

* Writing workshop well attended, and though different than previous workshops, it provided food for thought and encouragement in story telling.

* Keith Robinson, Purdue, cuts to the chase, and he offered tips about jargon; wordiness; unquotable quotes; syntax; vagueness and misuse of words;

* Mary Wirth, Penn State, talked about university's response to a 19 percent budget cut, changes in Extension, and a successful shift in their communications and marketing plans in 1) defining Extension, and 2) demonstrating value and successes. We had some good discussion about accountability in changing times, annual reports, reports to legislators, what works, what doesn't, how times have changed, etc. I took notes, have samples provided and have requested additional samples.

* Catherine Dehdashti, Minn., presented a standing-room only session on empowered and empowering story telling, which is helpful in zeroing in on success stories. SHE was FABULOUS!

* Folks from Florida gave a session on consumer opinions about local foods, and that was interesting because how you define this depends on where you live.

* Linda Benedict organized a social media roundtable, with participants from four universities (including Elaine) about how each is using social media. It was interesting and helpful to those of us interested in growing in this area.

* Emily Pitts, from Georgia, offered some tips on e-newsletters, with a lot of attention to programs, liability, and mailing lists.

* Computers in their Pockets: How Mobile Devices are Changing Extension also was excellent, as Jeanne Gleason (New Mexico State) shared how they purchased iPads for Extension staff and trained them. FYI, they encouraged staff to begin using them for personal and professional use (thinking they would become more adept in using them) and, also, provided -- and required -- six hours of training before they would issue the iPad. Has improved efficiency and overall productivity, and boosted morale.

* Retirement session (mine) earned good reviews, and there has been a suggestion that it become an annual part of the conference. I had panelists from six universities and the USDA.

* Writing sig mostly housekeeping stuff.

* Improving Food Safety Information Delivery with Underserved Audiences, very helpful; I picked up samples, and today contacted Nozella Brown (Wyandotte County) who is writing a grant proposal on this topic and have sent all materials this afternoon. She was pleased.

* Attended Deb's sessions on districts, and she was able to get Skype to work for Pat, despite internet problems in the conference center.

* Attended iPad starter session and iPad productivity sessions; both were helpful. Presenter from Purdue.

* Also picked up a nice Smart Yard handout from Alabama; they call it Smart Yards, while ours is Healthy Yards. Is colorful, eye catching.

Thought conference excellent; sorry not to be able to share more in discussion. N