



Newsletter for Western Agricultural Educators

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Serving Farmers and Ranchers Through Targeted Risk Management Education

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How Will You Verify?

Writing Measurable Results & Evaluation Best Practices

As the 2013 RFA announcement for the Extension Risk Management Education Grants Program nears, we invite you, as a prospective applicant, to better understand the elements of results based program delivery. Risk management educators will acknowledge it is easier to design a curriculum and activities needed for a workshop or training, than it is to identify and write a succession of clear and measurable results achievable by farm and ranch participants. Designing a project with a results based focus requires careful consideration of the following questions:

- *What is involved in writing a good set of results and why should the target audience matter?*
- *Why is beginning with the end in mind, or identifying the results/outcomes first before considering any of your other project components, a good approach?*
- *How can proposed results be translated into appropriate evaluation questions that verify/measure the changes participants (farmers and ranchers) have made as a result of your training effort?*

Conceiving of and writing a good set of producer results will depend upon your knowledge of and relationship with your target audience. Knowing who they are, why they will want to be involved in your project, what risk issues keep them awake at night and their threshold for risk are all important factors in determining what kind of outcomes you will identify for your audience. Being able to identify the risk situation(s) that your audience is facing and having confidence that participants can realistically achieve the risk management practices, strategies and/or goals you are proposing should help you draft a realistic and measurable set of outcomes.



Results are sequential—beginning with learning or knowledge gained, leading to changes in action with the end result being a positive change in a socio/economic condition. After you have identified a clear set of progressive results for project participants, project activities and curricula can be designed around these results—planning backwards, implementing forward. With this approach the primary focus of the project is to help farm and ranch participants achieve their desired risk management goals. Be realistic about what producers can actually achieve and how long it will take them to implement changes.

Building the capacity of your target audience to manage risk is to know what practices and/or changes will occur as the proposed results are accomplished by participants. To effectively document the changes that participants will make, develop a set of evaluation questions that follow from and/or match the results. Regardless of what tool(s) you use to measure the outcomes, suitable question formats should be used that are easy for participants to understand, invite their response, and are appropriate for the audience being served. Good evaluation methods and tools provide evidence of participant changes in knowledge, practice and condition (results) which lead to improved profitability and a positive socio/economic impact for farm and ranch families.

Evaluation Best Practices

The Extension RME Regional Centers have developed materials to help project teams improve how participant changes in learning, practice and condition are measured and documented. The following link includes links to an Evaluation Best Practices power point and other resource materials that can help you strengthen the “How Will You Verify” section of your application: [How Will You Verify? - Measuring Producer Results](#)

2013 Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program

The Western Center for Risk Management Education will announce its 2013 Request for Applications (RFA) on Thursday, November 1. In addition to the feature article, there are several resources for drafting a successful pre-proposal which include in depth instructions in the online application system, a Pre-Proposal Tutorial and a Proposal Resources page that contains expanded information for completing a successful application:

<http://www.extensionrme.org/verification/media.htm>

Investment Criteria and Economic Viability

The Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program emphasizes project results that will help farmers and ranchers improve their economic viability. Economic viability refers to the producers' ability to improve profitability and to increase opportunities for equity growth over time. Center staff will be available to discuss project ideas and their applicability to our proposal evaluation criteria as well as to field any other questions arising from the application process.

Regional Risk Management Priorities

The 2013 RFA will include regional risk management priorities. Proposals submitted in these areas must be able to effectively compete with other applications by demonstrating clear risk management results for producers that improve their economic viability. The applicant webinar on Monday, November 5 will address these priorities in more detail.

RFA and Online Application Changes

The "How Will You Verify?" and "Producer Demand" sections of the application will place more onus on the applicant to consider appropriate tools and methods for measuring results and to conduct a more thorough assessment of the target audience.

Percentage weight will change for two of the evaluation criteria:

- *Collaborators [15% weight]*
- *Innovative Approaches & Review of Past Projects [10% weight]*
**Please note that Review of Past Projects is a new criteria that is being added to Innovative Approaches



2013 RFA Timeline

Visit the Competitive Grants Program link on our home page for more information.
<http://westrme.wsu.edu/grants-program/>

RFA Announcement

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Closing Date for Pre-Proposal Submission

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Finalists Selected to Submit a Full Proposal

Friday, February 1, 2013

Closing Date for Full Proposal Submission

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Award Decisions Announced

Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Applicant Webinar

Monday, November 5, 2012 @ 1:00 pm PST

No pre-registration is required and there is no fee to participate. Simply join the Adobe Connect Pro meeting room at <http://breeze.wsu.edu/appwebinar/> about 10 minutes prior to the webinar start time.

You will be presented with a login screen that has the option to "Enter as Guest". Enter your full name, then click "Enter Room" to join the conference. You will be able to hear the audio directly from your computer's speakers.

The Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education is one of five USDA NIFA Extension Risk Management Education Centers serving agricultural producers through targeted risk management education. The Western Center partners with state university Extension educators and public and private sector partners in the west, providing tools and training to support producers in establishing long-term risk management strategies that will strengthen the economic viability of their farm and ranch enterprises. The Western Center is housed within the Washington State University College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences Extension School of Economic Sciences.



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