

## Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center

### Writing An Impact Statement

**Source:** Adapted from a presentation by Terry Meisenbach, Communications Director, USDA/CSREES. April 20, 2004

#### Outline

- What is the issue?
- What has been done?
- So what? (Impact)

#### Components of an Impact Statement

##### What is the Issue?

A problem statement, a description of why this is important. How many people are affected? How much do people spend related to this issue? Are we losing or about to lose acreage? Are lives being lost or threatening to be lost? What is the scope or magnitude of the problem – how big or widespread is the problem?

Note: be descriptive because you will want to make a link back as you discuss impact.

##### What has been done?

Here is where you include the number of people reached, the number of meetings held, the type of training held, the research conducted, the action that has taken place regarding the issue.

For those reporting on **research** only: briefly describe how the research was conducted but avoid technical terms.

##### So what? (Impact)

- Social – how have lives been changed?
- Environmental – what has been protected?
- Economic – how has the wallet/purse been affected?

**Hypothetical Example 1:**

**What is the Issue?**

Data obtained from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals showed that only 18 percent of women who delivered initiated breastfeeding. Nationally, more than 60 percent of women breastfeed thus reducing illness in infants and risk of cancers in mothers.

**What has been done?**

Fifty educational training sessions were offered to pregnant women in classes designated as 1, 2, and 3. Class 1 was attended by 200 pregnant women; 230 attended class 2; and 100 attended class 3.

A survey (or evaluation) of the pregnant women attending those classes showed that 90 percent of them said they will initiate breastfeeding.

**So what? (Impact)**

About 70 percent of the mothers initiated breastfeeding. Mothers who breastfeed save about \$130 per month in formula costs. Mothers who initiated breastfeeding through the training sessions saved over \$18,000 per month.

## **Hypothetical Example 2:**

### **What is the Issue?**

Louisiana Summary of Agriculture and Natural Resources published by the state's Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources reported that there are 650 small commercial vegetable farms in the seven parishes of the 1890 program with an average of six acres per farm. However, 90 percent of these farmers do not know how to access available markets. The result is a loss of income due to their inability to sell most of their produce.

### **What has been done?**

To help the farmers, SUAREC conducted seven Producer Meetings, three Field Days, and over 500 farm visits within the seven-parish area. Participation at these sessions were very high – an indication of the need for such sessions. About 400 farmers attended the Producer Meetings, and about 600 attended the three field days. The use of alternative market such as the Farmers Market was one of the major adjustments discussed.

An evaluation of participants after the sessions showed that 80 percent of those who attended the Producer Meetings, 85 percent of those who participated in the Field Days, and 90 percent of farmers visited said they will consider joining and selling their produce at the nearest Farmers Market. Also, over 87 percent of the participants said they learned new skills, while 60 said their opinions have changed.

### **So what? (Impact)**

Thus far, about 79 percent of the farmers who attended the sessions and said they will consider joining and selling their produce at the Farmers Market did. Specifically, 65 percent from the Producer Meetings and 67 percent of participants at the Field Days who said that they will consider joining and selling their produce at the nearest Farmers Market have actually done so. Seventy one percent of those visited are also selling at the Farmers market. As a result of their participation in the Farmers Market, their incomes have increased at an average of \$2,000 (about 33 percent) each.