

EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

AUSTRALIA POST APPROVED PP 34763700014

From the Chair

John Bourne

Over recent months there has been lots of activity in preparation for the conference in Albury in November. Peter Davies and the conference committee have done a tremendous job in organising things so far. By now you should have received a copy of the conference brochure. I have received very favourable comments about the brochure and so am sure this will attract a wide range of people. In speaking to people from different states I know there is a lot of interest ranging from practitioners to academics. I am sure that attendance at Albury will read like a "who's who of extension".



So get your registration form in as soon as you can and give a copy to someone else as well.

A special mention needs to be made of the excellent sponsorship that has been arranged to support the conference. Thanks to Amabel Fulton for organising this.

On another topic, have you seen a copy yet of the "Journal and Reference Lists in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development", put together by Jeff Coutts and the Reference Resources Committee of APEN? This is the sort of reference list we have all been wanting to put

together for many years but have never had the time. Well now we have one, and Jeff and the committee have clearly done a great job. You can get a copy through Rosemary Currie at the APEN secretariat. Of course if you have some additional references of your own that would be useful, then we plan to bring out future updates, and Jane Wightman at QDPI Rockhampton is co-ordinating this.

The Committee of Management is continuing to look closely at our costs of operating APEN to ensure that our dollars are well spent and costs are at a minimum. Our most important income source is membership, both corporate and individual, and again we need to keep monitoring this in relation to costs.

The committee has discussed the level of subscriptions several times and it would seem that an increase will be necessary next year. So I would like to flag this as an issue for the AGM during the conference in November. ❖

From APEN Tasmania

Jane Fisher
President

What is it about the small green state of Tasmania that produces intense activity in extension?

The answers lie in the nature of the agricultural scene here. Some years ago, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF) decided to scale down its extension services. The gap was filled by a diverse range of extension services. There are now many small to medium sized providers servicing the same market.

We asked our members what they wanted from APEN - the answer was training, with a preference for one day courses in a central location.

Why Training?

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has provided no formal training in extension for the last three years. The many small and medium sized consultancies do not have extension experts on staff. Thus APEN has identified and filled a niche. Ultimately, we would like our training courses to be accredited with a University, and to form part of a recognised post-graduate course in extension.

(Continued on Page 2)

From the Editor

Elwin Turnbull

The majority of articles in this issue have come from the Tasmanian APEN Chapter. Thanks to Jane Fisher and her hard working enthusiastic band.

Apologies for the lateness of this issue!

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**From APEN Tasmania
 (Continued)**

Evolution of a Committee

In the beginning, there was a group of enthusiastic people determined to get APEN off the ground in Tasmania. We decided to experiment with new and different ideas in running the committee, seeing it as an ideal opportunity to test ideas and extension theory out before we used them with farmers.

We decided to work with a very flat structure - everyone had the opportunity to do everything. The positions of facilitator and scribe rotated between meetings, giving great opportunities to practise those skills. The flat structure made for a lot of fun and spontaneity, and a very effective committee. People put their hands up to do jobs as they became apparent. The structure worked well, but people did become burnt out.

In the last couple of years, things have become more formalised. We have had defined roles. Some of the spontaneity has been lost. More than that has been the increasing workloads of committee members, which has meant that they have less time to spend on APEN matters. It would seem that being on the APEN committee has been effective in building skills - to the extent that we have been offered other challenges!

New Blood

Maintaining the drive of the committee has meant rolling the committee over - providing younger members with the same opportunities for networking, for developing specific skills in a safe environment.

Success

As well as running training days, we have been lobbying the board

of the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research to include extension in their research planning. Jane Fisher (president), Amabel Fulton and Sue Hinton met with Kim Evans (Chair of the TIAR board) and Rosanna Coombes (board member) on 17th of June. We have been asked to provide our views on the process by which research results can be effectively extended to farmers by mid August.

The big change has been committee burnout. We set ourselves a very ambitious program for the 1996 / 97 year - and have realised that we need two committees, one to run the conference that we had planned, and the other to take care of the day to day management of the branch.

We have changed our focus from treating every event as a learning exercise, in which committee members identified the area of greatest weakness in their knowledge, and took the opportunity to fill the gap, to outsourcing resources where possible. This has meant that costs of our workshops have risen, and that the stress levels of the committee have not got into the red.

We have run workshops through the local adult education, and through the University Consulting Service. Both have provided excellent service. The disadvantage has been that the people handling the registrations have not always known a lot about APEN, and have not been able to market the organisation as well as we would have liked. It is an issue that will be addressed in the future. ❖

WHERE IS EXTENSION HEADING?

Keith Jones

Principal Horticulturist, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Hobart Tas

I would like to ask the question 'who knows where the whole rural economy is heading, let alone extension?'

