

## Extension Service Doing Lot Of 'Moving, Shaking'

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EXTON (Chester Co.) —  
Extension Service looks a lot different these days in Pennsylvania than it does in Massachusetts.

In 1994, the "bottom fell out" at the Massachusetts Cooperative Extension Service, according to Gary San Julian, regional director of Penn State Cooperative Extension Southeast Region, leaving two counties that have extension agents with a staff of only 11.

Meanwhile, Penn State has been retooling and redirecting the focus and reach of extension, moving from four regions in the state to eight, going in "new directions," according to Dr. Robert D. Steele, dean of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences.

Steele spoke to about 200 extension members and friends on Monday evening at the Chester County Cooperative Extension's annual meeting at J & J Caterers, Exton.

Steele, who has been dean of the college since July this year, received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wis.

At the banquet, Steele reviewed the history and evolving philosophy of the land grant tradition since it began in 1862, asking those who attended, "Is this the same system we want to carry us on into the next century?"

As issues evolve, the extension service must adapt accordingly. In the 1860s, Steele said, "educating the public was the key to facing issues and solving problems." The Hatch Act of 1887 allowed money to flow from Washington to Pennsylvania and other states to come up with ways to solve problems in agriculture. In 1914, legislation was passed to create a system where that knowledge could be passed readily to the general public.

However, fewer people than ever before remain active in farming. "Many feel (Extension) is no longer important . . . (that we) don't need the Extension Service anymore," said Steele.

However, Penn State believes that the rewards that Extension Service can provide will be "great into the next century."

Penn State believes in reaffirmation of the mission of the land grant commitment — "to bring the full resources of the university to bear on issues we'll be facing today," not just one segment of the college, such as the College of Ag or Cooperative Extension.

To do so, the original four regions have been carved into eight separate regions, with new directions and primary activities. Steele noted that the university has redirected itself to open windows to other resources of the university, including the school of medicine, engineering, and others.

Penn State at University Park now boasts an enrollment of 40,000 students. The focus in the next several years will be to "build additional enrollment on different campuses," noted Steele.

The beauty of the system continues, noted Steele, when he indicated that for the past 135 years, the land-grant system working with the university has educated people, educated students, and "trained tomorrow's leaders," he said. As the country's population grows, Penn State will work to address new issues.

"How are we going to do it?" he said. "We're going to generate new knowledge."

Steele said the college will allow people to "create and discover the technologies of tomorrow to handle these issues.

"There will be a lot of moving and shaking going on at University Park," he said. "We think we're moving in the right direction."

Several extension agents were honored at the banquet. Lou Middleton, extension agent, horticulture, was honored for her work with growers and master gardeners in the county. Toni M. Stuetz, extension agent/youth, was honored for her work on 125 different youth projects. Betty Lou Lusky, staff assistant, was



Penn State has been going in "new directions," according to Dr. Robert D. Steele, dean of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, far right, who spoke at the Chester County annual banquet. From left, Judy Ann Yeatman, new board member; Gary San Julian, regional director, Penn State southeast region; Gary Smith, president of the county extension board of directors; and Steele.



Several extension agents were honored at the banquet. From left, Anna Mae Hughes, EFNEP staff, was honored for her work in helping people make more nutritious choices for themselves and their children. Betty Lou Lusky, staff assistant, was honored with her work in programs in cooperative support. Lou Middleton, extension agent, horticulture, was honored for her work with growers and master gardeners in the county. Toni M. Stuetz, extension agent/youth, was honored for her work on 125 different youth projects.



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