

Home Economics Clientele Use of Recommended Practices for Improving the Well-being Of Home and Family

Corinne M. Rowe, Extension Rural Sociologist

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Overview of Surveys

The Idaho Cooperative Extension Service, an integral part of the University of Idaho College of Agriculture, serves Idaho through faculty located in 42 county offices and departmental specialists housed in district offices and on the UI campus. Through the Cooperative Extension Service, the College of Agriculture seeks to generate and facilitate adoption of knowledge and to develop leadership in agriculture, natural resources, home economics, adult and youth development and related areas for people located throughout the state of Idaho.

Extension also is the educational arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture funded by the federal government cooperatively with state land-grant institutions and county governments. The mission of the National Cooperative Extension System is to improve U.S. agriculture and strengthen American families and communities by providing informal research-based educational programs.

Extension finds it increasingly important to identify and document program impacts and opportunities for improvement. To respond to this increased need for accountability and evaluation, the state and federal Extension partners in 1982 jointly established a nationwide planning, reporting and evaluation system. This system involves the identification of high priority areas requiring major efforts over an extended time period, the establishment of long-range goals and objectives and the evaluation of program accomplishments and impacts. It begins with analysis of baseline data, i.e., information on the current status of a practice, behavior or condition among the people involved. Where such information is nonexistent or inadequate, an indepth assessment of practices and/or needs is required.

Survey Scope and Method

During late fall 1986, the Idaho Cooperative Extension Service conducted statewide surveys of agricultural producers and Extension Home Economics program users. These surveys of Extension clientele were conducted to provide information for program planning and evaluation by Extension county and specialist faculty and advisory groups.

The surveys provide descriptive profiles of clientele and establish current levels of use by clientele of Extension recommended practices. This provides base data that will facilitate the planning of Extension programs — a process that includes working with clientele groups to determine needs, establishing long-term goals and specific objectives, specifying ways to implement programs for maximum effectiveness and evaluating these for impact.

The study results may or may not be appropriate for a given locality. Supplemental information should be obtained from other sources or collected and analyzed at the local level for program target audiences.

This report is for the Home Economics program area. Results of the agricultural producers' study will be found in a separate CES bulletin.

Baseline Data For Extension Home Economics Program Planning, 1988-1991

Extension Home Economics programs serve a large and diverse clientele, many more than those who attend meetings or regularly visit or call the Extension office. Most counties, however, maintain a newsletter mailing list to whom upcoming meeting announcements and other items of interest are routinely sent. To assess the current use of various practices related to management of the household and family, 1,250 names were drawn from Home Economics newsletter mailing lists maintained by county Extension offices.

Results from the survey are presented for the total state sample and, to facilitate program planning needs, by the four Extension districts of northern, southwestern, central and eastern Idaho. Figures given throughout the text represent findings for the full state sample. Tables showing data for the total sample and separately by district are located in the appendix. Differ-

ences among districts, where found, can generally be attributed to geographic location in relation to a metropolitan area (the southwestern area) or cultural differences related to historical development (northern Idaho) or group affiliation (the cultural influence of the Mormon church in south-central and southeastern Idaho).

Characteristics of the Study Respondents

Of the 1,250 surveys mailed, 880 were returned. When non-deliverable questionnaires are deleted, this is a 73 percent return rate. Of the 880 surveys returned, 854 contained complete information and were entered for tabulation. The 26 responses not included in the tabulation failed to identify county location.

Fig. 1 compares characteristics of the survey respondents to state population characteristics according to the

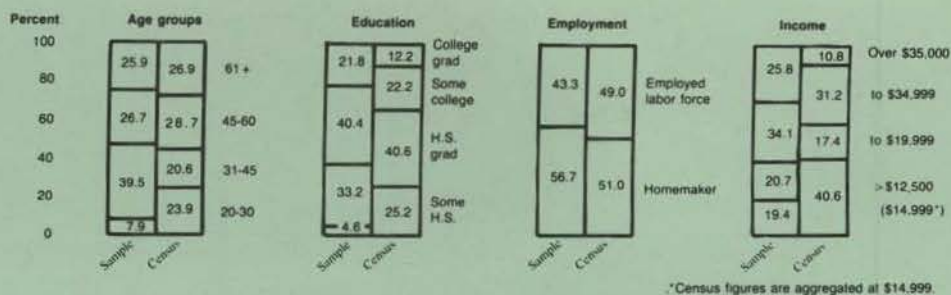


Fig. 1. Characteristics of study respondents. Comparison with 1980 census of population, Idaho.

1980 Census. Respondents were intuitively believed to be generally representative of Extension Home Economics program clientele in age, income and educational level. Extension clientele are not necessarily representative of the Idaho population, however.

Survey respondents generally were older and better educated and reflected higher income levels than the overall state population. Under-represented groups include persons under age 30 and those with limited education and income. Somewhat over-represented is the 31 to 45 age group. This group, however, is made up of people in the life cycle stage dominated by family and career formation and is a primary target audience for Extension programs.

Fulltime homemakers only slightly outnumbered women working outside the home except in the southwestern area (consisting of the metropolitan area of Boise and nearby counties) where percentages are nearly equal. Increasing numbers of women in the labor force create the need for greater sharing of household tasks. Male responses are generally absent from the survey, reflecting their general absence from Extension Home Economics newsletter mailing lists.

Survey Findings

Three interrelated areas of critical concern to families that have been identified nationwide are (1) improving nutrition and wellness, (2) extending financial resources and (3) balancing work and family. Survey questions dealing with these three critical issues were developed with the assistance of specialists and county home economists. They reflect practices recommended by professionals as contributing to social and economic well-being.

Respondents were asked to mark the frequency of use of various daily household and family management practices on a continuum from "Never" or "Seldom" to "Usually" or "Always." "Does Not Apply" was also available as an option. Only the highest response category is included in this report and then only for respondents to whom the question applied.

The number of individuals responding to each question is given in the appendix tables. In most instances, this includes all study respondents for whom complete information was available. When questions did not apply to certain individuals, responses were necessarily restricted.

Because household practices tend to change throughout the life cycle as family size, children's ages and income change, responses were compared for those over and under 45 years of age. Where differences are large, they are noted. Tables for the age-group comparison are not presented in this bulletin, however.

Improving Nutrition and Wellness

Obesity, coronary heart disease and hypertension are major concerns in Idaho and in the nation. New information surfaces constantly on diet-related diseases such as osteoporosis with conflicting advice given in magazine and newspaper articles. People seek accurate and reliable information on how to reduce diet-related risk of disease, yet seek quick and easy answers to health, fitness and weight control. Food safety measures and use of proper preservation and preparation of food can have a direct bearing on physical health.

A fairly limited listing of indicators of nutrition, diet and health practices were included in the survey. Equally important and frequently the focus of educational programs are such additional practices as maintaining desirable weight, eating adequate starch and fiber and reducing refined sugars, fats and salt in the diet.

Fig. 2. Nutrition, diet and health practices (items usually included in adult practices).

