

Coshocton County Agriculture Needs Assessment

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Background

When an Educator is hired to serve a County, it is very important for them to get to know their agricultural community and to determine the most pressing educational needs. David Marrison was hired as the OSU Extension Educator for Agriculture & Natural Resources in Coshocton County, Ohio in September 2018. One of the Educator's goals was to conduct a comprehensive review of the agricultural community in order to better provide educational programming for Coshocton County. There were three main components to this review. The first was an analysis of the 2017 Census of Agriculture; the second was to conduct a formal needs assessment of Coshocton County farmers; and third was to conduct a series of on-site visit interviews with Coshocton County farmers and industry personnel. This poster outlines the results of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Needs Assessment which was conducted from October 1, 2018 through October 1, 2019.

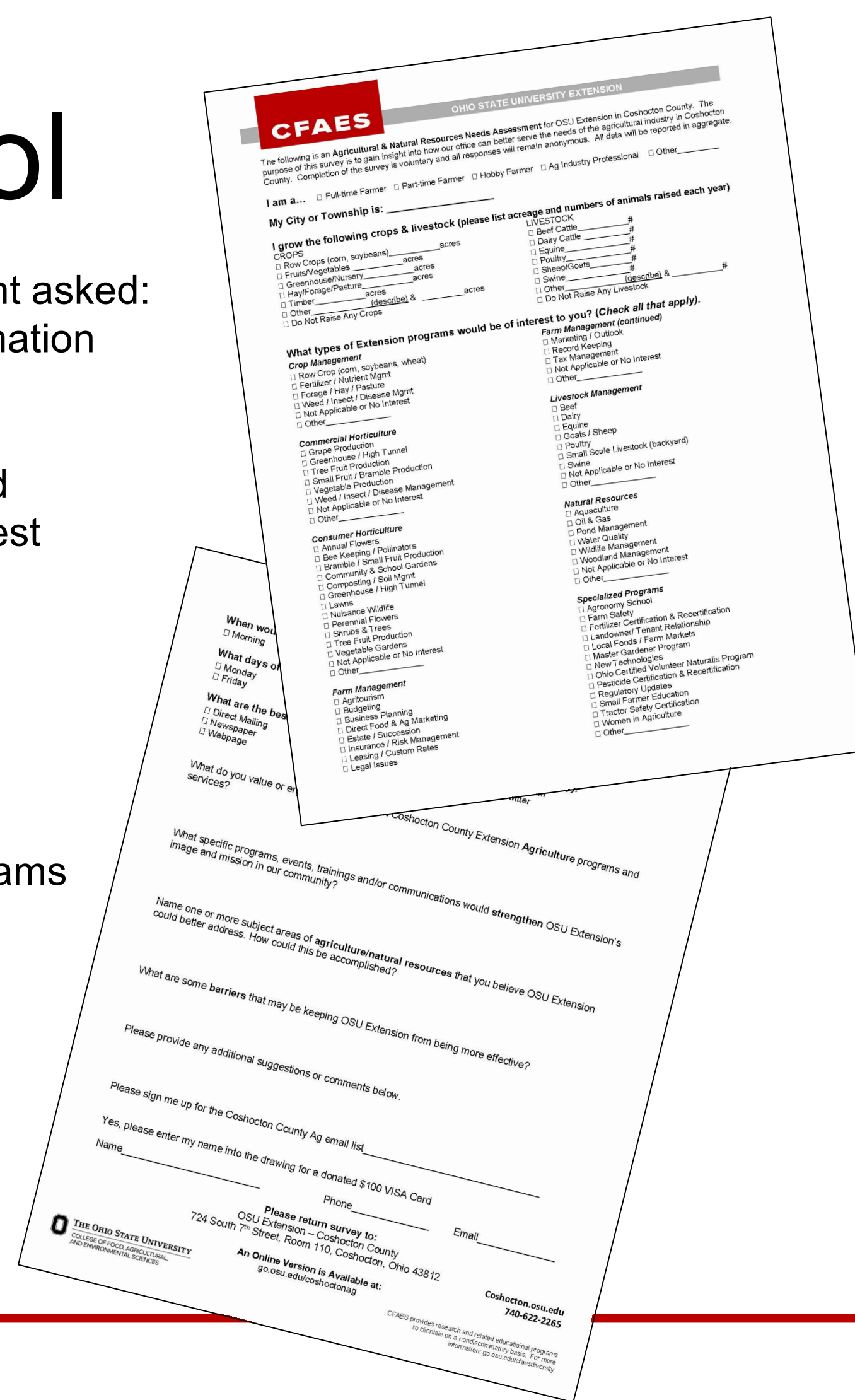
Procedures

After a completion of a literature review of existing surveys, the Educator developed a two-page needs assessment. Its release was published through local media sources. An initial mailing was made to 590 farmers on the Coshocton County mailing list in December 2018 with a second mailing made in August 2019. An electronic invitation was emailed to 436 farmers via email in December 2018 and again in July 2019. The assessment was also distributed at a variety of Extension programs and at events sponsored by local agricultural cooperatives and businesses.

