

# Surviving The First Year In Extension Agribusiness

**What Agricultural Economics  
Ph.D.'s Don't Prepare Us For**

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# Agribusiness Is Growing

## ● House & Sterns Report:

- 12 Ph.D. Ag Econ Programs With An Agribusiness Field
  - 41% Of Tenure-Track Faculty Positions Advertised In 2001 *Exchange* Had An Agribusiness Component
  - 60% Of Current & Recent Graduates Have An Agribusiness Specialization
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# **Ag Econ Graduate Programs vs. Agribusiness Extension**

## **Ag Econ**

- **Heavy On Theory, Research Methods, & Quantitative Methods**

## **Agribusiness**

- **Need Strategic, Financial, & Human Resource Management**
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# **Agribusiness Management Topics Learned By Agribusiness Students**

- **Strategic Management**
  - 70% → Classes, Research, Seminars
  - 45% → Ag Econ Classes
- **Financial Management**
  - 50-60% → Classes, Research, Seminars
  - 20-40% → Ag Econ Classes
- **Human Resource Management**
  - 25% → Classes, Research, Seminars
  - 7% → Ag Econ Classes



# **When Are We Taught How To Build An Extension Program?**

- Graduate School Focuses On Creating A Research Program
  - Some Teaching Opportunities In Graduate School
  - Only 4% Of Ag Econ Grad Students Have An Extension Assistantship  
(Mark, Daniel, & Lusk)
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# **Ag Econ Graduate School**

- **Students “Sign Onto” Faculty’s Research Projects**
    - **Does This Prepare Them To Identify Needs For Applied Work?**
  - **Ag Econ Grad Students Averaged Less Than 1 Hour/Week Doing Extension Work** (Mark, Daniel, & Lusk)
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# Could We Teach Extension?

## ● Extension Methods Class

- Teach Program Design, Delivery, Outcome Assessment, etc.
- Students Could Create A Program

## ● Apprenticeship

- Needs To Be An Incentive For Students
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# **Why New Agribusiness Ext. Programs Are Difficult To Start**

## **1. Not Sure How Agribusinesses & Trade Associations Work In State**


- **Learn The Culture & History**
  - **Figure Out Who Gets Along With Who**
  - **Avoid Becoming Their Employee**
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# **Why New Agribusiness Ext. Programs Are Difficult To Start**

## **2. Previous Extension Programs**

- What Was Done In The Past?**
  - Change Is Difficult**
  - Change Is Necessary**
  - Clientele Will Judge The New Program Against The Old**
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# **Why New Agribusiness Ext. Programs Are Difficult To Start**

## **3. Unsure Of Clientele's Needs**

- They May Not Know Themselves**






# **Why New Agribusiness Ext. Programs Are Difficult To Start**

## **4. Delivery Methods Differ Across Audiences**

- **Seminar vs. Active Learning**
  - **Distance vs. In-Person**
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# How Do We Overcome These?

- **Listen, Ask Questions, & Listen More**
    - **Don't Focus Exclusively On The Leaders, Focus On Who Will Be There In The Future**
  - **Make Changes Slowly But Deliberately**
  - **Develop Relationships With Clientele**
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# Fostering New Relationships

- No “Ivory Tower” Economists
  - Be One Of Them
  - Care About The Areas In Which You Work
  - Be “Media Friendly”
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# **The Great Balancing Act**

## **Extension, Research, & Teaching**

### **● Research Is Part Of The Extension Program**

- Schedule Time For It
- If You Don't, You Run Out Of Things To Say


### **● Teaching Is Part Of The Extension Program**

- Classes Become More Practical
  - It Can Be An Advantage – Good Reason To Stay On Campus
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# **Managing The Balancing Act**


## **Saying “No” Without Guilt**

- **Establish Your Priorities Based On Your Understanding Of Clientele’s Need For Ext. Programming**
    - **These Can Differ From Clientele’s, Senior Faculty’s, & Administrator’s Priorities For You**
    - **Do Not Compromise Your Priorities**
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# **Managing The Balancing Act Saying “No” Without Guilt**

## **● What To Say “No” To:**

- Things Low On The Priority List**
  - Requests That Require A Lot Of Time**
  - Projects Not In The Scope Of Your Program**
  - Projects With Low Return**
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# **Managing The Balancing Act**

- **Do The Things You Do Well**
  - **Let Promotion & Tenure Take Care Of Themselves**
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