

Western Extension
and Research Directors

**AWARDS of
EXCELLENCE**

2011

Western Region Joint Summer Meeting
Hilton Waikiki Beach Hotel, Hawaii

STATE PROGRAM WINNERS

eatfit :a health promotion intervention
for adolescents

University of California Team Members: Marilyn S. Townsend – UC Davis, Lucrecia Farfan-Ramirez – Alameda Co., Marcel Horowitz – Yolo Co., Margaret Johns – Kern Co., Cathi Lamp – Tulare Co., Anna Martin – San Joaquin Co., Lenna Ontai – UC Davis, Mical K. Shiits – UC Davis & CSU Sacramento, Dorothy Smith – Amador & Calaveras Co.’s

Eatfit was born with CE staff and teachers identifying a pressing need for obesity prevention programming to respond to the increasing unhealthy lifestyles of adolescents. Tapping the motivators identified by adolescents themselves, award-winning Eatfit builds on the learning needs and cognitive developmental stage of adolescents with its researched approach to ‘guiding goal setting’. Guided by stakeholders, program design includes innovations in approach [i.e. guided goal setting; web-based dietary analysis at www.eatfit.net; and alignment to & assessment of education standards] for a fun, flexible and interactive program. The program has reached 105,000 youth and has been used throughout California, and in other states, Canada and Japan. As published in nine refereed journal papers about Eatfit, students improve their eating and physical activity behaviors, self-efficacy, and decision-making and goal setting capabilities as well as generating gains in academic performance.



Marcel Horowitz



Marilyn Townsend

Engaging the medical community in combating childhood food insecurity

Anne Hoisington - Oregon State University Extension

Childhood hunger impacts the health, learning and development of children, and is considered to be an urgent public health concern. Programs that reduce the severity of food insecurity (e.g. SNAP and Child Nutrition Programs) are underutilized. Through an Extension partnership investment grant, an Extension nutrition specialist convened a multi-disciplinary team that includes physicians, nurses, and hunger advocates to assess current hunger screening practices among family practice and pediatric physicians and nurse practitioners, and to gauge interest in continuing education on the subject. Results, which indicate strong concern about childhood hunger and interest in learning how to incorporate the topic into clinic settings, were used to develop a highly endorsed and utilized continuing education course www.ecampus.oregonstate.edu/hunger. Course participation has resulted in enhanced sensitivity to the problem, consistent screening in some clinics that treat children from food insecure households, and increased distribution of outreach and education materials to parents and caregivers.





MULTI-STATE PROGRAM WINNER

Horizons

Team Members: *Montana* - Betsy Webb, Dr. Paul Lachapelle, Dan Clark, Dr. Dave Young, and Sarah Hamlen; *Idaho* - Dr. Priscilla Salant, Dr. Barbara Petty, and Debbie Gray; *Washington* - Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom and Cindy McHargue

Horizons is an 18-month community leadership program designed to build community leadership and capacity to address poverty in small, rural, and reservation communities. Horizons was predicated on the theory that communities already possess many of the assets and skills to arrest social and economic decline, and can, with leadership training, resources and support, craft and implement a shared community vision to address poverty in meaningful ways.

To date, 107 high poverty, small, rural and reservation communities in Montana, Idaho and Washington have completed the Northwest Area Foundation's Horizons program. The pilot program, concluded in 2005, involved 12 communities; and 50 communities completed Horizons II in 2008. The final cycle, Horizons III, concluded in April, 2010, with 45 communities completing the entire program sequence. Horizons programming activity continues today in Montana, Idaho and Washington.

MULTI-STATE RESEARCH WINNER

W-2188 Mass and Energy Transport at Different Vadose Zone Scales

Teams Members: Montana State University – Jeff Jacobsen and University of Wyoming – Thijs J. Kelleners

Knowledge of physical transformations taking place in the soil vadose zone is crucial for understanding, managing, and predicting both biotic and abiotic processes occurring in the Earth's critical terrestrial zone. Surface soils within the vadose zone form an interface with the atmosphere and are important for the control of mass exchanges, the transformation of energy, nutrients, and organic materials, and the sustenance of plants with water and essential microbiological communities. Public awareness of the role of soils, and by extension the vadose zone, is meager, but good stewardship of vadose zone functions must be among the highest priorities of our society.



This committee is comprised of internationally recognized leaders in applied and theoretical Soil and Environmental Physics, and Hydrology. The **objective** is to understand, characterize, monitor, and model mass and energy transport and transformation processes within the vadose zone over different spatial

and temporal scales and across its interfaces with both groundwater and atmosphere. The project's combined expertise and discoveries play a crucial role for sustainable management of soil and water resources and for the remediation of detrimental anthropogenic impacts on natural resources in the U.S. and the world.