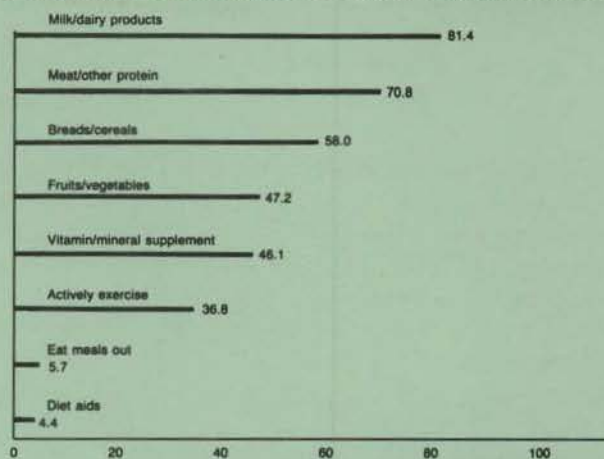


Fig. 2 gives responses related to a diet ensuring the recommended number of adult servings within the four food groups, the use of vitamin/mineral supplements, diet aids and regular exercise. The highest percentage of respondents indicated adults in the household drank the recommended amount of milk or ate an equivalent amount of dairy products and ate two servings of meat

or protein. Fewer respondents indicated adults ate the proper amount of breads or cereals and consumed four servings of fruits and/or vegetables daily. Nearly half of the respondents indicated use of vitamin/mineral supplements and relatively few said diet aids were usually taken. Just slightly over one-third of the respondents indicated adults usually engage in active exercise.

Responses of those under age 45 generally did not differ from the total sample. The younger group did less well than the full sample, however, on two key indicators: only 36 percent of the younger group reported usually eating four servings of fruits and vegetables and only 30 percent usually exercised regularly (data not shown).

Fig. 3. Food safety practices (always practiced).

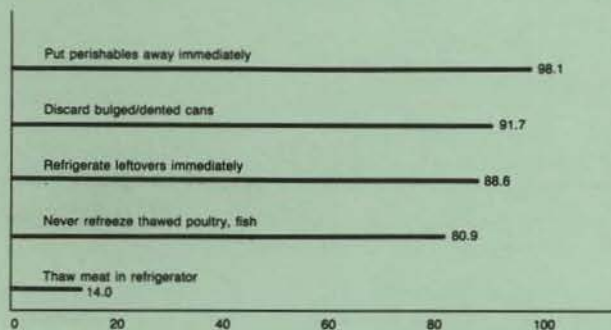


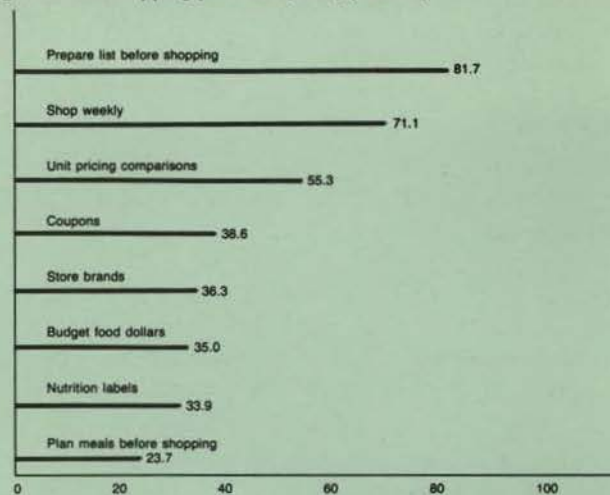
Fig. 3 shows Extension Home Economics clientele generally do follow food safety practices that can affect health. The practice of using the refrigerator for thawing meat was followed by only 14 percent of the total sample. An even lower percentage of those under 45 followed this practice. All other indicators showed 81 percent or more Extension clientele follow appropriate food safety recommendations.

Extending Family Resources

More and more people find it necessary to manage resources carefully today. Households with only one earner and those that rely on income from trade-sensitive industries such as agriculture, forestry and mining are especially vulnerable to financial problems. Real income has declined for middle class families. Education in self-sufficiency and wise management is the focus of extending family resources. Food shopping, preparation and preservation, clothing selection, construction and maintenance and household equipment and furnishings selection and maintenance all relate to extending family resources.

Three of the eight food shopping practices listed (shopping from a prepared list, weekly shopping trips and using unit pricing for comparisons) were usually followed by over half of the survey respondents. The remaining five practices were usually followed by only about one-third (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Food shopping practices (usually practiced).

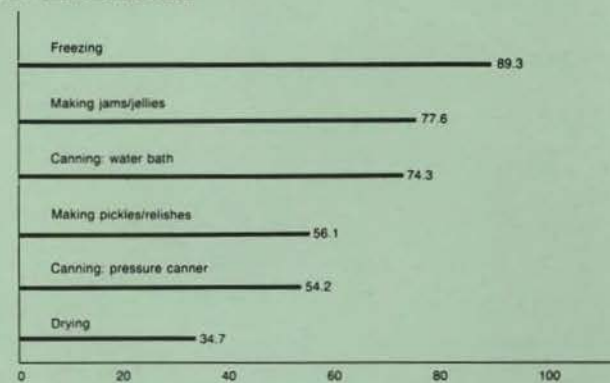


Comparing age groups, a greater number of women under 45 budgeted their food dollars (42 percent) and bought store brands rather than name brand products (41 percent). Fewer younger women used coupons to extend the food dollar (36 percent).

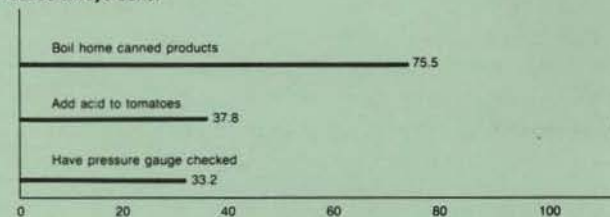
Another way the food dollar can be extended, particularly for those who grow their own fruits and vegetables, is through food preservation. Fig. 5 gives the percentages of respondents whose households did some food preserving during the past 12 months.

Fig. 5. Food preservation methods and practices.

Preservation method used.



Practice always done.



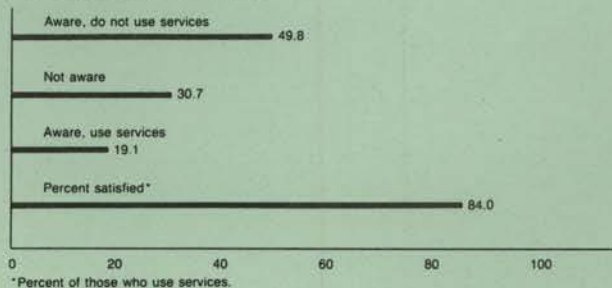
Three-fourths or more of those households that preserve food indicated they do so by freezing, making jams and jellies and canning by the water bath method. Over half make pickles and relishes and use a pressure canner. One-third preserve foods using the drying method. Most study respondents for whom the question applied boil all home canned products 10 to 15

minutes before serving but only about one-third follow recommended procedures of adding citric acid or lemon juice to tomatoes before canning. Of those who use a gauge, one in three have their pressure canner gauges checked annually (Fig. 5).

In many areas of Idaho, specially trained Extension volunteers (Master Food Preservers) provide canning and preserving information to the public, thereby extending the resources of the Extension office. About 31 percent of the study respondents indicated no awareness of this service while nearly 20 percent said they had used the service (Fig. 6). Differences among districts reflect the fact that master volunteers are not currently located in all areas of the state.

Of those who used the master food preserver, 84 percent were very satisfied with the help received. Somewhat fewer (70 percent) of the younger-age respondents indicated such satisfaction. Respondents' comments about the service included, "Gave up to date information," "Took time to look up answers," "Friendly service, always willing to help, good ideas," "Well done by capable people" and "Information was patiently and adequately delivered." Some respondents who were themselves Master Food Preservers praised the experience indicating the training classes were excellent and the back-up support was there when needed. Few respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the information provided through the volunteers.

