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**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:
PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSION EDUCATORS
IN THE NORTHEAST REGION**

BY

JOHN E. PIKE
B.S., University of New Hampshire, 1974
M.P.A., University of New Hampshire, 1976

DISSERTATION

**Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

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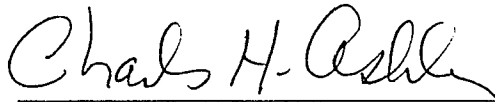
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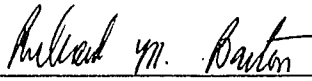
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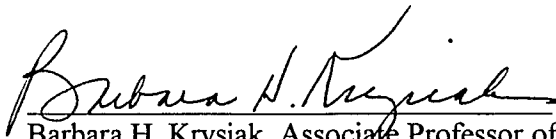
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DEDICATION

To my wife and best friend Gina,
my son Justin,
and my daughter Jillian,
whose love and support helped make
this effort possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Cooperative Extension.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	6
Methodology.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Organization of the Study.....	10
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	11
Human Motivation.....	11
Purposes for Assessing Performance.....	17
Performance Planning.....	23
Performance Feedback and Coaching.....	27
Performance Appraisal.....	31
Summary.....	37
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	39
Research Design.....	39
Population and Sample.....	40
Limitations of the Study.....	42
Instrumentation.....	42
Data Collection.....	46
Data Analysis.....	47
Summary.....	52

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	53
Demographic Characteristics of Study Respondents.....	54
Research Question One.....	57
Research Question Two.....	68
Research Question Three.....	77
Research Question Four.....	78
Comments.....	89
Summary.....	93
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	94
Summary of Study.....	94
Summary of Findings and Discussion.....	96
Recommendations for Practice.....	106
Recommendations for Further Research.....	107
Concluding Remarks.....	109
REFERENCES.....	112
APPENDICES	
A: Letter to State Directors in the Northeast Region.....	118
B: Questionnaire.....	121
C: Letter to State Program Leaders for Survey Validation.....	134
D: Letter to Extension Educators for Pilot Testing.....	136
E: Cover Letter for Questionnaire.....	139
F: First Reminder Letter.....	141
G: Second Reminder Letter.....	143
H: Comments from Respondents.....	145

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Extension Educator Population and Sample.....	41
2. Response Rate.....	47
3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	54
4. Extension educators' perception of the present and ideal performance management system.....	61
5. Differences between extension educator's perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system.....	72
6. Correlation between perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding current performance management system to responses within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.....	80
7. Correlation between responses to performance planning statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of the performance planning process.....	82
8. Correlation between responses to performance feedback and coaching statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of the feedback and coaching received.....	85
9. Correlation between responses to performance appraisal statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of performance appraisals.....	87
10. Categorization of open-response questions and frequency of responses.....	91

ABSTRACT

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENSION EDUCATORS IN THE NORTHEAST REGION

by

John E. Pike
University of New Hampshire, May, 1996

The purpose of this study was to determine Cooperative Extension educator perceptions regarding performance management. Performance management is defined as a system comprised of an ongoing process of planning and appraising which includes the establishment of goals and expectations through performance planning; continuing year round performance feedback and coaching; and a formal performance appraisal at the end of the performance period.

This research was intended to provide a better understanding of how extension educators perceived the performance management process within their respective state Cooperative Extension organization. An assumption of this study was that extension educator attitudes toward performance management are an important factor in the system's ultimate effectiveness.

A survey research method of data collection was employed in this study with a stratified random sample of 233 extension educators representing 30% of all extension educators from eight states within the northeast region of the United States. Participating states included Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York,

Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

A survey instrument consisting of a mailed questionnaire was developed to survey staff and determine the perceptions held by extension educators in response to statements regarding performance management especially in the areas of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Completed survey responses were received from 206 educators resulting in an 88% return rate.

The results of the study revealed a gap between what educators perceive as present and ideal performance management practices for each of the 53 statements presented in the survey. On average, educators considered their performance management system to be in the range of “somewhat ineffective” to “somewhat effective”; a strong relationship was suggested between how educators perceived the elements of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal with how they perceived the effectiveness of the overall performance management system.

Based on the study findings, recommendations for improving performance management within Cooperative Extension are presented.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The preeminent factor accounting for the success of an organization is its human resources, the people who staff and operate an organization. There are other important factors such as financial and material resources; however, an organization without personnel of quality is unlikely to be successful (Jones & Walters, 1994).

The management of human performance in organizations is a practice that has been conducted, discussed, and studied for decades (DeVries, Morrison, Shullman, & Gerlach, 1986). There are varied systems that manage and evaluate performance. Regarding some performance management systems, McGregor (1957), a respected researcher, claimed that supervisors are resistant to being in a position of "playing God" and having to judge the worth of another person and communicate their judgment both to the employee and the organization.

Some consider formal performance appraisal of individuals indispensable (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989) whereas others argue that it ought to be abandoned (Block, 1993; Deming, 1986). Few commentators, however, will dispute that a well-designed performance management system is an important human resource management tool to help people improve performance and achieve organizational goals (Peterson, 1995; Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993;

Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1984).

Both employees and supervisors often refer to performance "evaluations," "appraisals," or "reviews," but "performance management" is seldom mentioned. Perhaps one of the reasons why these terms are seldom referred to jointly is the different meanings they have for different groups and individuals. Some consider the terms *performance appraisal* and *performance management* to be interchangeable. Others distinguish performance appraisal from performance management, but few seem to distinguish between meaningful management and the appraisal of performance.

The lack of communication and suggestions after the classic "one shot" annual review, commonly referred to as a performance appraisal is problematic for many employees. This lack of management follow-up does not contribute to the development of new behavioral patterns that would be conducive to the success of both the organization and the employee. Two recent national studies revealed employee dissatisfaction with performance appraisals. A study by Wyatt (1994) showed that only 46% of 4,300 respondents felt that performance appraisal was useful in improving their job performance. In another study involving 218 companies, Mercer (1995) found that only 7% of the respondents rated their performance appraisal system as excellent.

One of the dominant criticisms of education personnel evaluation practices is that they have failed to provide constructive feedback to individual educators (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). Effective

performance management necessitates a continuous process throughout the year to encourage employee performance that is consistent with achieving results linked to organizational goals. Based on a review of the literature, there are three phases that contribute to effective performance management: (a) performance planning, (b) performance feedback and coaching; and (c) overall performance appraisal (Drake Beam Morin, 1993; Engelmann & Roesch, 1996; Gross, 1995; Plachy, 1988; Repinski & Bartsch, 1996; Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993; Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1987; Shaw, Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1995; Swan, 1991).

Although there has been much reported research on the performance appraisal phase of performance management, there is a paucity of research pertaining specifically to performance management in Cooperative Extension which integrates the appraisal phase into the overall process of performance management and which also considers the perceptions of extension educators in its paradigm. Extension educator attitudes toward performance management are an important factor in the ultimate effectiveness of the system within Cooperative Extension.

Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension, formally established by Congress in 1914, is a part of the land grant university system comprised of 105 land-grant colleges and universities which have a responsibility for teaching, research, and outreach. Each land grant university fulfills its outreach mission by extending the resources of the university to respond to the needs of citizens “off-campus,” primarily through

Cooperative Extension.

The purpose of Cooperative Extension is education - nonformal education programs that address social, economic, environmental, and technical concerns of the people of each state. It is staffed with a nationwide network of faculty and Extension educators who serve in the local and national interest by extending research-based knowledge from the land grant university system to the community in areas ranging from family and youth development to natural resources and environmental management education.

The management of human resources is critical to an effective Cooperative Extension system (Harper, 1991). There are 32,000 employees in 3,150 counties across the nation who work for Cooperative Extension. As a publicly supported organization with \$1.4 billion in funding, professional accountability for high levels of performance is essential (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 1995).

The extension educator is the organization's most important resource in accomplishing the organization's purpose. Extension educators are assigned responsibility for the development, design and delivery of educational outreach programs. An assessment of how effectively an extension educator performs is essential in determining the extent to which job responsibilities and organizational purposes are fulfilled. The ultimate purpose of a performance management system is the actualization and achievement of the organization's goals (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989).

It is acknowledged that managing human performance is difficult; however, avoiding it results in lost opportunities to bring about positive effects on both the employee and employer. Depending on whether the management of one's performance is well done, the outcomes of the process can have positive or negative effects on the employee and organization (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989; Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1984). A well executed performance management system can improve the overall effectiveness of Cooperative Extension by serving as an evaluation tool which acknowledges effective behavior, isolates ineffective behavior, and provides constructive feedback and coaching for performance improvement.

Cooperative Extension is charged with addressing critical issues affecting people's daily lives and the nation's future involving quality of life issues related to families, communities, and natural resources. Problems of families, youth "at risk," and natural resources are presenting Cooperative Extension with expanded opportunities and the system is undergoing major organizational change countrywide. It is critical that Extension's performance management system further the strategic direction of the organization and help staff improve performance and achieve organizational goals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine extension educator perceptions regarding performance management. These perceptions should be useful in determining the effectiveness of the performance management system and

identifying areas for improvement. This study consisted of survey research, designed to determine the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators in states within the northeast region regarding performance management in their respective state organization.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?
2. What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?
3. What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?
4. How do extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Significance of the Study

A recent national report outlining a strategic plan for Cooperative

Extension cited the need for a reassessment of Extension's performance review system to make the organization truly flexible and responsive (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 1995).

Assumptions of this study were that positive extension educator attitudes toward, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the system of performance management are crucial for its success. This research was designed to increase understanding of the perceptions and feelings of extension educators regarding performance management. This increased understanding is necessary if Cooperative Extension is to bridge the gap between current and ideal perceptions of performance management.

The findings of this study are intended to add to the knowledge base of performance management practices and provide information to state Cooperative Extension organizations for improving performance management. Specifically, the findings should be of assistance to Cooperative Extension administrators and educators as a basis for reviewing and strengthening the key elements associated with effective performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Methodology

A survey research method of data collection was employed in this study with a stratified random sample of 233 extension educators, representing 30% of all extension educators from eight states within the northeast region of the United States. This study was limited to states in the northeast that had an appropriate

supervisory structure which included an immediate supervisor for extension educators. For the purpose of this study, a supervisor was defined as a professional within Cooperative Extension representing the first level of management (immediate supervisor) and designated with the responsibility for managing the performance of extension educators through phases which include performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and overall performance appraisal.

A mailed questionnaire was developed to survey staff and determine the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators regarding performance management. The questions in the instrument represented a synthesis of the important areas cited in the literature on performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Definition of Terms

Extension Educator: Extension educators are professional field staff of Cooperative Extension located in field offices (off campus) who have subject-matter expertise and are responsible for educational programming in such areas as: agriculture; community development; 4-H and youth development; home economics and family development; forestry; and marine and fresh water resources. These positions are referred to in some states as “agents,” “county agents,” “county extension agents,” etc.

Performance: Human performance means both behaviors and results. It includes the consequences of behaviors. It is a combination of behaviors and the

results that they produce. It consists of an individual engaging in behavior in a situation to achieve results.

Performance Management: A system comprised of an ongoing process of planning and appraising which includes the establishment of goals and expectations through performance planning; continuing year round performance feedback and coaching; and a formal performance appraisal at the end of the performance period.

Performance Planning: The process of developing an established set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills resulting in a plan of work for which an individual is accountable and will be evaluated.

Performance Feedback and Coaching: Ongoing performance-related communication that conveys “how am I doing” information, reinforces good performance, and helps an individual improve trouble spots.

Performance Appraisal: Formal overall appraisal of performance at the end of a performance period of how an individual performed against a set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills.

Supervisor: A professional within Cooperative Extension representing the first level of management (immediate supervisor) and designated with the responsibility for managing the performance of extension educators through phases which include performance planning; performance feedback and coaching; and overall performance appraisal.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter consists of background information on the topic of performance management and Cooperative Extension, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, and definitions of terms. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature of the elements common to effective performance management and discussion of completed research relating to performance management within Cooperative Extension. Chapter three describes the methodology employed in the study. Chapter four contains the results and presentation of data related to the perceptions of Extension Educators toward performance management. Chapter five contains the summary, findings, and recommendations of the study. References and appendices conclude the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review encompasses identification of the elements common to effective performance management and investigation of completed research relating to performance management within Cooperative Extension. Performance management research is limited in comparison to literature existing in regard to performance “evaluation” or “appraisal”.

This review will focus on: (a) theories of human motivation which form the theoretical base for this study; (b) the purposes of performance assessment; and (c) key elements commonly associated with effective performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

The area of human motivation is an important theoretical base for this study. One’s performance in a job necessarily involves engaging in behaviors to achieve the results expected of the job. Stimuli in the workplace which encourage specific responses to achieve results are worthy of investigation.

Human Motivation

An effective performance management system will serve as a motivator and remove barriers which inhibit employee motivation. An ineffective system will serve as a demotivator of the workforce. A performance management system can

be a motivator or a demotivator depending upon what its components are and how it is implemented (Harper, 1991). Motivating the workforce towards achieving high performance is a key function of the supervisor and purpose for performance management. What motivates a person to behave in a productive manner? A common refrain in response to a question as to why an employee is not performing in the most productive, positive manner possible, is because he or she is “not motivated.” What is motivation?

There are several theories of human motivation. Among them are three major theories reflected in seminal works by three noted behavioral scientists including Maslow, McGregor, and Herzberg. All of these studies focus on human needs as the inward source of motivation and address the question as to what are the basic motivational needs of human beings?

Maslow (1970) described a hierarchy of basic needs of human beings. At the beginning of the hierarchy are physiological needs which when met, result in the emergence of higher needs including safety needs; needs for love and affection and belongingness; and esteem needs. Maslow maintained that even if the four basic needs noted above are satisfied, “discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he, individually, is fitted for...what a man can be, he must be” (p. 46). Maslow called this fifth level a need for self-actualization, i.e., to become everything that one is capable of becoming. A critical aspect of Maslow’s theory related to performance management is the important

realization that individuals have various needs and are at varying levels of the needs hierarchy.

Employees experience a stronger sense of fulfillment and motivation in working environments that encourage open communications and employee involvement (Reinemer, 1995). Creating an environment which allows for meaningful employee involvement reflects some assumptions as described in McGregor's "Theory Y."

McGregor (1960) discussed various assumptions about human nature and human behavior and stated that "all managerial decisions and actions rest on assumptions about behavior" (p. 11). He classified these assumptions under two theoretical categories, Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor described Theory X as the traditional managerial view of direction and control. He pointed out that a philosophy of management which stresses direction and control relies on rewards, promises, incentives, or threats and other coercive devices. However, these devices are of limited value in motivating people because they don't address what Maslow referred to as the esteem and self-actualization needs. Any organization which bases its strategies on assumptions of Theory X will as McGregor stated, "fail to discover, let alone utilize, the potentialities of the average human being" (p. 43).

Human potential is more apt to be realized in an organization which manages its human resources by subscribing to what McGregor referred to as

Theory Y. Contrasted with Theory X, where the managerial strategy is direction and control, the guiding principle in Theory Y is of integration, whereby the strategy is to create a climate where employees can fulfill their own goals by directing their energies towards the mission of the organization.

McGregor's assumption is that people will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed. Thus, an important feature of an effective performance management system is one in which the individual's goals are aligned with the mission of an organization.

A workforce which exercises self-direction and self control is motivated by intrinsic factors that are well described in work by Herzberg (1966). When one thinks of a human being, Herzberg suggested a focus on two questions. First, how happy is the person? Second, how unhappy is the person? When reviewing job attitudes, Herzberg stressed that the focus must be on what the employee is seeking and what makes the employee happy. However, the second distinctly separate question which is not deducible from the first is, what does the employee wish to avoid and what makes the employee unhappy? One might be inclined to think if you remove the causes of dissatisfaction in the workplace, then job satisfaction would result. But this is not what Herzberg and his associates found in their research conducted in the late 1950s. Is it intrinsic or extrinsic factors, or both, that serve as motivational influences?

Herzberg found five factors which stood out as strong determiners of job

satisfaction: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. He coined the phrase “motivators” to describe these factors which encompassed the psychological needs. The five major job dissatisfiers identified were company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions. Herzberg referred to the dissatisfiers as “hygiene” factors which encompassed biological needs. Herzberg’s original hypothesis, which his study appears to have verified, was that the “motivator” factors contributed very little to job dissatisfaction and the “hygiene” factors contributed very little to job satisfaction.