Survey Tool

The two-page needs assessment asked:

- General Demographic Information
 - Farmer Type
 - Location
 - Crops & Livestock Raised
- Extension Programs of Interest
 - Crop Management
 - Commercial Horticulture
 - Consumer Horticulture
 - Farm Management
 - Livestock Management
 - Natural Resources
- Interest in Specialized Programs
- Timing of Programs
- Qualitative Review



General Demographics

One-hundred forty-two individuals responded to the assessment. Ninety-one (64.1%) completed the paper version of the assessment with 51 (35.9%) completing it on-line. Forty-three percent of the respondents classified themselves as part-time farmers, 35.9% as full-time farmers, 7.7% as hobby farmers, 7.0% as agricultural industry personnel and 6.3% as other. With regards to acreage farmed, 52.1% (n=74) of respondents indicated raising 35,694 acres of row crops and 67.6% (n=96) reported having 10,004 acres of hay/pasture. Almost 28 percent (n=39) reported managing 3,501 acres of timber. Nine percent (n=13) reported growing 623 acres of vegetable crops and 2.1% (n=3) reported having a collective 1 acre of production in greenhouses. With regards to animals raised, 57.7% (n=82) reported raising 3,965 beef cattle, 9.9% (n=14) reported raising 929 sheep goats, and another 9.9% reported (n=14) having 65 horses. Almost 9% (n=12) reported raising 192,042 swine and 6.3% (n=9) raise 1,000,878 head of poultry. Nearly 6% (n=8) reported milking 472 dairy cows and 4.9% reported raising other types of animals such as donkeys, rabbits, dogs and llamas. Only twenty-five respondents (17.6%) reported that they did not raise any livestock.

Program Topics of Interest

Respondents were asked to indicate which types of Extension Programs would be of interest to them. A variety of topics were provided in the areas of crop management, commercial horticulture, consumer horticulture, farm management, livestock management, livestock management, and natural resources. Four of the top five topics were from the crop production area with nine of the remaining fifteen topics from the farm management area.

| Top Twenty Extension Program Topic Areas | Topic Area | Number Respondents | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Forage, Hay & Pasture | Crop Management | 93 | 65.5% |
| Fertilizer & Nutrient Management | Crop Management | 82 | 57.7% |
| Weed, Insect & Disease Management | Crop Management | 79 | 55.6% |
| Beef Cattle | Livestock Management | 77 | 54.2% |
| Row Crop (corn, soybeans, wheat) | Crop Management | 65 | 45.8% |
| Tax Management | Farm Management | 57 | 40.1% |
| Marketing & Outlook | Farm Management | 57 | 40.1% |
| Record Keeping | Farm Management | 53 | 38.7% |
| Oil & Gas | Natural Resources | 52 | 36.6% |
| Legal Issues | Farm Management | 49 | 34.5% |
| Estate & Succession Planning | Farm Management | 48 | 33.8% |
| Woodland Management | Natural Resources | 48 | 33.8% |
| Leasing & Custom Rates | Farm Management | 46 | 32.4% |
| Business Planning | Farm Management | 37 | 26.1% |
| Wildlife Management | Natural Resources | 35 | 24.6% |
| Water Quality | Natural Resources | 34 | 23.9% |
| Insurance & Risk Management | Farm Management | 33 | 23.2% |
| Budgeting | Farm Management | 32 | 22.5% |
| Pond Management | Natural Resources | 24 | 16.9% |
| Bee Keeping & Pollinators | Consumer Horticulture | 24 | 16.9% |

