

## Writing and Submitting Success Stories in the KERS Reporting System

In order to fulfill the reporting requirements for the NIFA Plan of Work and the required Annual Report of Accomplishments, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is required to submit a set of success stories describing the public benefits of its Extension, research and academic programs. These stories are web-based, searchable in the Kentucky Extension Reporting System (KERS), in addition to a variety of purposes of great benefit to Kentucky Cooperative Extension. These include, but are not limited to:

- Both college and university reporting requirements
- Internal and external public relations efforts (i.e.; [Public Value Statements](#), [PSD News Brief](#))
- Grant applications
- Additional required reports (i.e.; [Report to the People](#))
- In support of the college's legislative agenda (i.e.; Distribution at County Judge Executive Meetings)

When creating your success story it is important to address the five areas below:

- 1.) **Situation and Priorities:** What is the need of the community that Extension is addressing? Why is it a priority to the community?
- 2.) **Educational response:** Describe how Extension is responding to the needs of the community and/or participants, through the program. Evaluating this will provide the opportunity to improve *teaching* effectiveness. This includes:
  - educational and/or research efforts,
  - a variety of delivery methods
  - multiple contacts such as publications, electronic outputs, and teaching materials developed and/or used.
- 3.) **Participants/Target Audience:** Who did you want to participate in the program? What characteristics link them to the situation? How many people were reached?
- 4.) **Partners (if applicable) Extension** develops community partnerships to reach target audiences, maximize resources, and measure impact. Describe partners and resources they offer.
- 5.) **Outcomes/Impact:** The **outcome** of a program is the change that is shown, in an individual, group, family, or community as a result of the **educational response** used in a program.
  - Initial outcomes describes an increase in knowledge, developing an opinion or skill, or aspiring to adopt a practice.
  - Intermediate outcomes are adopting a practice or making a behavior change.
  - Impact, or long-term outcomes, is a broader change bringing social, economic, environmental, and/or civic benefits to the community.

Outcome and impact data are **used for communicating successes to administrators and stakeholders.**

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

*There are times when our programs and research efforts have not matured to the point where we can effectively measure what people are doing differently, the economic impact, or how communities have changed. In those instances, it is still important to communicate the significance of the project, our efforts and expected or anticipated impact of our work. Success stories can be edited throughout the reporting year; allowing individuals to make changes as needed.*

Outcomes and impacts can be measured in many ways; however, all need to go beyond a description of activities, effort and participation. The story needs to convey the result of our research and educational efforts. These results should include the realized or potential economic, social or environmental outcomes, much of which does not occur immediately.

Once the content is gathered for a success story, it's vital to think of the best way to portray this content. The writing needs to be concise or to the point, informative, while staying focused. Stories should be written to talk to a lay audience, who may not be familiar with Extension; **jargon, acronyms and references internal to the organization and college should be avoided.**

*Since we use these stories as a resource for multiple requests, **don't restrict Success Stories only to traditional Extension appointments and activities.** Any accomplishments and efforts that are noteworthy may be included.*

### **Submitting/Entering Success Stories**

Extension Success Stories are to be entered in the KERS Reporting System. The steps are as follows:

1. Once you enter the KERS homepage, look at the menu in blue on the left of the screen, and then click on **My Activity**.
2. **Success Stories** will be in that menu, please click on it once. *If you go to the "Extension Reports" section and click on "Success Stories", you will not be able to enter information; you can only view what has already been submitted.*
3. Choose **New Success Story** – *it will be a button on the right side of the screen*
4. Complete the below information – *The Plan of Work box will NOT be shown if you are a Specialist. That is for Agents only. All boxes shown in your profile are required.* 

New Success Story

Title:

Major Program:

Plan of Work:

Outcome Type:

Success Story: 

Snap Ed Related:

## **Sample Success Stories submitted by Extension Specialists**

Each of the five discussion areas listed on page one will be denoted in each success story below by text color. Each area will be highlighted as shown here:

1. Situation
2. Partner (if applicable)
3. Educational response
4. Participants/target audience
5. Outcome/impact

### **Beef Cattle Educational Programs**

The US Agriculture Statistics report states that beef cattle accounts for 58% of the agriculture income for XXXX County Farmers. The Extension Agent led a discussion with the local Cattleman's Association concerning programming and prioritizing topics.

