

American Agricultural Economics Association  
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# Evaluating Community/Rural Development Extension Programs

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ExpectMore.gov

EXPECT FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO PERFORM WELL, AND BETTER EVERY YEAR.



The Federal Government is working to ensure its **programs perform well**. Here we provide you information about where we're **successful** and where we **fall short**, and in both situations, what we're doing to **improve our performance** next year.

Show me the programs that are **PERFORMING**

Show me the programs that are **NOT PERFORMING**

Show me the programs by **NAME** or **KEYWORD**

Show me the programs by **TOPIC**

Show me the programs by **AGENCY**

## Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

- Strategic plans
  - Mission
  - Strategic goals
  - Implementation plan
- Annual performance plan
- Annual performance report

Programs categorized as **NOT PERFORMING** have ratings of **Ineffective** or **Results Not Demonstrated**.

**Ineffective**: have been unable to achieve results due to a lack of clarity regarding purpose or goals, poor management, or some other significant weakness. Programs are not using your tax dollars effectively.

**Results Not Demonstrated**: program has not been able to develop acceptable performance goals or collect data to determine whether it is performing.

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME	RATING
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Commodity Purchase Services (Section 32)</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Conservation Security Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Dairy Price Support Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Emergency Conservation Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Forest Service: Watershed</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Packers and Stockyards</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Rural Development Broadband Loan and Loan Guarantee Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Rural Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Senior and Woman, Infants, and Children Farmers' Market Programs</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)</u></a>	Results Not Demonstrated

**Effective**: set ambitious goals, achieve results, are well-managed and improve efficiency. This is the highest rating a program can achieve.

**Moderately Effective**: has set ambitious goals and is well-managed; likely need to improve efficiency or address other problems in the programs' design or management in order to achieve better results.

**Adequate**: needs to set more ambitious goals, achieve better results, improve accountability or strengthen its management practices.

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME	RATING
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Economic Research Service</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Grants for Economic Opportunities and Quality of Life for Rural America</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Grants for Nutrition and Health</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>On-going Pest and Disease Management Program</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Pest and Disease Exclusion</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Plant and Animal Health Monitoring Programs</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Rural Water and Wastewater Grants and Loans</u></a>	Effective
Department of Agriculture	<a href="#"><u>Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)</u></a>	Effective

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	
<b>PROGRAM</b> <a href="#">View Assessment Details</a>	<b>Farmland Protection Program</b> The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) protects farm and ranch lands from development by providing matching funds to state, local governments, and non-profit organizations to purchase conservation easements. Funds can also be used to purchase easements to protect historical resources.
<b>RATING</b> <a href="#">What This Rating Means</a>	<b>PERFORMING Adequate</b> <b>Overall, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers FRPP adequately.</b> The program prioritizes applications at the state level and selects the best projects for protecting important agricultural lands from development. <b>The program has developed improved long-term and annual performance measures that should better assess how well the program is delivering results.</b> For example, one new measure tracks the percent of farms with FRPP easements that remain in agriculture in the long term. This will assess how well the program is assisting local communities with maintaining an active agricultural economy. <b>The agency has not conducted independent and in-depth reviews of FRPP to assess its efficacy, particularly as compared with other agricultural land easement programs.</b>
<b>IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b> <a href="#">About Improvement Plans</a>	<b>We are taking the following actions to improve the performance of the program:</b> Performing more in-depth and independent evaluations to assess the efficacy of the program. Collecting and assessing data to track progress in improving program performance.

## Performance Impact on FY2006 Budget

	Increase of 10% or more	Increase of less than 10%	No change or a decrease	Termination of the program
Effective	30%	30%	38%	2%
Moderately Effective	17%	33%	48%	2%
Adequate	11%	29%	54%	6%
Ineffective	0%	5%	50%	45%
Results Not Demonstrated	11%	19%	56%	14%

Source: [http://www.john-mercier.com/omb\\_part](http://www.john-mercier.com/omb_part)

Hamilton, Verma and Burnett, <http://danr.ucop.edu/eee-aea/aeapaper.htm>

### Extension: diverse impact themes

- **technology transfer** – Provide information with the intent that a learner will adopt a particular practice that leads to improved productivity or quality of life. **Adoption of a particular behavior** or practice is the desired outcome.
- **education** - Participants come to understand how to make decisions regarding various courses of action. **Ability to make decisions** given appropriate information is desired outcome.
- **problem solving** - Application of knowledge to solve problems. Participants ability to use information and **make decisions** as they relate to the resolution of specific, short-term problems is the desired outcome.
- **development** - Build the **long-term** capacity of communities and individuals to act on issues they identify. Communities and individuals **gain knowledge and skills necessary to orchestrate the process of planned change**.