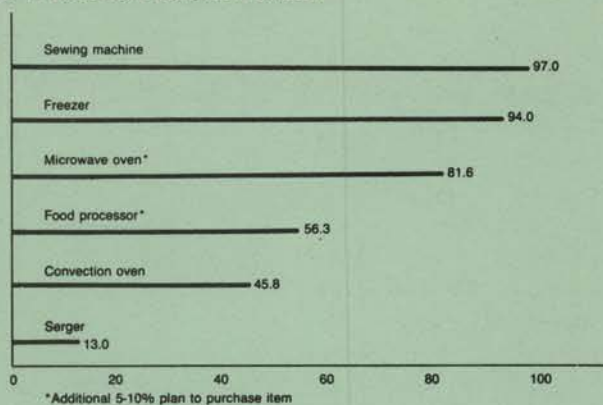
Fig. 6. Master food preservers.



Recent introductions of time saving household equipment have included convection ovens, microwave ovens and food processors for food preparation, and the serger for clothing construction. Study respondents were asked if they presently own or plan to purchase any of these items this year (Fig. 7). Microwave ovens, food processors and convection ovens were owned by 46 to 82 percent of the study group. Sergers, still an unknown item in many locations, were owned by only 11 percent. Two pieces of equipment that have been available over a longer period of time, the sewing machine and freezer, were owned by over 94 percent of the study group.

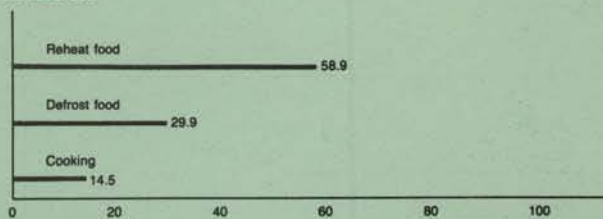
Three questions on the survey were designed to determine uses being made of the microwave oven. Relatively few of the study respondents indicated always using this labor-saving device for cooking, while 30 percent said they always used it for defrosting purposes

Fig. 7. Household equipment owned.



*Additional 5-10% plan to purchase item

Microwave use



and nearly 60 percent always for reheating food (Fig. 7). The questions were not mutually exclusive.

Recommended practices associated with shopping for clothing appear to be regularly used (Fig. 8). Six practices with high use include how well a garment fits, attractiveness of the garment, quality of construction, fabric, ease of care and upkeep of the garment, cost of cleaning and upkeep, price and garment durability. Responses indicated less emphasis is placed on three practices that could extend the clothing dollar: coordination with other clothes in the wardrobe, fiber content and the availability of alteration services.

Fig. 8. Clothing shopping practices.

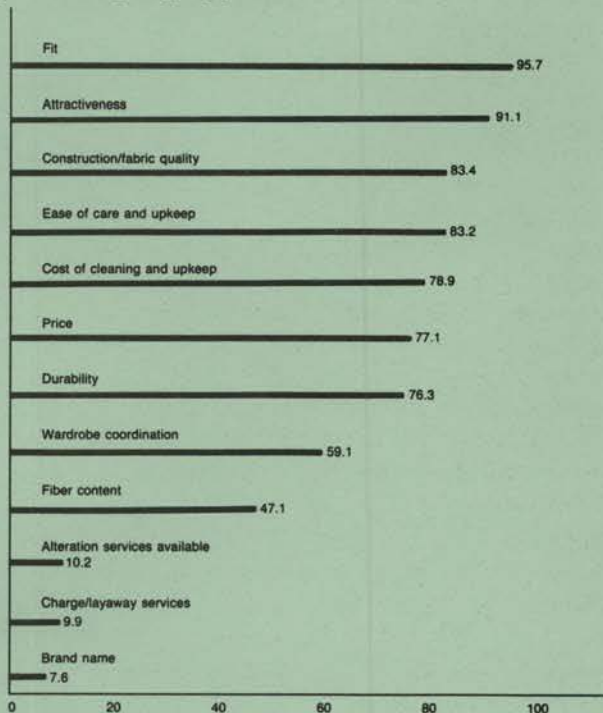
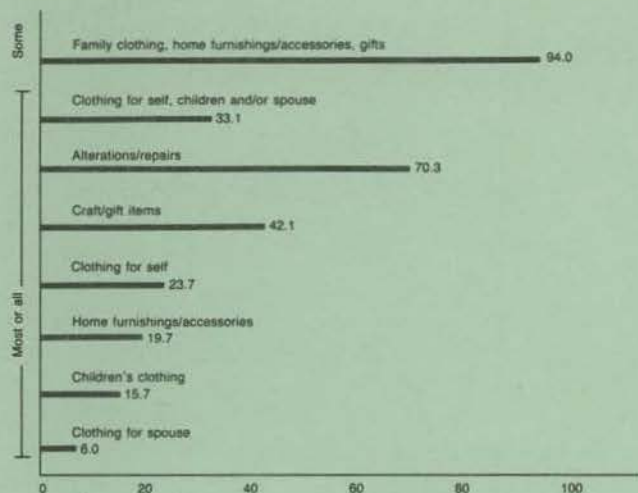
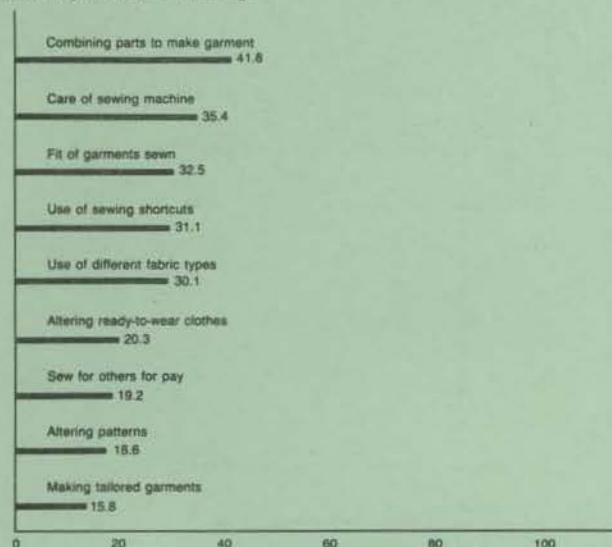


Fig. 9. Home Sewers.
Products sewn.



Percent very satisfied with sewing.



A very high percentage of these Extension Home Economics program clientele use home sewing to extend family resources (Fig. 9). Most indicated they sewed at least some family clothing items, home furnishings and accessories and gifts. About one-third made most or all clothing for themselves, their children or their spouses. The greatest use of sewing skills appeared to be for making alterations and repairs with craft or gift items next in frequency.

Relatively few, however, indicated they are pleased with their sewing skills and knowledge. Less than half of the sewers were "very satisfied" in any of the skills areas mentioned, and only about 1 in 5 indicated they were very satisfied with the results of altering ready-to-wear clothes, altering patterns, sewing for others for pay and making tailored garments.

Balancing Work and Family

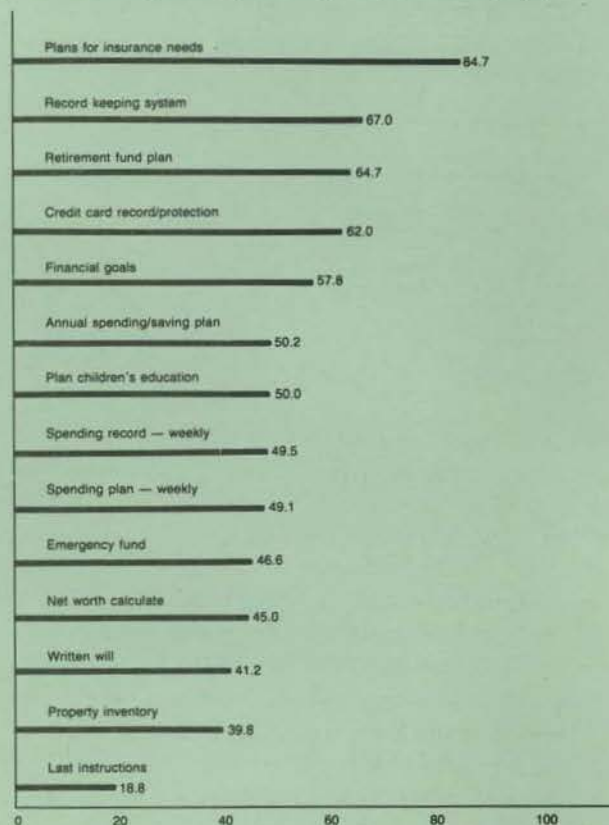
People who work and have families often fail to achieve a balance and comfort with personal and work life. Money problems often increase rather than decrease

in two-earner families. Established farm families as well as beginning small business entrepreneurs can fail unless they balance the family's financial needs with the capital needs and cash flow from the enterprise. Conflict arises because of poor family communications and lack of planning and organization. Many of these concerns relate equally to single-income families.