Monthly educational programs related to Beef Cattle Production were planned by the Extension Agent and conducted by agents and specialists. Programs included: Fall Calving, Stockpiling Fescue, NRCS Programs, Vehicle Enforcement, Private Pesticide Certification, UK Extension Vet/Animal health, Kentucky Beef Network, FSA Programs, Direct Marketing of Beef to Consumers and Herd Bull Selection

During the year, 50 beef producers attended one or more of the programs. A written survey was conducted at the end of the series. Because of the program, 64% of participants made one or more changes to their beef cattle operation including cattle waters, minerals, controlled calving season, weaning techniques, pasture rotation, pasture fertilization, and vaccination program.

Participants described their appreciation for the programs and made suggestions for future programs. They are interested in learning more about migrant worker requirements, meat processing, farm safety, animal health, and basic nutrition and mineral. They were also interested in traveling beef cattle operations or research farms.

### **Families Reading Every Day**

With family lifestyles getting busier and children watching more television and being involved with playing video games, parents find it difficult to have a meaningful relationship with their children. Studies show that children who are read to for at least 20 minutes a day are more likely to do better in school and not have as many discipline problems. By reading to their children, families become more involved and interested in what is going on in the child's life.

Families Reading Every Day (FRED) is a program designed to encourage families to read to the children in their lives. This program was implemented by the XXXX County Family and Consumer Science Extension Advisory Council, XXXX School Center Library, XXX School Family Resource Center and XXXX Early Head Start.

Fifteen families, with one or more children under the age of eight, reported reading books every day to their child or children for one month. During the first two weeks, they were to read at least

15 minutes daily with their child. Then the last two weeks they were to increase the time to 30 minutes daily.

The 15 families that completed the program read a total of 10,147 minutes as a whole (169 hours). The family reading the most minutes had a total of 1832 minutes (30 hours). After the program ended, each family completed an exit survey, which showed that 90% of the families said that FRED improved the quality of the time they spent with their child and improved relationships between parents and children. Ninety percent of the families stated that this program improved their child's vocabulary and ability to count. One parent stated, "because of FRED my relationship with my boys has improved and their relationship with each other has improved." One hundred percent of the families said they would recommend this program to other parents.

#### **4-H Country Ham Project Exposes Youth to Livestock Field**

Creating the next generation of ag-aware citizens has been stressed as a priority for XXXX County 4-H. According to 20XX data, approximately 14% of XXXX County citizens are employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industries.

In response, XXXX County 4-H conducts the 4-H Country Ham Project annually. This project offers an opportunity for youth to engage in livestock education through the course of a program year as they dry cure two country hams. The hams are cured in January and hung in ham socks in the county-provided barn at the Extension Office. They are cleaned twice and taken to the Kentucky State Fair in August where they are judged. In addition, participating youth are tasked with writing a speech on one of two prompted topics, dependent on their age. While their hams are judged, at the Kentucky State Fair, the youth give their speeches to volunteer judges and their speech scores are factored into an overall total score.

After the state fair, XXXX County 4-H youth participants are given the opportunity to sell their ham at a community investment sale which requires youth to engage community members and businesses as potential buyers at the sale. Participants during the 20XX project reported several noticeable outcomes, as 95% of the respondents remarked that they had learned something new, 82% reported that because of their participation in the project they feel more comfortable giving a speech in front of others and 77% reported that they learned something new about the field of agriculture. By exposing these youth, many of whom are unable to participate in other traditional livestock programs, XXXX County 4-H is helping to create a generation of agricultural aware citizens with connections to traditions of the past.

#### **Supporting Entrepreneurship**

XXXX County leadership continues to identify entrepreneurship and economic development as important areas for Cooperative Extension Service programming. The County Extension Agent is part of the XXXX County's Entrepreneurial Coaching Team and continues to support entrepreneurship. The coaches use materials developed by UK Extension specialist and agents to assist potential business owners. The entrepreneurial coaching team operates the XXXX County small business incubator program. The incubator program helps individuals start small businesses. The incubator program offers entrepreneurial coaching, assistance with the costs associated with getting the business open, rent assistance, and additional support for the business owner. Businesses can be in the incubator program for one year.

This year two businesses have opened. XXXX who have started their own farm and direct to consumer business. XXXX is an upscale consignment store. Another business has nearly completed the coaching process, but not yet opened.

The county entrepreneurial coaching team has now coached 28 businesses. Seventy-five percent of those small businesses continue to operate and provide service to the community.