



New Technologies for Extension: eXtension

The Cooperative Extension System is undergoing a profound transformation that builds on its historic mission and redefines how it organizes and distributes its most treasured resource: practical knowledge supported by education and peer-reviewed science. The initiative is eXtension, an Internet-based tool that will provide fast and convenient access to objective, science-based information on a range of subjects, including: food safety; homeland security; lawn and garden; agriculture; natural resources, energy, and environment; community development; personal financial management; youth development; families; and nutrition and health.

Here are three reasons why this new initiative is so exciting:

- **eXtension** will create a direct, 24-7 link from consumers to university-based extension and research experts throughout the United States, not just those within a consumer's own state or community. (Local extension professionals will, of course, continue to be available for face-to-face follow-up.)
- **eXtension** will harness the latest research from America's land-grant universities and colleges, aggregating knowledge that at present is dispersed across the country.
- **eXtension** will stand out in the online information marketplace because its content will be reviewed by nationally recognized scientists and extension specialists and follow consistent standards to ensure that the educational materials are valid, concise, and easy to use.

Better Service to a Larger Customer Base

Through eXtension, the Cooperative Extension System has the opportunity to serve its existing customers more effectively and extend the university system to new audiences, who will undoubtedly find the rich and diverse knowledge of benefit in both their personal and professional lives.

Helping Extension Specialists Help Us

Beyond these direct public benefits, eXtension will provide extension professionals in over 3,000 county locations with critical up-to-the-minute intelligence, data, and materials. This will enable these professionals to spend less time searching for and packaging information and more time in direct consultation with the public. Enhanced client outcomes will result.

National Content with Local Connections

Although eXtension will be a universal point of entry into the Cooperative Extension System the content will be framed in such a way as to reinforce state and local identities. There will also be direct links to resources and professionals at state and local offices and users will be able to receive assistance that is customized to their needs and interests.

A Modest Investment for a Blockbuster Return

The eXtension initiative was started in FY 2005 with a modest \$2.3 million investment by the state and territorial Extension Services with the additional support of CSREES. In FY 2006 and FY 2007, Congress appropriated \$1.485 million for the eXtension line item and the land-grant universities again provided \$2.3 million each year.

Congress can and must continue to support eXtension to assure the success of this important initiative, and NASULGC supports a funding level of \$2.97 million for eXtension in the FY 2008 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

