



SPRING 2011

Preliminary Report

UF/IFAS Extension Long Range
Planning: Public Focus Groups



Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UFIFAS

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Introduction

“The Florida Cooperative Extension System is conducting a planning process that will shape Extension programs in Florida for the next decade. This joint effort . . . will allow Florida Extension to have a clear path of action as an educational organization to support Florida's economy, environment, and people that is relevant and flexible to meet the changing needs of Florida's communities” (UF/IFAS Extension, 2011).

As part of this statewide effort, the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) was asked to solicit stakeholder/citizen input with specific constituent groups and members of the general public using focus group methodology. In June and July, the PIE Center conducted focus groups with members of the general public, county commissioners, agricultural and natural resources commodity leaders, and public agency representatives with a goal of transcribing, analyzing and preparing a final report for presentation at this year's EPAF meeting in late August. In conjunction with the Extension Admin LRP retreat being held July 19th, a preliminary analysis of the focus groups conducted with members of the general public was conducted and written up for this report.

Methodology

To conduct this study, two focus groups were conducted with members of the general public located in Orlando and Ft. Myers. Participants were recruited using random sampling techniques by a market research firm. There were nine participants in the Orlando focus group and eleven participants in the Fort Myers focus group. An objective moderator conducted the focus groups, working from an IRB approved protocol and moderator's guide using similar questioning route as LRP listening sessions, along with additional questions assessing draft mission and vision statement. Responses were recorded and transcribed, and then content analyzed using constant comparative technique (Glaser, 1976).

Results

Issues Affecting and Threatening Local Communities

Participants in Fort Myers and Orlando felt that the following issues were affecting and threatening their communities:

- **Lack of Jobs and Unemployment Rate**
 - QUOTE: “Well, the big issue is that there aren't any jobs. And that hasn't gotten any better in four years and looks like it is not going to get any better. I think the jobs are not coming back and we are going to have to adjust to that reality, and that is what bothers me the most.”
 - QUOTE:” The rate of unemployment.”
- **Environmental Issues**
 - QUOTE: “I think the natural resource depletion and the fertilizer runoff and the fresh water getting off the landscape, because of all this growth, is going to kill the ecotourism that we have coming to the area.”
 - QUOTE: “I think we are looking at a lot of environmental issues. I grew up here in Orlando, been here since I was just a few years old. And if you look at the massive changes and the growth and I look at water, air pollution, noise pollution all of that. Those are serious issues.”

Participants in **Fort Myers** indicated the following issues were also impacting and threatening their community:

- **Housing Issues**

- QUOTE: “So, to me, at the beginning, six years ago, it was kind of the ideal place. And now, seeing what has happened to the housing situation that is personally the thing that has affected us the most. All of the foreclosures and no available housing right now, like decent housing, and that is one of the things that really affects me.”
- QUOTE: “The problem that I find an issue is all the Chinese drywall, that there are so many houses that still have it. And that’s what I talk about that there is no real housing available because when you want to move out you have to be so careful of this situation.”
- **Property Values**
 - QUOTE: The biggest threat is from the decrease in property values which means the money is not there, which means that everything falls apart which is what it is doing right now. And it has gone down further after they have already... they said, “cut things to the bone” and now they have got to cut it further. And where do you go? Where do you go? That is a potential disaster.”
 - QUOTE:”I think it is difficult, the property values, obviously, have made it really really hard for all of the municipalities as well as the counties.”
 - QUOTE: We had reached the point where they were getting \$41,000 for a lot in Lehigh Acres, that was worth at most \$1,200. But that was the only available land, so people were buying it.
- **Crime**
 - QUOTE: “I think that crime is one issue.”
 - QUOTE: “There are no jobs. I think that is harmful and it goes with what (name omitted) said, that it causes an awful lot of the crime. If you don’t have any hope or any jobs, it’s a whole lot easier to sell ‘crack’ on the street than it is to stand around and wait for something to happen.”
 - QUOTE: Twenty years ago, I never locked my house, I never locked my car. Now, I lock my house, I lock my car, I turn my alarm systems on and I sleep with a 38, and my wife. And she had got her own pistol. But, God forbid somebody walks into my house and they are not invited. I am here to tell you that they have got a problem.