A cornerstone of this project is to reach out to a broader scientific community to educate and communicate with stakeholders and colleagues both inside and outside our traditional disciplines, and provide leadership. For example, keynote speakers with backgrounds in geomorphology, pedology, and ecology have been invited to our annual meeting to expand and share understanding of vadose zone processes and to learn from diverse disciplines. Our current W-2188 members advise and participate in national and international multidisciplinary projects, play vital roles in establishing national natural observatories (National Ecological Observatory Network- NEON and Critical Zone Observatories -CZOs), and characterize spatial distributions of soil properties across landscapes in the U.S.



HONORABLE MENTION

Strengthening Families Initiative

New Mexico State University Team Members: Dr. Esther Devall, Dr. Marcel Montanez, and Lisa Shields

Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) was developed to improve the well-being of children in New Mexico through evidence-based family education and culturally responsive service delivery. Over the past 10 years, SFI offered three intensive programs throughout the state:

- The *Nurturing Parenting* program - parenting classes enhanced with life skills and nutrition education for low income, at-risk parents (18 weeks).
- The *Family Wellness* program – relationship classes for married, cohabiting and single adults with children (12 weeks).
- The *Incarcerated Fathers* program - parenting classes enhanced with life skills and domestic violence prevention for fathers in prison (15 weeks).

SFI enhances parent-child and couple relationships, builds self-sufficiency, and encourages healthy behaviors. SFI conducted 349 class series serving 5,213 parents and 5,839 children. Participants reported significant positive improvements in parenting attitudes and skills; knowledge and skills in managing money and seeking employment; relationship satisfaction and family functioning; and healthy nutrition practices.

Stepfamily Education

Utah State University Team Members: Brian Higginbotham and Linda Skogrand

The Stepfamily Education program, administered by Utah State University Extension, provides healthy relationship training to ethnically diverse, low-income couples in stepfamilies. Remarried couples and unmarried stepfamilies (e.g., cohabitating couples who have children from a previous relationship) learn communication and conflict management skills as well as content on finances, stepparenting, and co-parenting with ex-partners. The program uses a research-based curriculum, *Smart Steps: Embrace the Journey*, and provides 12 hours of programming offered in two-hour segments over a six-week period. Adults and children participate in age-appropriate concurrent classes. Classes are offered in English and Spanish. Supported by federal and state funds, stepfamily education is offered throughout Utah via partnerships with community family service agencies and Head Start organizations. Now in the projects fifth year, over 130 *Smart Steps: Embrace the Journey* courses have been taught, close to 2,500 adults have been served, and nine peer-reviewed research articles have been published.

REGIONAL QUALIFYING PROGRAMS

The Aviation Turf Program

Stephen C. Brown - University of Alaska Fairbanks

A leading cause of flying accidents in Alaska is rock damage caused by operating on gravel runways. The Aviation Turf Program was developed to increase aviation safety by encouraging airstrip owners/managers to turf their unpaved runways with an appropriate native grass. The grass suppresses damage by anchoring rocks. The grasses were identified through research collaboration with the Agricultural Experiment Station and others. To increase adoption, a demonstration runway was created near Talkeetna, Alaska. More than a dozen workshops were held across the state in partnership with Federal Aviation Administration safety programs/conferences. Targeted media pieces resulted in extensive television coverage and a National Public Radio interview. An Associated Press article resulted in national media coverage. More than 200 Alaskan runways were turfed at an annual aircraft damage savings of 1.5 million dollars. An Extension bulletin, an upcoming article in the Journal of Extension and presentations at state/national conferences also resulted.

ACT: Arizona Community Training: Grassroots Leadership Development

University of Arizona Team Members: Juanita O'Campo Waits – Navajo Co., Cathy Martinez – Pinal Co., Linda Block – Pima Co., Lynn Borden – Norton School, Darcy Dixon – Santa Cruz Co., Evelyn Whitmer – Cochise Co., and Marta Stuart – Yavapai Co.

ACT: Arizona Community Training leadership development program provides valuable skills and knowledge in understanding and enhancing leadership abilities for engaging individuals in mobilizing communities for positive change. ACT is a capacity building program targeting emerging leaders in limited resource communities. ACT is a research based program.

