

Keeping Our Committee Active

A program/issue committee will stay active as long as its work is interesting and productive. You can also give special attention to “dynamics,” or operational matters that will help your committee become...and stay effective.

Consider the six points in this worksheet.

() Identify an appropriate committee role.

Discuss the committee’s role. Then come to an understanding – reach agreement – on what the committee can and should do.

Get the agent’s viewpoint, too, to see what expectations he/she has of this group.

Committee’s primary purpose(s):

() Insure contact.

Keep in touch with each other – before and after meetings and events. Get to know other members on an informal basis.

Find out what the other program/issue committees are and how you might occasionally interact with them.

Schedule committee meetings, at least tentatively, for a whole year. Meet enough times to accomplish the various committee tasks and to maintain momentum...you can’t do everything in only one or two meetings a year.

Meeting Date: _____ Primary Purpose: _____

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Try to have at least one activity as a committee that will give an opportunity for people to get acquainted with each other and the committee’s role:

Date: _____ Primary Purpose: _____

Or plan the first 15 minutes of an already scheduled meeting to be informal time to meet each other and visit – with refreshments.

() Have opportunity to speak.

Members should express ideas, suggestions, and opinions. Members should be free to express their own points of view, as well as those of the people they are representing.

Be prepared to participate at meetings.

The chairperson should call on all members at committee meetings, to insure that all alternatives are considered and that the richness of members' contributions is not lost.

() Notice your progress.

From time to time, take a look at how well you're doing.

Review your goals and plans that you made at the beginning of this year. What progress has been made toward carrying them out? Find positive steps. Look for good things.

Even long-range goals can have visible progress in a short time, when you look at specific things your committee does to reach its goals.

What events have taken place or been planned? _____

What reactions have participants had to the events? _____

What is the next step the committee could take to achieve a goal? _____

() Involve more people.

The more people who are involved, the easier the job!

Here are some opportunities for involvement of other people:

- () Recruit new members to fill vacant/inactive positions.
- () Recruit new members to fill positions of members whose terms are expiring.
- () Identify tasks that committee members can do for educational activities – don't leave it up to the agent!
- () Identify people who have specific program needs/interests – get them to help with program planning and program activities.
- () Identify tasks that people (who aren't current members) can do – be involved with – at committee's upcoming activities.

() Help get needed support resources.

An active committee is one that is searching for ways to support the program/issue. Think of ways to expand the scope of your committee and to build community support for your area of concern.

Consider these ways...and add more:

- () Identify potential result demonstrators, when appropriate.
- () Seek financial and/or material resources, when needed.
- () Identify businesses/individuals who could contribute something (time, equipment, facilities or sponsor something (door prize, meal, refreshment, etc.) in connection with an educational activity the committee sponsors.
- () Explain your program area's importance – and educational program – to key groups to get their support and understanding.
- () _____
- () _____

When a committee believes it is making reasonable progress toward its goals, members tend to stay involved in committee activities.
Development of appropriate committee leadership may require that there be more than one type of leader in the committee.
The benefit of participation comes from the feeling of progress... not necessarily from progress itself.

Prepared by Extension Program Development Specialists, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

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