Areas of concern related to balancing work and family include financial planning and management practices and family communications. Fig. 10 deals with financial planning, giving the percent of study respondents who have both prepared and usually keep various items. Of these, planning for insurance needs was the most widely used practice with 85 percent of the study respondents indicating insurance needs were both prepared and usually kept up to date. About two-thirds regularly used a record-keeping system and had a plan for funding retirement. Nearly two-thirds maintained credit card records or protection and 58 percent had established financial goals. About half of the respondents indicated they had an annual spending/savings plan, planned for children's education and kept a monthly or weekly spending record and spending plan. Less than half maintained an emergency living fund, calculated net worth, had a written will or kept a personal property inventory. Fewer than 20 percent had any written last instructions.

Comparing the younger-age respondents with those 45 and older identified a possible need to reach young audiences. The percentage of respondents under age 45 indicating these financial planning items were prepared

Fig. 10. Financial planning practices (Items prepared/usually kept).

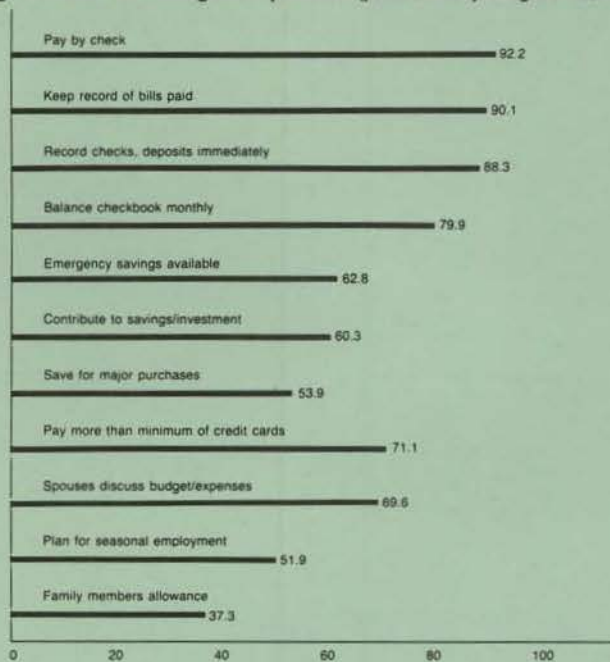


and usually kept was consistently 5 to 7 percentage points lower than that of the total study group (data not shown).

Fig. 11 lists responses to questions about usual financial management practices followed by these families. Once again, responses by the under-45 age group were consistently lower by several percentage points than those for the total study group (data not shown).

Study respondents indicated they usually make payments by check, keep a record of bills paid, record checks and deposits immediately, balance checkbook monthly, pay more than the minimum due on credit cards and discuss budget and expenses with their spouse. Items rating somewhat lower included having an emergency savings available (63 percent of the full sample; 50 percent of the younger age group), contributing regularly to a saving or investment program, saving for major purchases, vacations, education, etc., and planning for seasonal unemployment if seasonally employed. Providing each family member an individual spending allowance was practiced by just 37 percent of the total sample.

Fig. 11. Financial management practices (percent usually doing the following).



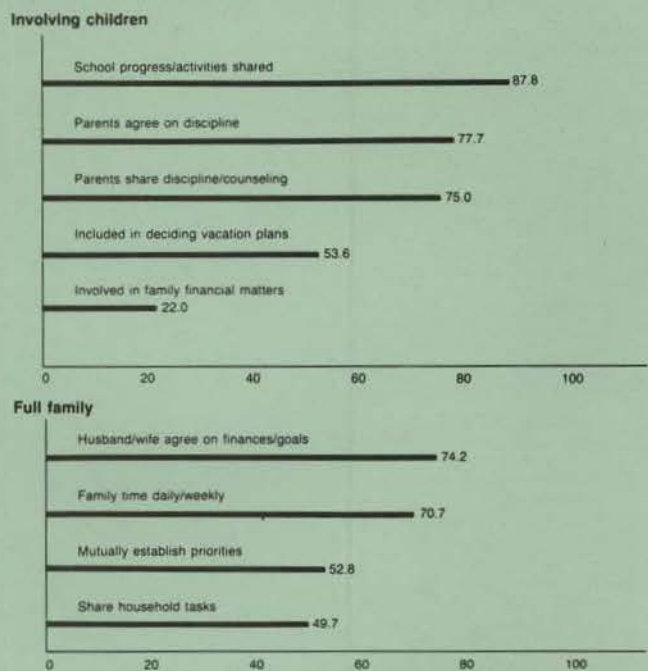
Family communication often relates directly to family strength and security. Especially in times of financial trouble, open communication and positive reinforcement among family members can make a difference in the family's well-being and coping abilities. Questions asked of study respondents were simply indicators of family communication patterns. They are not meant to indicate correct or preferable practices.

Generally speaking, study respondents indicated their families maintain open and positive communication patterns. Over 3 of 4 indicated positive relations between parents and children (sharing school progress and activities, parents agreeing on best ways to discipline, sharing discipline and counselling). Over half indicat-

ed children were included in deciding vacation plans (this would, of course, vary with ages of children). Relatively few involved children in family financial matters, however. This also varied with ages of children. Results are shown in Fig. 12.

Items dealing with adult communication and sharing patterns in the family show sizable variation. Agreement between husband and wife on family finances and goals was indicated as true most of the time for 74 percent of the full sample and for 72 percent of the younger age group. Mutual establishment of family priorities, however, was true for 53 percent of the full sample but for just 46 percent of those under age 45. Family time together was common for about 71 percent of both the full study sample and the younger age group. Sharing of household tasks, true for 50 percent overall, ranged from 45 to 59 percent across regions and somewhat among age groups.

Fig. 12 Family communication (action occurs most of the time).



Future Programming Directions

Dealing directly with potential areas for program planning, respondents were asked to indicate on a generalized list of topics how important educational programs are for solving problems and satisfying people's needs. Topics in Fig. 13 are ranked according to the percent of responses indicating educational programs in the topic are "very important." Programs dealing with relationships between nutrition, diet, health and well-being in general and programs for the elderly and lower income families ranked in order first through third. A related topic, human nutrition needs over the life span, ranked seventh.

Topics related to balancing work and family tended to be given the middle rankings with 53 to 70 percent indicating they are very important. These topics included family relationships, balancing work, home and family, relationships in blended or single parent families,

time management and preparation for entering or re-entering the work force.

Except for family financial planning and dealing with financial conditions and related stress, topics dealing with extending family resources tended to fall into the lower rankings, identified by less than 50 percent of the study respondents as being very important. Consistently fewer respondents under 45 than over rated educational programs on these topics as being very important.

Leadership development to address public policy issues, the item least mentioned as very important, does not fit within any of the three identified focus areas.

Fig. 13. Importance of educational programs (rank order listing).