Enhancing extension of integrated pest management (IPM) information to consumers through local Master Gardener programs: A partnership of the UC Statewide IPM Program and the UC Statewide Master Gardener Program

University of California Team Members: Mary Louise Flint – UC Davis, Pam Geisel – UC Davis, Myriam Grajales-Hall – UCCE Riverside, Scott Parker – UCCE San Diego, Cheryl Wilen – Los Angeles, Orange & San Diego counties, and Karey Windbiel-Rojas – UC Davis

Pesticide contamination of creeks, rivers and bays due to urban and consumer use of pesticides is an important environmental issue in California. The University of California Statewide IPM and Statewide Master Gardener programs teamed up to address these problems by preparing Master Gardeners to educate their communities about less toxic ways to manage pests. We provided hands-on, train-the-trainer training to Master Gardeners in 38 counties through Advanced IPM Training programs. We created innovative bi-lingual outreach materials including free UC IPM Quick Tips and 16 portable interactive touch screen computer kiosks that circulate around the state, as well as books, video and web resources. Our special web page for UC Master Gardeners provides up-to-date information on pests and management solutions as well as presentation materials, hand-outs and videos they can use in their own outreach programs. Follow-up surveys show that these materials have been used widely.

Hawaii Rangelands and Grazing Management Program

University of Hawaii at Manoa Team Members: Mark S. Thorne – Kamuela, HI, Glen K. Fukumoto – Captain Cook, HI, Michael DuPonte – Hilo, HI, John Powley – Kahului, HI (retired), Matthew Stevenson – Lihue, HI, Linda Cox, Jonathan Deenik, Ashley Stokes, and Eileen Herring – Honolulu, HI, Harold Keyser – Kahului, HI

The Hawaii Rangelands and Grazing Management Program plays a critical role in soil health and fertility, forage production, drought mitigation and invasive weed management across Hawaii's range and pasturelands. Led by Associate Livestock and Range Management Extension Specialist, Dr. Mark Thorne, this multi-disciplinary team helps Hawaii ranchers maintain profitability while sustaining their precious land resources. Land remediation of former sugarcane and pineapple lands, development of decision support tools to help ranchers predict and minimize the impacts of drought, and adaptive management tools to reduce the effects of toxic invasive weeds are all part of this extension and outreach program that not only serves Hawaii ranchers but others across the Pacific.

Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program (SOAP)

University of Hawaii at Manoa Team Members: Theodore Radovich, Linda J. Cox, and Jody Smith

A multidisciplinary team began developing the Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program (SOAP) in 2006 because organic producers were an underserved, isolated stakeholder group. Today, topic leaders across CTAHR work with the SOAP team to generate a quarterly newsletter and other scholarly products to address concerns of this important stakeholder group, while also bringing healing to a rift between this stakeholder group and other more traditional agricultural stakeholder groups.

The Montana Forest Stewardship Program

Montana State University Team Members: Peter F. Kolb, Cindy Bertek, Martin Twer, and Bob Harrington – Montana State Forester

The MSU Extension Forestry Stewardship program has impacted over 1,000,000 acres of family owned forests and 3,017 landowners over the past 20 years in Montana by helping them learn about and develop their own forest management plans. Family forest lands, although only 19 percent of the state's total forested lands, provide more than 30 percent of the annual wood harvested while also conserving critical wildlife habitat along mountain range approaches. The unique landowner empowerment approach of the program blends conservation and management and has inspired multiple other states and foreign countries to use a similar approach. The program has also been adopted by the Montana Logging Association as a primary educational component of their Accredited Logging Professional certification. The MSU Stewardship management plan template was also recently employed as the major component of a national forest management plan template adopted by the American Forest Foundation Tree Farm program.

4-H Bootstraps Program

University of Nevada Team Members: Rodney L. Davis - Battle Mountain, NV, Marilyn Smith - Elko, NV, Amy Meier - Tonopah, NV, and Bill Evans - Reno, NV

The global economic recession hit Nevada especially hard resulting in the highest unemployment rate in the nation. Young adults who are not working and not in school have been particularly affected. The Bootstraps program attracts these high-risk, young adults, ages 18-25, to work on environmental projects identified by BLM wildlife biologists. The program is more than a job for these participants who have left school and typically have no positive leadership or role models. This seasonal program includes job training and life skills classroom instruction. Participants develop skills and experiences that enable them to find meaningful work or return to school. Evaluation data has documented positive youth development and public land restoration outcomes.

A qualitative study found that collaborating agencies view these young adults as critical partners in addressing sage grouse habitat restoration. Such results have led to over \$2 million in grant funding in support of the program.

Team Nutrition “Smart Choices”

University of Nevada Team Members: Kerry Seymour, Joe Dibble, and Christina Turner

With the rise in childhood obesity, there has been a call to increase nutrition education in schools. The majority of teachers, however, lack formal nutrition training. The Team Nutrition “Smart Choices” (TNSC) program addresses this issue using the train-the trainer method to model delivery of grade-specific nutrition lessons. Partnering with USDA’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides experiential reinforcement for lesson content. Program evaluation tested the hypothesis that teacher understanding of nutrition concepts and the amount of nutrition content teachers deliver will increase following TNSC participation. Elementary teachers at nine Washoe County schools participated in the education program and 224 teachers completed the post-program questionnaire. The number of program lessons received was significantly correlated with teacher understanding and preparedness to teach basic nutrition, amount of nutrition content taught outside the program and frequency of use of the nutrition resources provided. Funding is provided by USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed).