Participants in **Orlando** indicated the following issues were also impacting and threatening their community:

- **Transportation/ Lack of Mass Transit**
 - QUOTE: You look at just transportation, getting from point A to point B in this area, is hugely difficult.
 - QUOTE: I came from a place that did really good traffic planning and as near as I can tell they are always at least twenty years behind. Build a huge subdivision and don’t build the roadways to it for another twenty years. Open up development in a whole half of town and then twenty, twenty-five years later, think about the interstate or the toll roads. It is just crazy.

- QUOTE: I guess any kind of mass transit is going to have to be subsidized, apparently. But in the larger cities with a lot of history of mass transit, you see it's necessary as you grow, but we don't seem to think in this state that it is so necessary, especially in central Florida.

- **Road Construction**

- QUOTE: "Up on 50, how long did it take them to finally widen 50 past 436? I have been down here 10 years and that has been a bottleneck for the whole time. Finally, somebody got the big bright idea to, "Well, there is more people living out there, maybe, just maybe it might be a good idea to widen 50 so that people can get back and forth." Voila. "
- QUOTE: "I mean they can tear up dozens of miles of interstate and replace it in a single summer in some places in the country. But we, it takes four years to do a 3 mile stretch of a double wide boulevard."

- **Closure of Small Businesses Due to Construction**

- QUOTE: Well, there must be something wrong with the process because they started the thought of widening 50 longer than 10 years ago. Because you saw things starting to close at 50 and 436. Dairy Queen is gone, Steak and Ale closed, they got rid of all those things.
- QUOTE: And during that construction, there are so many businesses that, the one that I am talking about which is 50 & 436, some I mentioned that closed, businesses, out of business. I am talking about small business owners, there is an employment issue. All the way down, all the way to Dean Road, just small businesses, gone. They moved up toward the mall area where construction was completed. But then I wasn't willing to drive through the construction to the mall area so I started going in another direction. So they lost my business.

Issues Affecting Agriculture and Natural Resources

Participants in Fort Myers and Orlando both mentioned water as an issue affecting their community's agriculture and natural resources. Within the water issue, several sub-topics were discussed.

- **Water Availability** – Discussed by both groups

Regarding the discussion of water availability, the Florida aquifer was discussed by both groups.

- QUOTE: "I think the biggest issue is water. Having available water."
- QUOTE: "We came here when we built the house in 1966, our well was 18 feet deep. It took water in fine, winter and summer, and now they dig down about 200 feet or they go through unusable water in order to get down there. But that is not coming back, that's people. There were 90,000 people here when the wells were 18 feet deep. Now there are 630,000 people and there isn't any water."
- QUOTE: "They have been thinking about taking from a river here recently, the St. John's River. That wouldn't be good. But they think we are running out of water in the aquifer and maybe the levels are getting lower, but I am not so sure it is, but it could be."
- QUOTE: "You know they said to report on it [aquifer levels] every once in a while. And I look at the numbers, I don't know what they mean, but they look like they're within guidelines."

- QUOTE: “Our shower heads just barely get a drizzle out of them. I mean, I am used to getting in the shower and getting knocked down. But not anymore, I showered before I came today, and boy howdy, that was a chore.”
- **Government Involvement in Water-** discussed by both groups
There was confusion as to how the individuals on the water boards were elected/appointed.
 - QUOTE: “These folks at Southwest Florida Water Management don’t have a clue, not the first one. And I will tell the man straight to his face.”
 - QUOTE: “The only thing I can say is that there has got to be a better way than what we are living with.”
 - QUOTE: “I was really excited when Governor Christ said, “Oh, we are going to buy up so much of the land and connect it with the Everglades, and it is really going to be good. And we are going to go back to natural drainage and take out some of the sugar crops and let it be natural again.” And I understand that is, if not all gone away, going or gone away with Scott. So, I find that disturbing.”
 - QUOTE: So when the government doesn’t care, what are the people supposed to do? And you would sit there and try to tell them, and you try to write them. You try to do this, you try to do that. And it is like, “Okay, la la la la, I will do what I want as long as I get that big corporate check.” And that is what it all boils down to. “
- **Water Dumping** – Discussed in Fort Meyers group
 - QUOTE: “If you look at Okeechobee Lake, this is one of my real pet peeves, when they got beau coups water, they let water out of the river up here like gangbusters. I mean to the tune of 2 Olympic swimming pools a second. And they tell you on the evening news how much they are releasing and now the lake is below ten feet.”
 - QUOTE: “But can’t they put that water back into the Everglades? Why are they letting it down.”
 - QUOTE: “Yoder Brothers uses beau coups water out there growing mums and stuff. All those orange groves on both sides of the river pull out of the river to irrigate their groves. The farms out that way irrigate with it. But yet, they dump water, and I’m an ardent saltwater fisherman, and when they flush the water hyacinths and the guppies and whatever else comes out of the river out here to Caloosahatchee, it just messes up the whole ecosystem, I am here to tell you.”
- **Water and Fertilizer Use-** Discussed in Fort Myers group
 - QUOTE: “But you have also got contaminated water due to fertilizer that has been dumped.”
 - QUOTE: “you can’t buy fertilizer in Lee County that pollutes.”
 - QUOTE: “how many years did it take to get to where it was and how many to clear it up? It is going to be eons. “
 - QUOTE: “A couple of years ago, they started the ‘no phosphates’and ‘low nitrogen’and all that stuff. “
- **Water Taste-** Discussed in Orlando group

