

Evaluation/Impacts

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**Adapted from the Extension Risk
Management Education Grants
Program Team Presentation**



 EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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ERME Mission

Educating America's farmers and ranchers to manage the unique risks of producing food for the world's table

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Risk Management Overview

Extension Risk Management Education



Mandate and Mission

- Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000
 - Education for producers in the “full range of risk management activities”
- 2018 Farm Bill
 - Education for producers underserved by Federal crop insurance



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Return on Investment

Return on investment of Extension Risk Management Education grant dollars

- Risk management improvements that agricultural producers make because they participated in a funded project
 - i.e., the risk management outcomes that agricultural producers achieve are the measure of success of any project we fund.



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Return on Investment

- If the “Return on Investment” of grant dollars awarded are the risk management improvements that producers will make...
- Then measuring producer outcomes becomes an integral component of program planning and design, not an afterthought!



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Evaluation Methodology

Results/Outcomes

“Begin with the end in mind”*
or
“plan backward, implement forward”**



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* Stephen Covey (2004). The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
** Jon Newkirk, Former Director, WSU Western Center
Beverly Anderson Parsons, WKKF Cluster Evaluator



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



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Evaluation Best Practices

Keep the focus on:

- Producer outcomes
- Project Team's accountability to measuring/verifying producer outcomes
- Commitment to helping producers reach their risk management goals



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Evaluation Best Practices Payoffs

- Improve effectiveness of your project from start to finish in terms of outcomes for participants.
- Demonstrate participant achievement of risk management tools and strategies to the public
 - Final reports available on the ExtensionRME.org site and in the Ag Risk Education Library
- Improve accountability and provide incentives for awardees to deliver the risk management outcomes they proposed
- Move the bar higher for the effectiveness of risk management education



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Outcomes Defined...

Changes in Knowledge...

- When project participants learn or become aware of new fundamental or applied knowledge which could include:
 - Methods and techniques
 - Policy knowledge
 - Improved skills such as decision making, life skills or quality of life choices



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Outcomes Defined...

Change in Actions...

- When project participants act upon what they have learned such as:
 - Adopting methods and techniques
 - Changing a practice
 - Adoption of improved skills such as decision making, life skills or quality of life choices
 - Direct application of knowledge gained



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Outcomes Defined...

Change in Conditions...

- A socio/economic condition is positively changed because of participant actions
 - Information resources that improve community and/or farming infrastructure
 - Technology transfer
 - Improved farm income for target audience
 - Decrease in farm foreclosures



Focus on Outcomes

- Proposed outcomes should drive program planning
 - What do you need to do to for producers to be able to achieve outcomes?
 - Are the outcomes measurable?
- Outcomes, not outputs
 - Meetings and participants are steps and outputs - the measurable outcome should be focused on what producers achieve
 - Curriculum, tools, papers, etc. are outputs, not outcomes – the outcome is what producers achieve by using the outputs



Exercise – Writing Effective Outcomes

- Identify the risk situation(s) and the risk topic areas that you want your project to address
- Build a set of measurable risk management outcomes
 - Include both short and long term outcomes (those that will happen after the project – within 3 months to a year)
- Determine if the outcomes are a good fit for the target audience



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Comments on Your Target Audience

- Are outcomes suitable for audience being served?
 - Realistic goals that can be achieved within specified timeframe?
 - Linguistically and culturally appropriate?
 - Learning styles and environment?
- Reliability of Information
 - Science based content?
 - Appropriate for outcomes being proposed?
- How well do you know your target audience?
 - Relationship capital?





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Evaluation Methodology

Measuring Outcomes



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Measuring Outcomes

ERME projects need evaluation
focused on measuring or verifying
outcomes



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Measuring Outcomes

1. Identify measurable expected outcomes
2. Define criteria for success
3. Develop evaluation tools to measure outcomes
4. Evaluation distribution



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Measurable Outcomes

Proposed outcomes

- The “so what” question
- What difference will it (your program) make?
- Why invest time and money into delivering it?