1. Relationships between food, nutrition, diet and health
2. Nutrition and well-being of elderly
3. Nutrition and well-being of lower-income families
4. Family financial planning, budgeting and management
5. Family relationships and activities
6. Ways to deal with financial conditions and related stress
7. Human nutrition requirements over the life span
8. Balancing work, home and family
9. Relationships in blended or single parent families
10. Ways to manage time effectively
11. Preparing to enter/re-enter the work force
12. Selection/maintenance of housing/home furnishings
13. Selection/care of clothing and household textiles
14. Cottage industries — home-based businesses
15. Leadership development to address public policy issues

Methods of Program Delivery

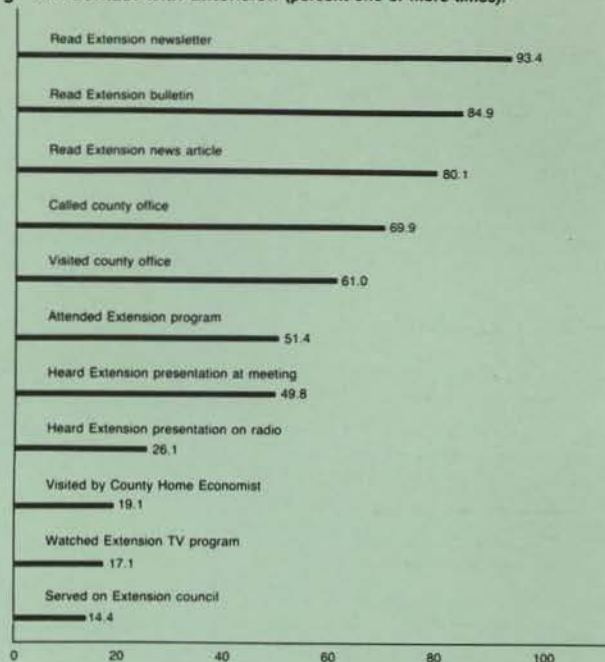
Methods of program delivery vary from group meetings to personal visits in the office or home to newsletters, newspaper articles, bulletins and radio reports. Respondents were asked to indicate the ways in which they had had contact with Extension during the past 12 months. Topping the list of contacts was the Extension newsletter, read by 93 percent of the respondents, followed by Extension bulletins and Extension articles in the local newspaper. Even with the advent of electronic media (TV, radio, VHS systems, etc.), reading, particularly reading short articles or reports of interest, continued to be the number one source of Extension information for the greatest number of study respondents (Fig. 14).

Other ways of gaining Extension information came through direct contact with the Extension office either by phone or in person, attendance at an Extension program or hearing an Extension presentation at a meeting or conference.

Least likely methods of contact were an Extension radio program, county home economist visit, Extension TV program and by service on an Extension committee.

Looked at another way, study respondents tended to vary in the amount of contact they had with Extension, from no contact at all during the past 12 months (4 percent overall) to a low level of between 1 and 19 contacts (47 percent) to the high level of 20 to 60 contacts (48 percent).

Fig. 14. Contact with Extension (percent one or more times).

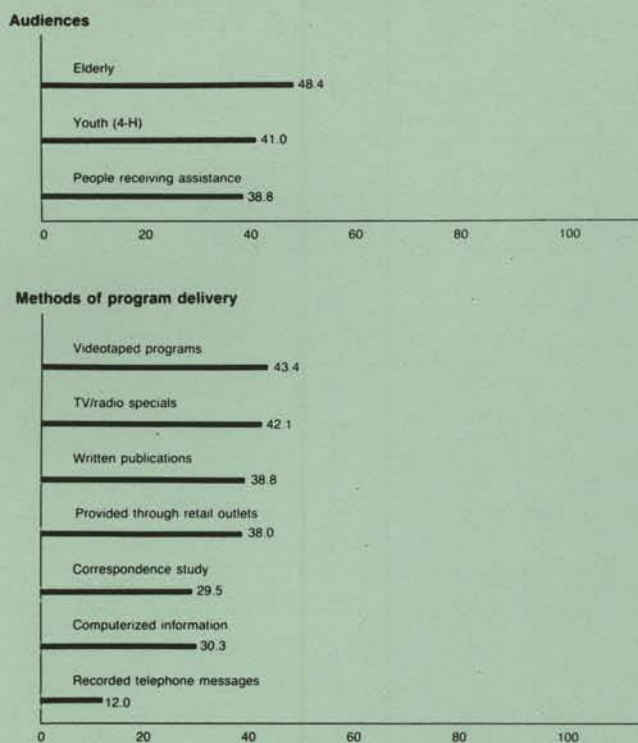


Respondents were also asked what changes they thought should be considered during the next 5 years to keep Extension information and programs timely and useful. Possible responses to a listing of potential changes included "Increase," "Decrease," "No Change" and "Not Sure." Fewer than 6 percent indicated items that should be decreased (primarily fees for items such as workshop attendance, bulletins, videotapes or computer disks) although most respondents indicated no change or not sure (data not shown). For simplicity, only the percentages indicating "Increase" are given in Fig. 15.

In terms of targeting audiences, nearly half of the study respondents indicated consideration should be given to increasing programs for the elderly, 41 percent said youth programs and 39 percent thought programs for people receiving assistance should be increased. (For the under-45 age group, these figures are 40 percent for elderly programs, 43 percent for youth programs and 32 percent for programs directed to people receiving assistance.)

Increased use of videotaped programs was suggested by 43 percent (47 percent of those under age 45), increasing TV and radio specials by 42 percent and increased numbers of written publications 39 percent. Providing information through retail outlets garnered 38 percent of the total sample, but 44 percent of the younger age group thought an increase here might be appropriate. In the total group, 30 percent thought both problem-focused correspondence study and computer programs could be increased, while 36 percent of the younger age group supported an increase in computer programs.

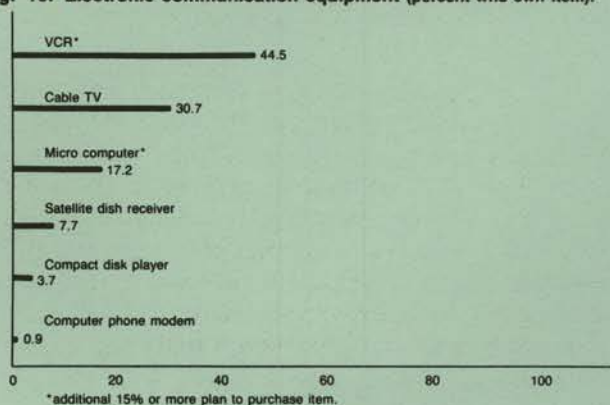
Fig. 15. Changes in program delivery (percent indicating item might be increased).



Fees for workshops, the use of recorded telephone messages, fees for videotapes, computer disks and bulletins all garnered 12 percent or less of the positive responses.

In this changing world the increasingly limited resources available to conduct Extension programs necessitate searching for improved methods of delivering educational information and programs. To find out how many residents own various electronic equipment in different regions of Idaho, we asked respondents to indicate whether they currently own or plan to purchase within the next 2 years six different pieces of electronic equipment (Fig. 16).

Fig. 16. Electronic communication equipment (percent who own item).



VCR's are now owned by nearly half of the study group and another 15 percent plan to purchase a unit. Cable TV is found in 31 percent of respondents' homes and satellite dish receivers in 8 percent. About 17 percent of the study respondents now own and 16 percent plan to purchase a personal computer, but less than 1 percent have a computer telephone connection.

To determine whether the telecommunications revolution might be more a phenomenon of the younger persons, responses were compared by age groups. Large differences were found only for VCR's and personal computers: 56 percent of the respondents under 45 owned a VCR and 19 percent planned to purchase a unit; 24 percent owned a personal computer and 25 percent planned to purchase one within 2 years.