- QUOTE: “I came from Michigan and I could go to my sink at any given time and turn that water faucet on and take a drink of water and it tasted good. I came down here, I was amazed how often I was sick and I couldn’t figure out why. And all of a sudden it dawned on me that when I went to the water faucet to get a drink, I got sick. And then I started boiling the water and if you ever see all the sediment that comes to the top, with the crap that is in the water down here, it is amazing. And I started checking into it and I was just floored, and now our government up in Tallahassee decided, “Well it doesn’t matter, clean water, clean air, who cares?” And you just can’t do that to people.”
- QUOTE: “I have probably never met anybody, not from Florida, that likes Florida water.”
- QUOTE: “All of my friends complain about our water.”

Preferred Issue Outcomes

Participants were asked what type of outcomes they would prefer to see regarding the issues affecting their communities. Both groups discussed the importance of education relating to water use.

- **Water Education-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I guess what people don’t realize is, without water, you are lost. And that is an education thing. And there are different ways to preserve it. Like even your buckets, to get your rain water to do your garden with. And that is really public education.”
 - QUOTE: “I’m sure (name omitted) would go to something on why you have sediment in your water and what to do about it. Who to write to, maybe not like getting together in a class, but something on the internet, something that is easy to find on the internet, a mailing, you know, just something to say, if... then.... Or what to do if you are pissed about... It seems to me that if we don’t know, if we just feel helpless and hopeless and stupid about it and give up.”
 - QUOTE: “And I guess we were in California in the seventies and they had a real drought. And my children still laugh at me because they closed down the public bathrooms and everything and there were signs, “If it’s yellow, let it mellow. If it’s brown, flush it down.” And I have recited that since the seventies and people laugh at me.
 - QUOTE: “Well, I am just thinking if I have a problem with my water, I’m not going to get, you know, but if you do and if you had somebody that put out something that said, “Here’s what you can do. If you have sediment in your water and your utility is OUC or whatever works for you, have wells, or whatever, there are three things that you can do.”
- **Better Water Management** – Discussed in Fort Myers group
 - QUOTE: “Water management in Florida, for a hundred years, has been a disaster. Everything they have ever done turned out to be the wrong thing. They have drained out the Kissimmee River and made a sewer out of it. They drained the Everglades so that they could sell more and more lots. And they killed that. They put a giant sugar grove in and these things with giant government subsidies. And nobody ever seems to understand that improving on nature may be very difficult when these places have been here a very long time and evolved into whatever it is now, that means it was working, and now it doesn’t work.”
 - QUOTE: “I would like to see water ranching instead of the reservoir. The reservoir is digging more rock out of the ground, dropping water tables down, making standing water full of algae and nasties.”
- **Greater Citizen Involvement-** Discussed in Orlando group

Orlando participants believed citizens should become more involved in attaining their preferred issue outcomes.

 - QUOTE: “I think probably more of a citizen’s advocacy group. I think that a lot of times, decisions are made that there is not good planning and you have politicians who have their own special interests. Unless you are really plugged into what is going on with the political scene, sometimes you can become a

little oblivious or you have no voice at all, that decisions are being made that may or may not be something that you would approve of.”