Herzberg made the case that the “motivator” factors led to job satisfaction because of a need for growth or self-actualization which ought to cause organizational leaders and supervisors to ask whether they are focusing primarily on “hygiene” systems or “motivator” systems. Clegg’s study, (as cited in Herzberg, 1966), replicated Herzberg’s earlier research conducted in the late 1950s on factors affecting work motivation. Clegg’s research involved 58 county administrators of Cooperative Extension at the University of Nebraska. The results of the study indicated achievement and recognition as satisfiers and company policy and administration, working conditions, interpersonal relationships with subordinates and peers, supervision, and personal life as the six major dissatisfiers. Similar to Herzberg, Clegg’s findings indicated intrinsic factors as the motivating force. Assuming Clegg’s observations are valid, it’s logical that Extension

administrators would want to implement a performance management system which enhances the possibilities for educators to earn recognition, achievement, and advancement.

The two distinctly different sets of psychological and biological needs of human beings described by Herzberg have implications for performance management in a work setting. An effective performance management system ought to focus on “motivator” factors (e.g., job enrichment and opportunities for staff achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement). In such a system, supervisors would place a high premium on providing feedback and coaching and operating through people’s growth needs (psychological), as opposed to functioning through the manipulation of people’s “biological or hygiene” needs (e.g., obstacles presented by company policies or supervision).

The three theories of motivation put forth by Maslow (1970), McGregor (1960), and Herzberg (1966) point to achievement and recognition as two of the strongest motivators leading to high level performance and a sense of fulfillment. Accordingly, some of the questions which need to be answered are: What type of performance management system ought to be in place to determine and respond to motivational triggers such as the need for achievement and recognition? Why do performance management systems exist? Systems for managing and assessing performance have been in existence for many years; however, an effective performance management process necessitates understanding the purposes for

assessing performance.

Purposes for Assessing Performance

From the time of its inception centuries ago, the primary purpose of assessing performance has been to provide a basis for administrative decisions (terminations, layoffs, transfers, promotions, salary increases, etc.). Since the 1950s, assessment of performance has been commonplace in organizations and reasons for conducting such assessments of performance have expanded beyond solely administrative purposes. In addition to administrative reasons, assessments are conducted to provide developmental feedback, documentation for legal purposes, research, career planning, and organization development (Cleveland & Murphy, 1992; DeVries et al., 1986; Levinson, 1976; McGregor, 1957; Mohrman, et al., 1989; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Napier & Latham, 1986; Wexley & Klimoski, 1984).

Wise and his colleagues (1984) refer to two basic purposes for assessing educator performance including: (a) formative evaluation for helping improve performance, and (b) summative evaluation for making administrative decisions regarding employment status. Their research focused on teacher evaluation practices within 32 school districts. They concluded that a single evaluation system can serve only one goal well. Other assessment purposes such as fostering improvement and accountability “may require different standards of adequacy and evidence” (p. 11). They emphasized the importance of clarifying whether the

purpose of assessment was for improvement or accountability and matching the evaluation process to the specified purpose for which it was intended.

In the early 1960s, Johnson and Cassell (1962) described two basic objectives of assessing performance within Cooperative Extension. One objective was to determine present and potential performance and a second objective was to provide a framework for the development of the employee. They reported that research studies in Cooperative Extension found the purposes for assessing performance varied. The four most important purposes cited were (1) training, (2) salary adjustment, (3) promotion, and (4) professional improvement.

In his research, McNeill (as cited in Johnson and Cassell, 1962), cautioned against designing an appraisal program which serves more than one purpose. According to McNeill, experience in industry suggested ultimate failure in appraisal programs which had a multi-purpose design. Once employees became skeptical of the people doing the appraisal and its purposes, then the system lost its effectiveness. Johnson and Cassell (1962) emphasized improving the professional competence of Cooperative Extension educators as the greatest value of an appraisal program.

Buford, Bedeian and Lindner (1995) indicated that most states have some kind of system for assessing performance in Cooperative Extension which range from supervisory comments to various types of formal systems. These researchers

strongly suggested that an assessment system should include the following factors: (a) job analysis and content validity relating to performance criteria that measure work behavior; (b) clear statement of the purpose and use of performance assessment; (c) availability of all performance records to staff ; (d) cost-effective assessments; (e) periodic analysis of performance ratings to prevent errors and adverse effects; and (f) assessment instruments containing criteria relating to a job's critical work behaviors.

The seminal work in the design of a performance assessment system for Cooperative Extension was a research study conducted by the American Institutes for Research in 1979 under contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Cooperative Extension (Hahn, Brumback, & Edwards, 1979). The purpose was to perform the research and development work necessary to produce new selection and performance assessment systems for extension educators.

This study by Hahn et al. (1979) included the development of a job analysis for entry-level and experienced extension educator positions. This analysis was conducted by gathering data from questionnaires distributed to more than 1,250 educators in eight states. Subsequent to the results of the job analysis, a management-by-objectives performance assessment approach was field tested with 29 educators and supervisors in Michigan.

The final report by Hahn et al. (1979) recommended that Cooperative Extension in each state implement a performance assessment system consisting of

an annual cycle including:

1. Setting objectives by the extension educator for the performance period for review by the supervisor and mutually understood by both the educator and supervisor.

2. Annual self-report of accomplishments by the extension educator submitted to the supervisor.

3. Supervisor review of extension educator accomplishments and attainment of objectives as well as a review of performance against standards.

4. Consideration of external situational factors and individual factors which affect performance.

5. Discussion of performance review and analysis resulting in the educator knowing at what level the performance was judged to be; what factors and evidence were considered; and how the educator may improve in the subsequent period (p. 23).

Additional research is needed in states which implemented the performance assessment system recommended by the American Institutes for Research to determine the applicability and utilization of the system. The most recent research found in the literature pertaining to Cooperative Extension was a study conducted by Davis (1991) which surveyed 558 Cooperative Extension staff in six southern states regarding their perceptions of the present and ideal performance assessment

process. The respondents, presented with 56 statements, were asked to indicate, on a seven-point Likert type scale, if they agreed or disagreed with various aspects of the performance appraisal system as presently administered compared to their view of ideal administration.

The survey statements were grouped into 15 descriptive categories and all comparisons were found to be statistically significant. A t-test was used to determine differences between the present and ideal. Of the 15 areas, all but one indicated deficiencies in perceptions of the present performance assessment system when compared with perceptions of the ideal system. The only category where there was satisfaction with the present system was knowledge of performance assessment scores, that is, the educator being told the appraisal score he/she received from the supervisor.

Differences between means for the ideal process and the present process ranged from a high difference of 2.22 regarding knowledge of one's relative rank in comparison with colleagues to a low difference of .25 pertaining to educator recourse if they disagreed with their supervisor's assessment. As reported by Davis and Verma (1993), within the 14 categories indicating deficiencies with the present appraisal process, educator responses to situation statements reflected the following as some of the key findings:

There was a difference of 1.69 between the present and ideal means of proper training of the evaluator and 96% of respondents wanted evaluators to

receive proper training. There was a difference in means of 2.03 concerning frequency of supervisory observation and 91% desired supervisors to observe their work more often. Regarding satisfaction with the evaluation form, there was a difference of 2.09 in means between the present and ideal and 88% agreed that if they were satisfied with the evaluation form they would be more comfortable with the process.

There was a difference of .72 in present and ideal means pertaining to the relationship of performance appraisal to the plan of work and 87% of respondents wished to see the appraisal process related to the annual plan of work and to include in the plan an objective to improve educator performance through a management-by-objectives approach. As to the use of the evaluation form and outcome, there was a difference of 2.03 in the means between present and ideal and 95% of respondents hoped supervisors would help educators grow personally, become more competent, and improve performance by using the system both as a score card and a counseling tool.

The study concluded that the current system could be improved if:

(a) supervisors performing assessments are well trained and their observations of staff on-the-job are increased; (b) an appropriate performance evaluation form is utilized which recognizes the wide range of educator job duties; and (c) the process is multi-faceted to include professional development, cooperation between supervisor and educator, utilization of plan of work as a basis for appraisal,

feedback regarding performance, and a management by objectives system.

One of the categories in the study by Davis (1991) included questionnaire statements regarding the purpose of the performance assessment process. Study findings indicated educators felt that improvement of their job performance should be the overall purpose of performance assessment.

Research by Davis (1991) concentrated primarily on the performance appraisal phase of performance management. It would be useful to discover perceptions regarding the overall process of performance management which would encompass two other central elements including performance planning and feedback and coaching. Based on a review of the literature, there are three phases that contribute to effective performance management: (a) performance planning, (b) performance feedback and coaching, and (c) overall performance appraisal (Drake Beam Morin, 1993; Engelmann & Roesch, 1996; Gross, 1995; Plachy, 1988; Repinski & Bartsch, 1996; Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993; Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1987; Shaw, Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1995; Swan, 1991).

Performance Planning

Tracey (1991) defined planning as “the keystone of successful management and prerequisite to performance of all other managerial functions” (p. 270).

Planning what one intends to accomplish is critical to effective performance. A commonly used phrase is, “if you don’t know where you are going, then you won’t know when you have arrived”.

At the outset of a process to manage performance, one must establish a work plan. The work plan becomes the basis for performance expectations (Drake Beam Morin, 1993; Hahn, Brumback & Edwards, 1979; Plachy, 1988). There must be a clear relationship between the purpose of the organization and the work plan of the individual. Alignment of organizational goals and objectives with individual performance goals and objectives is essential for achieving high performance.

The purpose of the organization is what guides individual performance efforts. In striving to carry out its mission and achieve peak performance, Covey (1995) cites the importance of alignment between the goals of each employee and the mission of the organization. Covey refers to such an alignment as “co-missioning”, which involves co-mingling of the organizational and individual mission.

Esque, Kastelic, and Simington (1994) stressed the importance of managing performance at both individual and organizational levels and linking efforts such that individual performance contributed directly to organizational objectives. They attributed ineffective performance management to a lack of clearly stated organizational objectives. Drucker (1974) emphasized the need for management to provide direction to the organization it manages including the establishment of mission, objectives, and the organization of resources to accomplish results. He stated, “objectives are the basis for work and

assignments. . . unless we determine what shall be measured and what the yardstick of measurement in an area will be, the area itself will not be seen” (p. 101).

Establishing performance objectives is an important part of performance planning. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988, hereafter referred to as Joint Committee), cited the importance of performance objectives in the following statement: “a carefully developed and sufficiently detailed and delineated description of the role, responsibilities, *performance objectives*, and qualifications, is prerequisite to specifying relevant assessment criteria” (p. 86).

Without a plan, individuals are apt to pursue random activities that are not focused on organizational goals and well-defined objectives (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995). Work motivation and what people think and do are influenced by goal setting. There is a strong research base for recognizing the value of goal setting and its effects on employee motivation.

Locke, Shaw, Saari and Latham (1981, as cited in Latham, 1990) concluded that goals provide a specific direction for people to move toward and that more challenging goals are more likely to result in high performance than are easy goals. In studies in which control groups, random assignment, negligible attrition, controls for ability, objective performance measures, and a great variety of tasks and situations were included, Locke et al. reported that 99 of 110 studies “found that specific, hard goals produced better performance than medium, easy,

do your best, or no goals” (p. 187). Research by Locke, Shaw, Saari and Latham (1981, as cited in Glaser, 1987, p.#3) involving 110 goal-setting experiments, showed a median improvement in performance (quality, quantity, etc.) of 16%, with a range from 2% to 58%.

Meyer, Kay, and French (1965), in their seminal study involving 92 appraisees in an experimental group of General Electric Company employees, found that employee participation in the goal-setting process affected performance improvement and that establishing specific plans and goals increased the likelihood of employees focusing on those aspects of job performance.

Within Cooperative Extension it is the plan of work which sets forth that which is to be accomplished. It is at the performance planning phase of the performance management process that plans of work are discussed and expectations agreed upon. According to Hahn et al. (1979), planning within Cooperative Extension in most states is in a management-by-objectives framework. The end result of the performance planning phase between a supervisor and an educator should be a mutual understanding of agreed upon objectives and their relative weights. A mutual understanding of what is to be accomplished provides the foundation for performance management throughout the plan of work performance cycle. Once the plan of work commences and throughout the performance period, feedback and coaching, another central element of the performance management process must be implemented.

Performance Feedback and Coaching

Throughout the performance period it is essential that individuals receive regular feedback and coaching. Unfortunately, this is the phase of the performance management process that appears to be the most ineffectively implemented function by supervisors (Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993). Giving feedback and coaching to individuals is an integral contributor to successful performance.

Feedback has been shown to affect work performance and other outcomes related to the organization (Fedor, 1991). It has been estimated that 50% of performance problems in business are the result of a lack of feedback (Fournies, 1987). If ineffective performance is the result of a lack of feedback, then it is critical that feedback be provided to address issues of performance improvement.

Besides the lack of feedback, an additional problem cited is the predominant emphasis on negative feedback. Generally, according to Spitzer (1995), supervisors provide negative feedback five times more often than positive feedback. Constructive feedback is an important motivator for people to strive towards the achievement of goals (Joint Committee, 1988). Meyer, Kay, and French (1965) found that individuals receiving an above average number of criticisms, "generally showed less goal achievement 10 to 12 weeks later than those who had received fewer criticisms" (p. 172).

Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor (1979) defined feedback as "a special case of the general communication process in which some sender (i.e. source) conveys a

message to a recipient. In the case of feedback, the message comprises information about the recipient" (p. 350). They further stated, "it provides information about the correctness, accuracy, or adequacy of a response" (p. 351).

Feedback provides an opportunity for the employee to increase chances for success. Successful supervisors have the ability to give employees effective feedback and provide coaching in both instances of successful and unsuccessful performance. If an employee is performing effectively, the successful behavior is indicated by the supervisor and coaching is provided to further enhance performance. If an employee is not performing effectively, it is necessary for the supervisor to assume the role of a coach and engage in a coaching process to improve performance.

Coaching as defined by Tracey (1991) is a one-on-one, face to face relationship designed to develop job-related knowledge and skills and improve performance. Phillips (1992) describes the goal of coaching as "redirecting an employee's behavior to improve future performance, while continuing to build a relationship of mutual trust with the employee" (p. 1). Glaser (1987) defined coaching as "a performance management activity a manager engages in to help an employee improve his/her job performance...or to change behavior to do something he/she should be doing or to stop doing something he/she should not be doing" (p. 11). Positive employee performance is recognized in the coaching process as well as indicating problem areas and a means for improvement.

Evered and Selman (1995) defined a coach as “someone who has an ongoing, committed partnership with a player/performer and who empowers that person, or team to exceed prior levels of play/performance” (p.197). They refer to coaching as “the managerial activity of creating, by communication only, the climate, environment, and context that empowers individuals and teams to generate results. . .and to be empowered by the results they generate” (p. 195).

Meyer, Kay and French (1965) found that coaching should be done on a daily basis as opposed to a once-a-year occurrence, because employees accept performance improvement suggestions when they occur in a less concentrated form throughout the year as opposed to sharing it all during a formal and comprehensive annual appraisal, which often results in the employee feeling “overloaded” and defensive. Because studies of the learning process indicate that feedback is less effective when much time elapses between the performance and feedback, Meyer et al., advocated frequent discussions between a supervisor and employee. The Joint Committee (1988) emphasized the importance of follow-up activities and working with employees to design appropriate developmental plans that will assist them in overcoming deficiencies and reinforcing strengths.

Taylor, Fisher, and Ilgen (1990) advocated for regular feedback sessions between supervisors and employees as a mechanism to achieve higher congruency between individual and organizational standards. They indicated that feedback is likely to result in a desired behavioral response when “(a) sources clearly

communicate the standards they will be using to evaluate behavior and the rationale behind their use; (b) the content of descriptive feedback facilitates recipients' accurate assessments of performance causes; (c) sources attempt to correct inaccurate expectancy perceptions held by recipients through the use of performance analysis, modeling, or persuasion; and (d) reward contingencies are thoughtfully established, e.g., if exceeding the standard is desired, it must be rewarded, and communicated by policy and practice" (p. 246-247).

Wexley and Klimoski (1984) cautioned that most research regarding the best approach to take in providing appraisal feedback does not reflect true complexities of organizational reality. They stressed that selecting an optimum approach is not that simple depending on employee characteristics, manager characteristics, manager-employee relationships and organizational characteristics.