The Philosophy of Change

Changes in the way we do things often get imported, quite often from the USA. During the last few years leaders seem to have been indoctrinated into acceptance that change is good. It is often good in political, managerial or educational arenas to use this philosophy to show you have achieved something. The art is to move on quickly before the true results of change are established, to claim victory if they even partly worked or to blame someone else if they did not.

Often we hear such trite expressions such as "if you don't like the heat get out of the kitchen". This is often directed at people who may resist change. The agricultural environment has the dual problems of having a fixed farm asset, (some may say liability) and volatile markets.

Advice to the Rural Sector

Extension in its modern garb of advisory and information services (AIS) is a complex issue. Considerations of sustainability and the environment have become increasingly important. Education in all its forms is also a vital element. Community involvement and acceptance of requirements of farming have accelerated in the last decade. No longer should we think merely of technological transfer, marketing and economics as being the only driving forces of extension.

How many of you have listened to either financial advisers or economists about what to do with your money? How many of you have made a fortune? Often what some of these experts fail to reveal is that they have a hidden agenda. This agenda may be political or may commonly be mainly to the financial advantage of the adviser.

Teach the Teacher

One area that bears a lot more examination is building up a sense of community spirit in rural areas. During this century rural areas have been steadily depopulated. Land and water degradation has forced many communities to co-operate. Landcare and water catchment programmes have widened community involvement and co-operation. Communication has been vastly improved, which in itself is a vital component of extension.

Improvement of skills of group leaders through a teach the teacher approach has brought more skills to rural areas. The skills have been often well focused to the care of localities. The care of our resources flows on to the sustainability of rural production as a whole. Often it is resisted by some farmers or farming organisations but it appears the message is progressively getting through.

Electronic Communication in Extension

Best practice, while accommodating the above, also

must embrace proven technology and marketing and economic information. Even in quite remote communities modern, electronic data transfer can be fast and cheap. Not all individual businesses will have suitable equipment but increasing numbers have access or will have.

Although there has been a progressive downsizing of extension personnel, particularly by government, good communication can partially compensate for this trend.

Best Practise in Extension

There are moves to rationalise research and development (R&D) as well as extension. This can and does lead to R&D being tailored to a price. Best practice, as I know it, must be based on properly authenticated data. Some field trials and some untested economic data do not fall into this category. It is the duty of extension providers to check their advice on a regular basis with R&D providers and to hammer out best practice.

The future

Extension must use all the resources available. I am not suggesting each farm or station accesses everything from Internet from centrally based "gurus". Neither do I believe that we will ever re-establish the close knit rural communities of the last century. But you have to admit that both elements could play a part in future rural development.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES THAT DID NOT WORK: CASE STUDIES FROM PAKISTAN

A.M.H.Kango

Pakistan has more than 70% of its population living in rural areas comprising of about 50,000 villages. Hence the country's real development as a whole was conceived to be only attained through rural development. Reminded that rural development could take place only by involvement of the communities at the grass roots level, each successive government prior to the present one put square policies in to round program models of rural development.

The phrases "Development", "Sustainable Development" and "Human Development" appear to have lost their charm to new mints: "Eradication of Poverty and Hunger", "Globalization and Civil Society". The World Food Summit, November 1996, found need for priority international commitment to: "assurance of the political, social and economic environment conducive to food for all without discrimination of gender participation", as basis for action towards achievement of the social development goals outlined in the Copenhagen Declaration, ie.

- a) good governance,
- b) encouragement of private initiatives,
- c) efficient mobilisation of national resources,
- d) m a c r o - e c o n o m i c policies encouraging sustainable growth in the production of goods and services,
- e) and equatibility of sharing the benefits.

The main thrust of the Human Development Report (1997) is also on the eradication of poverty and deprivation. The report however apprehends that unless globalization is carefully managed poor countries and poor people will become increasingly marginalised. FAO's Study Guide on Development (1990) said, "The ultimate purpose of development is to provide everyone with ever increasing opportunities for a better life. It therefore requires an equitable distribution of income and other social resources to promote justice and efficient production, to raise levels of employment substantially, to extend and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social and cultural well being. The quantitative and structural changes that development thus imposes on society must go hand in hand with economic progress while racial, ethnic and social inequalities must be substantially reduced. These are decisive factors in hastening development and hence must be handled with dynamism". The rhetoric continues without results as shall be readily demonstrated through Pakistan's development strategies behind each Program's development of agriculture and allied industries. Though the approaches were different and implementation widened, each Program met the same fate - the failure of human ingenuity to help his fellowmen. The brief review of each of the Programs is given below.

Cooperative Societies.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Government relied on the cooperative societies for distribution of credit to the farmers on reasonable terms in order to accelerate agricultural development. Although the number of cooperative societies increased, they could not grant credit to small farmers to a desired level. In fact, the credit facilities provided by the societies were pre-empted by big landlords, thus creating further disparities in incomes of big and small farmers.

Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (Village-AID) Program.

In 1952, the government considered various proposals at different levels to initiate a viable rural development Program on the principles of self-help, supported by government technical and financial help. It was a comprehensive rural development effort covering the total spectrum of rural life. The Program was conservative in essence and liberal in appearance. It sought to change and modernise the traditional community without eradicating antagonistic economic and social relations.

However, instead of transforming the environment and giving welfare bias to the bureaucracy, it became more like the traditional bureaucracy. The Program failed to build up local initiative and popular participation necessary for sustaining growth and broad-based development.

Worst of all, the Program was financed through external project aid (US PL- 480) and once the aid was withdrawn, local financial base could not sustain it. In its review of the Program, the Food and Agriculture Commission observed, "The Program has not fulfilled its objectives and its utility was only marginal". Accordingly, it was abandoned in 1961.

Basic Democracies

A basic democracy system was introduced as a link between the government and the people, particularly in the spheres of administration, local self-government and local development programs. It provided a framework for local self-government which was required to initiate, coordinate and supervise development activities. The Program could not create the requisite impact due to contradictions between the government's desire to bring forward the local leaders to accept the responsibility and the bureaucracy's reluctance to share its power. The role of basic democrats as electoral college for President and Members of the Legislature jeopardised the basic concept and development fabric of the BD system.

Rural Works Program (RWP).

This Program was first tried as a pilot project during 1962-63 at Comilla in former East Pakistan. The concept was that if money is injected into local areas, it will increase the purchasing power of the citizens and demand for consumer goods would increase. The RWP had its genesis in the negotiations over PL-480 Program between Pakistan and the United States. The commodities were to

be paid for in Pakistan Rupee which would accumulate in counterpart funds in Pakistan and disbursed by the US government in agreement with the local authorities. The Program was designed to increase the sense of participation of the common man by initiating small projects of local nature.

Although this Program brought some tangible achievements it also suffered due to lack of interest of public servants in the rural development and the utter dependence on them by elected representatives. This led to the frustration of the people with this Program. Only the big landlords took the maximum benefit of the government concessions while the small farmers were left high and dry.

Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP).

IRDP envisaged the concept of growth with equity as a guiding principal of State Policy on rural development. This Program was based on a single experiment - the Shadab Pilot Project. Intensive inputs and personalised attention were provided. Contrary to the fact, the role of planning and implementation at the gross roots level was said to be assigned to local leadership, to be developed through organisation of cooperatives (an early failure). Public functionaries were to act as organisers, advisers and trainers of local leadership.

The Program could not take off due to sporadic commitment at the highest level, traditional rivalries between line departments, abolition of basic

ASPAC Conference in Tasmania this November

The Australian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC) is holding its 2nd National Conference and Workshops in Launceston from November 23-26.

A number of reviews will be presented by prominent scientists, consultants and farmers. APEN members may be especially interested in papers on the role of soil and plant analysis in monitoring catchment health (Doug Reuter, CSIRO Adelaide), on measuring nutrient and pesticide movement in catchments (Bob White, University of Melbourne), on precision farming (Simon Cook, CSIRO Perth), and on farmer and consultant views of the utility of soil and plant analysis in their businesses. A half day field trip will include displays of equipment such as GPS, yield monitors, soil samplers and plant and soil field kits.

Conference information can be obtained from Susan Jay at Unitas Consulting,
phone 03 6324 3044,
fax 03 6424 3459,
email
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democracies system and to inherent weaknesses in the cooperative setup.

People's Works Program (PWP).

The Rural Works Program, in operation under the BD system,

continued side by side with IRDP. It was captioned The People's Works Program by the PPP. People's Works Councils were created at the district and provincial level for administering the PWP. The objectives included the restoration of initiative among the people; creation of self confidence; and to make people conscious of improving their standard of living. The Program was so conceived that the projects were to be identified by the local people and executed through locally available talent.

The Program became a source of corruption because the elected political members were given powers to use the funds in their constituencies. It did create some political awakening in the countryside and a number of infrastructure works were completed. A majority of the rural poor were more or less by-passed.

Rural Development as Multi-sectoral Development. This approach was adopted during the period 1978-86. The overall shortfall in achievement of most physical targets were due to low utilization of the funds in absence of local participatory base, in the wake of Martial law government.

Prime Minister's Five Point Program.

This Program identified five points to promote the welfare and prosperity of the masses: the political system, economic order, scientific development, removal of illiteracy and social reforms. According to the Planning Commission this Program was successful in financial and

physical terms mainly because of the firm commitment at the highest political level and the institutional setup installed to implement the Program. Nevertheless, it lacked sustainability and all physical works became monuments of the past.

Revival of People's Works Program (PWP).