- QUOTE: “But you can get in there and fight, but it does take a large group before you can get anybody’s attention.”

Biggest Issues Facing Youth and Families

- **Need for Stronger Basic Education** –Discussed in both groups

Participants in both groups mentioned youth needed to focus on basic educational principles.

- QUOTE: “If I didn’t have registers that told people, told the kids how much change to give back, they were lost. I don’t know if you employ kids or not, this all started with calculators and all that stuff. And we are big to teach trigonometry and calculus and all this stuff that you never use again for the rest of your life.”
- QUOTE: “You can have robots, but you still need to know how to read, write and do math.”
- QUOTE: “If they get a good core education, then it’s easier to add on environmental, conservation, and things like that.”
- QUOTE: “When I was in Orlando just last week, we were on one of the rides and there were some classes there. One of the school’s shirts said “They were proud that they were a C-rated school.” And I was horrified when the lady just thought that was the best thing ever.”

- **Educational Standards**- Discussed in Orlando group

Participants in Orlando expressed concern over the changing educational standards for students.

- QUOTE: “Our school system is too concerned with making us look smart instead of actually making us smart. Because instead of pushing us and raising the standard and actually making us learn new things, if they have kids that are failing, they actually drop the standards. If they are getting 60’s and that is failing, 60 is an A now. That solves the problem, right? They look smart so we are doing the right thing.”
- QUOTE: “We have to teach people things and not just lower the standards, so that they look like they are learning things.”
- QUOTE: “What I am watching is that it’s okay if you fail a test, it is okay not to hand in your stuff. Because there will always be made an opportunity for extra credit or “You didn’t do good on that test.” This is a good teaching method, but it doesn’t also teach accountability. Well, “Yeah you failed it, why don’t you go home, rework those problems bring it back to me.”
- QUOTE: “There is always this effort to bring that test score up. Because funding for the school is directly tied to it. So it looks to me that a lot of effort is being made, at least on the high school level. I know what I was seeing at the middle school level, something was going on there. But at the high school level, you can definitely see those teachers are jockeying, they are looking, they are watching, and they will throw in extra credit so that they will get that classes grade up.”

- **Parental Involvement**- Discussed in Orlando group

Participants in Orlando discussed a lack of parental involvement as being an issue affecting youth and families.

- QUOTE: “I see it as a lack of involvement of parents.”
- QUOTE: “It shames me to see how few parents show up for some of the events.”
- QUOTE: “I agree, parents have got to be involved. I am not saying that they are not, you have got a responsibility as a responsible parent to get those kids and to teach them how to learn. Plain and simple.”
- QUOTE: “It boils down to the parent, the teacher and the child. You see? It has to start at home, it has to start at home. There is no way to give quality education; it has to start at home.”

Preferred Issue Outcomes Relating to Youth and Families

- **Greater Parental Involvement** – Discussed in both groups

- QUOTE: “Well, if there was some way that we could have some program so that it would cause parents to be more involved. I don’t know how or what that would look like, but it seems like that would be a real important thing to be developed.”
- QUOTE: “We went to a four day school week. And we fought for it and I testified in front of the state school board. And the biggest argument we had was, “What am I going to do with my kids on Friday?” And my comment was, “It is my total responsibility to educate the youth of this nation. It is not my responsibility to baby-sit.”
- QUOTE: “It does, you can’t... that is something that you can’t force people to do, but you can set a good example. And whenever you are trying to change a culture, you can’t come in and say, “Well you guys are doing it wrong, now do it this way.” That doesn’t work, but what does change culture is setting a good example and getting results and getting together with other people who want to set a good example. Kind of likeness of mind and working together. I mean, we have seen in our small community, it doesn’t take very many households, it doesn’t take very many parents to really get engaged or get involved to begin setting a good example. And there is some of those households and some of those families, and some of those kids in school, their parents are never going to be engaged or involved. But there is a lot, I feel like, that are just teetering on the brink and if they had a better example, if they saw some hope, if they were encouraged, whether it is to work on their marriage or to have family dinners together, or get involved in education at the school, that would make a huge difference.”
- QUOTE: “It takes a village, it is not an individual thing and if you don’t reach out to those people who are single parents, that may not have a ride there or may not have a babysitter for the younger kids, who may not be able to attend, then those parents are never going to be involved. They will never know what type of parent would be best for their kids in order to give them the discipline, to teach them responsibility, to do this. But you have got to say, “Can I help you, is there something I can do?”