Increases in ownership of these two types of electronic equipment combined with the interest indicated in receiving more programs via videotape and computer, particularly as given by those under age 45, supports the supposition on the part of many that movement into the information age is upon us.

Consumer Sources of Information

Finally, the study sought to determine where homemakers and others seek information related to household and family management (see Appendix Table 17). The product label served as first source typically for laundry methods, fabric care, stain removal, food preparation and clothing construction. Books and magazines were the greatest initial source of information on diet and nutrition, family finance and canning and food preservation. Extension was best known as an initial source of information related to home gardening/pest management and clothing construction. A professional agency is the first source for information on family estate planning, consumer credit and energy conservation. Retail stores or service centers provide information on appliance selection, wardrobe selection and home furnishings and equipment. For information on mending, repair and alterations, respondents indicated they are most likely to ask a friend or neighbor first. The public library was given as the least likely source of information related to household and family management.

Extension's share of "first source" choices ranged from a high of 33 percent of the study respondents (home gardening/pest management information) to a low of less than 3 percent (family estate planning).

APPENDIX

Use of Recommended Practices for Improving The Well-being of Home and Family

Table 1. Background characteristics of study respondents (figures in percent).

	Full sample	Northern	South-western	South-central	South-eastern	Idaho census
	n = (854)	(187)	(176)	(255)	(236)	
Age group						
20 to 30	7.9	7.5	6.3	7.1	9.4	26.9
31 to 45	39.5	38.0	39.7	39.3	38.7	28.7
46 to 60	26.7	23.0	28.7	23.7	31.1	20.6
61 or over	25.9	31.6	25.3	29.9	20.9	23.9
Sex						
Male	0.9	3.2	0.0	0.8	0.0	49.7
Female	99.1	96.8	100.0	99.2	100.0	50.3
Educational background						
Some high school	4.6	5.9	5.7	4.1	3.9	25.2
High school graduate	33.2	33.7	29.7	34.7	33.2	40.6
Some college	40.4	39.0	41.1	36.9	44.0	22.0
College graduate	21.8	21.4	23.4	24.3	19.0	12.2
Employment						
In labor force	43.3	38.8	50.3	41.1	44.0	49.0
Homemaker	56.7	61.2	49.7	58.9	56.0	51.0
Family household income*						
Less than \$12,500**	19.4	18.2	21.0	20.0	18.6	40.6
to \$19,999	20.7	19.3	19.9	24.7	18.2	17.4
to \$34,999	34.1	37.4	32.4	31.8	35.2	31.2
Over \$35,000	25.8	25.1	26.7	23.5	28.0	10.8

*Idaho median family income was \$17,492 in 1980.

**Census figures are for income less than \$14,999.

Table 2. Nutrition, diet and health practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating adults in family USUALLY do the following:						
Drink milk or eat dairy products	(832)	81.4	80.1	73.4	80.2	88.2
Eat 2 servings daily of meat or other protein	(837)	70.8	73.1	68.0	72.1	68.8
Eat 4 servings daily of breads or cereals	(834)	58.0	53.5	51.8	61.6	61.6
Eat 4 servings daily of fruits/vegetables	(839)	47.2	46.0	48.5	50.9	44.9
Take a vitamin/mineral supplement	(827)	46.1	53.5	48.8	40.0	44.3
Actively exercise 15-30 minutes 3 times/week	(834)	36.8	40.5	41.5	35.2	32.6
Eat meals away from home	(836)	5.7	6.5	4.1	6.8	5.2
Use diet aids	(791)	4.4	2.2	4.4	6.3	4.5

Table 3. Food safety practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating ALWAYS using these practices:						
Put perishable foods away immediately after shopping	(842)	98.1	97.8	99.4	96.3	98.7
Discard food from bulged or severely dented can	(831)	91.7	92.2	89.2	92.3	94.0
Refrigerate leftover foods immediately	(850)	88.6	91.4	88.4	87.2	87.7
Never refreeze poultry, fish after thawed completely	(831)	80.9	83.1	81.0	81.0	79.6
Thaw meat in refrigerator	(847)	14.0	14.5	16.3	15.9	11.5

Table 4. Food shopping practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating the practice is USUALLY followed:						
Prepare a list before shopping for groceries	(838)	81.7	85.0	85.5	77.0	81.5
Buy groceries once a week or less often	(833)	71.1	67.4	71.6	71.3	72.3
Use unit pricing to compare prices	(819)	55.3	56.1	59.8	56.4	50.6
Use coupons to extend food dollar	(830)	38.6	37.6	51.5	39.5	32.0
Buy store brand vs. name brand products	(833)	36.3	31.9	35.1	37.9	39.2
Budget/plan the amount of money to spend for food	(798)	35.0	28.0	33.3	31.9	45.0
Use nutrition labels to make food choices	(828)	33.9	34.4	43.8	31.9	28.4
Plan meals before shopping for groceries	(822)	23.7	27.9	22.6	21.0	23.1

Table 5. Food preservation practices.

Method	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating household PRESERVED food during the past 12 months:						
Freezing	(831)	89.3	84.7	91.2	91.4	90.4
Making jams/jellies	(821)	77.6	75.1	79.2	73.4	82.3
Canning: water bath	(806)	74.3	64.4	78.6	74.5	79.3
Making pickles/relishes	(799)	56.1	51.4	58.5	54.6	60.9
Canning: pressure canner	(773)	54.2	45.7	44.4	56.7	65.6
Drying	(753)	34.7	31.5	43.5	34.8	30.6
Percent indicating ALWAYS using these practices:						
Boil home canned products 10-15 minutes before serving	(702)	75.5	81.4	78.0	73.8	72.2
Add citric acid/lemon juice to tomatoes before canning	(632)	37.8	39.3	47.9	33.1	34.1
Have pressure canner gauge checked annually	(539)	33.2	27.9	32.6	34.0	37.3

Table 6. Awareness and use of Master Extension Volunteers.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating AWARENESS and USE of Master Volunteers:						
Not aware	(811)	30.7	24.2	30.7	22.4	40.4
Aware, have used volunteer services	(811)	19.1	18.5	17.8	21.0	20.6
Percent indicating being very satisfied with services	(181)	84.0	84.6	83.3	80.4	88.9

Table 7. Household equipment.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating equipment is presently owned:						
Sewing machine	(843)	97.0	93.5	97.7	98.4	97.8
Freezer	(838)	94.0	92.3	93.1	95.2	94.8
Microwave oven	(820)	81.6*	74.4*	81.3*	83.7*	85.2*
Food processor	(788)	56.3*	53.4*	54.8*	59.0	57.0*
Convection oven	(766)	45.8	33.1	36.2	49.1	59.0
Serger	(692)	13.0	5.3	16.3	11.9	17.8*
Percent indicating ALWAYS using the microwave:						
To reheat food	(783)	58.9	53.0	61.1	62.4	61.3
To defrost food	(780)	29.9	26.5	27.6	28.6	35.9
For cooking	(778)	14.5	14.6	18.5	12.4	14.1

*Indicates an additional 5-10% plan to purchase this item this year.