The PPP government launched again a People's Works Program in the country from the first week of April 1989. The basic concept and approach of this Program was to: allow the community itself to decide about its most felt needs; supplement the existing development activities through a set of schemes which would have an optimum impact on the poorest segments of the rural population; ameliorate the lot of the people of urban slums/impoverished rural areas; and also to relate the development activities more closely to the felt needs of the people.

The beauty of the Program rested: in mobilisation of local resources and motivation of the people for the productive efforts, so that the process of the development was associated with a large segment of the population; in welfare of the under-privileged sections of the population such as women, disabled and the aged; and, improvement in employment opportunities for unemployed and under-employed.

Tameer-e-Watan Program.

It was a replica of the Prime Minister's five point Program, extended to cover the extensive employment opportunities in transport. Tameer-e-Watan (National

Reconstruction) Program is envisaged to undertake farm to market roads, education, health, water supply and sanitation projects. Strengthening of local bodies and improvement of katchi abadis were also initiated under the Program.

New Era: Involvement of NGOs

The Government has also initiated a National Rural Support Program (NRSPs) on the lines of AKRSP as a pilot project in a few districts/villages in the provinces. The program is to function in conjunction with government agencies, local bodies, NGOs and the private sector. The major objectives of NRSP are the stimulation and support of rural development in rural areas. The international donors are preferring to support NGOs for social work. They have established their field offices in Pakistan and are giving preference to expatriate NGOs to work with communities. Trust For Voluntary Organisation (TVO) is sharing areas of activity with the National Council of Social Welfare (NCSW) and their areas of activity overlap. The main activity of foreign NGOs is towards weakening the state, by making the political confusion more confounding.

Social Action Program

The Social Action Program (SAP) is a kind of accelerated Program for delivery of social services. The concentration is on primary education, especially for girls; population; and, rural water supply and sanitation. This is a parallel Program with line departments on the same pattern as special education, which is neither owned by education nor health.

Achievements

The review of past Programs brings out the following facts. The increases registered in the production sectors and development of infrastructure have not adequately helped in bringing about the qualitative change in the rural life. The exodus from the rural areas to the urban centres could not be arrested. The nominal income increases have mostly been offset by the uncontrolled growth in population and prices. The services made available in the past have not proved beneficial to the community or utilised as envisaged because of increasing central decision making, bureaucratic controls, capital injection, absence of people's participation; and, chronic unemployment and under-employment.

Untold stories are at the back of these failures. The political system of the country is not well suited to the culture of the society. The personal factor is more

prominent and the centralisation is the preference. Local self-government is absent since the British left the country. They took away the traditions of democracy as well.

A look into the future

Each country has inherited the problem of under-development in a special historical perspective, and, as such, special models and recipes have to be devised to meet the location-specific requirements. The process of self-contained development cannot be started with imported concepts. Models compatible with the local resource structure and social aspirations of the people have to be developed. This warrants indigenous efforts and elimination of reliance on external aid and development models. However there are many lessons to be learnt from the past and from others' experience.

The words of wisdom come from UNDP, which writes open letters

to the state. HDR97 identifies six priorities of action and gives a blueprint of six policies that can help governments minimise the damage of globalization and maximise the opportunities. These are:

- a) careful management of trade and capital flow;
- b) investment in poor people;
- c) stimulation of exports from small enterprises;
- d) management of new technologies;
- e) safety nets;
- f) and, improvement in governance.

The will and ability are the prerequisites for any self-sustained and self-reinforcing process of development. The nations that were too indolent to choose the path of self-reliance were sooner or later condemned to fall prey to economic stagnation and cultural decadence. The solution comes only through civil society and good governance. ❖

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NETWORKING BY EMAIL

> Subject: Fellow extension workers networking

>

> Hi,

> I just spotted your site tonight and wish I had seen it or known about your organization 6 months ago. I recently returned from a 7 week study tour of education programs for young people entering agriculture in Australia and New Zealand. I was even in Albury/Wodonga for a couple days.

>

> I spent time with people conducting and participating in the UDV Traineeship Program in Victoria and some of the ITO programs in New Zealand. I got a great deal of useful information.

>

> I was also asked to look into future agricultural education tours to Australasia so hope to be back within a couple years leading a reinvigorated tour of farmers and/or ag professionals. I co-lead a tour this year from the University of Minnesota, but we are looking at some changes in the

next couple years due to staff retirements, so that is where I came into the picture.

>

> While on tour I was also asked to look at the possibility of staff exchanges in the future between your part of the world and Minnesota. I'd love to work on some such program.

>

> I also happen to be president of the Minnesota Association of County Agricultural Agents, a professional organization of extension agents (or educators as called in some states) dealing in the field of agriculture.

>

> Well, I'm going to mark your site and perhaps we can continue some dialogue in the future.

>

> Best wishes.

> Chuck Schwartau

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