- **School-related Transportation** – Discussed in Fort Myers

Participants in Fort Myers discussed the pros and cons to school-related public transportation.

- QUOTE: “That goes back to education and carpooling ... No one wants to give up their car. How many cars do you see with one person in it? ... Why don't they give the parents who let their children ride the school bus to school a discount on their taxes? Your tax money is being paid to put all these school buses that are empty on the road. And if you go to a school, the lines of parents coming to pick up their kids. Why can't they, for public education, ride the school bus? “
 - QUOTE: “And it's Gladiolus Elementary School, at 2 whatever it is, :15, there are parents lined up for a mile and a half and then the buses show up and they have, this might be an exaggeration, 10 students on the bus. To cover, like we say, the mass area. It is a nightmare for the transportation school.”
 - QUOTE “But I think the issue also is that parents are worried about the children on the buses. Not so much about saving money. Because my daughter doesn't ride a bus and I wouldn't dare let her get on the bus.”
 - QUOTE: You know the bullying, you know, there are issues. I do not trust my daughter on a regular school bus.
- **Greater Discernment in Public Funds Distributed to Schools-** Discussed in Orlando
 - QUOTE: “The public schools ask for a lot of money lately. They have gotten a lot of money taken away from them, so it's fair. But at the same time, the more they ask for the money the more it made... Like I remember when I was in high school, they would always, like every week, we were doing things asking to donate money to the school, and that is all well and good. But then, one week they put in these brand new cameras in every hallway that are really expensive and they put them in because some kids got in a fight or something. Something really trivial, to be honest.”
 - QUOTE: “So seeing them waste money like that while they need money, sure, it is hard to want to give them money when you see them waste it on things like that. Until you know that someone is going to use the money for right things and use it correctly then you are not going to give it to them. “

Impressions of UF/IFAS Extension

Participants were asked their general first impression when they heard the phrase “University of Florida IFAS Extension.”

- **A few participants had heard of Extension, but didn't know what IFAS meant** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I have to think of it as the Extension, I don't know what IFAS is.”
 - QUOTE: “I do think of Extension, I didn't know the acronym at all. I just think of the Extension service.”
 - QUOTE: “I have no idea what IFAS is.”
- **Other participants had not heard of IFAS/Extension at all** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “IFAS Extension Office, I didn't even know it existed.”
- **Where have you heard about Extension programs and services?** – Discussed in both groups

- QUOTE: “I have known about land grant institutions and Extension offices, I was trying to think on the way over here when I first learned about them, but it is just one of those things that you always knew. And today the students don’t know about them and the residents don’t know about them.”
- QUOTE: “I went through the Master Gardener program.”
- QUOTE: I certainly have used the Extension Office for the Florida environment and ornamental turf and sustainable landscapes and I know about the ag industry uses of it. I teach a class at the University called ‘Colloquium.’ And we do an agricultural field trip and most of the classes go to Echo, which is in North Fort Myers. But I have been bringing my students, starting this year, out to the IFAS research station out in Immokolee. And then to the Coalition and it is really amazing how many people out there were just walking all over themselves trying to get access to my students and educate them about what they do and on the different things that are going on in agriculture research.
- QUOTE: I know that if I am ever having trouble with a plant, or a type of soil or a pest that a lot of times when I am googling it, I will find Extension service websites. So I might not know where to go in town to find a person to ask the question, but I will look on the internet. And if I can find it, and it’s a good article by the Extension service, something that is practical.

After gathering the participants’ first impressions, they were given a summary explaining IFAS Extension along with the Extension priority areas. The following responses are after participants have had a chance to review basic IFAS Extension information.

