**Smith-Lever Act**

**Smith-Lever Act and Extension in Idaho**

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established a system of cooperative Extension services connected to land-grant universities such as the University of Idaho (UI). UI Extension and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences carry out activities to make practical, research-based knowledge available to people to help them live healthy, productive lives. UI receives $2.9 million annually from federal Smith-Lever funding. That funding is combined with $11.4 million from the state of Idaho, $4.6 million from Idaho counties and $7.7 million from grants.

Extension’s community outreach mission is the core of the land-grant university’s purpose and is critical to Idaho’s agriculture, communities and people of all ages. The Idaho 4-H Youth Development program provides healthy living and leadership programs for thousands of young people in rural and urban settings. UI Extension operates with extensive stakeholder involvement at all levels.

**Background**

UI Extension activities rely on a unique partnership of federal, state and county funding created by the Smith-Lever Act. The university opened its first off-campus Extension office in Boise in 1910 and located a dairy specialist there. The passage of the Smith-Lever Act allowed the university to work with counties more closely, partnerships that now extend to Extension faculty who operate from offices in 42 counties statewide. Extension educators and specialists provide research based education in agriculture, community development, family and consumer sciences, natural resources, and 4-H youth development throughout Idaho.

**Recent Accomplishments**

- UI Extension 4-H Youth Development provided after-school, club based and special interest educational programming for nearly 65,000 young people across the state. A myriad of programs provided education to volunteer-led educational projects ranging from STEM projects in robotics, rocketry and animal husbandry to cooking, sewing and gardening. UI Extension 4-H Robotics managed the FIRST program in Idaho. FIRST is the premiere international educational robotics program responsible for promoting and channeling youth interest in and pursuit of STEM careers. Teen programming included Know Your Government in Boise during the legislative session and State Teen Association Convention on the Moscow campus focusing on career exploration.

- The growing interest in locally grown meat and produce led UI Extension educators to develop a concurrent, multi-part hybrid course statewide to help beginning farmers and ranchers learn about the legal and business considerations for starting their own operations. Delivery methods included webinars, in-person facilitation and farm tours. This program was offered to 170 individuals at nine different sites across the state.

- In FY2017, UI Extension’s Eat Smart Idaho program partnered with over 146 community partners to provide nutrition education and physical activity programming to low-resource Idahoans in 37 of Idaho’s 44 counties. Through direct education classes and policies, systems and environmental projects, participants in Eat Smart Idaho programming increased their knowledge of and access to healthy foods, improved their diet quality, increased their daily physical activity, and reported increased food security.

- To help young people and their families enjoy healthier lives, 4-H nutrition advisors worked with the Eat Smart Idaho program for low-income and underserved audiences to help people understand basic nutrition principles and lead more active lives. The statewide health and nutrition topic team held

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more than 800 teaching events that reached 33,600 individuals with the goal of reducing the incidence of obesity and related health issues.

- An international potato conference, regional cereal school workshops for wheat growers, and instructional field days throughout the state helped Idaho farmers learn new developments affecting Idaho crops, improve the efficacy and safety of pesticide management, learn about new potato varieties, and enhance their efficiency to meet market demands. The information provided through Extension activities focused on increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of Idaho agriculture, large and small.

- UI Extension’s Idaho Master Gardeners, a program that trains volunteers to provide expert gardening and home landscaping information to the public, enhanced its efforts by digitally expanding gardening information through social media. The audience use of Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest increased by 243%, 150% and 33% respectively over the past two years. In addition, news articles were written for the Idaho Statesman, which is the largest local news publication in the state. This led to a 32-week Master Gardener gardening series of articles and videos on a variety of topics.

Upcoming Goals

- UI Extension will continue to support efforts to encourage more Idaho residents to pursue higher education opportunities by working with youth and place-bound individuals to help the state increase the preparedness of its workforce for future job opportunities.

- To help residents lead healthier, more active lives, UI Extension will continue to offer workshops and peer-led educational opportunities that increase knowledge about nutrition and provide strategies to reduce the risk of obesity.

- Extension educators and specialists will deliver educational programs to help new farmers and ranchers access the expertise and knowledge they need to start agricultural operations. Educational programs will provide timely, accurate, research-based information to help large-scale farmers and ranchers expand the competitiveness of their operations and improve the sustainability and reduce the environmental impacts of their practices.

- UI Extension will continue to expand its reach through digital media to reach new audiences interested in local food production.

- Idaho 4-H Youth Development will continue to cultivate volunteers to help young people develop citizenship, leadership, healthy living, and science and STEM skills.

Projected Impact of Continued and Increased Funding

UI Extension provides practical, research-based information to help large agricultural producers operate sustainably and increase their competitiveness in world markets, while helping small farmers provide locally raised food increasingly sought by consumers. Youth development and healthy living programs help people throughout the state live healthier, more active lives. Community development efforts support Idaho’s rural communities and cities.

Accounts: Agriculture Appropriations, NIFA, Smith-Lever

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