## Community/Rural Development

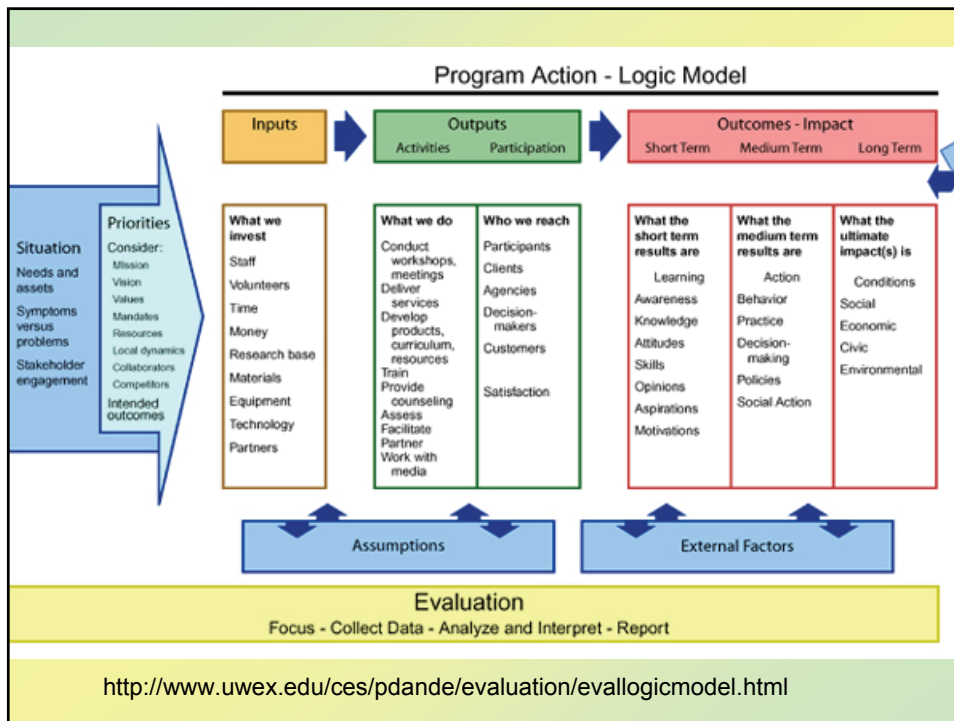
- **Development:** build the **long-term** capacity of communities and individuals to act on issues they identify.
- **Communities and individuals gain knowledge and skills necessary to orchestrate the process of planned change.**
- **This is arguably an intermediate “good” from which people produce final “goods.”**

## Types of evaluation

- Formative—how it can be improved
  - Internal use
- Summative—how good the service is
  - Internal use
  - External reporting
- Current emphasis on evaluation is coming from funders so the emphasis is on summative evaluation

# Burnett's Hierarchy

- Program implementation
  - Resources
  - Activities
  - Participation
- Program results
  - Reactions
  - Learning
  - Action
  - Impact



## **Extension websites for CD**

Success stories approach

- Situation
- Responses by Extension
- Actions and Outcomes—what the community did and/or received or accomplished
- Ones that I read do not get to impacts

## **NCR: Leadership Programs Evaluation**

- Increased diversity and inclusion in leadership structures
- Leadership roles/opportunities taken on: (volunteer and paid)



## **NCR: Community Planning Programs Evaluation**

- Number of plans developed
- Number of plans adopted
- Percent of plan/goals implemented
- Dollar value of the plan (meaning unclear)
- Percent of plan/goals attained, legally adopted

## **NCR: Economic Development Programs Evaluation**

- Number of jobs created and value
- Number of jobs retained and value
- Programs and activities initiated/completed and the dollar value attributed to these
- Efficiencies or dollars saved

## **Attribution issues**

- A complex of events is usually involved—how to attribute causation?
- Several partners may be involved and all claim the same thing
- Small changes do not show up in large data sets
- Self-selection bias--those who show up at an Extension program may be those who would have done something anyway

## **Data collection**

- Survey
- Interviews
- Observation
- Group techniques
- Case study
- Tests
- Photos-video
- Document review
- Testimonial
- Expert panel
- Simulated problem solving
- Journal log diary
- Unobtrusive measurement

## **Data Collection**

- Input or process evaluation use previous education research to make inferences about learning, actions, outcomes based on
  - Quality of Teaching—inference on quality of learning and future use of that learning
  - Pre-test and post-test—inference about future actions

## **Unobtrusive Data Collection**

- Contacts as a measure of willingness to pay, which is used in other research
- Quality measures
  - Asked back
  - Increased # of participants
  - Phone calls for more information
  - Asked to new events

# **Socio-Economic Benefit Assessment System (SEBAS)**

*An information system with which  
USDA Rural Development can  
objectively estimate its impacts  
on rural economies*

Tom Johnson at the University of Missouri has a contract to develop it.

## **SEBAS Process**

1. Collect data from clients when they apply for funds.
2. These data used to generate projected impacts of projects.
3. Each subsequent year clients will be asked to update original estimates
4. These actual data will be used to generate more accurate tallies of actual impacts.

## Outcomes and Impacts

- Private value
- Public value
  - Public finance framework and then provides an example of each
  - Argues that the way to gain support for public funding is to show public value
- The ExpectMore website does not seem to make this distinction at this time
- CD focus is creating public value that is difficult to measure
- Laura Kalambokidis, MN (JOE, April, 2004)

## Conundrums

- Community Development is by definition decision-making by groups for groups
  - Identifying if clientele were instrumental may be difficult
  - Will always be disagreement about whether outcomes and impacts are good or bad
- Bad decisions avoided are unknown
- Unknown population for statistical comparisons
  - When starting something new
  - When populations are voluntary

## **My concerns**

- The private value created by a program may be easier to document than the public value.
- Capacity building seems particularly difficult to evaluate in terms of impacts
- The evaluation tail may wag the programming dog—programs that are easier to evaluate will get funded

## **My concerns**

- Extension is an education program
- Impacts are long run
- Evaluation systems seem designed for the short run
- Evaluation requires resources but resources continue to erode
  - Resources to do evaluation
  - Resources for research on evaluation