Fedor (1991) suggested there are many reasons why feedback might not be fully considered by the recipient and therefore not be "effective". Fedor's evidence indicated that supervisor and managerial training is essential to help in understanding the wide array of reasons why feedback might not be fully considered by the recipient. Lack of supervisor observation of an employee, which includes a representative sample of one's work performance, is cited by Taylor, Fisher, and Ilgen (1990) as a key contributor to an incompatible feedback system. Another reason cited by Mink, Owen, and Mink (1993) contributing to a lack of recipient acceptance of feedback related to the quality of the relationship between

the supervisor and the employee.

For feedback to be fully considered, there must be a level of trust. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) indicated the likelihood that higher trust levels exist where there is a developmental focus to help improve performance as opposed to a punitive focus. Lawler, Mohrman, and Resnick (1986) found that when the organizational climate was one of high trust, support, and openness, both employees and supervisors viewed the appraisal process positively.

The Joint Committee (1988) discussed the need for the development of mutual trust and understanding, stating when the parties involved “share a sense of professionalism and basic human dignity, they are less likely to be anxious and feel negative toward the evaluation...overall, the exercise of good human relations can support the evaluatee’s sense of worth and professionalism, foster better service, and strengthen the credibility of personnel evaluation” (p. 40). High levels of trust and interpersonal communication are important to effectively completing the third and final phase of the performance management process which entails the overall performance appraisal.

Performance Appraisal

DeVries, Morrison, Shullman and Gerlach (1986), defined performance appraisal as "the process by which an organization measures and evaluates an individual employee's behavior and accomplishments for a finite time period" (p. 2). The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988)

defined personnel evaluation as “the systematic assessment of a person’s performance and/or qualifications in relation to a professional role and some specified and defensible institutional purpose” (p. 7-8). Thus, an important question to ask at the outset of an appraisal process is what the purpose is from the perspective of the organization, supervisor and employee?

The problems of appraisal serving more than one purpose have been discussed among several researchers. One of the most important variables in terms of its impact on the appraisal of performance is defining what the purpose is (Kavanaugh, Borman, Hedge, & Gould, 1987). The Joint Committee (1988) emphasized the importance of identifying both the users and intended uses of an appraisal. In the research of Mohrman et al. (1989), they discovered great confusion among supervisors and employees as to the purposes of performance appraisals. They stressed the critical need for supervisors and employees to decide on the purposes of performance appraisal.

Both the appraiser and the appraised need to mutually define what is meant by performance and the purposes for appraising performance before the process begins. Definition of the performance being rated is essential to an effective appraisal process. There must be an understanding of the purpose for the process. For example, determining whether the assessment is being conducted to form the basis of an administrative decision or to enhance the development of the employee is important to know at the outset (Wexley & Klimoski, 1984).

A key question that must be explored prior to conducting appraisals is what the primary goals of appraisal are from the perspective of the supervisor conducting the appraisal, the employee being evaluated and the organization. Sometimes the needs of employees conflict with the goals of the organization and the control mechanisms used to monitor performance collide with the developmental feedback mechanisms designed to enhance employee growth and development (Levinson, 1970; Stroul, 1987).

Cleveland and Murphy (1992) believed that appraisal should be viewed as a social and communication process with participants each pursuing goals that are substantially influenced by the social context of work. They emphasized that particular attention must be paid to the goals pursued by each participant (e.g. the rater, the ratee, and the organization).

Different constituents may have different goals and thus define different purposes of appraisal which influence behaviors. These differences may considerably affect the outcome of appraisal (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Cleveland and Murphy (1992) emphasized that information collected about performance for one purpose may not be useful for other purposes. Such incompatibility negates the possibility of an effective appraisal process if there are conflicting purposes.

For example, Levinson (1970) was critical of a management by objectives appraisal process, if one of the primary concerns in performance review is

counseling the subordinate. He pointed out the lack of provisions for counseling in most reviews or for documenting such discussions. The goals of rater, ratee and organization are important to identify at the outset so the needs of each can be met in the appraisal session.

Rater goals. Raters use performance appraisal for a variety of goals. Cleveland and Murphy (1992, p. 128) identified four general categories of goals that raters are most likely to pursue: (a) task performance goals which involve using performance appraisal to increase ratees' performance levels or to maintain present performance levels; (b) interpersonal goals which involve using appraisal to maintain or improve interpersonal relations between the supervisor and subordinates; (c) strategic goals which involve using appraisal to increase the supervisor's and/or the work group's standing in the organization; and (d) internalized goals which are the product of the raters values and benefits.

Successful implementation of a performance appraisal depends on the skill of the rater. The Joint Committee (1988) pointed out if raters are not viewed by ratees as credible with the requisite skills to evaluate them, then ratees are apt to be uncooperative and will not accept the system. Martin and Bartol (1986) cited the importance for the rater to thoroughly understand the usefulness of appraisals. Wexley and Klimoski (1984), identified prerequisites of quality appraisals: (1) being in a position to observe the behavior and performance of the individual of interest; (2) being knowledgeable about the dimensions or features of performance;

- (3) having an understanding of the scale format and the instrument itself; and
- (4) being motivated to do a conscientious job of rating (p. 55).

Ratee Goals. The goals of the ratee are usually not as clear as those of the rater or organization. However, they are important because they may affect the appraisal ratings provided by the supervisor. Ratees may have such goals as finding out how they are doing, how to improve on the job, and what is indicative of effective performance. Depending on the perceived rater goals by the supervisor, performance ratings may be hardened or softened (Cleveland & Murphy, 1992).

Of importance to the ratee, is to experience appraisal procedures which are regarded as fair and contribute to performance development. A procedure likely to contribute to perceived fairness by the ratee is the inclusion of an opportunity for self-appraisal. Lawler, Mohrman, and Resnick (1986) learned in their study involving 700 manager-subordinate pairs from all levels of management, including nine different businesses from within the General Electric Corporation, that 90 percent of raters and 86 percent of ratees felt that an employee's self-appraisal should be an important part of performance appraisal.

A key advantage of self-appraisal is that it provides the ratee with an opportunity to assess their own performance prior to meeting with a supervisor. The self-appraisal can then be used as a basis for discussion with the supervisor including an exploration of any perceptual differences between the ratee and rater (Heckel, 1978; Plavner, 1992; Spitzer, 1995).

Organizational goals. Evidence from recent research indicates that developmental feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses is one of the top two uses of performance appraisal, with the other being salary administration (Cleveland & Murphy, 1992). It's important for organizations to determine which of these purposes will be the focus of appraisal.

When a key purpose is developmental, an important way to improve the professional competence of staff is by providing developmental feedback through a performance appraisal interview. Maier (as cited in Johnson & Cassell, 1962), described three different methods of counseling in a feedback interview which included: (a) "Tell and Sell" in which the supervisor tells the employee what the appraisal is with a goal of having them accept the evaluation and follow the suggested plans for improvement, (b) "Tell and Listen" in which the supervisor communicates the results of the appraisal to the employee and then listens to the employee reaction, and (c) "Problem-Solving" where the supervisor does not render judgment but rather the supervisor and employee mutually come up with solutions to improve performance situations. Some feedback approaches may be a combination of all of the above.

According to Krayer's (1987) review of the literature, performance appraisal interviews typically serve two important functions which include a review of an employee's job behaviors over a certain time frame and the establishment of goals and objectives for which the employee should strive before the next

evaluation period. Involving the employee and establishing future goals for the subordinate to achieve on the job during the interview discussion have been found to result in several positive outcomes.

Performance appraisal serves as both a beginning and end marker in the performance management process. As an end point, the analysis of past performance provides a focus for planning the future (Guinn, 1987). Involvement of the employee in the work planning discussion leads to a greater feeling of ownership on the part of the employee and a higher likelihood that the performance management process will meet its objectives (Lawler, Mohrman, & Resnick, 1986). Performance management ought to be regarded as a shared process between the employee and supervisor as opposed to a one-sided, top-down supervisory responsibility.

Summary

Clearly, the challenge of fulfilling Cooperative Extension's mission is closely linked to the effective performance of extension educators. The extension educator is the organization's most important resource in accomplishing the organization's purpose. Effective extension educators are guided by effective supervisors. Performance management is the process which establishes and maintains the interaction between the educator and the supervisor. The degree to which the educator and the supervisor understand, agree on, and value the elements of performance management will impact on the degree to which

Cooperative Extension fulfills its mission.

The literature is filled with information regarding the annual performance appraisal, however, there is a lack of study on the overall process of performance management which is on going throughout the year. Models of performance management reflect the notion that the effectiveness of a system is based on the inclusion of three common elements, i.e., performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and overall performance appraisal.

In preparation for the challenges facing Cooperative Extension in the twenty-first century, it is hoped this study will help address one of the organization's national strategies which calls for a reassessment of Extension's performance management system and increased organizational flexibility and responsiveness. This research was intended to provide a better understanding of how extension educators perceived the performance management process within their respective state Cooperative Extension organization. The overall purpose was to provide information which will form a basis for bridging the gap between what educators perceived as present and ideal performance management practices.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter reviews the following: research design; sample population; study limitations; development of survey instrument; procedures utilized; and data analysis.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to determine extension educator perceptions regarding performance management. The findings would be useful in determining the performance management system effectiveness and identification of areas for improvement.

The research method consisted of surveying a sample of extension educators in eight states within the northeast region. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?
2. What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

3. What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?

4. How do extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Population and Sample

Cooperative Extension is structured within four regions of the country including: (1) Northeastern, (2) North Central, (3) Western, and (4) Southern. The geographic focus of this study was the northeastern region which consists of Connecticut, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Each of the states within the northeastern region were invited to participate in the study through a letter to each state director (Appendix A). The study was not conducted in a state without support from the state Director of Cooperative Extension. Five states declined and eight states agreed to participate.

The subjects for this study were Cooperative Extension educators from eight states within the northeast region. Participating states and numbers of extension educators are noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Extension Educator Population and Sample

State	Extension educators	30% Sample
Delaware	14	4
Maine	46	14
Massachusetts	60	18
New Hampshire	38	11
New York	314	94
Pennsylvania	271	81
Rhode Island	7	2
Vermont	29	9
Total	779	233

A 30% stratified random sample was selected from a list of staff provided by each state cooperative extension director. The sample total from the eight states identified in Table 1 included 233 extension educators. A proportional allocation was made in which each state surveyed had a sample that was proportional to its size in the total population of staff from the eight states. To ensure a random sampling from each of the participating states, participants were selected randomly using a random-number-generating computer program.

Limitations of the Study

Extension educators in some states are considered faculty and are not necessarily supervised by an individual on an ongoing basis, nor do they necessarily have one individual who is responsible for conducting performance appraisals. This study was limited to states in the Northeast that had an appropriate supervisory structure which included an immediate supervisor for extension educators. For the purpose of this study, a supervisor was defined as a professional within Cooperative Extension representing the first level of management (immediate supervisor) and designated with the responsibility for managing the performance of extension educators through phases which include performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and overall performance appraisal. Three of the 13 states within the northeast region chose not to participate in the study because they did not have an organizational structure which included an “immediate supervisor” as defined for this study. Two other states decided not to participate in the study due to extensive reviews and reorganization underway in those states.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument consisting of a mailed questionnaire (Appendix B) was developed to survey staff and determine the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators regarding performance management. The questions in the instrument represented a synthesis of the important areas cited in the literature on

performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Two major sources from the literature serving as the basis for the survey instrument included: 1) personnel evaluation standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988), and 2) a national survey conducted by Rogers, Miller and Worklan (1993) for Development Dimensions International, Inc. and the Society for Human Resource Management.

The first major source for developing questions in the survey instrument was the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The Joint Committee was comprised of 16 members representing 14 major organizations of professional educators, researchers, and government officials which undertook the project of developing standards beginning in 1984 and published its final report in 1988. The personnel standards developed by the joint committee were designed to assist educational organizations in examining and improving their systems for evaluating educators.

The Joint Committee identified four basic attributes judged to be essential to all evaluations encompassing 21 standards contained in the four basic attributes of propriety, utility, feasibility, and accuracy. First, the five propriety standards are aimed at ensuring that the rights of persons affected by an evaluation system are protected. Second, the five utility standards are intended to guide evaluations so that they will be informative, timely and useful. Third, the three feasibility

standards are intended to increase the prospects for evaluations that are practical as well politically and fiscally viable. Finally, the eight accuracy standards are established to ensure that the performance information obtained represents conclusions drawn from data which are sound, defensible and valid.

The second major source for developing questions in the survey instrument was from a national study of current and future performance management practices conducted jointly by Development Dimensions International (DDI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). The DDI/SHRM survey instrument (Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993) was constructed to explore levels of satisfaction and proficiency with current performance management practices. Members of the DDI/SHRM research team, which included some senior officials with doctorates, generated the questions based on consulting expertise, business experience, and the design of an effective performance management system. The instrument was tested both within and outside of the sponsoring organizations for clarity of instructions and questions.

The survey instrument for this study consisted of 69 items contained within four sections including: (a) perceptions and feelings (53 items); (b) overall satisfaction (4 items); (c) summary (3 items); and (d) demographic (9 items). In section one, which focused on perceptions and feelings regarding performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal, respondents were asked to circle an appropriate number on a 6-point Likert scale

which included: 1, completely disagree; 2, disagree; 3, somewhat disagree; 4, somewhat agree; 5, agree; 6, completely agree.

Section two was designed to assess overall satisfaction with the performance management system and respondents were provided with a 6-point Likert scale including: 1, highly ineffective; 2, ineffective; 3, somewhat ineffective; 4, somewhat effective; 5, effective; 6, highly effective. Section three included an open-ended comments section wherein respondents were given an opportunity to express additional thoughts concerning performance management and those thoughts were summarized and some actual comments provided as part of the data analysis.

Section four, the final section, included fixed-type questions for providing demographic data. The demographic data described the characteristics of the respondents and was utilized for descriptive purposes only in the data analysis.

The design effectiveness and clarity of understanding of the survey instrument was validated by a group of experts who reviewed the survey and made suggestions (Appendix C). These experts included five State Program Leaders within the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, all of whom had been educators in the field and were currently responsible for statewide leadership in all program areas as well as the supervision of all extension educators in New Hampshire. Appropriate changes were made to the survey instrument based upon suggestions provided by the five experts.

Each of the five state program leaders were asked to provide the names of two extension educators from each of their respective program areas to participate in a pilot test. The questionnaire was pilot tested (Appendix D) on the selected group of 10 extension educators from New Hampshire who were not included in the study. Following the pilot test, final revisions were made and the survey instrument was approved by the University of New Hampshire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.

The questionnaire, in booklet form, was sent with an explanatory cover letter (Appendix E) to the 30% sample of extension educators within the eight participating states. The explanatory cover letter accompanying the survey included a statement of support from each Cooperative Extension Director indicating approval of the study and encouragement of staff to complete the survey.

Data Collection

A postage-paid, self-addressed business reply envelope was provided for returning the instrument. In order to determine who did and did not return the questionnaire, each survey was numbered to identify respondents and non-respondents for follow-up purposes only.

Respondents were asked to return the questionnaires within two weeks. Following the two week period, a written reminder was sent (Appendix F). Phone calls were made to individuals who had not responded following three weeks of

the original mailing. At the end of a four week period, a second mailing of the questionnaire was sent to non-respondents (Appendix G). A response rate of 88% was obtained as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Response Rate

State	Number Surveyed	Usable Response	Non-Respondent	Response Rate
Delaware	4	3	1	75%
Maine	14	14	0	100%
Massachusetts	18	14	4	78%
New Hampshire	11	11	0	100%
New York	94	76	18	81%
Pennsylvania	81	77	4	95%
Rhode Island	2	2	0	100%
Vermont	9	9	0	100%
Total	233	206	27	88%

Data Analysis

The data on returned questionnaires were coded and entered into a data base computer program. Subsequently, the data was transferred into the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Answers to the research questions were sought by analyzing the data through the use of SPSS.

The four research questions were:

Research Question 1 - What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Research Question 2 - What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Research Question 3 - What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?

