

## The Public Value of Extension Programs

Extension educators provide evidence of their programs' private value to direct participants, but our programs also create *public value* when they induce program participants to act in ways that benefit community members who never had contact with the program. While participants who directly benefit from Extension programs have always been a source of crucial political support for Extension, demonstrating our *public value* can be the key to shoring up support from the rest of the population. Current fiscal pressures on state and county governments make the need to demonstrate our public value increasingly important. More than that, by understanding and substantiating the public benefits our programs provide, we can be confident that Extension, as a publicly funded organization, is doing what it is truly meant to do.

An Extension Symposium in-service training session entitled *Assessing and Communicating the Public Value of Extension Programs* was conceptualized, planned and coordinated by the Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Focus Team of Goal 7. This three-hour in-service training, which was held on May 17, 2006, was designed to help Extension educators understand (1) the definition of public value, (2) the sources of public value, (3) Extension's strengths in creating public value, (4) how to demonstrate the public value of an Extension program. The training included time for participants to work in groups to draft messages about the public value of their particular Extension programs. Each group shared their draft message and received feedback from the presenter, Dr. Laura Kalambokidis, Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Minnesota.

This video of the instruction portion of the in-service training is made available to Extension personnel only. For more information about the training and other resources related to Extension's public value, please contact Dr. Lisa A. Guion or Mr. Richard Tyson, Co-Chairs of the Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Focus Team. Other focus team members include (in alphabetical order by last name): Georgene Bender, Betsy Crisp, Gary England, Nancy Gal, and Brenda Holloway.