

A Suggested Format for Writing About Impact

The impact writing format shown below was used for nearly 15 years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's science and education impact reporting project, which highlighted land-grant university success stories from across the country. There is no single "right" format for sharing impact, but effective reports generally contain three main elements:

1) Issue -- who cares and why?

In one paragraph, explain the problem or issue you're trying to solve and its importance. Ask yourself:

- What prompted this work?
- How important is this issue to a certain region, the state or nation?
- Are people suffering from this problem? How?

The issue paragraph:

- ✓ Is the attention-getter that tells who should care and why.
- ✓ Is a brief problem/issues statement.
- ✓ Tells why this information is important and provides context.
- ✓ Briefly sets the stage, outlines the situation.
- ✓ May help frame the scope of the issue or problem you're addressing.
- ✓ May mention potential public payoffs.

2) What's been done?

In one or two paragraphs, describe what you did to solve a problem or address the issue. Provide brief details of the project that are **meaningful to nonscientists** to explain what you've done.

The "what's been done" section:

- ✓ Is a brief, general overview of activities and process so people know the context.
- ✓ You can list scope, number of years or people served, acres tested, etc., here.
- ✓ It provides only the "gist," not many details.

3) Impact

Here's where you quantify changes resulting from your work, if possible. In case of potential impact, here's where to use your estimates or anecdotes. Ask yourself: Did I solve a problem or make progress on a solution? What were the economic, environmental or social gains? Who benefited and how?

The impact paragraph:

- ✓ Is the heart of your report.
- ✓ Quantifies economic, environmental or social change.
- ✓ Relates to real people and real-world problems.
- ✓ Reinforces "so what" and "who cares."
- ✓ Reports scope of the outcome.
- ✓ May be a testimonial or anecdote.
- ✓ May include potential impact or outcome.

Optional for impact reports: Partners, Funding, Contacts

- List your name, address, phone and e-mail contact for further information.
- You may want to mention partners or major collaborators.
- For some reports, it's important to list funding sources.

What's been done?

The goal within K-State Research and Extension is to involve a representative cross-section of residents in all planning and outreach activities. There are, however, several specific programs that target under-served audiences for higher levels of involvement. These programs address needs of economically disadvantaged agricultural producers, youths, families, and communities and provide knowledge, skills, and practices where needs are great. Specific examples of work with under-served and under-represented groups:- Extension faculty and staff in counties surrounding Fort Riley are collaborating to develop strategies and marketing materials targeting military families. With an expectation of more than 30,000 people coming to the area, this is an opportunity to increase the reach of extension programs to nontraditional, underserved, and emerging audiences. It is essential they learn about basic military practices and procedures so that we might better serve and partner with this new audience.- Wyandotte County has seen a recent dramatic increase in Latino population going from 9% to 17% of the county's population in just five years. There is a Spanish-speaking population of around 30,000 residents that will benefit from the educational programs offered by establishing a Latino community outreach program through Wyandotte County Extension. A bilingual Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent hired in 2004 will continue to develop excellent collaborations with human service agencies and other organizations that are reaching out to this community. - Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Family Nutrition Program (FNP) target low income and ethnically diverse populations. EFNEP will add one agent position in Wyandotte County as a result of increased funding.

BETTER

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- agricultural producers,
- youths,
- families, and
- communities

K-State Research and Extension provides knowledge, skills, and practices where the needs are great.

Some specific examples of work with under-served and under-represented groups include:

- Extension faculty and staff in counties surrounding Fort Riley are collaborating to develop strategies and marketing materials targeting military families. With an expectation of more than 30,000 people coming to the area, this is an opportunity to increase the reach of extension programs to nontraditional, underserved, and emerging audiences. It is essential they learn about basic military practices and procedures so that we might better serve and partner with this new audience.
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