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Defining Criteria for Success

Think about:

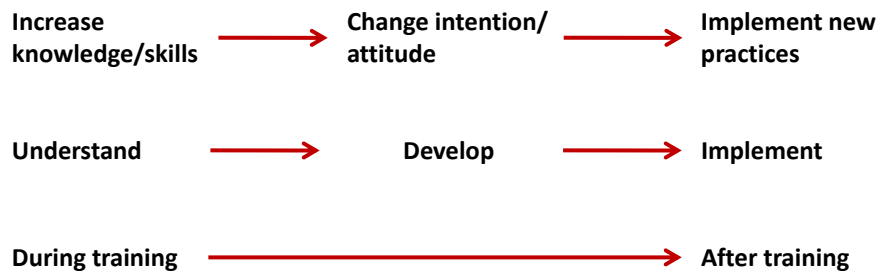
- What will you actually be measuring?
- What is the standard for success?
- How many participants need to achieve standard in order for your program to be considered successful?
- When should participants achieve results?



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Defining Criteria for Success



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

Type of measurement

- Direct – demonstrate learning through observable actions/outcomes
- Indirect – imply learning through change in perceptions or attitude

Time of measurement

- Before
- During
- After



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

Method of measurement

- Observation (draft business plan, permit; application)
- Peer assessment of product or skill
- Self-assessment of a product or skill
- Photos, screen capture, video (before/after)
- Questionnaire/survey
- Interview (individual, group)
- Submitted/approved document (application, permit, report)
- Test
- Testimonial
- Logs, records
- Other



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

When writing questions, think about:

- How the information gathered will be used
- The way you ask a question will influence how participants respond
- When you ask a question will influence how participants respond



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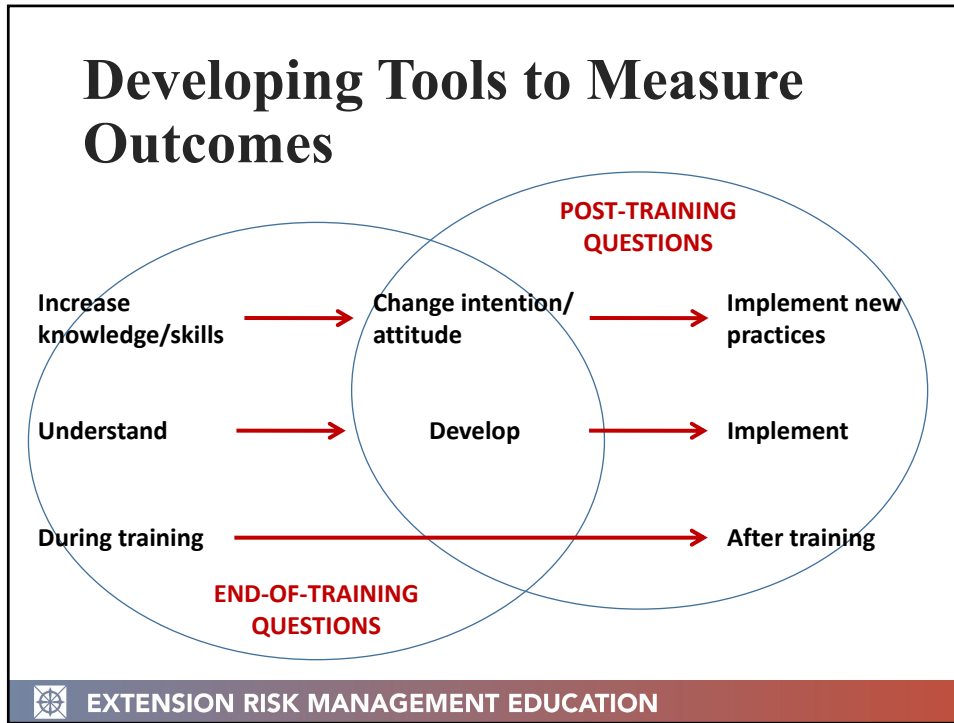
Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

- End-of-training questions
 - Knowledge gained/skills learned
 - Intentions to change behavior/change in attitudes
- Post-training questions
 - Actual implementation of new practices/changes in behavior
 - Lasting knowledge gains



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

End-of-Training Question Development

Likert Scale Questions

Intentions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

<i>In the next 3 months,</i> I will implement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
Practice A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

End-of-Training Question Development

Retrospective Pre-Post Questions

Knowledge/Skills

How much did you / do you now know about these topics?	BEFORE this program I knew...					NOW I know...				
	Very Little	Little	Some	Much	Very Much	Very Little	Little	Some	Much	Very Much
1. Topic 1	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Topic 2	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Topic 3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

