

A Statewide Summary of UW Extension Stakeholder Input 2018-2019

Stakeholder input is valued and driven by the philosophy that stakeholders want opportunities to identify positive things that happen in their counties, share their concerns and offer suggestions. These listening sessions provide opportunities to gather feedback and identify issues important to Wyoming citizens which are considered by UW Extension in determining program direction.

One hundred and seventy (170) individuals participated in Natrona, Sheridan, Carbon, Sweetwater counties, and the Wind River Indian Reservation sessions November 2018 through February 2019. Each session included individual focus groups around UW Extension's five educational initiatives: Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources; Agriculture and Horticulture; Community Development Education; Nutrition and Food Safety; and 4-H and Youth Development. Individuals who participated in the Stakeholder Input Session on the Wind River Indian Reservation completed a written survey.

Results from the 5 sessions were analyzed to help identify issues that have emerged across the state in the initiative areas. This summary reflects those issues that were prioritized and had common themes across Wyoming. Results will be used by county, area, and state extension teams to direct new programming efforts. Unique items identified in individual counties will continue to be appropriately addressed in that county.

Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources

Rangeland management has a direct impact on the quality of life for all groups interested in range and natural resources. Concerns for range lands, both public and privately owned, need to be addressed with a better awareness of range ecosystems and mutual respect by the various user groups.

- Management of rangelands, including management of invasive species, to improve sustainability and economic viability.
- Education about range ecosystems specifically for the general public to address the perception of rangeland issues and improve management.
- Enhance collaborations between public, private and professional users of range lands to increase knowledge, improve communications and joint efforts to maintain and sustain rangelands.
- WRIR – Natural resources issues with rangelands include drought planning, rangeland management, and BIA relationships. Water concerns include irrigation, livestock water, water quality and access.

Agriculture and Horticulture

A healthy agriculture sector is crucial to Wyoming's economy.

- Profitable and sustainable agriculture which includes management priorities to preserve agricultural operations. Ag market development/Ag risk management
- Agriculture workforce preparation and merging the gap between the generation leaving ag and the generations coming into ag. Have to take a new approach for the upcoming workforce and how they think versus the older generation and actual business practices. Successful integration into ag businesses. Shortage or lack of qualified hireable workers.
- More visible collaborations – connecting farmers/ranchers/growers with information, education, peers and mentors.
- Education – individualized education (one on one contacts and help related to agriculture); expert seminars; promotion of programs needs to include “just in time” as well as advanced notice with advertising.
- WRIR - Home gardening and methods to extend the growing season are important issues on the reservation. The demand for agricultural information revolves around feeding livestock for the best nutritional value and livestock business/financial planning.



Community Development Education

Community issues are seldom resolved in a silo. Successful solutions come from engaging all parties in the community: individuals, families, business leaders, civic organizations, governmental groups, non-profit organizations, etc.

- Facilitation of collaborative efforts to solve community needs/concerns.
- Education programs which benefit the community such as grant writing, entrepreneurship, board training, and workforce preparation.
- WRIR – Basic money management, including budgeting, was identified as a high priority for individuals. Communication, conflict resolution, and other leadership skills were also identified as a need for individuals as well as groups on the reservation.

Nutrition and Food Safety

Programs which combine education and behavior strategies such as goal setting, decision making, etc. are most effective in creating changes in behavior to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. Healthy lifestyles decrease the risk of obesity and chronic disease which are major issues in Wyoming.

- Increase level of physical activity to improve overall wellness in individuals and families.
- Awareness of existing resources and how to access them.
- Education – hands on classes, on-line resources, and community collaborations to help educate individuals and families about nutrition, availability of healthy food options, how to plan and cook healthy meals at home.
- WRIR – Limited financial resources creates an interest in food preservation and meal planning to stretch the food budget especially with high numbers of individuals in a household. There is also an increased interest in learning about indigenous foods.

4-H Youth Development

All communities have youth who are over committed as well as youth who live on the fringe and are not engaged in community activities and/or programs. These invisible youth could also benefit from engagement with peers and other adults through 4-H.

- Effective marketing strategies to communicate the value of and opportunities available to all youth in the 4-H program.
- Identify and remove barriers that may reduce or completely eliminate youths' ability to participate in the 4-H program which could include transportation, cost, lack of family support, etc.
- Education around appropriate use of technology/social media which results in positive interactions rather than negative consequences such as cyber bullying and low self-esteem.
- WRIR – Barriers for participation in youth programs included a lack of transportation, lack of parental support and lack of program information. Suggestions for youth activities in specific subject matter included leadership, care of pets and livestock, and arts and crafts. Training and support for adult volunteers providing leadership for 4-H clubs is also needed.

Thank you to all of the stakeholders who participated and to all the Extension employees who made these sessions possible.

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