

EDEN: Role of the Extension Disaster Education Network in Framing the Land Grant Role in Community Preparedness

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Presenters: Eric Hallman and Mark Hansen

National Extension Disaster Education Network **Mark Hansen**

- The number one challenge for emergency management agencies is getting information to the public. Trust in the Land Grant system makes this possible.
- EDEN was developed in 1994, after the Mississippi River floods because:
 - 1- Local staffs were not capable of responding to a disaster of that magnitude, and
 - 2- The roles/relationships between agencies were not known or had not been developed.
- EDEN links state Extension services with local agencies and state and county-level agencies, such as departments of health.

After September 11th

- EDEN received a grant to work on plant biosecurity.
- Two web-based surveys found that Extension needs to focus on homeland security. Agricultural producers did not believe that they were adequately prepared for a disaster, but that should one occur, they would go to Extension for help.

EDEN website

- It has been specially designed to allow for the easy and fast downloading of information.
- Search mechanisms allow you to find delegates by state, websites (both Extension and non-Extension) by state, and EDEN catalogued resources in a reference format.
- The website also includes:
 - A “current topics” page
 - Restricted listserve to share information amongst state Extension offices
- URL: <<http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/eden/>>

Cornell / New York State Extension Disaster Education Network **Eric Hallman**

September 11th and the 1998 Ice Storm

- Extension faced agricultural problems such as the removal of dead cows that could not be buried due to the ice storm, which led to public health concerns, zoonoses, loss of food, etc.
- September 11th came with its unique set of problems, including:
 - The evacuation of city residents (voluntary)
 - What to do about transportation that was no longer working
 - Toxic particulates that remained in the air after the buildings collapsed.
- Materials should be prepared before an emergency to make dissemination more efficient.

EDEN Taskforce

- The New York / Cornell EDEN Taskforce is comprised of county, agency, and Cornell representatives.
- Some of the goals for Cornell's EDEN membership include building a network between local, county, university and state agencies, implementing county disaster relief training, creating a website, and the quick dissemination of materials.
- Counties and regions need organization, agency links, etc., BEFORE disasters occur
- Hard and electronic copies of materials must be housed in regions and counties, as internet access may be lost from one or the other during a disaster.
- NY / Cornell EDEN (tentative) website URL: <<http://emergencypreparedness.cornell.edu>>
- Need to build collaborative relationships with agencies and people with different backgrounds and specialties, e.g., veterinary medicine, food safety scientists, etc.

Audience Participation

- Dennis Bader (Cornell Cooperative Extension): New York City has little to no physical infrastructure for the number of coordinators, respondents, etc., that an emergency Extension team would need. How can EDEN deal with limited command center space?
- Mark Hansen: State extension centers must contact state emergency centers to determine the roles of each in the event of a disaster.
- Steve Caine (Purdue University Cooperative Extension): During a massive animal carcass disposal emergency, our Extension office found that interagency relations were not there. EDEN does not need to be at the incident command center, but we can work with county governments to improve emergency responses.
- Pamela King (University of Maryland Cooperative Extension): Extension needs representatives at the command center "table", especially for funding issues, as it will not receive any recognition if it does not have representation there. In addition, connections must be made at state and county levels, and Extension should have "seats" at both. Many of these agencies and offices have a very limited understanding of agricultural problems.
- Pat Skinner (Louisiana State University Extension): Extension is not at the table to get money or recognition; we are there to be the person that can bring the resources of the agency to bear in an emergency response. Emergency operation centers will bring together all the necessary state agencies in the planning for and relief of disasters. Another important role of EDEN is at the planning table — especially mitigation planning, where we represent agricultural interests. This is occurring all over the country now, due to government funding for approved emergency response plans.
- Mark Hansen: The human component of disaster relief (psychological well-being and stress) is now more recognized, and more materials are now available to help Extension treat this.
- Betty Koch (North Dakota State University): How can Extension offices join at the national level of EDEN?
- Mark Hansen: The state is the EDEN member, with one point of contact per state, which is the state's EDEN chairperson.
- Jim Clark (Penn State Cooperative Extension): How can Extension members identify the nation's top experts in different fields?

Notes taken by Sara Miller