End-of-Training Question Development

Analyzing Retrospective Pre-post Questions

- Compare percent change in each column
- Calculate average point shift of participants

How much did you/ do you now know about these subjects?	Change in what participants indicated they knew after training versus before it.					Average point shift
	Very little	Little	Some	Much	Very much	
Topic A	0%	-11%	+6%	-3%	+7%	+0.02
Topic B	-16%	+2%	-29%	+37%	+7%	+1.9
Topic C	-5%	-9%	-17%	+30%	+1%	+0.55



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

Post-Training Question Development

Retrospective Pre-Post Questions

Indicate the extent to which you did the following BEFORE the workshop and SINCE the workshop	BEFORE the training, I did...					SINCE the training, I do...				
	Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always	Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always
Practice A	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Practice B	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Practice C	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

End of/Post-Training Question Development

Open-Ended Questions

- Key to gathering success stories (and other information too)
- Ask for most extreme cases – the best or the most – if you want to identify successes
- Can also have them interview each other
- Can have them indicate on evaluation if they'd be willing to be interviewed later



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

End of/Post-Training Question Development

Open-Ended Questions

- What is the most useful thing you learned and why?

- Of the practices covered, which one are you most likely to implement in the next 6 months and why?



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

Post-Training Question Development

Open-Ended Questions

- In what ways have you applied what you learned in the training to your own work?

- What new practice have you implemented that has been most beneficial? Why?



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Developing Tools to Measure Outcomes

Post-Training Question Development

Yes/No combined with Open-Ended Questions

Since the training, have you done any of the following?	No	Yes	If yes , please describe why you did it and how the practice has impacted your work.
Practice A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practice B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practice C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Evaluation Distribution

Post-Training Evaluation Formats

Must have participants' contact information!

Formats	+	-
Mail	Reaches audience w/o internet	Costs of mailing surveys and reminders, time required to enter data
Phone	Reaches audience w/o internet, easy analysis, can ask probing questions	Time consuming, need to develop script, participants might be more hesitant to tell truth
Web	Free survey programs available, easy analysis, Can sample everyone	Very easy to ignore

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Exercise – Writing Effective Evaluation Questions

- Write a question that targets an expected outcome on knowledge gained/skills learned
- Write a question that targets an expected outcome on intentions to change behavior or actual implementation of new practices
- Write a question that is open-ended (You can choose the type of expected outcome to target)



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Developing Tools to Measure Results/Outcomes

Key tip

- For each proposed result/outcome, you should be able to write an evaluation question
 - Do this when you develop your funding proposal
 - Validates that proposed results are actually results
 - Helps design the evaluation from the beginning



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Evaluation Methodology

Measuring Impacts



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Outcome Based Reporting

Documents

- Producer progress towards achieving goals (short and long term)
- Producer stories and testimonials
- Unexpected results/outcomes

Provides access to

- RME curriculum and resource materials
 - Training methodologies
 - Evaluation tools



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Integrating Outcomes into Project Reporting

Summarizing outcomes

- Project overview
- Actual outcomes
- Comments/stories/examples of success

Input into other reports



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Impactful Reporting

- Builds capacity for educators who work directly with farmers and ranchers through...
 - Access to risk management curriculum and resources
 - Access to training methodologies
 - Access to successful evaluation methods and tools
- Creates transparency
- Improves accountability
- Documents in a database format risk management outcomes/impacts for farmers and ranchers.
 - Available to federal and state agencies, government offices such as the GAO and OMB, institutions and other funding partners.
- Keeps moving the bar higher for the effectiveness of risk management education.



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Measuring Economic Benefit

Increasing focus on the economic benefit

How can we measure?

- Self reporting
 - How much did your income change?
 - Did your income change by? – use ranges
- Participation data plus credible financial data
 - Example project evaluations



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Measuring Economic Benefit

- Financial benefit per participant
- Societal benefit
- **Let your regional ERME Center know if you want to do an economic benefit evaluation**



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In Summary...

If the “Return on Investment” of grant dollars awarded are the risk management improvements that producers will make...

Then measuring producer outcomes becomes an integral component of program planning and design, not an afterthought!



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