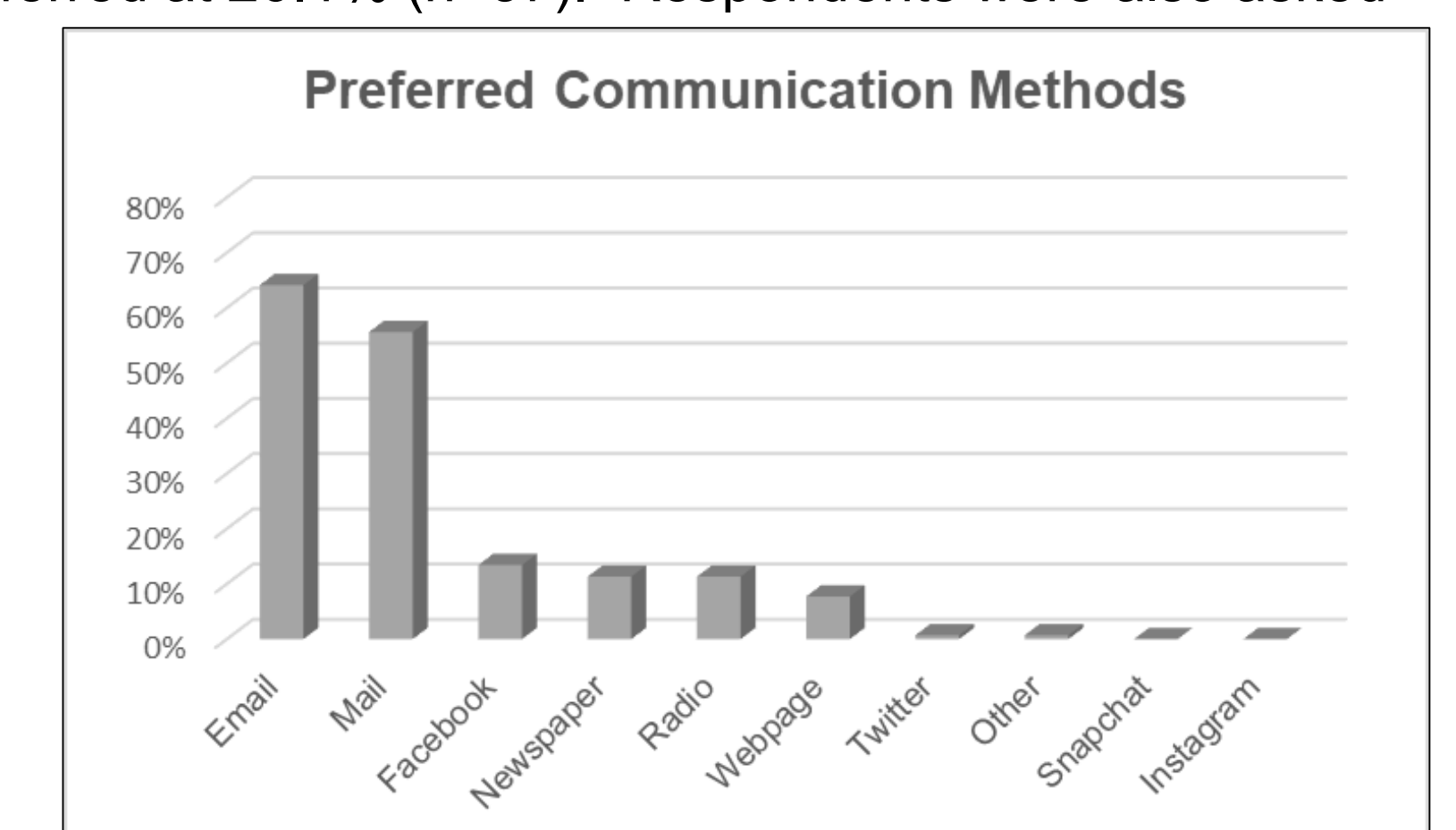
Specialized Programs

The needs assessment also asked the respondents to rate their interest in 13 different specialized programs traditionally offered by OSU Extension. The top-rated program cited was the Fertilizer and Pesticide certification/license programs.

| Specialized Program Area | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|-----------------------|------------|
| Fertilizer Certification & Recertification | 61 | 43.0% |
| Pesticide Certification & Recertification | 50 | 35.2% |
| Agronomy School | 38 | 26.8% |
| Landowner/ Tenant Relationship | 36 | 25.4% |
| Small Farmer Education | 31 | 21.8% |
| New Technologies | 30 | 21.1% |
| Women in Agriculture | 29 | 20.4% |
| Regulatory Updates | 26 | 18.3% |
| Farm Safety | 25 | 17.6% |
| Local Foods / Farm Markets | 20 | 14.1% |
| Tractor Safety Certification | 18 | 12.7% |
| Master Gardener Program | 10 | 7.0% |
| Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program | 5 | 3.5% |

Programming Preferences

Respondents were also asked to cite their preferred time for programs. Nearly 46% (n=65) responded they would prefer evening workshops with 30.3% (n=43) reporting it did not matter when programs were held. With regards to the day of the week for programs, 50.7% (n=72) responded that it did not matter the day of the week which a program was held. For those who selected specific days, Tuesdays was most preferred at 26.1% (n=37). Respondents were also asked to indicate the ways in which they would like to receive management information and details on educational workshops and events. Two preferred manners emerged with 64.1% (n=91) choosing to be notified by email and 55.6% (n=79) via direct mail.



Summary

The data received from the assessment aligns demographically with the 2017 Census. The Educator is working with a local *Agriculture & Natural Resources Program Committee* to develop a 5-year strategic programming plan. Some of the initial outcomes are:

- ✓ Development of a bi-weekly Agriculture & Natural Resources Electronic Newsletter
- ✓ Increased crop production education
- ✓ Increased forage & hay production education
- ✓ Increased farm management education
- ✓ Increased beef production education
- ✓ Exploration of the formation of a Cattlemen's Association