Table 8. Clothing shopping practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating items considered VERY IMPORTANT in making clothing purchase decisions:						
Fit	(843)	95.7	95.1	90.8	96.4	99.1
Attractiveness	(840)	91.1	92.3	86.1	91.0	93.6
Quality of construction/fabric	(841)	83.4	79.5	87.2	82.8	84.7
Ease of care and upkeep	(843)	83.2	79.5	80.6	84.2	86.8
Cost of cleaning/upkeep	(837)	78.9	76.1	76.9	80.5	81.0
Price	(842)	77.1	73.0	79.9	76.9	78.7
Durability	(842)	76.3	72.8	74.3	73.4	81.6
Coordination with other clothes in wardrobe	(842)	59.1	53.0	58.6	61.7	61.4
Fiber content	(837)	47.1	44.0	52.3	47.5	47.4
Alteration services available	(827)	10.2	6.0	4.8	13.6	14.9
Credit card or layaway sales available	(837)	9.9	9.8	9.8	10.0	10.4
Brand name	(837)	7.6	5.4	7.5	8.6	9.5

Table 9. Home sewers.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent who sew at least some family clothing items, home furnishings/accessories, gifts	(845)	94.0	90.3	95.4	92.4	96.6
Percent who sew most or all clothing for self, children and/or spouse	(845)	33.1	29.2	39.9	28.6	35.9
Percent who sew most or all:						
Alterations and repairs	(827)	70.3	71.8	72.7	66.3	69.0
Craft/gift items	(833)	42.1	35.8	42.7	47.0	45.6
Clothing for self	(835)	23.7	22.9	31.8	16.8	24.4
Home furnishings and accessories	(837)	19.1	14.6	20.5	17.6	20.3
Children's clothing	(804)	15.7	7.3	15.2	13.5	23.0
Clothing for spouse	(814)	6.0	3.9	6.1	5.2	7.4
Percent indicating being VERY SATISFIED with sewing.						
Combining fabric, pattern, notions and interfacing into one garment	(680)	41.8	44.1	38.9	44.4	38.0
Care/maintenance of machine	(686)	35.4	37.0	33.8	36.5	34.0
Fit of clothes you sew	(679)	32.5	30.3	30.8	34.8	31.9
Use of sewing short cuts	(669)	31.1	31.7	34.8	27.0	31.2
Use of different types of fabrics	(667)	30.1	35.0	28.3	28.8	28.2
Altering ready to wear clothes	(655)	20.3	20.3	20.8	21.1	19.1
Sew for others for pay	(224)	19.2	18.9	18.4	17.6	16.7
Altering patterns	(598)	18.6	15.0	19.1	15.4	13.2
Making tailored garments	(537)	15.8	15.0	19.1	15.4	13.2

Table 10. Financial planning practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating the following are PREPARED AND USUALLY KEPT:						
Plan for insurance needs	(774)	84.9	84.6	89.0	77.8	89.6
Record keeping system	(775)	67.1	68.1	70.1	67.0	65.1
Plan for funding retirement	(719)	64.7	64.2	69.8	60.8	66.0
Credit card records/protection	(616)	62.0	63.2	71.4	64.8	53.8
Financial goals	(750)	57.8	53.8	58.3	55.1	66.4
Annual spending/saving plan	(743)	50.2	41.9	54.0	45.5	56.9
Plan for children's education	(506)	50.0	39.3	54.3	47.7	53.8
Monthly/weekly spending record	(749)	49.5	48.1	49.0	49.5	51.9
Monthly/weekly spending plan	(747)	49.1	44.7	52.0	44.4	55.2
Emergency living fund	(734)	46.6	49.4	54.7	37.9	46.2
Net worth calculation	(740)	45.0	46.3	50.0	44.1	40.0
Written will	(808)	41.2	46.3	47.9	42.8	33.8
Personal property inventory	(767)	39.8	45.2	43.9	37.6	33.8
Written last instructions	(782)	18.8	21.3	23.5	21.2	13.0

Table 11. Financial management practices.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating following statements are USUALLY accurate for household:						
Records						
Make payments by check	(833)	92.2	91.8	91.3	91.0	94.3
Keep record of bills paid	(839)	90.1	92.5	90.1	89.5	89.7
Record checks, withdrawals, deposits immediately	(829)	88.3	90.8	91.2	87.1	87.4
Balance checkbook monthly	(819)	79.9	80.1	82.5	77.1	80.3
Savings/investments						
Emergency savings are available	(819)	62.8	65.2	70.1	55.6	63.8
Contribute regularly to a savings/investment program	(760)	60.3	59.2	66.2	52.6	64.5
Save for major purchases, vacations, education, etc.	(774)	53.9	50.0	63.1	45.6	56.3
Planning/sharing						
Pay more than minimum due on credit cards	(636)	71.1	81.1	75.0	70.4	61.4
Spouses discuss budget/expenses	(757)	69.6	67.3	73.0	68.0	71.4
Plan for seasonal unemployment if seasonally employed	(208)	51.9	57.5	66.2	52.6	64.5
Family members have individual spending allowance	(616)	37.3	33.1	38.9	33.5	40.4

Table 12. Family communication.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating action occurs MOST OF THE TIME:						
Involving children						
Children's school progress and activities are shared	(507)	87.8	85.9	93.7	86.0	85.5
Parents agree on children's discipline	(546)	77.7	80.4	78.4	76.6	77.7
Parents share discipline/counselling of children	(543)	75.0	72.5	73.5	71.9	79.3
Children are included in deciding vacation plans	(507)	53.6	54.7	57.7	50.0	54.4
Children are involved in family financial matters	(514)	22.0	15.4	15.6	23.1	28.7
Full family						
Husband and wife agree on family finances and goals	(728)	74.2	77.6	75.9	69.3	75.6
Daily or weekly activities include family time	(669)	70.7	71.1	74.4	65.5	71.8
Family members mutually establish priorities	(680)	52.8	57.9	54.8	47.2	53.6
Household tasks are shared by all family members	(715)	49.7	44.8	46.0	45.1	59.1

Table 13. Importance of educational programs.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating educational programs are VERY IMPORTANT for solving problems and satisfying people's needs (listed by rank order):						
1. Relationships between food, nutrition, diet and health	(841)	79.0	76.5	84.3	75.0	81.1
2. Nutrition and well-being of elderly	(836)	74.3	77.3	74.9	70.4	75.9
3. Nutrition and well-being of lower income families	(837)	70.6	70.2	72.7	67.0	74.0
4. Family financial planning, budgeting and management	(831)	70.0	64.1	68.8	66.4	79.4
5. Family relationships and activities	(826)	69.5	66.3	66.3	65.3	80.3
6. Ways to deal with financial conditions/related stress	(828)	69.3	61.0	68.3	68.8	77.5
7. Human nutrition requirements over the life span	(834)	68.6	68.9	69.6	67.4	68.3
8. Balancing work, home and family	(829)	67.8	64.1	66.1	68.9	73.0
9. Relationships in blended or single parent families	(815)	62.5	60.9	64.8	62.1	65.2
10. Ways to manage time effectively	(828)	60.4	55.0	56.5	59.5	69.4
11. Preparing for entering/re-entering the work force	(822)	52.9	51.7	56.3	50.5	57.3
12. Selection/maintenance of housing/home furnishings	(832)	40.0	29.8	38.0	39.0	51.3
13. Selection/care of clothing and household textiles	(832)	38.0	30.9	38.2	40.8	41.5
14. Cottage industries — starting your own business	(822)	35.2	34.4	38.6	36.3	35.6
15. Leadership development to address public policy issues	(823)	29.9	29.6	29.8	30.5	32.9

