

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD: RESULTS OF NCWSS EXTENSION SURVEY.
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Time, personnel, and budget constraints within University systems and industry has significantly affected Weed Science Extension programs in the North Central Region. To successfully meet the needs of our clientele we must continue to evolve. The objectives of this symposium were to develop a baseline of information on current NCWSS Extension programs, to discuss methods and ideas for positioning ourselves for the future, and to stimulate ideas and partnerships based on current innovative and successful programs. Input collected at the 2002 NCWSS Extension business meeting was used to develop an on-line survey to determine a baseline of information regarding current extension programs. This survey was sent to all Extension Weed Scientists in the North Central Region. The following is a compilation of information collected from the 13 respondents. Based on survey results respondents believe that our strength lays in developing and delivering unbiased, research based information to our clientele. We also feel that that we must continue to develop educational materials on basic weed science principles as well as technical information regarding herbicide resistance management and genetically modified organisms. Conversely, respondents agreed that we need to increase our efforts in extension education and research on cropping systems management and on integrating disciplines (agronomy, plant pathology, entomology, plant breeding and biotechnology). We also need to increase or efforts in meeting the needs of our part-time and organic clientele. Respondents collectively indicated that the most critical issues facing our discipline were a loss of faculty positions, a general lack of funding, and a perceived de-emphasis on extension programming and applied research by University administration. In the future, respondents indicated that we must continue to develop hands-on in-field training, but we must also work towards developing web-based programs that are centrally located (either one-website within a University or possibly one regionalized website) and that are easy to access by our clientele in the field. Though times are challenging it is apparent that Weed Science Extension Specialists are working to evolve their extension and research programs to meet the changing needs of their clientele.