



Increasing Stakeholder Confidence that Extension had an Impact

Funders and legislators when they see Extension reports about impact, often ask agents, “How do you know Extension made this impact? Couldn’t it have been the media or some other information source?”

With only a post measure that is, after a program, the only claim you can make is that the participants in your program knew the information after the program. You can’t say anything about extension’s role. However, you can make the claim that Extension played some role in achieving a post program result, if you measure *both* before and after a program and demonstrate a difference.

Even with a strong program though, finding a measure that will be sensitive enough to the change in a program, especially a short program, is sometimes difficult to create.

In a recent evaluation of a program featuring many new ideas for the target audience, one set of questions elicited a demonstrable change and the opportunity to claim that Extension played a role in that change. The questions measure the perception of knowledge gained on a specific topic. Although the answer categories comprise only a 4-point scale, the language in the four categories seems to be non-threatening. Many people in the evaluation that we ran were comfortable choosing “non existent” or “minimal” on the pre-program measure, choices sometimes difficult to achieve but needed however, if you want to show change.

Try adapting these questions to your audience and subject matter. Then, pilot them to see if they show demonstrable change in your program.

My understanding of natural toxicants in plant foods BEFORE the extension program was: (circle number)

- 1 NON-EXISTENT
- 2 MINIMAL
- 3 MODERATE
- 4 CONSIDERABLE

My understanding of natural toxicants in plant foods AFTER the extension program was: (circle number)

- 1 NON-EXISTENT
- 2 MINIMAL
- 3 MODERATE
- 4 CONSIDERABLE

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