing lands simulator. Funds were provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Cooperative State Research Service, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, National Cattlemen's Association, and the Extension Service for development of the equipment by Montana State University.

Hopefully, this background will help an individual or SRM Section to contact the appropriate Extension person or unit to assist in developing a good information/education program. I encourage everyone to strengthen the cooperation between the Extension Service and the Society. In many cases the Information and Education Committee effort will fit within the educational goals of the Extension system. In these cases, you may wish to combine the efforts of the Society and Extension in the development, printing, and distribution of materials that fit the objectives of both organizations. This does not mean that the Extension Service will pay the whole bill or do all the work. It does mean that a cooperative proposal that is approved by both parties is a possibility. In many cases this will benefit both organizations at a reduced cost.

An example of cooperation is youth camps. These are often co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and the Society for Range Management. This has provided the Extension System the opportunity to call on specialists from the Society to help participate and contribute to youth camps. And at the same time, it has provided the Society the opportunity to have a staff instructor handle many of the logistics of hosting the camp that helps deliver the range management message.

Cooperation with the Extension system in your information/education activities should reduce the cost to both parties and extend our opportunities to reach various audiences.