- **General Impressions of IFAS Extension After Reading Information** – Discussed in Fort Myers group
 - QUOTE: “I have always understood it to be the place that the homemaker or the farmer could call and find out something he needed to know.”
 - QUOTE: “Right, from my younger days, that is what I remember them as. How effective it is, I have no idea.”
- **Some participants discovered they had used IFAS Extension Services before without knowing what they were called** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I used the Extension Office up in Highlands County when I had a blight on an orange tree in my yard. I had probably ran into it the first time in Florida, anyway.”
 - QUOTE: “My first was that I use them more than I really thought, because if you do an internet search of a plant. I buy them first and then I say, “What the heck did I buy? Is it going to live here and stuff?” I am just realizing that I think they come from, it always says UF and then I don’t know what all else. I think I am way more familiar with them, at least when you are growing stuff in your own yard. I am pretty sure that they are the people that put all those things out. And they are easy to find and easy to understand.”
- **Participants were unaware of the family/youth development services IFAS Extension provided** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I wasn’t aware of the individual and family development component.”

- QUOTE: “I thought it was just about agricultural land development and just had to do with that. That it didn’t have to bring in families.”
- QUOTE: “I forgot about 4-H. I didn’t realize that that was an Extension program.”
- QUOTE: “I never, ever, ever would have guessed that the individual, family development on down.”
- QUOTE: “You know I was wondering in our discussion before about busy families and if there are community resources for these families to become involved whether it is learning how to interact with their children, parenting for instance. Or struggling as an individual, a single parent. I am wondering if some of these individual and family development, if that covers some of those areas that we just have been talking about.”

How could IFAS Extension communicate more effectively about their services?

- **IFAS Extension needs to be marketed more effectively** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I think you need to market yourselves better. You expect us to find out where you are and what you do. And I think it would work better the other way around. Tell us where you are and what you do.”
 - QUOTE: “I have lived here a long time and I have never heard of you. And I am pretty active. You know, I belong to everything.”
 - QUOTE: “I’m thinking that they need to be more top of mind. I am someone who has used their services and I don’t ever think of them at all”
 - QUOTE: “I lived in Omaha, Nebraska for 2 years, I don’t recommend it, but I lived in Omaha for 2 years. The University and the Extension Services were sort of a daily thing that was right in front of you. They talked about it on the radio, in the newspaper, it was just part of daily life. Here, I wasn’t exactly aware that the University of Florida had anything besides a football team.”
- **IFAS Extension should use media resources to market services more effectively**- Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “You know maybe a television ad, in the newspaper just for a community event, where they are coming out and hitting some of the key areas you are going to market and just make it fun too, to get them out. Because once they are here, they can learn a lot.”
 - QUOTE: “Even in the newspapers when the voc-techs do their schools, where they are giving photography classes and landscaping classes, and they have those huge two page ads in the newspaper, that catches your attention. And you wait for it, I know I look every year and wait for it to come out.”
 - QUOTE: “I know that some of these media outlets are required to do pro-bono community advertising or information and I think maybe IFAS just needs to get more word out.”
 - QUOTE: “What you can do is go to the local news people and say, “Hey, we are doing this and we are going to be at such and such school teaching these kids how to container garden on this, that, and the other day. And this is our program.” Or you just send them something and then they get involved, and

the more media outlets you can get involved in, the more it will be reached out to the community and what your services are and everything like that.”

- **IFAS Extension should create more local community partnerships to market their services** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE:” I think the entry to the community can be through other organizations, service organizations... they are very open minded to listen to people. They each have certain specific things that they want to accomplish...and they are very open, it has been my experience anyway, very open to ask them, “Can we come in and talk to your group for 15 minutes?” ...And particularly United Way, they are so open that they have got businessmen in all levels of the business spectrum. From the top CEO’s of big companies here in Lee County or Collier County, these people are movers and shakers. They make things happen, they have to raise money. That is how they make their budget every year. Every year they have increased their budget by a given number of percentage to accommodate the new organizations going into their system. When I first got in, they were supporting 35 different organizations. Today, they are supporting, I think it is 78. See, that has doubled in size in just a few years. So they know how to reach the communities.”
 - QUOTE: “Well, maybe connect with organizations that are affiliated with each category because if you are looking at agriculture, then the companies that sell those products, you can connect with them and tell them about the services so that way it can help bring in more customers and it can show the benefit of purchasing certain things.”
 - QUOTE: “Well, if you could convince the businesses that it will drive business their way then I think that you can get some partnerships going there. Because otherwise they are busy promoting their own programs. You have got to do kind of the upfront work of convincing them that it will help drive business.”
 - QUOTE: “It’s those partnerships with the businesses in the community. Lowe’s is happy to donate a bunch of bricks or landscaping timbers so that the kids could have a container garden for a science class. And if you have got that good partnership with a PTA member, a teacher that is willing to take it on, probably in the science department, and a local business, you can make it work without the grants.”
- **IFAS Extension should consider partnerships with local schools**- Discussed in Ft. Myers group
 - QUOTE: “I think Civics 101, whenever it went out, it made a major problem with our youth. I learned about land grant institutions, probably in high school, if not grade school. And I knew that every county had an Extension office, and that was just some of the stuff I knew. And I have moved all around the country, and it was a place that I would seek out to find information, because I knew what they were. And if people don’t know about that, then we have failed in our civics courses back in grade school and high school. So that they don’t know that this is a resource that is available to them anywhere in the country that they go.”