Research Question 4 - How do extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

The statistical techniques applied in the analysis for each of the four research questions included:

Research Question 1 - Statement means and standard deviations were

computed for the Extension educators' responses to 53 questions in Section 1 of the survey for both the present and ideal situations. Likert-type scale interpretation of means were as follows: completely disagree, 1 - 1.5; disagree, 1.51 - 2.5; somewhat disagree, 2.51 - 3.5; somewhat agree, 3.51 - 4.5; agree, 4.51 - 5.5; completely agree, 5.51 - 6.

Research Question 2 - Statement means and standard deviations were computed for the Extension educators' responses to questions in Section 1 of the survey for both the present and ideal situations. The mean scores for the aggregate (including all eight states) were used. The mean of the present situation was subtracted from the mean of the ideal situation to ascertain the differences in means.

A one-tailed t-test for paired samples was conducted to determine if the differences between the present and ideal statement means were significant. That is, were the differences between the means for present and ideal situations, as reported by the 206 respondents, likely to be representative of Extension educators in the states surveyed. All t-tests were conducted at an alpha level of .001.

In addition, eta-squared, the proportion of explained variance, was calculated to index the strength of the relationship between the present situation and the ideal situation. Standards for interpreting eta-squared differ considerably among researchers. For the purposes of interpretation, the following eta-squared index, as outlined by Jaccard and Becker (1990), was used: less than .10

constituted a weak effect; between .10 to .25 constituted a moderate effect; and greater than .25 constituted a strong effect.

Research Question 3 - A statement mean and standard deviation was computed for the Extension educators' response to question #4 in Section 2 of the survey which asked respondents to: "Rate how you perceive your current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help you be effective in your job".

Research Question 4 - Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of the relationship between extension educators' perception of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system and responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for question #4 of Section 2 with questions #1, #2 and #3 in Section 2.

Levels for interpreting what constitutes a large effect for correlational studies have not been standardized. For the purposes of discussion, the following Pearson correlation guidelines outlined by Cohen (as cited in Wolf, 1986, p.#31) were selected for effect sizes: small ($r=.10$); medium ($r=.30$); and large ($r=.50$). Hence, a Pearson correlation coefficient value of .76 would be considered strong; a correlation of .36 would be considered moderate; and a value of .16 would be considered weak.

In addition, correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of the relationship between responses in Section 1 within the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal with the perceptions of effectiveness for each of these respective categories rated by respondents on question #1, #2, and #3 in Section 2. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed for each of the statements in Section 1 (Performance Planning #1 - #16; Performance Feedback and Coaching #17 - #31; and Performance Appraisal #32 - #53) and their corresponding statements in Section 2 (#1 - Performance Planning; #2 - Performance Feedback and Coaching; and #3 - Performance Appraisal). All of these correlations were tested for significance and ranked in order, i.e., those having the strongest correlation and those having the weakest correlation.

Two additional areas of data analysis included response summaries to open-response questions in section three and reported demographic data from section four of the survey. Within Section 3, respondents had a chance to provide additional comments related to the performance management process. Categories for the open-response questions were identified that emerged from the respondent answers and similar responses were grouped within the categories. Those responses were summarized and some actual quotations of the educators' likes, dislikes, and recommendations were recited.

Section four included fixed-type questions for providing demographic data

which was utilized for descriptive purposes only. Frequency distribution summaries were determined for demographic data including years of experience, years in current position, job classification, gender, race, age, and highest degree held.

Summary

This study was designed to determine extension educator perceptions regarding performance management which would be useful in determining the effectiveness of the system and identifying areas for improvement. This chapter presented an overview of the methodology used in the study including research design, sample population, study limitations, survey instrumentation, procedures utilized, and techniques applied in the analysis of data. The results of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of survey responses regarding the perceptions of performance management from 206 Cooperative Extension educators, representing 26% of all extension educators in eight states within the northeast region of the United States, are presented in this chapter. First, demographic characteristics of the respondents will be reported. Second, findings for each of the following four research questions will be delineated:

Research Question 1 - What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Research Question 2 - What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Research Question 3 - What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?

Research Question 4 - How do extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Demographic Characteristics of Study Respondents

Respondents in the study worked an average of 14 years for Cooperative Extension, ranging from 1 year to 39 years. Ten years was average for educators in their present position, with a range of 1 year to 39 years.

Job classifications were diverse. Educators worked in a variety of program areas including but not limited to agriculture, natural resources, family, community and youth development, and administration. One hundred twenty-six females and 80 males participated.

The racial makeup included White, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, and Asian persons. Age of respondents ranged from below 25 to 64 years. As is common with extension educators, all possessed degrees.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	n	Percent
Years in Cooperative Extension		
1- 5 years	40	19.5%
6-10	37	18%
11-15	40	19.5%
16-20	41	20%
21-25	22	11%

Table 3 Continued

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	n	Percent
Years in Cooperative Extension (continued)		
26-30	19	9%
31 and over	7	3%
Total	206	100%
Years in present position		
1- 5 years	80	39%
6-10	52	25%
11-15	30	15%
16-20	21	10%
21-25	11	5%
26 and over	12	6%
Total	206	100%
Job Classification		
Agriculture	62	30%
Community Development	6	3%
Family & Youth/4-H	17	8%
4-H & Youth	41	20%
Home Economics/Fam. Dev.	45	22%
Natural Resources	13	6%
Other	20	10%
No response	2	1%
Total	206	100%

Table 3 Continued

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	n	Percent
Gender		
Female	126	61%
Male	80	39%
Total	206	100%
Racial makeup		
White	192	93%
Black	5	2%
Hispanic	3	2%
Multi-Racial	2	1%
Asian	1	.5%
Other	1	.5%
No response	2	1%
Total	206	100%
Age		
Under 25	1	.5%
25-34	30	15%
35-44	70	34%
45-55	79	38%
56-64	25	12%
No response	1	.5%
Total	206	100%
Highest degree held		
B.S. or B.A.	43	21%
Masters	112	54%
Masters + 15 hours	21	10%
Masters + 30 hours	14	7%
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	13	6%
No response	3	2%
Total	206	100%

Research Question 1

What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system were measured by responses to a set of 53 statements in Section 1 of the survey. A 6-point Likert scale, including degrees of disagreement and agreement was used (1 = *completely disagree*; 6 = *completely agree*).

Table 4 shows the statements, means, and standard deviations for both the present and ideal situations. Mean responses for the present situation ranged from 3.47 to 5.18. The mean of means for responses to the present situation was 4.24. Mean responses for the ideal situation ranged from 4.86 to 5.67. The mean of means for responses to the ideal situation was 5.36.

Table 4 also includes a ranking for statements within each of the categories. The 16 statements (#1 - #16) within the category of performance planning are ranked with 1 indicating the highest mean and 16 the lowest mean. Within the category of performance feedback and coaching, the 15 statements (# 17 - #31) are ranked with 1 for the highest mean and 15 for the lowest. The 22 statements (#32 - #53) within the category of performance appraisal are ranked with 1 indicating the highest mean and 22 for the lowest mean.

The 53 statements in Section 1 of the survey were grouped under three categories and will be reported by each category including: performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Performance Planning. The mean responses for statements within the category of performance planning for the present situation ranged between “somewhat agree” and “agree” for all statements. The statement with the highest mean among respondents regarding the present situation was that educators do have strong ownership of their plan of work (Statement 6 $\underline{M} = 4.94$). The area with the lowest mean among educators regarding their present situation was that their supervisor is effective in helping them identify their training and development needs (Statement 8 $\underline{M} = 3.67$).

Educator mean perceptions of the ideal situation ranged between “agree” and “completely agree” for all statements. The statement with the highest mean was that educators should be aware of the criteria utilized to evaluate performance (Statement 7 $\underline{M} = 5.67$). Two statements reflecting the lowest means among educator responses were that goals and objectives should be developed jointly with the supervisor and that performance standards should be demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele (Statement 4 $\underline{M} = 4.92$; Statement 11 $\underline{M} = 4.86$).

Performance Feedback and Coaching. Responses concerning current performance feedback and coaching ranged between “somewhat agree” and “agree” for all but one statement which was within the range of “somewhat

disagree”. The statement with the highest mean among respondents was that the educator and supervisor share a common goal of achieving high performance (Statement 27 $\bar{M} = 5.00$). The area with the lowest mean among educators regarding their present situation was that they are sufficiently observed to be adequately evaluated (Statement 24 $\bar{M} = 3.47$).

Educator mean perceptions of the ideal situation ranged between “agree” and “completely agree” for all statements. The statement with the highest mean was that there should be an open, trusting relationship between the educator and the supervisor (Statement 28 $\bar{M} = 5.65$). There was also a high mean response for the statement indicating that the supervisor should be less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” (Statement 26 $\bar{M} = 5.62$).

Performance Appraisal. Regarding their present situation, educator mean responses for all statements ranged between “somewhat agree” and “agree”. The two statements with the highest mean responses among educators were that they receive a performance appraisal at least once a year and that performance is jointly reviewed between the supervisor and educator (Statement 35 $\bar{M} = 5.18$; Statement 38 $\bar{M} = 5.04$).

The area with the lowest mean response among educators regarding their present situation was that supervisors are held accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness (Statement 53 $\bar{M} = 3.80$). In addition, there were low mean responses with the statements that formal input from peers is used by the supervisor to assess educator performance and that performance appraisals are a

priority at all levels of the organization (Statement 44 \bar{M} = 3.84; Statement 52 \bar{M} = 3.84).

Educator mean perceptions of the ideal situation ranged from “agree” and “completely agree” for all statements. The statement with the highest mean was that the supervisor should take a problem-solving approach versus a judgmental, punishment-oriented approach when appraising performance (Statement 48 \bar{M} = 5.60). The statement with the lowest mean was that formal input from peers should be used by the supervisor to assess performance (Statement 44 \bar{M} = 4.87).

Table 4

Extension educators' perception of the present and ideal performance management system

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
PERFORMANCE PLANNING						
1. I do/should have a clear description of what is expected of me.	4.37	1.08	7	5.57	.59	2
2. Identifying objectives and behaviors does/should help me focus my efforts.	4.81	.92	3	5.45	.63	5
3. My professional goals are/should be aligned with the goals of the organization.	4.61	.95	5	5.27	.73	12
4. My goals and objectives are/should be developed jointly with my supervisor.	3.80	1.19	14	4.92	.90	15
5. My goals and objectives are/should be updated as needs change during the performance cycle.	4.23	1.29	8	5.39	.77	6
6. I do/should have strong ownership of my plan of work.	4.94	1.05	1	5.46	.71	4
7. I am/should be aware of criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance.	4.49	1.21	6	5.67	.50	1
8. My supervisor is/should be effective in helping me identify my training and development needs.	3.67	1.27	16	5.24	.77	13
9. My performance is/should be measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by me and my supervisor.	3.88	1.22	13	5.33	.72	9

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
10. The mission, values, vision and goals of the organization are/should be well understood and serve as the foundation for the performance management process.	4.14	1.23	9	5.38	.64	7
11. My performance standards are/should be demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele.	4.00	1.12	11	4.86	1.01	16
12. The organization's mission and strategic direction is/should be communicated to me by my supervisor.	4.14	1.31	10	5.31	.76	10
13. My supervisor does/should make clear to me what the performance standards are.	3.98	1.23	12	5.36	.65	8
14. My supervisor does/should make clear to me the organizational results extension administration want to achieve.	3.78	1.25	15	5.20	.64	14
15. My individual plan of work objectives are/should be clearly consistent with organizational goals and objectives of the Cooperative Extension organization.	4.81	.88	4	5.31	.68	11
16. During the discussion of my proposed plan of work objectives, my supervisor does/should encourage and give me every chance to express my ideas and concerns.	4.91	1.10	2	5.54	.58	3

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND COACHING						
17. I do/should receive feedback from my supervisor throughout the year about how I'm doing.	3.65	1.40	11	5.47	.58	6
18. During the year, my strengths are/should be clearly pointed out to me.	3.84	1.35	10	5.42	.64	9
19. During the year, my areas for improvement are/should be clearly pointed out to me.	3.59	1.33	13	5.45	.61	8
20. My supervisor does/should provide feedback that includes specific examples of how I am using behaviors and skills.	3.62	1.28	12	5.26	.73	13
21. I do/should get the coaching I need during the year to achieve my goals and improve my behaviors.	3.53	1.32	14	5.26	.79	12
22. I do/should have access to all the information I need to track my performance.	3.89	1.29	9	5.30	.69	11
23. I am/should be responsible for tracking my performance relative to my goals.	4.81	.92	2	5.18	.79	15
24. I am/should be sufficiently observed to be adequately evaluated.	3.47	1.43	15	5.25	.63	14
25. Feedback about my performance does/should come from multiple sources.	4.37	1.33	4	5.41	.68	10

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
26. My supervisor is/should be less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” who builds successful team members.	4.24	1.47	6	5.62	.55	2
27. My supervisor and I do/should share a common goal of achieving high performance.	5.00	1.03	1	5.59	.53	3
28. There is/should be an open, trusting relationship between me and my supervisor.	4.57	1.39	3	5.65	.50	1
29. My supervisor does/should let me know how she/he feels about my performance and what needs to be improved.	4.12	1.26	8	5.46	.53	7
30. My supervisor does/should demonstrate an ongoing genuine care for helping me improve performance and better serve clientele.	4.36	1.34	5	5.52	.56	4
31. My supervisor does/should have knowledge of progress I make in achieving my objectives.	4.17	1.20	7	5.50	.52	5
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL						
32. The purpose of the performance appraisal is/should be made clear to me by my supervisor.	4.55	1.12	6	5.47	.56	6

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
33. My performance appraisal is/should be based primarily on specific objectives outlined in my plan of work.	4.00	1.19	19	4.93	.91	21
34. During my performance appraisal, my supervisor and I do/should discuss the results I achieved plus the behaviors and skills I used to achieve them.	4.35	1.20	10	5.37	.61	13
35. I do/should receive a performance appraisal at least once a year.	5.18	1.31	1	5.57	.74	3
36. My appraisal is/should be very objective.	4.39	1.28	9	5.37	.78	14
37. My appraisal does/should focus equally on my strengths and areas for improvement.	4.46	1.25	7	5.39	.72	12
38. My supervisor and I do/should jointly review my performance.	5.04	1.16	2	5.57	.56	2
39. I do/should gather data and self-evaluate my performance prior to meeting with my supervisor.	4.95	1.16	3	5.33	.79	15
40. The individuals presently conducting the performance appraisal interview and rating in my state are/should be knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes.	4.01	1.33	17	5.52	.60	5

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
41. Performance appraisal does/should help me improve my individual performance.	4.45	1.24	8	5.42	.70	10
42. Performance appraisal does/should help improve organizational performance.	4.14	1.31	12	5.42	.69	9
43. The supervisor conducting my performance appraisal has/should have first-hand knowledge of my work.	4.13	1.34	13	5.55	.58	4
44. Formal input from peers is/should be used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	3.84	1.55	21	4.87	1.09	22
45. Formal input from clientele is/should be used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	4.02	1.51	16	5.16	.92	19
46. My performance appraisal is/should be formal, including written statements and an interview with an opportunity for discussion.	4.86	1.20	4	5.26	.92	16
47. Planning for performance improvement is/should be a high priority of the performance appraisal discussion.	4.06	1.23	15	5.24	.72	18

Table 4 Continued

Statement	Present			Ideal		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Rank</u>
48. When appraising performance, my supervisor does/should take a problem-solving approach versus a judgmental, punishment-oriented approach.	4.77	1.25	5	5.60	.55	1
49. I am/should be motivated after each performance appraisal.	4.12	1.40	14	5.46	.63	7
50. The goals of the organization, my supervisor's goals and my goals for appraising performance are/should be shared and understood.	4.15	1.28	11	5.40	.60	11
51. The goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor and extension educator do/should complement and reinforce each other.	4.00	1.28	18	5.44	.60	8
52. Performance appraisals are/should be a priority at all levels of the organization.	3.84	1.44	20	5.25	.89	17
53. Supervisors are/should be held accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness.	3.80	1.34	22	5.15	.98	20

Note. Scale: 1 = Completely Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Completely Agree

Research Question 2

What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

The differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system were ascertained by subtracting the mean of the present situation from the mean of the ideal situation. Differences in means ranged from a low of .36 to a high of 1.86. A one-tailed t-test for paired samples was conducted to determine if the differences between the present and ideal statement means were significant. That is, were the differences between the means for present and ideal situations, as reported by the 206 respondents, likely to be representative of Extension educators in the states surveyed.

