Galaxy IV Super Seminar – Communicating Climate Change and Sustainability in Extension Programming
Thursday, September 19, 2013, David Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA

Seminar Notes: This seminar was led by a panel of Extension professionals from different associations (see PowerPoint) and keypad polling questions were given to approximately 36 participants around the topic of communicating climate change and sustainability. This is a compilation of the notes taken by participants at this session around two questions:

What are the solutions to address some of the challenges discussed in the survey questions?

How do we implement the solutions suggested?

These are the responses, as action statements, that were given - duplicates not included as much as possible:

- Build awareness among general public
- Find partners to address issues without duplicating what has already been done
- Make issues locally relevant with local data, presented by specialists to achieve local buy-in
- Displace myths with facts using fact sheets multi-media approaches
- Define and consistently use appropriate terminology – avoid problematic terminology
- Include wide-range of audiences and organizations –i.e. youth so that they can inform their parents
- Use innovative teaching tools that lead directly to applying new skills in everyday life, work, etc.
- Make the correct/helpful decision be an easy decision and cost-effective.
- Engage policy makers and industries in these efforts – make it personal for them
- Be role models through our (Extension) buildings, travel and by talking about it
- Prioritize issues where we can make the most difference
- Develop sustainability SWAT teams
- Utilize citizen science, i.e. the National Phenology Network
- Focus on resiliency
- Help people recognize that individual actions matter
- In-service training for agents/educators in ALL program areas
- Create a checklist for Extension offices
- Look at existing programs and ways to incorporate climate change science into them
- Spread the word about energy efficiency volunteer teams and funding options
- Train sustainability master volunteer teams
- Distribute carbon footprint calculators
- Use “energy scavenger hunt” game
- Reframe the title “climate change” so that discussions with stakeholders can move forward – like ‘climate variability’
• Focus on adaptation rather than why things are happening
• Use trusted examples of climate change adaptation and planning like the Department of Defense
• Leverage existing community/industry issues, (i.e. poverty, nutrition, transportation) to reframe larger issue and then teach
• Develop broadband accessibility to target low-income, disengaged populations
• Partner with industry and use tangible things as incentives
• Go where target audiences are rather than expecting them to come to us
• Speak to ‘pocketbook’ through cost-benefit analyses, apps, etc
• Create local case studies, engage peer to peer like Master Gardeners
• Develop audience-appropriate programs, i.e. urban, rural, low-income, family, hunters, etc
• Develop funding incentives for engaging in positive behaviors
• Create sustainability-focused specialists in Extension
• Use local experts in sustainability
• Support more literature and tools
• Develop citizen education curriculum to move to action individually, then collectively around water, transportation, food, etc.
• Develop more community gardens
• Increase science-based info around sustainability
• Reframe efforts to focus on economics and quality of life
• Create a directory of university and extension resources
• Increase specialists outreach to county agents
• Create an app that shows linkages between climate and social and economic change
• Increase online tools like local visualizations of impacts
• Engage in national security issues
• Find agencies that have scientific resources, i.e. USGS, NOAA, universities, other states’ Extension programs