Advancing Tennessee

UT Extension Programs Produce Substantial Economic Impact

Assessment Overview
UT Extension extends the knowledge and expertise of the University to the people of Tennessee through agents and specialists in all 95 counties of the state. Educational programs in 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and resource development produce substantial returns to the state. Using research, questionnaires, observations, and sales records, an economic impact was estimated at more than $487 million for 2013 for statewide educational programs.

Economic assessments provide a tangible way to measure and monitor the results of Extension programs. Economic impact data, such as jobs created or maintained, communicates the value of Extension programs in a way that most people understand.

The 2013 statewide economic assessment was shared with county directors, regional directors, program leaders, area 4-H specialists, department heads, and camp managers.

Introductory Statement
We provide education that produces solutions to societal, economic and environmental issues. We teach Tennesseans in the places they live, work and play through hundreds of programs. Our efforts are based on local needs, research and a commitment to improve the quality of life.

Economic Impact
The total economic impact of Extension’s statewide educational efforts in 2013 was estimated at $487 million. This includes recurring economic values (increased revenue, increased savings, and one-time capital purchases) and one-time non-recurring economic values.

Jobs Created/Maintained
The recurring economic impacts translate to 6,836 jobs created or maintained.

Cost-Benefit
For every $1 in public funds invested in UT Extension programs, an estimated $9.81 is returned to the people of Tennessee.

Big Idea 1
Economic impact data communicates the public value of Extension programs in a way that most people understand.

Big Idea 2
SUPER has made statewide economic assessments possible. Data is incorporated from all 95 counties, regions, and departments. The data represents research, questionnaires, observations and sales records.
Making the Most of Economic Assessment

Engage the Workforce
Spring is a great time to share the economic assessment with your colleagues to influence both reporting in the current year and program planning in subsequent years.

Compare Cost-Benefit Analysis
County offices may compare the statewide assessment to data for their own county. SUPER makes this easy. A Unit Cost-Benefit Analysis is located in Unit Operations.

Report Accurately
The Unit Cost-Benefit Analysis is fed by the following SUPER reporting:

- volunteer hours reported in Delivery activity reports
- financial outcomes reported in Delivery outcomes
- value of local contributions to planned programs reported in Individual Annual Plans
- course/event fees collected reported in Training/Registration
- grants/contracts/gifts reported in Profile

Share the Assessment
Accountability reports are helpful in communicating the value of Extension to industry leaders, advisory groups, legislators, county commissioners, and other stakeholders. Consider sharing the economic assessment with a one-page accountability report of program outcomes from your county or area served.

Do the Best You Can
The recurring economic impacts only represent about 11 programs. Neere, Votruba, and Wells (2011) stipulated that “...it is often difficult – perhaps even impossible – to do a comprehensive assessment or evaluation. In that case, the institution should do the best it can...” (p.177)

Big Idea 3
Economic impact is just one way to communicate the value of Extension programs. Other measures may demonstrate an increased quality of life or better environmental conditions.

Resources
The following resources are helpful for extending knowledge of economic impact, public value, and engagement:


State & National Stakeholders
The Economic Assessment is used in a number of ways with state and national stakeholders, including:

A. *Defining the Future, the UT System Strategic Plan* includes the economic assessment data: http://president.tennessee.edu/strategicplan/dashboard/index.html

B. *The Tennessee State Budget* is a performance-based document that includes actual performance and estimated performance on key outcomes (called standards and measures) for every state agency. See pp. B-115 and B-116 of the 2012-2013 State Budget: http://www.tn.gov/finance/bud

C. *Congressional Reports to Tennessee’s congressional delegation* include the assessment data: https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/ReportsPlans.aspx

D. USDA-NIFA requests that every Annual Accomplishment Report include an economic assessment of statewide efforts.