All t-tests were conducted at an alpha level of .001. The differences between present situation means and ideal situation means for all 53 t-tests were found to be significant at the .001 level. In addition, eta-squared, the proportion of explained variance, was calculated to index the strength of the relationship between the present situation and the ideal situation. Jaccard and Becker (1990) emphasize that it is important to note the eta-squared statistic describes the strength of the relationship between two variables in the set of sample data (206 extension educators) but not necessarily the entire population (all extension educators in the states surveyed). They state the reason is because eta-squared

“tends to slightly overestimate the strength of the relationship in the population across random samples” (p. 233).

Standards for interpreting eta-squared differ considerably among researchers. For the purposes of interpretation, the following eta-squared index, as outlined by Jaccard and Becker (1990), was used: less than .10 constituted a weak effect; between .10 to .25 constituted a moderate effect; and greater than .25 constituted a strong effect. The results pertaining to differences between the present and ideal means, t-values, and eta-squared are presented in Table 5. Differences will be reported by each category of statements including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Performance Planning. As shown in Table 5, the greatest difference between the present situation and the ideal situation, for the educators surveyed, was in the area of supervisor effectiveness in helping the educator identify training and development needs (Statement 8 difference = -1.58). There were also great differences related to clarity of position responsibilities, program objectives, organizational results expected, and performance standards (Statement 9 difference = -1.45; Statement 14 difference = -1.41; Statement 13 difference = -1.37).

There was very little difference in the present and ideal situations, for the educators surveyed, regarding their work objectives being consistent with organizational goals as well as strong ownership by the educator of the work plan (Statement 15 difference = -.50; Statement 6 difference = -.52).

Eta-squared values for the statements in this section ranged from .252

(Statement 6) to .608 (Statement 8). Based on Jaccard and Becker's index, which considered eta-squared values above .25 as constituting a strong effect, the present situation had a strong effect on the ideal situation when looking at each of the statements regarding performance planning.

Performance Feedback and Coaching. The difference in the present situation and ideal situation as perceived by educators was substantial in several areas. Three of the greatest differences were in: (a) communication during the year from the supervisor to the educator regarding areas for performance improvement; (b) reception of feedback from the supervisor to the educator throughout the year; (c) observation by the supervisor sufficient for adequate evaluation (Statement 19 difference = -1.86; Statement 17 difference = -1.83; Statement 24 difference = -1.78; Table 7).

Minimal differences existed in statements concerning the educator being responsible for tracking performance relative to goals and sharing a common goal with the supervisor of achieving high performance (Statements 23 difference = -.36; Statement 27 difference = -.59).

Eta-squared values in this section ranged from .120 (Statement 23) to .628 (Statement 19). The present situation had a moderate effect on the ideal situation as it pertained to responsibility for tracking performance relative to goals (Statement 23) and a strong effect when looking at each of the other statements regarding performance feedback and coaching.

Performance Appraisal. As displayed in Table 5, the greatest difference

between the means of the present situation and the ideal situation pertained to individuals conducting performance appraisals being knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes (Statement 40 difference = -1.51). Another area where there was considerable difference, pertained to the goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor, and educator complementing and reinforcing each other (Statement 51 difference = -1.44).

There was not much difference between the means of the present and ideal situations regarding the educator receiving a performance appraisal at least once a year (Statement 35 difference = -.39). In addition, there was minimal difference between the means of the present and ideal situations in the educator gathering data and self-evaluating performance prior to meeting with the supervisor (Statement 39 difference = -.39).

Eta-squared values for the statements in this section ranged from .078 (Statement 35) to .553 (Statement 51). The present situation had a strong effect on the ideal situation when looking at each of the statements regarding performance appraisal except for Statements 38, 39, and 46 which had a moderate effect and Statement 35 which had a weak effect.

Table 5

Differences between extension educator's perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system

Statement	Present <u>M</u>	Ideal <u>M</u>	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
PERFORMANCE PLANNING					
8. My supervisor is/should be effective in helping me identify my training and development needs.	3.67	5.24	-1.58	-17.789	.608
9. My performance is/should be measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by me and my supervisor.	3.88	5.33	-1.45	-15.869	.552
14. My supervisor does/should make clear to me the organizational results extension administration want to achieve.	3.78	5.19	-1.41	-15.056	.526
13. My supervisor does/should make clear to me what the performance standards are.	3.99	5.36	-1.37	-15.618	.545
10. The mission, values, vision and goals of the organization are/should be well understood and serve as the foundation for the performance management process.	4.15	5.38	-1.23	-13.834	.484
1. I do/should have a clear description of what is expected of me.	4.37	5.57	-1.20	-15.540	.542
7. I am/should be aware of criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance.	4.49	5.67	-1.18	-13.562	.474
12. The organization's mission and strategic direction is/should be communicated to me by my supervisor.	4.14	5.32	-1.18	-13.071	.456
5. My goals and objectives are/should be updated as needs change during the performance cycle.	4.23	5.39	-1.15	-12.651	.440

Table 5 Continued

Statement	Present M	Ideal M	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
4. My goals and objectives are/should be developed jointly with my supervisor.	3.80	4.92	-1.13	-13.609	.476
11. My performance standards are/should be demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele.	4.00	4.86	-.86	-11.554	.396
3. My professional goals are/should be aligned with the goals of the organization.	4.61	5.27	-.66	-9.925	.326
2. Identifying objectives and behaviors does/should help me focus my efforts.	4.81	5.45	-.64	-11.493	.393
16. During the discussion of my proposed plan of work objectives, my supervisor does/should encourage and give me every chance to express my ideas and concerns.	4.91	5.54	-.63	-9.134	.290
6. I do/should have strong ownership of my plan of work.	4.94	5.46	-.52	-8.284	.252
15. My individual plan of work objectives are/should be clearly consistent with organizational goals and objectives of the Cooperative Extension organization.	4.81	5.31	-.50	-9.181	.292
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND COACHING					
19. During the year, my areas for improvement are/should be clearly pointed out to me.	3.59	5.45	-1.86	-18.555	.628
17. I do/should receive feedback from my supervisor throughout the year about how I'm doing.	3.65	5.47	-1.83	-17.727	.606
24. I am/should be sufficiently observed to be adequately evaluated.	3.47	5.25	-1.78	-16.553	.573

Table 5 Continued

Statement	Present <u>M</u>	Ideal <u>M</u>	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
21. I do/should get the coaching I need during the year to achieve my goals and improve my behaviors.	3.53	5.26	-1.72	-16.349	.567
20. My supervisor does/should provide feedback that includes specific examples of how I am using behaviors and skills.	3.62	5.26	-1.64	-16.464	.571
18. During the year, my strengths are/should be clearly pointed out to me.	3.84	5.42	-1.58	-15.522	.542
22. I do/should have access to all the information I need to track my performance.	3.89	5.30	-1.40	-14.948	.523
26. My supervisor is/should be less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” who builds successful team members.	4.24	5.62	-1.37	-13.188	.460
29. My supervisor does/should let me know how she/he feels about my performance and what needs to be improved.	4.12	5.46	-1.34	-15.097	.528
31. My supervisor does/should have knowledge of progress I make in achieving my objectives.	4.17	5.50	-1.33	-15.243	.532
30. My supervisor does/should demonstrate an ongoing genuine care for helping me improve performance and better serve clientele.	4.36	5.52	-1.17	-12.923	.450
28. There is/should be an open, trusting relationship between me and my supervisor.	4.59	5.65	-1.06	-10.898	.368
25. Feedback about my performance does/should come from multiple sources.	4.37	5.41	-1.04	-11.326	.386
27. My supervisor and I do/should share a common goal of achieving high performance.	5.00	5.59	-.59	-8.611	.267

Table 5 Continued

Statement	Present <u>M</u>	Ideal <u>M</u>	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
23. I am/should be responsible for tracking my performance relative to my goals.	4.81	5.18	-.36	-5.282	.120
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL					
40. The individuals presently conducting the performance appraisal interview and rating in my state are/should be knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes.	4.01	5.52	-1.51	-14.966	.523
51. The goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor and extension educator do/should complement and reinforce each other.	4.00	5.44	-1.44	-15.894	.553
43. The supervisor conducting my performance appraisal has/should have first-hand knowledge of my work.	4.13	5.55	-1.41	-14.469	.506
52. Performance appraisals are/should be a priority at all levels of the organization.	3.84	5.25	-1.41	-12.754	.444
53. Supervisors are/should be held accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness.	3.81	5.15	-1.35	-13.013	.454
49. I am/should be motivated after each performance appraisal.	4.12	5.45	-1.33	-13.588	.475
42. Performance appraisal does/should help improve organizational performance.	4.14	5.42	-1.29	-14.585	.510
50. The goals of the organization, my supervisor's goals and my goals for appraising performance are/should be shared and understood.	4.16	5.39	-1.23	-14.171	.496
47. Planning for performance improvement is/should be a high priority of the performance appraisal discussion.	4.07	5.23	-1.16	-13.366	.469

Table 5 Continued

Statement	Present <u>M</u>	Ideal <u>M</u>	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
45. Formal input from clientele is/should be used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	4.02	5.16	-1.14	-10.931	.369
44. Formal input from peers is/should be used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	3.84	4.87	-1.02	-10.113	.334
34. During my performance appraisal, my supervisor and I do/should discuss the results I achieved plus the behaviors and skills I used to achieve them.	4.36	5.37	-1.01	-12.460	.432
36. My appraisal is/should be very objective.	4.39	5.37	-.98	-11.336	.386
41. Performance appraisal does/should help me improve my individual performance.	4.45	5.42	-.97	-11.760	.404
33. My performance appraisal is/should be based primarily on specific objectives outlined in my plan of work.	4.00	4.93	-.93	-10.624	.356
37. My appraisal does/should focus equally on my strengths and areas for improvement.	4.46	5.39	-.93	-10.404	.347
32. The purpose of the performance appraisal is/should be made clear to me by my supervisor.	4.55	5.47	-.92	-11.676	.401
48. When appraising performance, my does/should take a problem-solving approach versus a judgmental, punishment-oriented approach.	4.77	5.59	-.82	-10.096	.333
38. My supervisor and I do/should jointly review my performance.	5.04	5.57	-.53	-7.180	.202

Table 5 Continued

Statement	Present M	Ideal M	Dif.	t-value*	Eta-Squared
46. My performance appraisal is/should be formal, including written statements and an interview with an opportunity for discussion.	4.86	5.26	-.40	-4.827	.103
39. I do/should gather data and self-evaluate my performance prior to meeting with my supervisor.	4.95	5.33	-.39	-6.339	.165
35. I do/should receive a performance appraisal at least once a year.	5.18	5.57	-.39	-4.161	.078

Note. Scale: 1 = Completely Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Completely Agree

*All values significant at $p < .001$.

Research Question 3

What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?

A statement mean and standard deviation were computed for the Extension educators' response to question #4 in Section 2 of the survey which asked respondents to: "Rate how you perceive your current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help you be effective in your job". Section 2 included a 6-point Likert scale with degrees of effectiveness ranging from "highly ineffective" to "highly effective".

The mean was 3.74 and the standard deviation was 1.25. These results indicated that educators perceived their performance management system to fall between the range of being “somewhat ineffective” to “somewhat effective” in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool in helping them be effective in their job. It is clear that the educators surveyed did not generally perceive their performance management system to be “effective” or “highly effective”.

Research Question 4

How do extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of relationship between the extension educators' perception of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system to responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Specifically, this analysis generated Pearson's correlation coefficients for question #4 of Section 2 with questions #1, #2 and #3 in Section 2 and tested for significance. All three correlations were significant at the .001 level.

Levels for interpreting what constitutes a large effect for correlational studies have not been standardized. For the purposes of discussion, the following Pearson correlation guidelines outlined by Cohen (as cited in Wolf, 1986, p.#31) were selected as rough guidelines for effect sizes: small ($r=.10$); medium ($r=.30$); and large ($r=.50$).

As shown in Table 6, a strong correlation existed between how educators perceived the performance planning process they experienced and how they perceived their current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help them be effective in their job.

In addition, a strong correlation existed between how educators perceived the performance appraisals they received over the past three years helped them be more effective in their job and the overall effectiveness of their current performance management system. Similarly, a strong correlation existed between how educators perceived the feedback and coaching they received from their supervisor and how they perceived their current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help them be effective in their job.

Table 6

*Correlation between perception of overall effectiveness regarding current performance management system to responses within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal**

Statement	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	r
PERFORMANCE PLANNING 1. Rate how you perceive the performance planning process you have experienced.	3.89	1.07	.763**
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND COACHING 2. Rate how you perceive the feedback and coaching you have received from your supervisor.	3.91	1.26	.652**
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL 3. Rate how you perceive the performance appraisals you have received over the past three years have helped you be more effective in your job.	3.81	1.31	.739**

*Note. Question #4, Section 2 regarding overall effectiveness statement was “Rate how you perceive your current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help you be effective in your job.”

Scale: 1 = Highly Ineffective, 2 = Ineffective, 3 = Somewhat Ineffective, 4 = Somewhat Effective, 5 = Effective, 6 = Highly Effective

**All values significant at $p < .001$.

Correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between current situation responses in Section 1 within the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal with the perceptions of effectiveness for each of these respective categories rated by respondents on question #1, #2, and #3 in Section 2. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed for each of the statements of agreement in Section 1 (Performance Planning #1 - #16; Performance Feedback and Coaching #17 - #31; and Performance Appraisal #32 - #53) and their corresponding ratings of effectiveness statements in Section 2 (#1 - Performance Planning; #2 - Performance Feedback and Coaching; and #3 - Performance Appraisal). All of these correlations were tested for significance and ranked in order, that is, those having the strongest correlation and those having the weakest correlation. These correlations will be reported for each of the three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Performance Planning. As shown in Table 7, other than statements 6 and 11, all correlations were found to be significant at the .001 level. The strongest correlation value (.512) in this category was with statement 9 regarding performance being measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by the educator and supervisor. In addition, there was a strong correlation (.503) with statement 13 regarding clarity from the supervisor as to what the performance standards are and a moderate correlation (.462) with what criteria will be utilized

to evaluate performance. The weakest correlation (.164) was with statement 11 which pertained to performance standards demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele.

Table 7

*Correlation between responses to performance planning statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of the performance planning process**

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
PERFORMANCE PLANNING		
9. My performance is measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by me and my supervisor	.512	.000
13. My supervisor does make clear to me what the performance standards are.	.503	.000
7. I am aware of criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance.	.462	.000
14. My supervisor does make clear to me the organizational results extension administration want to achieve.	.448	.000
8. My supervisor is effective in helping me identify my training and development needs.	.439	.000

Table 7 Continued

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
12. The organization's mission and strategic direction is communicated to me by my supervisor.	.424	.000
16. During the discussion of my proposed plan of work objectives, my supervisor does encourage and give me every chance to express my ideas and concerns.	.412	.000
10. The mission, values, vision and goals of the organization are well understood and serve as the foundation for the performance management process.	.392	.000
2. Identifying objectives and behaviors does help me focus me efforts.	.350	.000
4. My goals and objectives are developed jointly with my supervisor.	.335	.000
1. I do have a clear description of what is expected of me.	.314	.000
15. My individual plan of work objectives are clearly consistent with organizational goals and objectives of the Cooperative Extension organization.	.314	.000
3. My professional goals are aligned with the goals of the organization.	.236	.000

Table 7 Continued

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
5. My goals and objectives are updated as needs change during the performance cycle.	.216	.001
6. I do have strong ownership of my plan of work.	.202	.002
11. My performance standards are demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele.	.164	.009

*Note. Performance planning statement was “Rate how you perceive the performance planning process you have experienced.”

Performance Feedback and Coaching. As shown in Table 8, strong correlations predominated and all but statement 23 were found to be significant at the .001 level . The strongest correlation coefficient (.745) in this category was with statement 30 pertaining to supervisors who demonstrate an ongoing genuine care for helping the educator improve performance and better serve clientele. Correlations relating to the supervisor being less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” and for the educator to receive feedback from the supervisor throughout the year were also found to be strong correlations (Statements 26 and 17).

A moderate correlation (.363) was found for statement 22 regarding the educator having access to all the information needed to track performance. The weakest correlation (.205) was with statement 23 pertaining to responsibility for tracking performance relative to goals.