- QUOTE: “I kept thinking because I have a kid that is in grade school and I think that this would be a very interesting field trip for them, do you ever invite the public schools to come and give them a presentation?”
- QUOTE: “I think they would be interested in this and they would bring this home to the parents. Because there is something on here for every child, teenager that they could get involved in. What are you going to do with your children, you know? How many times can you go to the movies or go to the mall? Whereas, something like this is really interesting and they are getting an education and don’t even know it, and that is what you want to do. “

New Mission Statement Feedback

- **Some participants had positive feedback regarding the proposed new mission statement** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “It is very positive.”
 - QUOTE: “It is short and simple, which is good.”
 - QUOTE: “And you were smart not to put IFAS in it. I would just ditch the IFAS acronym. I don’t think that it is helping you.”
- **Participants felt that the mission statement was too broad** – Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I think it is way too general. It is everything, and then we live happily ever after.”
 - QUOTE: “You have got to be more exact as to what you actually do. I know it is supposed to bring in people, but you also have to let people know what you are bringing them in to.”
 - QUOTE: “It is so general. What is well-being? Well-being of what? (crosstalk) That’s a mindset. What about prosperity, how many synonyms do you have for prosperity? I saw prosperity and I am thinking that I am going to get a bunch of money.”
 - QUOTE: “Well, if I just read the mission statement, I would not make the connections with everything that is here. I would be kind of curious as to well, what does that mean? ‘Prosperity,’ what does that mean? I mean, what are you referring to? So again, I think what he said, it is really broad. I mean, I like it, but I don’t know that by reading it, it would tell me or I would make the connection to the things that are on here.”
- **Participants were confused as to the target audience for this mission statement-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “A mission statement usually aims at a particular thing, like a customer. Who is your customer?”
 - QUOTE: “Who do you promote the ‘solutions’ to?”
 - QUOTE: “Yeah, who is the audience?”

- QUOTE: “If I am the audience, it is not what this says to me. But if it is a “Go, get ‘em” kind of statement for the people that are there, then I think you know what you are there for.”
- **Participants offered suggestions to improve the mission statement-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I am surprised that the word ‘education’ isn’t in there.”
 - QUOTE: “I don’t understand the prosperity, really. Because it doesn’t go with everything we have talked about. I don’t really think, well-being I get to a point. But, prosperity, I don’t understand how this is going to make me prosper.”
 - QUOTE: “Just something in that to say, like one word, to somehow get the environment involved in the verbiage, because you do have some programs devoted to sustainable living, water resources, and all that under Florida environment.”
 - QUOTE: “I don’t think that you are getting the message across that this is the research arm of the University of Florida. That carries a lot of weight to it. It’s a lot of credibility to it. So, ‘to promote solutions’ sounds too generic and like there is nothing behind it. But I think knowing that a lot of this research comes from the University of Florida, it is very well respected. Somehow, I think it should be in that. Just so you are aware of it.”

