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2008-09 Validation of Stakeholder Input

by the Leadership Advisory Board

Completion Date: County Extension Agents will be able to enter results from:

November 7, 2008 – May 15, 2009

If you have questions, please contact:

Courtney Dodd, cfdodd@ag.tamu.edu

(content and implementation questions)

Scott Cummings, s-cummings@tamu.edu

(content and implementation questions)

J. Rey Santos, j-santos@tamu.edu

(website / data entry questions)

Introduction. One of the most important items the Leadership Advisory Board does with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is ensuring that programs provided to the citizens of Texas are relevant. With the advent of the Leadership Advisory Boards in 2007, one of their major roles is to help provide direction and focus for the county program by ensuring that educational programs are reaching the needs of local audiences. The next “official” Leadership Advisory Board Validation of Stakeholder Input will be in late Fall 08 – Spring 09. This process has taken the place of the Texas Community Futures Forum. This user’s guide has been designed to help County Extension Agents work with their Leadership Advisory Board to validate program relevancy and determine new issues facing the local county. The specific objectives are:

- Understand how to use the county strategic plans to assist the Leadership Advisory Board in making future decisions about programs;
- Ensure that the Leadership Advisory Board knows where the county is in the educational program process with outcome programs, and ask their input about future programs with these issues / programs; and
- Allow the Leadership Advisory Board to provide new issues facing the county.

County Strategic Plans. One of the items that should help the county Leadership Advisory Board validate issues is the new county strategic plan. Faculty and staff in Extension Organizational Development have created a county strategic plan for each county. These documents were created by using program plans placed into the TExAS system. The documents can be used as a resource to share with the county Leadership Advisory Board as they assist in determining the next appropriate steps with educational programs and to help identify new issues the county might be facing. The documents provide the following information:

- *Issue* – This was derived by looking at justification of the plan and summarizing the major issue being addressed.
- *Program* – This is the name of the program.
- *County Justification* – This is a description of the issue’s importance and why the program is being conducted.
- *Strategy* – This is the overall design of the program and the outcome indicators.
- *Activities / Timeline / Measure(s)* – This is the educational plan and methods to implement the plan.
- *Oversight* – This is the County Extension Agent who is the primary person implementing the program.

This should assist the Leadership Advisory Board to better understand the educational program and the progress of delivery.

One item that should be explained clearly to the Leadership Advisory Board is the difference in Outcome and Output plans in the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. As employees, we sometimes assume our stakeholders know the common phrases we use. However, most of the time members of the Leadership Advisory Board, Program Area Committees and other planning groups do not know the meaning of these terms. The definitions are:

- *Outcome Programs* comprise a series of educational activities that use appropriate methods designed to help targeted audiences reach a goal (client change level). Evaluation techniques measure change.
- *Output Programs* comprise a series of educational activities that use appropriate methods designed to measure targeted audiences’ satisfaction levels and general clientele feedback. Such programs do NOT measure client change.

It is also important for Leadership Advisory Board members to know that output programs are designed to possibly become outcome programs, and they may agree it is time to move one or more output programs to an outcome program. If that is the case, the output program suggested to be moved to an outcome program needs to be listed on the *new issue* portion of the data entry site.

Validation Process. As County Extension Agents discuss their outcome programs with the Leadership Advisory Board, the objective is to gain their perspective on future direction with the program and the issue. The question that needs to be answered is, “does the county need to continue to program in this area (issue) or is it time to move forward to another issue?”. The choices in the validation process are:

- *Continue Programs* – This means that the issue is not resolved and it should continue as an emphasis. The County Extension Agent may change the program or target a new audience, but the issue would still be addressed. An example of continuing, but doing so with a difference audience would be a county water issue. The program may have targeted agriculture producers, but may need to focus more with homeowners. The Leadership Advisory Board could provide direction, but the bulk of work would be passed on to the County Extension Agent and the appropriate planning committee (Program Area Committee, Task Force, Coalition, etc.)
- *Educational Programs Complete* – This means that the Leadership Advisory Board thinks that the programs have met the issue’s needs and it is time to move forward or there is something more pressing that should be considered. This does NOT mean the County Extension Agent will not address this issue again, but it may not be at the “outcome” level of emphasis.

After the Leadership Advisory Board has provided their input on current outcome programs, they need to be asked to provide new issues that the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in the county should consider addressing in the future. It is important that the LAB members are provided with an overview of the Output Programs because it may provide them with some new ideas about future programs. As they consider new issues, it is a good practice to review Extension’s base program areas, so they are familiar with the main educational areas. These four base programs are:

- Agricultural & Natural Resources
- Family & Consumer Sciences
- 4-H & Youth Development
- Community Resource and Economic Development

Similar to definitions of Outcome and Output Programs, it is important to define what these terms mean to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in your county.

The following page is a worksheet that can be used to validate issues with the Leadership Advisory Board.

TEXAS System Entry. Any County Extension Agent can edit the validation of stakeholder input information in the TEXAS system. However, it is strongly encouraged that the County Coordinator / County Extension Director be the contact person for the implementation of this process. Listed below are the steps to login and enter information:

1. Login to TEXAS - <http://texas.tamu.edu/>
2. Once you have logged yourself in the system (UIN and Password), click on the *ADMIN* button.
3. On the *ADMIN* page, there will be several links on the left hand side of the web page. Click on the radio button that says, “LEADERSHIP ADVISORY BOARDS.”
4. This will take you to the database page for entry. The page will look like the worksheet on the following page. Use it as a guide to enter all information.
5. Once all information is entered, click on the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the page.

Worksheet for Validation of Stakeholder Input with the Leadership Advisory Board

County Validation of Stakeholder Input

Issue ¹	Program Name ¹	Next Steps (Select One)
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
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		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete
		<input type="radio"/> Continue programs <input type="radio"/> Educational programs complete

¹The issue and program are provided in the strategic plan. All you have to do is write this information as you meet with the Leadership Advisory Board. When you enter it in the system, the issue and program will appear in the boxes, so you will not have to retype it, but you can edit the information if you need to do so.

Enter new issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board below²:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

²You will have to enter this information in the system.

Steps for Implementation for the Validation of Stakeholder Input

Before the LAB Meeting

- _____ 1. Discuss the county strategic plan with the county staff and determine who is going to lead the discussions for appropriate outcome programs.
- _____ 2. Review the guide and the complete plan to validate stakeholder input.

During the LAB Meeting

- _____ 1. Provide the Leadership Advisory Board an overview of the importance of their role to the county program in regard to the vision and relevancy of educational programs.
- _____ 2. Hand out a copy of the county strategic plan and discuss the overall county program (defining outcome programs).
- _____ 3. Ask each County Extension Agent to provide a brief overview and an update on the program they lead. If the meeting is in the spring, it would be beneficial to provide the Leadership Advisory Board with the outcome summary that accompanies the plan.
- _____ 4. As the County Extension Agents summarize each program, ask for the Leadership Advisory Board to provide feedback. They should be able to provide some direction. The specific question they should address with the county staff is if programs should continue in this issue area or if it is time to move forward to a new issue.
- _____ 5. Repeat this process for all outcome programs listed in the county strategic plan.
- _____ 6. All County Extension Agents should spend a brief moment reviewing the output programs that are identified on the final page of the strategic plan.
- _____ 7. Ask the Leadership Advisory Board to identify new issues Texas AgriLife Extension should be addressing in the county.

After the LAB Meeting

- _____ 1. Make sure one person (most likely the county coordinator or County Extension Director) enters the information into the TEXAS System following the steps outlined on the previous page.