Table 8

*Correlation between responses to performance feedback and coaching statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of the feedback and coaching received**

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND COACHING		
30. My supervisor does demonstrate an ongoing genuine care for helping me improve performance and better serve clientele.	.745	.000
26. My supervisor is less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” who builds successful team members.	.722	.000
17. I do receive feedback from my supervisor throughout the year about how I’m doing.	.693	.000
21. I do get the coaching I need during the year to achieve my goals and improve my behaviors.	.690	.000
31. My supervisor does have knowledge of progress I make in achieving my objectives.	.684	.000
29. My supervisor does let me know how she/he feels about my performance and what needs to be improved.	.648	.000
18. During the year, my strengths are clearly pointed out to me.	.643	.000
28. There is an open, trusting relationship between me and my supervisor.	.639	.000
20. My supervisor does provide feedback that includes specific examples of how I am using behaviors and skills.	.598	.000

Table 8 Continued

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
19. During the year, my areas for improvement are clearly pointed out to me.	.585	.000
24. I am sufficiently observed to be adequately evaluated.	.544	.000
27. My supervisor and I do share a common goal of achieving high performance.	.496	.000
25. Feedback about my performance does come from multiple sources.	.464	.000
22. I do have access to all the information I need to track my performance.	.363	.000
23. I am responsible for tracking my performance relative to my goals.	.205	.002

*Note. Performance feedback and coaching statement was “Rate how you perceive the feedback and coaching you have received from your supervisor.”

Performance Appraisal. As shown in Table 9, the strongest correlation (.678) was with statement 49 regarding the educator being motivated after each performance appraisal. The next two strongest correlations (.643 and .618) related to: (a) performance appraisal helping the educator improve individual performance; and (b) the individuals presently conducting the performance appraisal being knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes.

The weakest correlation (.183) pertained to gathering data and self-evaluating performance prior to meeting with the supervisor (Statement 39). All correlations, other than statement 39 were found to be significant at the .001 level.

Table 9

*Correlation between responses to performance appraisal statements in Section I to corresponding statement in Section II regarding effectiveness of performance appraisals**

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL		
49. I am motivated after each performance appraisal.	.678	.000
41. Performance appraisal does help me improve my individual performance.	.643	.000
40. The individuals presently conducting the performance appraisal interview and rating in my state are knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes.	.618	.000
42. Performance appraisal does help improve organizational performance.	.589	.000
47. Planning for performance improvement is a high priority of the performance appraisal discussion.	.586	.000
48. When appraising performance, my supervisor does take a problem-solving approach versus a judgmental, punishment-oriented approach.	.570	.000
50. The goals of the organization, my supervisor's goals and my goals for appraising performance are shared and understood.	.567	.000
36. My appraisal is very objective.	.541	.000

Table 9 Continued

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
37. My appraisal does focus equally on my strengths and areas for improvement.	.527	.000
53. Supervisors are held accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness.	.511	.000
34. During my performance appraisal, my supervisor and I do discuss the results I achieved plus the behaviors and skills I used to achieve them.	.501	.000
33. My performance appraisal is based primarily on specific objectives outlined in my plan of work.	.494	.000
43. The supervisor conducting my performance appraisal has first-hand knowledge of my work.	.493	.000
32. The purpose of the performance appraisal is made clear to me by my supervisor.	.479	.000
51. The goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor and extension educator do complement and reinforce each other.	.468	.000
52. Performance appraisals are a priority at all levels of the organization.	.465	.000
46. My performance appraisal is formal, including written statements and an interview with an opportunity for discussion.	.436	.000
38. My supervisor and I do jointly review my performance.	.405	.000

Table 9 Continued

Statement	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
44. Formal input from peers is used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	.339	.000
35. I do receive a performance appraisal at least once a year.	.313	.000
45. Formal input from clientele is used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	.278	.000
39. I do gather data and self-evaluate my performance prior to meeting with my supervisor.	.183	.005

*Note. Performance appraisal statement was “Rate how you perceive the performance appraisals you have received over the past three years have helped you be more effective in your job.”

Comments

Section three of the questionnaire included an open-ended comments section wherein respondents were given an opportunity to express additional thoughts concerning their organization’s performance management system. The majority of respondents provided responses to the questions.

The responses were summarized according to three open-ended questions including: (1) What do you feel best about regarding your organization’s current performance management system? (2) What has caused the greatest frustration regarding your organization’s current performance management system? (3) What changes would you recommend to your organization’s current performance management system?

As a means for analyzing the open-response comments, categories were identified that emerged from the answers. Sixteen categories were created and similar answers were grouped within each category. Each category contains the key words that were used to identify the placement of the response. The categories and frequency of similar responses are presented in Table 10. The responses represented 66% of all answers provided by respondents. The remaining 34% were dissimilar and not conducive to categorization.

Educators generally felt best about three aspects of their organization's performance management system: (1) it provides a framework for communication between the educator and the supervisor; (2) it includes an opportunity for self-evaluation as well as multiple sources of input from peers and clientele, and (3) it bases performance evaluation on program goals, objectives, and accomplishments.

Frustrations expressed by educators were primarily within six categories indicating perceptions that there is: (1) a lack of timeliness, efficiency and practical procedures; (2) a lack of knowledgeable and skilled supervisors trained in performance management; (3) a lack of performance feedback and coaching throughout the year; (4) a lack of sufficient observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance; (5) a lack of monetary rewards linked to performance; and (6) a lack of supervisory accountability for performance management, particularly regarding educators perceived by peers as poor performers.

Changes recommended by educators focused on seven areas for

improvement including: (1) a need for supervisory training in performance management and implementation of consistent evaluation procedures; (2) a need for an efficient and relevant reporting system coupled with more timely and frequent reviews; (3) a need for increased communication with ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the performance cycle; (4) a need to address cases of unsatisfactory educator performance and a stronger linkage between pay and performance; (5) a need for more observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance; (6) a need for more emphasis on performance expectations and clearly defined program outcomes reflected in a plan of work that serves as a basis for performance evaluation; (7) a need for increased use of multiple sources of performance feedback including peers and clientele.

Refer to Appendix H for 119 actual comments which have been categorized and are representative of two-thirds of all statements provided by respondents.

Table 10

Categorization of open-response questions and frequency of responses

Category	Response Frequency
WHAT EDUCATORS FELT BEST ABOUT	
The performance management system provides a framework for communication between the educator and the supervisor.	61
There is an opportunity for self-evaluation as well as multiple sources of input from peers and clientele.	32

Table 10 Continued

Category	Response Frequency
Evaluation is based on program goals, objectives, and accomplishments.	22
WHAT EDUCATORS FELT FRUSTRATED WITH	
Lack of timeliness, efficiency and practical procedures.	38
Lack of knowledgeable and skilled supervisors trained in performance management.	23
Lack of performance feedback and coaching throughout the year	21
Lack of sufficient observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance.	18
Lack of monetary rewards linked to performance.	17
Lack of supervisory accountability for performance management, especially regarding ineffective performers.	11
WHAT CHANGES EDUCATORS RECOMMENDED	
More supervisory training in performance management and implementation of consistent evaluation procedures.	26
More efficient and relevant reporting system coupled with more timely and frequent reviews.	24
Increased communication with ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the performance cycle.	22
Address cases of unsatisfactory educator performance and establish more of a linkage between pay and performance.	18

Table 10 Continued

Category	Response Frequency
More observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance.	16
Emphasize program outcomes reflected in a plan of work that serves as a basis for performance evaluation.	15
Increased use of multiple sources of performance feedback including peers and clientele.	14

Summary

This chapter presented the results of survey responses from 206 Cooperative Extension educators from eight states within the northeast region of the United States regarding their perceptions of performance management. The results revealed a gap between what educators perceive as present and ideal performance management practices. On average, educators consider their performance management system to be somewhat ineffective and a strong relationship is suggested between how educators perceive the elements of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal with how they perceive the effectiveness of their overall performance management system. The next chapter will summarize the study, findings and present recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine extension educator perceptions regarding performance management within the Cooperative Extension organization. Assumptions of this study were that positive extension educator attitudes toward, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the system of performance management are crucial for its success.

A survey research method of data collection was employed in this study with a stratified random sample of 233 extension educators from eight states within the northeast region of the United States. Participating states included Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

A questionnaire was developed and mailed to survey staff and determine the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators regarding performance management. The questions in the survey instrument represented a synthesis of the important areas cited in the literature on performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Completed survey responses were received from 206 educators resulting in an 88% return rate.

The challenge of fulfilling Cooperative Extension's mission is closely linked to the effective performance of extension educators. The extension educator is the organization's most important resource in accomplishing the organization's purpose. Effective extension educators are guided by effective supervisors. Performance management is the process which establishes and maintains the interaction between the educator and the supervisor. The degree to which the educator and the supervisor understand, agree on, and value the elements of performance management will impact on the extent to which Cooperative Extension fulfills its mission.

An overall purpose of this study was to provide information which would form a basis for bridging the gap between what educators perceive as present and ideal performance management practices. The findings of this study are intended to add to the knowledge base of Cooperative Extension performance management practices and provide information to state organizations for improving performance management. Specifically, the findings should be of assistance to Cooperative Extension administrators and educators as a basis for reviewing and strengthening performance management and the key elements of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

The following summarizes the findings according to the four research questions beginning with research questions 1 and 2:

Research Question 1. *What are the extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?*

Research Question 2. *What are the differences between extension educators' perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?*

Extension educators' perceptions of their present performance management system revealed that educators "agreed" (means of 4.51 - 5.50) with 14 of the 53 statements regarding practices currently being administered in their organization. Thirty-eight statements were rated as "somewhat agree" (means of 3.51 - 4.50) and one statement was rated as "somewhat disagree" (means of 2.51 - 3.50).

Three survey statements with which educators agreed the most, also ranked high in perceptions of ideal performance appraisal practices. The statements included the following: (a) a performance appraisal is received at least once a year; (b) the supervisor and educator jointly review performance; and (c) the supervisor and educator share a common goal of achieving high performance. Of all 53

statements, these three statements ranked among the top ten statements pertaining to what educators perceived as an ideal performance management situation. Thus, the practice of conducting an appraisal at least once a year, jointly reviewing performance, and sharing a goal of achieving high performance should be continued.

Mean responses ranking among the lowest in agreement for statements within each of the 3 categories for the present situation also reflected a desire by educators to implement those practices in an ideal system. Those practices included the following: (a) effective supervisor assistance in identifying training and development needs; (b) sufficient observation to be adequately evaluated; and (c) supervisor accountability for performance appraisal effectiveness. The desire of educators to implement these practices was evident based on numerous responses to the open-ended questions related to coaching as well as supervisory observation and supervisory accountability.

Extension educators' perceptions of an ideal performance management system revealed that educators "completely agreed" (means of 5.51 - 6) with 12 of the statements and "agreed" (means of 4.51 - 5.50) with the remaining 41 statements regarding practices that ought to be administered in an ideal situation.

Among all 53 statements concerning educator perceptions of an ideal performance management system, the highest mean responses reflected that: (a) educators should be aware of the criteria utilized to evaluate performance;

(b) there should be an open, trusting relationship between educators and their supervisor; (c) the supervisor should be less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach”; and (d) the supervisor should address problem-solving rather than finding fault. These perceived practices underscore the importance of: (1) clarifying performance expectations (Drake Beam Morin, 1993; Hahn, Brumback & Edwards, 1979; Plachy, 1988); (2) establishing trust and providing coaching (Phillips, 1992); and (3) offering constructive feedback (Joint Committee, 1988; Spitzer, 1995).

Differences between extension educators’ perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system were found to be significant at the .001 level for all 53 statements. Educators reflected higher agreement with what should be done as compared to what was presently happening. These significant differences would appear to indicate educators feel that changes ought to be made to their current performance management system. The following summarizes some of the areas of agreement among extension educators based on the mean responses for the four greatest differences between perceptions of their present and ideal situations in each of the three categories.

Performance Planning. Educators perceived that: (a) the supervisor should help the educator identify his/her training and development needs; (b) performance should be measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period; (c) the

supervisor should make clear to the educator the organizational results extension administrators want to achieve; and (d) the supervisor should clarify what the performance standards are.

It is important to note that among the top three mean responses for the perceptions of both the present and an ideal performance planning situation, educators rated the following statement among the highest in agreement: During the discussion of the proposed plan of work objectives, the supervisor encourages and gives the educator every chance to express ideas and concerns. This might explain why the highest mean response for the present situation was that educators feel they have a strong ownership of their plan of work which was a factor they also considered to be very important in an ideal performance management system.

Given that differences between the present and ideal were among the lowest for both of these statements pertaining to educator involvement and sense of ownership, a reasonable conclusion can be drawn that educator involvement in the development and discussion of plans of work is an important practice that should be continued. The importance of involving employees in the goal-setting process and its positive effects are cited in research by Meyer, Kay and French (1965).

It would appear there is a need for increased educator awareness of the criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance as well as a clear description of what is expected. Although both of these statements (statements 7 and 1) are

ranked high in present and ideal situations, the differences between them rank among the top 50% within all categories combined ranging from the greatest to lowest differences among the 53 statements. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1985) cite the importance of delineating roles, responsibilities, objectives and assessment criteria.

Performance Feedback and Coaching. Educators perceived that: (a) areas for improvement should be clearly pointed out to the educator during the year; (b) the educator should receive feedback throughout the year about how he or she is performing; (c) the educator should be sufficiently observed to be evaluated; and (d) the educator should get the coaching he or she needs during the year to achieve their goals and improve their behaviors.

Noteworthy is that among all 53 statements, the top five statements reflecting the greatest differences between present and ideal situations were within the category of performance feedback and coaching, including: (a) during the year, areas for improvement are clearly pointed out to the educator; (b) the educator reviews feedback from the supervisor throughout the year; (c) there should be sufficient observation for adequate evaluation; (d) coaching should be received during the year; and (e) feedback should be provided that includes specific examples of behaviors and skills.

Feedback and coaching must be offered if a performance management system is to be on-going and successful throughout the year. Rogers, Miller and

Worklan (1993) acknowledge that this is the part of the performance management process that is the most ineffectively implemented function by supervisors. Without feedback and coaching, a performance management system cannot be effective.

Performance Appraisal. Educators perceived that: (a) individuals conducting appraisals should be knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes; (b) the goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor, and educator should complement and reinforce each other; (c) the supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of the educator's work; and (d) performance appraisals should be a priority at all levels of the organization.

In an ideal performance management system, the desire to have supervisors who are knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes was ranked in the top 20% of all 53 statements and was rated as having the highest difference between the present and ideal paradigms. Findings of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) underscore the importance of skilled supervisors who are viewed as credible and qualified. Otherwise, the supervisors are simply perceived as incompetent without the requisite skills to evaluate, and as a result, the educators are apt to be uncooperative and will not accept the system.

Research Question 3. *What are the extension educators' perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for increasing job effectiveness?*

Educators perceive their performance management system to fall between

the range of being “somewhat ineffective” to “somewhat effective”. It is clear that educators did not generally perceive their performance management system to be “effective” or “highly effective”. The disparity in responses between what educators regard as ideal practices compared to what is currently practiced might suggest the basis for the perceptions of a performance management system that is regarded as being “somewhat ineffective” to “somewhat effective”.

Research Question 4. How do extension educators’ perceptions of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system compare with responses within each of the three categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal?

The findings indicate that the degree to which educators perceive the effectiveness of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal categories, has a significant and strong positive correlation to how educators perceive the overall effectiveness of the performance management system. In addition, since the correlation values for each of these three categories range from .652 to .739 to .763, it would suggest that no single performance management category predominates extension educators’ perceptions of overall effectiveness. Thus, a reasonable conclusion can be drawn that the elements of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal are all integral parts and play an important role in how

educators perceive a performance management system. This supports the literature indicating these three elements as contributors to effective performance management (Drake Beam Morin, 1993; Engelmann & Roesch, 1996; Gross, 1995; Plachy, 1988; Repinski & Bartsch, 1996; Rogers, Miller, & Worklan, 1993; Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1987; Shaw, Schneier, Beatty, & Baird, 1995; Swan, 1991).

