

York Extension Focuses On Team Work

JOYCE BUYP

York Co. Correspondent

YORK (York Co.) — York County no longer has a county agent.

Instead, York County has moved to the concept of a team of county agriculture extension agents, each with specialized

expertise and leadership skills to serve diverse agriculture and community needs.

And, the York county agents' team recently got a new coach.

A "sounding board" or a facilitator for the staff is the self-described role of Roxanne Price, who on January 2 became county

extension director for the York Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. The position is a fairly new one for women in Pennsylvania's extension service; and Roxanne is both York County's first female and youngest extension director to date.

"Extension director is an administrative position, working with personnel, with the physical facilities, working closely with our administrative assistant on budget issues, and overseeing all extension programming," said Roxanne. Public relations and representing the extension service at various community programs is also an important part of the director's task. In addition, she coordinates York County's 4-H program.

An 18-year veteran of extension work, Roxanne joined the York office in 1973, beginning as a 4-H assistant. A home economics education graduate of Mansfield College, she had been active in the 4-H program through her teen years. In preparation for her director role, Roxanne recently completed graduate studies at Penn State's Capitol Campus, specializing in training and development.



Jennie Hess, dairy agent, works with 4-H'ers and farmers on industry issues ranging from production to paperwork.



York County Extension director Roxanne Price sees her role as a sounding board for the staff of 10 agricultural, family living and 4-H agents and assistants.

"It's very applicable to extension work and dealing with adult education," Roxanne says of her graduate work major. "We want to make extension training meet people's needs."

According to the director, the federal government has in recent years seen the need to broaden the

audience of extension outreach into areas such as family living and finance. If extension programs are to continue to operate with some levels of federal funding, they are mandated to reach more people.

But, a major challenge to Roxanne - and to extension in general - is the budget crunch faced by all levels of government.

"There's a strong support for extension but we must be accountable for what we do," she recognizes. "Our Pennsylvania goal is to reach every citizen. In the last decade, the number of people reached by extension has doubled, to 6 out of 10. We want to service clientele but must really prioritize and make sure every need is sincere."

"We don't want to cut activities here, but we will look at travel and involvement outside the county," Roxanne says of budget-meeting measures. "We have always stayed within our budget, and we do want to be team players because we do appreciate the support of the county. Our board of directors has always taken meeting the budget as a priority goal."

Because agriculture, from the farm through the processor to the retailer, continues to be a driving force in the economy of Pennsylvania, farm and rural needs remain a vital part of the state's extension

(Turn to Page B16)

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Jodi Myers is one of the newer members of the York staff, serving as the Extension 4-H assistant for the past year.