New Vision Statement Feedback

- **Some participants had positive feedback regarding the new vision statement-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “I think the word, or words ‘research based,’ that is a good connection because it is letting the reader or individual know that this is not something that we are just throwing out there. We are not just giving our opinions or ideas, this is actually research based, which makes a difference.”
 - QUOTE: “I love the ‘non-formal educational organization’ because that tells me what they are trying to accomplish.”
 - QUOTE: “But this is a ‘non-formal educational,’ so it’s not the University of Florida having classes that you sign up for a whole degree and everything. It tells you, we are just trying to educate you folks about the world you live in. And we rely on research to get there, so it’s not the political science people, it’s the people who have done the research that goes, “What works?” So if you are organizing your community and you are pissed about the traffic on East 50, here is what the research says you can do. And then the other group comes in and says, “Here is how to best organize.” Because they have done the research. And we are not just facing Florida, we go from local all the way to the world.”
- **Participants felt the vision statement was lofty –** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “It is lofty.”
 - QUOTE: “It makes sense, but I’m thinking you are going to fix my traffic problem. I don’t see agriculture, really, at all.”
 - QUOTE: “I like it a lot, because you are always the ‘premier,’ you always have this lofty goal.”

- **Participants felt the vision statement was broad-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “You got it all covered but world peace.”
 - QUOTE: “I am thinking here, agriculture, resources and things like that, and there, I mean that could be abortion. Anything could go under there. It just needs to, it has got to have a focus word”
 - QUOTE: “No where in there do I get the food, agriculture and family. I just don’t get it. It’s not there. I am still stuck on two or three words that you just repeat over and over. If you are really in food, agriculture and family, just say it.”

- **Participants had concerns with the span from “local to global issues”-** Discussed in both groups
 - QUOTE: “If you are really targeting Floridian’s, does using the word ‘global’ turn some people off? A little too big, a little too... If you really want to get to a Floridian, talk to him about what is important to him locally rather than what might be a global type thing.”
 - QUOTE: “I feel like it is too vague with the issues. I know it says local to global, but I feel like that could be anything. I feel like one more word to kind of describe the types of issues, be it zoning issues or agricultural issues or whatever.”
 - QUOTE: “What about just ‘issues’, I mean they don’t have to be just ‘local’ or ‘global.’ But I mean, just ‘current issues.’”
 - QUOTE: “‘global’ is too big for my mind to get around.”

- **Some participants didn’t like the word “premier” used in the vision statement-** Discussed in Fort Myers group
 - QUOTE: I see the word ‘premier’, I don’t know if I like it or dislike it, it is almost like it is arrogant. (crosstalk) I don’t even know if that is the right term. I am just stating that, when I see the word ‘premier.’ How would that make others feel who are in the same industry? “Well, what do you mean, you are premier? I’m not?”
 - QUOTE: I like to be a ‘leading non-formal.’ I mean, you want to be ahead, you want to be number one, but there are other organizations that are doing the same thing.
 - QUOTE: Yeah, ‘the premier,’ it sounds like a movie. We are having a premier showing.

Additional Information

At the conclusion of the Orlando group, participants were asked if they had any more information to add to the discussion. Several participants wanted to continue to discuss the IFAS acronym.

- **IFAS**
 - QUOTE: “I do like the ideas...brought up of changing IFAS or not even changing it, coming up with a new one that is a word. A real word, that you would use. Yes, something, anything, use all of these letters and coming up with something that, because IFAS sounds, it just doesn’t mean anything.”
 - QUOTE: “Sounds like a disease.”

- QUOTE: “You may have outgrown that acronym. You have got so many of these things going on that all of these things don’t fit under IFAS. You know?”
- QUOTE: “Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences is way too limited.”
- QUOTE: “It is like you needed an Extension for your Extension”
- QUOTE: “You know, it says it right here, supposedly, “Solutions for your life.” The acronym does not say that. The acronym just talks about growing things. The rest of this, it brings in a lot of other elements to someone’s life and it’s dot com. You know, if that is your website, is that your website?”
- QUOTE: “I would bank on the University of Florida’s reputation more than I would the acronym. I’ll brag a little bit, I come from Iowa, everybody knows the Ag University is Iowa State. So all you say is ‘ISU Extension Service,’ everybody knows what you are talking about. There is no acronym in between it, because they all know that Iowa State is the ag college, in addition to engineering and everything else. They think when they hear Extension and ISU, they say, “Oh yeah that’s not that bunch down at University of Iowa, they can play football and basketball and make doctors and lawyers, but they don’t know how to grow anything. But you go to Iowa State, they know how to grow things.”