Mean responses indicate that educators perceive the overall effectiveness of each of the elements of performance planning ($M = 3.89$), performance feedback and coaching ($M = 3.91$), and performance appraisal ($M = 3.81$) to be “somewhat ineffective”. Like the correlation values, it should be noted that the means are close in range. This would suggest that it may not take much to achieve the “effective” range if there were movement towards implementation of ideal performance management practices.

A closer look at the findings within the category of performance planning revealed significant correlations between each of the statements within the category of performance planning and the overall question of how educators perceived the effectiveness of the performance planning process. Likewise, there were significant correlations between each of the statements in the category of performance feedback and coaching and the overall question of how educators perceived the feedback and coaching received from their supervisor. Similarly, significant correlations were found between each of the statements in the third

category of performance appraisal and the overall question of how educators perceived the effectiveness of the performance appraisals they have received. The following represent the four strongest correlations within each category:

Performance Planning. The four strongest correlations were found with the following statements: (a) performance is measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by the educator and supervisor; (b) the supervisor makes clear to the educator what the performance standards are; (c) the educator is aware of criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance; and (d) the supervisor makes clear to the educator the desired results of the organization.

Performance Feedback and Coaching. The four strongest correlations were found with the following statements: (a) the supervisor demonstrates an ongoing genuine care for helping the educator improve performance and better serve clientele; (b) the supervisor is less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach”; (c) the educator receives feedback throughout the year from the supervisor about how the educator is performing; and (d) the educator gets the coaching he or she needs during the year to achieve goals and improve behaviors.

Performance Appraisal. The four strongest correlations were found with the following statements: (a) the educator is motivated after each performance appraisal; (b) performance appraisal helps the educator improve individual performance; (c) individuals conducting appraisals are knowledgeable and skilled

in performance appraisal processes; and (d) performance appraisal helps improve organizational performance.

When reviewing the above findings with findings from research question 2 concerning differences, interesting patterns emerge. For example, when comparing ideal practices which were reflected among the 20 highest mean responses from educators to the greatest differences between the present and ideal, five statements surfaced.

The five statements are as follows: (1) areas for improvement are clearly pointed out to the educator during the year; (2) feedback from the supervisor should be received by the educator throughout the year; (3) the supervisor should be knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes; (4) the supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of the educator's work; and (5) the supervisor should be less of a "judge and jury" and more of a "mentor and coach".

Further, the five statements noted above were strongly supported by several statements made by educators in response to the open-ended comments which revealed a strong desire for: (a) increased communication from the supervisor with ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the performance cycle; (b) more supervisory training in performance management and implementation of consistent evaluation procedures; and c) more observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance. These findings and findings previously discussed from each of the four research questions pose several

implications for practice.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the following are 10 recommendations which, if implemented, would likely result in improved performance management:

1. Increase the frequency of direct “on the job” observation by the supervisor and acquire first-hand knowledge of educator performance.
2. Increase feedback and coaching, with ongoing performance-related communication from the supervisor, that conveys how the educator is doing; reinforces good performance; and demonstrates a genuine care for helping the educator improve performance and better serve clientele.
3. Provide training resulting in supervisors who are knowledgeable and skilled in the process of managing performance and who function less as a “judge and jury” and more as a “mentor and coach”.
4. Hold supervisors accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness.
5. Identify educator position responsibilities, program objectives, organizational results expected, and performance standards at the beginning of the performance cycle and evaluation period.
6. Clarify the goals and purposes of performance appraisal from the perspective of the organization, supervisor, and educator.
7. Consider a stronger linkage between pay and performance.
8. Increase the timeliness and frequency of performance reviews.

9. Establish an efficient and relevant reporting system.

10. Increase the use of multiple sources for performance feedback from others such as from peers and clientele.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the following 13 questions warrant additional research:

1. Are there differences in perceptions held by supervisors regarding performance management in comparison to extension educators' perceptions?

2. What differences are there in philosophy and approaches to performance management based on different age groups of extension supervisors?

3. What type of training have supervisors received in performance management and what is the relationship to how educators perceive supervisory effectiveness?

4. What are the goals of performance appraisal from the perspective of the organization, supervisor and educator? Do they complement and reinforce each other? Is performance management focused on developmental purposes to help improve performance or does it emphasize a punitive focus with poor performers?

5. What type of professional development system could be established that would be mindful of a supervisor's and an educator's developmental stage and one which provides the necessary supports and challenges?

6. What are the differences in performance management with regard to

gender, that is, supervision provided by female extension supervisors and male supervisors?

7. What types of performance information should be collected through direct observation versus indirect observation and how does a supervisor collect information about performance? When information is obtained from some source other than direct observation, how is that information evaluated and used effectively?

8. What kinds of information are indirectly available from different sources, relevant for making important human resource decisions, that are unavailable to the supervisor directly?

9. What is the perceived effectiveness of performance management in a system where educators are evaluated by supervisors who are based in the field within close proximity versus a distant location?

10. What are the performance standards that define good versus poor performance and how are they developed, communicated and used? Do supervisors and educators differ in their perceptions of standards regarding good and poor performance?

11. How do supervisors provide feedback and coaching? What is the effect on educator performance?

12. What is the role of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as a motivator for educators and what do educators perceive will motivate better job performance?

13. What differences are there in performance management within unionized

versus non-unionized organizations?

Concluding Remarks

In summary, what this author has learned from this study is that extension educators are not fully satisfied with their system of performance management and see room for improvement within the key elements commonly associated with effective performance management including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal. Findings from this study coupled with past research provide a basis and direction for strengthening performance management.

The research based performance evaluation system developed by Hahn, Brumback, and Edwards (1979) was designed to be a never ending cycle that integrated the functions of planning, analysis and review. The system recommended inclusion of four main components, “objective setting, self-reports of accomplishments on objectives, supervisory review and analysis, and review and planning discussions” (p. 73). Although not a perfect fit, their four main components do fit within this study’s identification of three major components to an effective performance management system; performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.

Research by Davis (1991) is consistent with the findings of this study; particularly in the area of performance feedback and coaching. Davis concluded that performance evaluation could be improved if: (a) supervisors performing assessments are well trained and their observations of staff on-the-job are

increased; (b) an appropriate performance evaluation form is utilized which recognizes the wide range of educator job duties; and (c) the process is multi-faceted to include professional development, cooperation between supervisor and educator, utilization of plan of work as a basis for appraisal, feedback regarding performance, and a management by objectives system.

Rogers, Miller and Worklan (1993) found that performance feedback and coaching was the one component of performance management that needed the most improvement and emphasized that it must be an ongoing process. They stated, “the more frequently people receive coaching and get feedback about how they’re doing, the better chance they have and the more motivated they will be to achieve organizational goals” (p. 13).

An important theoretical base for this study was in the area of human motivation. The challenge is to create and implement a system within Cooperative Extension which fully involves supervisors and educators in the process of performance management resulting in motivation towards achieving high performance. Rogers, Miller, and Worklan (1993) claim the likelihood of a performance management system being successful is directly linked to “the enthusiasm people have for wanting to make it work” (p. 37).

Based on the assumption that positive extension educator attitudes toward, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the system of performance management is crucial for its success, then a careful review of the perceptions that have been determined through this study would be deserving of attention within Cooperative

Extension.

Finally, if everyone within the Cooperative Extension organization invests the necessary time and effort to strengthen performance management by considering the aforementioned recommendations for practice and further research, the outcome may very well result in a more motivated network of extension educators achieving high performance in fulfilling the mission of Cooperative Extension.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to State Directors in the Northeast Region

November 16, 1995

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Init.) FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Address 1)
FIELD(Address 2)
FIELD(Address 3)
FIELD(City, State, Zip)

Dear Dr. FIELD(Last Name),

As a Director within the Cooperative Extension System, I am sure you are aware of the importance of performance management (i.e., *performance planning; performance feedback and coaching; and performance appraisal*) and the need for additional research in this area. I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program in Education at the University of New Hampshire and am writing to request your support to survey a random sample of extension educators (field staff) in your state as part of my dissertation.

The study will consist of survey research designed to discover the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators (field staff) in the northeast region regarding performance management in their respective state organization.

I am defining "Extension Educators" as professional field staff located in field offices (off campus) who have subject-matter expertise and are responsible for educational programming in such areas as: agriculture; community development; 4-H & youth development; home economics & family development; forestry; and marine and freshwater resources. These positions are referred to in some states as "agents", "county agents", "county extension agents", etc.

I will only be surveying extension educators (field staff), however, it's important to know that my survey instrument includes several questions which refer to supervisors of extension educators. Therefore, it's essential that only states having a structure which includes an immediate supervisor for field staff be participants in this study. I'm defining "supervisor" as a professional within Cooperative Extension representing the first level of management (immediate supervisor) and designated with the responsibility for managing and evaluating the performance of extension educators through phases which include performance planning; performance feedback and coaching; and overall performance appraisal.

Extension educators will be asked to respond to questions concerning their perceptions of the performance management system. Enclosed is a glossary of key performance management terms. I am planning to sample 30% of extension educators from each participating state throughout the northeast.

If you agree to my request to survey a random sample of your staff, I will need a printed list of names and mailing addresses of **all** of the extension educators (field staff) in your state who have been on staff for at least one year. If this mailing list is in a data base and could be sent as a delimited ASCII text file it would be helpful. Also, if you have their e-mail addresses, those would be helpful as well, particularly for any follow up that may be necessary.

In addition, I would like to obtain a cover letter from you to your staff which would accompany my survey. It would be helpful if your letter would emphasize the importance of performance management , and your support of the study. I would then duplicate the letter and include it with my questionnaire. Enclosed is a sample for your use.

I will provide you with a copy of the study results. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and I hope to receive your information by **December 11, 1995**. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 603-862-1537 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John E. Pike
Associate Director

JEP/kj

cc: Dr. Peter J. Horne
Dean and Director

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

**Performance Management within Cooperative Extension:
Perceptions of Extension Educators
in the Northeast Region**

Extension Educator (Field Staff) Survey

Please respond to the questions in this booklet and return it in the enclosed self-addressed and postage paid envelope. Your cooperation and timely reply are deeply appreciated.

Your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your answers will be averaged with those of your co-workers from states in the Northeast Region.

SECTION I - Perceptions and Feelings

SECTION II - Overall Satisfaction

SECTION III - Summary

SECTION IV - Demographic

Refer to next page for a glossary of terms.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EXTENSION EDUCATOR: Extension educators are professional field staff of Cooperative Extension located in field offices (off campus) who have subject-matter expertise and are responsible for educational programming in such areas as: agriculture, community development, 4-H & youth development, home economics & family development, forestry, and marine & fresh water resources. These positions are referred to in some states as “agents,” “county agents,” “county extension agents,” etc.

PERFORMANCE: Human performance means both behaviors and results. It includes the consequences of behaviors. It is a combination of behaviors and the results they produce. It consists of an individual engaging in behavior in a situation to achieve results.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: A system comprised of an ongoing process of planning and appraising which includes the establishment of goals and expectations through performance planning; continuing year-round performance feedback and coaching; and a formal performance appraisal at the end of the performance period.

PERFORMANCE PLANNING: The process of developing an established set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills resulting in a plan of work for which an individual is accountable and will be evaluated against.

PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND COACHING: Ongoing performance-related communication that conveys “how am I doing” information, reinforces good performance, and helps an individual improve trouble spots.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: Formal overall appraisal of performance at the end of a performance period of how an individual performed against a set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills.

SUPERVISOR: A professional within Cooperative Extension representing the first level of management (immediate supervisor) and designated with the responsibility for managing the performance of extension educators through phases which include performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and overall performance appraisal.

SECTION I - Perceptions and Feelings

Please respond to the following statements **twice**. Circle your response in the left-hand column which reflects your **present** situation (the first half of the italics in each statement relates to present situation). Circle your response in the right-hand column which reflects your view of an **ideal** situation (the second half of the italics in each statement relates to ideal situation).

Number meanings: 1) Completely Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Somewhat Disagree; 4) Somewhat Agree; 5) Agree; 6) Completely Agree

Completely Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Completely Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

Performance Planning

(The process of developing an established set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills resulting in a plan of work for which an extension educator is accountable and will be evaluated against.)

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	1. I <i>do/should</i> have a clear description of what is expected of me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	2. Identifying objectives and behaviors <i>does/should</i> help me focus my efforts.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	3. My professional goals <i>are/should be</i> aligned with the goals of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	4. My goals and objectives <i>are/should be</i> developed jointly with my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	5. My goals and objectives <i>are/should be</i> updated as needs change during the performance cycle.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	6. I <i>do/should</i> have strong ownership of my plan of work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	7. I <i>am/should be</i> aware of the criteria that will be utilized to evaluate performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	8. My supervisor <i>is/should be</i> effective in helping me identify my training and development needs.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Completely Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Completely Agree 6

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	9. My performance <i>is/should be</i> measured against a set of clear position responsibilities and program objectives that are known at the beginning of the evaluation period by me and my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	10. The mission, values, vision and goals of the organization <i>are/should be</i> well understood and serve as the foundation for the performance management process.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	11. My performance standards <i>are/should be</i> demonstrated in observable outcomes which can be objectively measured for how they impact clientele.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	12. The organization's mission and strategic direction <i>is/should be</i> communicated to me by my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	13. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> make clear to me what the performance standards are.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	14. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> make clear to me the organizational results extension administration want to achieve.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	15. My individual plan of work objectives <i>are/should be</i> clearly consistent with organizational goals and objectives of the Cooperative Extension organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	16. During the discussion of my proposed plan of work objectives, my supervisor <i>does/should</i> encourage and give me every chance to express my ideas and concerns.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Completely Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Completely Agree 6

Performance Feedback and Coaching

(Ongoing performance-related communication that conveys “how am I doing” information, reinforces good performance, and helps an extension educator improve trouble spots.)

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	17. I <i>do/should</i> receive feedback from my supervisor throughout the year about how I’m doing.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	18. During the year, my strengths <i>are/should be</i> clearly pointed out to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	19. During the year, my areas for improvement <i>are/should be</i> clearly pointed out to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	20. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> provide feedback that includes specific examples of how I am using behaviors and skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	21. I <i>do/should</i> get the coaching I need during the year to achieve my goals and improve my behaviors.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	22. I <i>do/should</i> have access to all the information I need to track my performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	23. I <i>am/should be</i> responsible for tracking my performance relative to my goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	24. I <i>am/should be</i> sufficiently observed to be adequately evaluated.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	25. Feedback about my performance <i>does/should</i> come from multiple sources.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	26. My supervisor <i>is/should be</i> less of a “judge and jury” and more of a “mentor and coach” who builds successful team members.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	27. My supervisor and I <i>do/should</i> share a common goal of achieving high performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	28. There <i>is/should be</i> an open, trusting relationship between me and my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Completely Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Completely Agree 6

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	29. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> let me know how she/he feels about my performance and what needs to be improved.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	30. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> demonstrate an ongoing genuine care for helping me improve performance and better serve clientele.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	31. My supervisor <i>does/should</i> have knowledge of progress I make in achieving my objectives.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Completely Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Completely Agree 6

Performance Appraisal

(Formal overall appraisal of performance at the end of a performance period of how an extension educator has performed against a set of goals/objectives and behaviors/skills.)

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	32. The purpose of the performance appraisal <i>is/should be</i> made clear to me by my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	33. My performance appraisal <i>is/should be</i> based primarily on specific objectives outlined in my plan of work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	34. During my performance appraisal, my supervisor and I <i>do/should</i> discuss the results I achieved plus the behaviors and skills I used to achieve them.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	35. I <i>do/should</i> receive a performance appraisal at least once a year.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	36. My appraisal <i>is/should be</i> very objective.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	37. My appraisal <i>does/should</i> focus equally on my strengths and areas for improvement.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	38. My supervisor and I <i>do/should</i> jointly review my performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	39. I <i>do/should</i> gather data and self-evaluate my performance prior to meeting with my supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	40. The individuals presently conducting the performance appraisal interview and rating in my state <i>are/should be</i> knowledgeable and skilled in performance appraisal processes.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	41. Performance appraisal <i>does/should</i> help me improve my individual performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	42. Performance appraisal <i>does/should</i> help improve organizational performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Completely Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Somewhat Agree 4 Agree 5 Completely Agree 6

Present Situation	Statement	Ideal Situation
1 2 3 4 5 6	43. The supervisor conducting my performance appraisal <i>has/should have</i> first-hand knowledge of my work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	44. Formal input from peers <i>is/should be</i> used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	45. Formal input from clientele <i>is/should be</i> used by my supervisor to assess my performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	46. My performance appraisal <i>is/should be</i> formal, including written statements and an interview with an opportunity for discussion.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	47. Planning for performance improvement <i>is/should be</i> a high priority of the performance appraisal discussion.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	48. When appraising performance, my supervisor <i>does/should</i> take a problem-solving approach versus a judgmental, punishment-oriented approach.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	49. I <i>am/should be</i> motivated after each performance appraisal.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	50. The goals of the organization, my supervisor's goals and my goals for appraising performance <i>are/should be</i> shared and understood.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	51. The goals and purposes of performance appraisal for the organization, supervisor and extension educator <i>do/should</i> complement and reinforce each other.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	52. Performance appraisals <i>are/should be</i> a priority at all levels of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	53. Supervisors <i>are/should be</i> held accountable for performance appraisal effectiveness.	1 2 3 4 5 6

SECTION II - Overall Satisfaction

Please complete a rating by circling your response which best represents your opinion to the following questions.