Table 14. Contact with Extension.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating doing the following ONE OR MORE TIMES during the past 12 months:						
Read Extension newsletter	(839)	93.4	96.1	95.9	94.0	93.3
Read Extension bulletin	(817)	84.9	82.1	89.6	88.2	83.7
Read Extension news article	(838)	80.1	80.4	85.7	82.9	75.7
Called county office	(831)	69.9	66.5	76.6	69.8	68.3
Visited county office	(826)	61.0	61.3	61.8	61.6	57.1
Attended Extension program	(815)	51.4	55.2	54.9	50.7	45.9
Heard Extension presentation at meeting or conference	(817)	49.8	50.8	47.5	52.3	50.9
Heard Extension radio program	(812)	26.1	27.1	16.1	33.0	24.6
Visited by County Home Economist	(805)	19.1	17.4	17.0	19.5	19.3
Watched Extension TV program	(809)	17.1	16.1	10.1	20.2	21.0
On Extension council	(817)	14.4	13.3	20.9	16.6	9.3
	n =	(825)	(187)	(176)	(226)	(236)
Extensiveness of contact with Extension. Percent indicating level of contact was NONE, LOW or HIGH:						
No contact		4.4	2.1	4.0	5.1	5.9
Low contact		47.4	49.7	45.5	44.7	50.8
High contact		47.9	48.1	50.6	50.2	43.2

Table 15. Changes in Extension program delivery.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Possible responses were "Increase," "Decrease," "No Change" and "Not Sure." Only INCREASE percentages are given in table:						
Audiences						
Elderly	(786)	48.4	49.7	50.6	48.8	48.1
Youth (4-H)	(788)	41.0	43.3	51.3	33.7	38.4
People receiving assistance	(776)	38.8	39.3	44.4	38.2	38.4
Methods of program delivery						
Videotaped programs	(774)	43.4	37.1	46.8	42.6	48.3
TV and/or radio specials	(771)	42.1	37.3	43.7	44.1	44.5
Written publications	(795)	38.8	36.8	48.1	36.8	37.2
Provide information through retail outlets	(756)	38.0	37.6	42.3	37.9	35.0
Problem focused correspondence study	(758)	29.5	28.2	36.0	27.1	29.1
Computerized information	(755)	30.3	26.4	33.8	30.6	31.2
Recorded telephone messages	(753)	12.0	8.0	21.2	9.3	12.1

Table 16. Electronic communication equipment.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating item is currently owned:						
Video cassette record (VCR)	(836)	44.5*	42.1	38.0*	43.6*	51.9*
Cable TV	(825)	30.7	37.0	19.4	33.5	33.0
Personal or microcomputer	(824)	17.2*	17.2	20.7*	14.2*	16.7*
Satellite dish receiver	(819)	7.7	8.9	6.0	7.3	6.6
Compact disc player	(816)	3.7	3.4	3.0	3.7	4.8
Computer-phone connection	(815)	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.9	0.4

*Indicates over 15% plan to purchase within 2 years.

Table 17. Sources of information.

	n	Total	N	SW	SC	SE
Percent indicating seeking information first from source given (only the top 3 to 5 sources are listed in table):						
Food preparation	(837)					
Product label		42.3	35.8	43.7	41.4	45.8
Books magazines		29.5	41.3	31.1	27.9	20.3
Extension		10.9	8.9	9.6	10.7	15.0
Canning/preserving	(802)					
Books magazines		39.0	49.1	41.5	31.4	33.2
Extension		32.0	26.0	35.2	33.8	35.4
Product label		12.1	11.6	10.7	15.7	11.2
Special dietary concerns	(728)					
Books magazines		37.9	43.8	40.9	36.5	29.4
Other agency		23.4	16.7	28.2	19.9	29.9
Extension		14.2	13.0	13.4	16.0	15.7
Diet and nutrition	(765)					
Books magazines		44.8	51.2	51.0	41.5	36.7
Extension		16.0	13.9	13.2	20.5	16.9
Other agency		15.3	9.6	17.9	15.4	18.8
Home garden/pest management	(821)					
Extension		33.4	27.8	37.6	34.1	34.8
Books magazines		23.2	27.8	18.2	21.8	21.0
Product label		13.0	11.9	12.7	14.7	12.5
Home/family records/budgets	(639)					
Books magazines		40.8	48.9	42.4	38.8	36.9
Other agency		32.9	35.3	26.4	37.1	30.1
Extension		7.8	6.0	7.2	7.6	10.8
Family estate planning/wills	(703)					
Other agency		75.0	77.7	74.3	78.7	70.6
Books magazines		13.5	15.3	15.7	9.8	13.9
Library		3.5	3.2	2.1	5.2	3.2
Friend		2.9	1.9	2.1	1.1	5.9
Extension		2.3	1.3	2.1	3.4	2.7
Consumer credit concerns	(602)					
Other agency		40.7	33.8	46.2	40.5	39.4
Books magazines		29.3	34.6	27.4	31.0	25.5
Extension		10.3	6.9	8.5	13.3	12.7
Clothing construction/fit	(740)					
Extension		22.4	23.5	23.8	23.3	22.3
Product label		22.0	16.8	25.8	22.3	22.3
Friend		18.8	19.5	17.9	18.7	20.4
Wardrobe selection/purchase	(712)					
Retail store		44.7	45.5	39.6	45.0	45.1
Books magazines		17.3	15.9	22.3	18.5	13.8
Product label		13.5	13.1	15.8	12.2	14.4
Friend		10.2	9.7	11.5	10.1	10.8
Extension		7.6	8.3	5.0	7.4	9.7
Laundry methods	(785)					
Product label		66.7	67.9	64.9	66.3	65.1
Extension		9.9	8.9	11.7	9.0	11.5
Books magazines		9.5	11.3	11.7	8.0	8.7
Fabric care/stain removal	(822)					
Product label		52.1	55.7	46.3	52.6	51.1
Extension		18.8	11.5	22.6	19.1	23.1
Books magazines		13.1	16.1	13.4	11.5	11.4
Mending/repair/alterations	(705)					
Friend		29.0	25.9	29.9	28.4	31.5
Books magazines		27.5	32.7	31.3	24.0	23.2
Extension		17.0	17.0	17.2	18.6	17.2
Home furnishings/equipment	(761)					
Retail store		44.4	40.8	45.8	48.7	43.1
Books magazines		18.8	26.1	18.7	16.6	14.2
Product label		15.2	12.1	16.1	14.5	18.0
Extension		6.3	8.9	4.5	7.8	5.2
Household appliance selection/maintenance	(737)					
Retail store		44.7	39.9	45.2	49.5	41.9
Product label		18.6	17.2	15.9	18.8	22.1
Books magazines		14.1	21.5	15.3	12.9	9.2
Other agency		6.5	3.7	8.3	5.0	8.8
Extension		5.7	8.0	3.8	6.9	5.1
Household energy conservation/saving	(721)					
Books magazines		26.9	33.1	27.0	25.5	20.2
Other agency		26.2	27.4	27.0	24.5	27.6
Extension		15.1	13.4	11.5	18.6	16.7

Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to provide information for program planning and evaluation by Extension county and specialist faculty and advisory groups. Data collected through a survey of Extension Home Economics clientele identified on newsletter mailing lists can provide a beginning point for further local data collection and discussion. Advisory groups will need to examine these findings in light of what is known about conditions and needs in the local community.

As the planning process advances, two important considerations should be kept in mind. The first is that Extension Home Economics programs must clearly delineate and address both the social and economic concerns of the specific audience to whom educational programs are targeted. If evidence shows that clientele have reached an acceptable level of adoption related to specific practices, the time may be ripe to focus on new concerns or to target new audiences.

The second consideration is that the goals and objectives of planned programs must be made specific and measurable. Only by clearly identifying program goals and designing evaluation tools that can measure progress toward and accomplishment of these goals will Extension meet the challenge for increased accountability. Potential focuses of Extension programming include diet- and nutrition-related practices that make a difference to the health and wellness of family members, decision-making practices or habits related to managing family financial resources and knowledge or attitude-based practices that affect one's ability to balance family, home, work and leisure. For struggling rural communities, leadership development for addressing public policy issues may also be important.

Working together, advisory groups and Extension home economists can provide an active force for change and the betterment of family life within their communities.

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