Utah 4-H STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

Utah State University Team Members: Dave Francis and Corinne Mayberry – Lehi, UT, Donna Carter – Ogden, UT, and Vernon Parent – St. George, UT

Over the past 12 years, the USU Extension 4-H STEM program has grown from one 4-H Tech Team to a multi-faceted program reaching across the state. To achieve this expansion, a variety of methods including 4-H Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) delivery modes were used to teach a wide variety of STEM topics. Financial support from the Department of Labor, NASA and private foundations assisted in providing training and equipment. A summative evaluation of 4-H Science programs for teens was conducted in November 2010. One important finding was the recruitment, training and delivery strategies that worked well to reach youth. The 4-H TRY Team programs were the most effective with 82 percent of youth involved in a TRY team. Additional findings included: how and why equipment availability was key to programming success and STEM teaching events that worked for rural communities. The top STEM abilities that teens developed were: build/construct (91 percent), collaborate (91 percent) and use tools (78 percent).

Washington's Rural Community Vitality Program

Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom – Washington State University

WSU Extension's Rural Community Vitality Program seeks to create thriving communities for all individuals by helping rural residents understand poverty, build leadership skills, develop action plans for their communities, and provide peer coaching. Building capacity in this way leads to positive, sustainable changes in small rural communities. The Community Vitality Program wields two national, comprehensive community prosperity initiatives in Washington State: the Northwest Area Foundation's Horizons program, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Aspen Institute's Rural Family Economic Success (RuFES). Additionally, vitality efforts include the Microenterprise Assistance Pilot Project (MAPP), and an annual Rural Conference. Numerous private and public organizations have partnered with communities in this program to empower residents so that together, they can ameliorate poverty and economic disadvantage common to small rural communities. Documentable progress has been made in the 40 communities that have participated in this program.

Forage and Pasture Educational Program for Extension, FSA, and NRCS in the Pacific Northwest – (Multi-State)

Team Members: Glenn Shewmaker – University of Idaho, Mylen Bohle – Oregon State University, Steven Fransen – Washington State University, Thomas Griggs – West Virginia University (formerly Utah State University)

A multi-state program of research, education, and extension for pasture-based livestock production systems was identified a priority in 2003 at a Pacific Northwest Forage Workers Conference. A grant proposal for professional development to the Western Sustainable Agricultural Research and Extension (WSARE EW05-012) was awarded \$90,000 in 2005. We developed and provided education and training in improved pasture and grazing management. The audience was 125 educators and professional personnel, who are now better prepared to extend the knowledge to pasture operators. We provided training materials and a program for grass physiology, plant materials, fertilization, irrigation, and grazing management. Training materials including a course syllabus, outlines, reference material, and presentations are available. Summarization of forage prediction data was completed in a MS Thesis by Laura Hooper. A Pasture and Grazing Management Guide was completed. A potential economic impact of \$244 million annually could benefit the four northwestern states, and improve the environmental sustainability.

Strengthening Community Agriculture Planning (S-CAP) – (Multi-State)

Team Members: Billy Dictson and David Graham – NMSU, Jeff Witte – NMDA, Andrea Husband, Ricky Yeargan, Dr. Roberta Dwyer, and Dr. Melissa Newman – University of Kentucky, Dr. Kerry Rood – Utah State, Scott Cotton – University of Nebraska, Tom McBride – Colorado State University, Ricky Maxwell – Texas A&M University, Howard Van Dijk –Clemson, Tommy Bass – Montana State University, Ray Burden – University of Tennessee

The NMSU Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center (Center) began in June 2006 and is a partnership between the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and New Mexico State University (NMSU) Cooperative Extension Service in New Mexico to provide a focus for food and agrosecurity training and exercises.

The Center and the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service were selected as co-leads for the Strengthening Community Agrosecurity

Planning (S-CAP) project in 2008 involving a partnership with seven other universities including Utah, Colorado and Montana from the western region. In 2008, the team developed teaching materials which were pilot tested in early 2009 in three states, followed by deliveries in seven additional states.

In 2010, this EDEN sponsored program delivered training in nine states including Hawaii, Washington, and Colorado in the Western Region. In 2011 eight states will receive training including Montana in the west.

The S-CAP program teaches counties a process to develop county agriculture emergency plans and build capacity to address food and agriculture issues during an emergency or disaster.