Number meanings: 1) Highly Ineffective; 2) Ineffective; 3) Somewhat Ineffective; 4) Somewhat Effective; 5) Effective; 6) Highly Effective

Highly Ineffective Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Somewhat Effective Effective Highly Effective
 1 2 3 4 5 6

Statement	Rating
1. Rate how you perceive the performance planning process you have experienced.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Rate how you perceive the feedback and coaching you have received from your supervisor.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Rate how you perceive the performance appraisals you have received over the past three years have helped you be more effective in your job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Rate how you perceive your current performance management system in terms of its overall effectiveness as a tool to help you be effective in your job.	1 2 3 4 5 6

SECTION III - Summary

Please respond to the following three questions regarding your organization's performance management system.

1. What do you feel *best* about regarding your organization's current performance management system?

2. What has caused the greatest *frustration* regarding your organization's current performance management system?

3. What *changes* would you recommend to your organization's current performance management system?

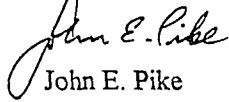
SECTION IV - Demographic

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Number of years experience in Cooperative Extension? _____ years
2. Years in your present position? _____ years
3. Job Classification: (circle one)
 1. Agriculture
 2. Community Development
 3. Family & Youth/4-H
 4. 4-H & Youth Development
 5. Home Economics/Family Development
 6. Natural Resources
 7. Sea Grant
 8. Other (list) _____
4. Sex: (circle)
 1. Female
 2. Male
5. Race: (circle)
 1. American Indian
 2. Asian
 3. Black
 4. Hispanic
 5. Multi Racial
 6. White
 7. Other _____
6. Your Age: (circle)
 1. Under 25
 2. 25-34
 3. 35-44
 4. 45-55
 5. 56-64
 6. 65 and over
7. Highest Degree Held: (circle)
 1. B.S. or B.A.
 2. Masters
 3. Masters plus 15 hours
 4. Masters plus 30 hours
 5. Ph.D. or Ed.D.
8. STATE: _____
9. Other Comments: _____

Thank you for your time completing the form. By expressing our perceptions concerning performance management, we may be able to improve the process and our performance as we fulfill the mission of Cooperative Extension. Please indicate if you wish to receive a copy of the study results: _____ Yes _____ No

Sincerely,



John E. Pike
Associate Director
UNH Cooperative Extension
102 Taylor Hall
59 College Road
Durham, N.H. 03824-3587

Telephone: 603-862-1537
E-Mail: john.pike@unh.edu
Fax: 603-862-1585

Some questions adapted from a survey instrument contained within *Performance Management: What's Hot - What's Not*, ©Development Dimensions International, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Used with permission.

NUMBER: _____

APPENDIX C

Letter to State Program Leaders for Survey Validation

November 17, 1995

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Init.)FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Address 1)
FIELD(Address 2)
FIELD(Address3)
FIELD(City, State, Zip)

Dear FIELD(First Name),

I am in the process of developing a survey instrument as part of my doctoral dissertation study in performance management and am writing to request your assistance in validating the survey instrument and making suggestions for improving it.

The study will consist of survey research designed to discover the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators (field staff) in the northeast region regarding performance management in their respective state organization. I am defining "Extension Educators" as professional field staff located in field offices (off campus) who have subject-matter expertise and are responsible for educational programming at the local level. Extension educators will be asked to respond to questions concerning their perceptions of the performance management system. I am planning to sample 30% of extension educators from each participating state throughout the northeast.

Given the purpose of the study, do you think the questions and items reflected in the enclosed survey instrument are likely to do the job? Please provide me with any suggestions you have regarding the addition or deletion of questions, the clarification of instructions, or improvements in format. As you review the survey, please try to think in terms of staff throughout the northeast who will be responding to the final survey instrument.

Also, would you please identify two members of your field staff that I will plan to include as individuals who will receive this questionnaire for the purpose of piloting/field testing the instrument. I'll be piloting the survey only in N.H. with 10 selected extension educators from our state (two from each program area).

I would appreciate it if you could forward your review comments and suggestions by **November 27**. Don't hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions. Your assistance is much appreciated. Thanks!

Sincerely,

John E. Pike
Associate Director

APPENDIX D

Letter to Extension Educators for Pilot Testing

December 21, 1995

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Init.) FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Address 1)
FIELD(Address 2)
FIELD(Address 3)
FIELD(City, State, Zip)

Dear FIELD(First Name),

I am in the process of field testing a survey instrument as part of my doctoral dissertation study in performance management. You are among 10 Extension Educators who have been selected to participate in the field testing of this study because of your experience as a Cooperative Extension educator in the field.

The study will consist of survey research designed to discover the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators (field staff) in the northeast region regarding performance management in their respective state organization. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the extension educators' perception of the present and ideal performance management system within three categories including performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.
2. To determine the differences between extension educator's perceptions of the present and ideal performance management system within the categories of performance planning, performance feedback and coaching, and performance appraisal.
3. To determine the extension educators' perception of overall effectiveness regarding their current performance management system as a tool for helping them be effective in their job and to compare perceptions of overall effectiveness to responses within the three aforementioned categories of a performance management system.

Extension educators will be asked to respond to questions concerning their perceptions of the performance management system. I am planning to sample 30% of extension educators from participating states throughout the northeast.

Please complete the enclosed survey as you would any other survey. Also, I want to emphasize that this pilot effort I'm asking you to participate in, is from John Pike "doctoral student" and not as N.H.'s "Associate Director". Therefore, I want to stress that your responses will be strictly **confidential and for my use only** as part of my study/survey design process.

After you've completed the survey, please fill out the enclosed feedback form and return to me along with your completed survey. I would appreciate you recording how long it takes you to complete the survey instrument. Likewise, I would appreciate you indicating on the enclosed form, any areas of the survey instrument you feel are unclear as well as any suggestions you might have regarding the addition or deletion of questions, the clarification of instructions, or improvements in format.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in field testing the survey instrument. Performance management is an important area within Cooperative Extension and your input will aid in insuring the final survey instrument is as accurate as possible.

If possible, I would appreciate it if you would send your completed survey and feedback form to me **by January 5** in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Don't hesitate to give me a call at 862-1537 if you have any questions. Your assistance is much appreciated. Best wishes for a happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

John E. Pike

APPENDIX E

Cover letter for Questionnaire

January 12, 1996

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Init.) FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Address 1)
FIELD(Address 2)
FIELD(Address 3)
FIELD(City, State, Zip)

Dear FIELD(First Name),

I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program in Education at the University of New Hampshire and am requesting your help with my dissertation study which I believe will benefit your state and the Cooperative Extension System. I am interested in your view of performance management. I specifically seek your opinion about three key components of performance management which include: *1) performance planning; 2) performance feedback and coaching; and 3) performance appraisal.*

The study, consisting of survey research, is designed to discover the perceptions held by Cooperative Extension educators (field staff) in eight states within the northeast region regarding performance management. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine the current and ideal performance management system as perceived by extension educators.

Your name was randomly selected and you are among extension educators throughout the northeast asked to respond to questions concerning perceptions of your organization's performance management system. Director _____ has given his/her support for your participation in this study. Please see the enclosed letter from him/her.

The questionnaire takes about 45 minutes to complete. I need your true perceptions and feelings as a response to each question. Your individual answers will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your answers will be compiled along with all the other responses and only the totals will be reported.

Should you have any questions about the survey, feel free to call me at 603-862-1537. If you wish to receive a copy of the study results, please indicate at the end of the survey. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed and postage paid envelope by **January 31**. Your participation in this study is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

John E. Pike
Associate Director

APPENDIX F

First reminder letter

January 26, 1996

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Init.) FIELD>Last Name)
FIELD(Address 1)
FIELD(Address 2)
FIELD(Address 3)
FIELD(City, State Zip)

Dear FIELD(First Name),

Two weeks ago you should have received a questionnaire from me asking you for your participation in my dissertation study focusing on performance management. To date, I have not received your response. It is very important that I be able to include your response in my study.

If you have already responded, thank you for your help and excuse this reminder. If you have not responded, won't you please take about 45 minutes to complete and forward the questionnaire?

Let me reassure you that your individual answers will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your answers will be compiled along with all the other responses from eight states and only the totals will be reported. Your identity will not be revealed.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire or it got misplaced, please call me at (603) 862-1537 and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

John E. Pike
Associate Director

APPENDIX G

Second reminder letter

February 12, 1996

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Initial) FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Address1)
FIELD(Address2)
FIELD(Address3)
FIELD(City, State Zip)

Dear FIELD(First Name),

In mid-January a questionnaire seeking your perceptions regarding performance management was mailed to you. To date, I have not received your response. Since I have not received your completed questionnaire, I am enclosing another copy in case the original one was lost. It is very important that I be able to include your response in my study.

If you have already responded, THANK YOU for your help and excuse this reminder. If you have not responded, won't you please take about 45 minutes today to complete and forward the questionnaire. Let me reassure you that your individual answers will be held in the strictest of confidence. Your answers will be compiled along with all the other responses from eight states and only the totals will be reported.

In order for the study to be truly representative of extension educators throughout the northeast, it is essential that each person return the questionnaire. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John E. Pike
Associate Director

APPENDIX H

Comments from Respondents

SOME ACTUAL COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

What Educators Felt Best About

The performance management system provides a framework for communication between the educator and the supervisor. Some actual comments:

Beyond the “formal” system there are on-going opportunities to talk with my “supervisor” whenever there is a need. Yearly or bi-yearly reviews, in my opinion, do not encourage formative evaluation which is essential in changing times.

We talk; my supervisor and I meet and informally discuss strengths and weaknesses throughout the year and evaluation is an on-going process.

It gives me a chance at least once a year to talk to my supervisor about me, him and the organization. Feedback is important to motivate me. I like to be complimented and I need to know when I need improvement.

It reflects and incorporates the goals agreed upon prior to performance review. It provides an opportunity for visiting with supervisor and his/her individual attention to assist the worker in drawing out the best performance.

There is an opportunity for self-evaluation as well as multiple sources of input from peers and clientele. Some actual comments:

That I am able to complete a self-evaluation which helps me identify areas for improvement, as well as successes for past year and also to plan goals for next year.

It forces me to get organized and to look at my accomplishments for the year. It makes me feel good about my work while it rejuvenates and motivates me to continue to seek to develop my knowledge and skills.

It is clearly defined; performance reviews are given high priority; there is a midyear review; self evaluation is built in; peers and clientele are asked to evaluate my performance--people I work with directly; it gives an opportunity for regularly taking stock of where I am and where I should be heading.

Evaluation is based on program goals, objectives, and accomplishments. Some actual comments:

Establishing outcomes; specific goals, objectives and related tasks are identified and serve as benchmarks of achievement; the performance planning stage helps me focus my energies and set priorities; the appraisal phase helps me refocus; helps to

see areas of strength and needed improvements.

It's based on my plan of work and program impact; it is flexible enough to leave room for innovation and updating planning goals as county needs arise.

What Educators Felt Frustrated With

Lack of sufficient observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance. Some actual comments:

It is based too much on subjective, judgmental input from supervisors who know nothing about what we are doing. My supervisor is not at my programs, does not interact with my clientele and doesn't understand what I do and therefore can't effectively evaluate me.

Supervisors who rate you when they see you only 1 to 3 times per year but never in your "work role" in the county and really don't know what I am doing. No one who evaluated me this year has seen me present an actual program.

The greatest frustration is that my direct supervisor has no understanding of what I do or need to do. I haven't been observed "on the job" by my supervisor while teaching, conducting meetings, etc.

Lack of awareness by supervisors of what I am actually doing - not actually attending any programs. Having people evaluate me without once observing my teaching ability and style.

Being evaluated by a supervisor completely unfamiliar with my program and program area; lack of input by persons familiar with program and program accomplishments; basing evaluation on client change and "practices adopted" regarding subjects taught such as decision-making which do not lend themselves easily to "practices adopted" criteria. There are many things one is expected to do that do not fall neatly into the measurable impact category!

Lack of contact with supervisor during the year. I want to show the supervisor my good work and share in my failures.

Lack of performance feedback and coaching throughout the year. Some actual comments:

I want more guidance and feedback throughout the year. There is no coaching. Don't have a clear understanding of specific areas of strength or areas to improve.

No real follow up or help in becoming better or overcoming problems. Lack of ongoing attention to performance with feedback and coaching.

Supervisor is not a mentor/coach; supervisor is not supportive but generally critical.

The amount of feedback that is lacking. No real help in planning how to make constructive changes once needs are identified. There seems to be no concern for you.

There is no on-going performance feedback. No coaching or motivational effect. No plan to help with improvement.

Lack of honesty when evaluating employees. There has been a weak trust relationship between supervisors and staff.

Lack of clear performance expectations. Not clear on supervisor's vision or goals for the organization. There is an inability to define what makes a good extension program and we lack tools to effectively assess program impact with clientele.

Lack of knowledgeable and skilled supervisors trained in performance management. Some actual comments:

Lack of personnel management skills in key supervisors. Lack of consistency and follow through. No organizational plan exists. Unequal expectations of staff.

Supervisor lack of skill in performance assessment. Primarily identifies failures and over-reacts to some negative input from clients, volunteers who know only small part of one's work.

How poorly my current supervisor does in making this an ongoing process. Some supervisors do not have enough training and/or experience in coaching and providing feedback.

Real or perceived difference in standards between evaluators. Supervisors are not skilled nor adequately trained in the evaluation process. All educators are not objectively evaluated with the same yard stick.

Lack of supervisory accountability for performance management, especially regarding ineffective performers. Some actual comments:

Many of my co-workers do not even do reports. The supervisors have not been able to motivate non-reporters to follow up therefore it feels like there really is no accountability.

It appears that the issues and needs of those who are widely recognized as poor performers are not addressed. Individuals keep on conducting business the way they want with little apparent consequence.

Appraisals do not seem to have the desired effect of improving the organization and the performance of at least some of the staff.

People who consistently fail to measure up to performance standards and who do not listen to coaching suggestions are allowed to remain in the system and not terminated. This is a drag on morale and tends to make performance based management look weak.

Great variance among appraisers. Some educators “wonder” why some peers are “kept” around the organization. Those deemed “ineffective slackers” are kept while others go above and beyond and wonder why they bother to make the effort.

“Loafers” in the system are still here while I’m working my butt off!

Lack of monetary rewards linked to performance. Some actual comments:

Excellent performance leads only to increased responsibility, not to increased compensation.

No consequences or rewards for performance good or bad. Frustration when no raises are available for high producers.

There are no tangible rewards such as enhanced benefits or increased compensation for achieving or exceeding performance benchmarks.

No rewards for outstanding performance. Promises of performance and merit affecting salary increases but never realized.

The amount of money available for merit raises is so small that it hardly serves as an incentive or reward (it’s almost a joke).

It is tied to annual raises which are so small as to make you feel like why bother to do a good job.

My performance appraisal doesn’t impact my annual pay raise staff who don’t accomplish as much as I do still get the same raise.

There are no dollars available to award individuals with for their good evaluation with high merit increases. Good evaluations mean nothing in Extension except a pat on the back once a year.

Lack of financial reward for work done. Appraisal is supposed to be reflected in “raise”. So many years I received an excellent rating and with budget crunches I received very little or no raise. This doesn’t do much to motivate.

Lack of timeliness, efficiency and practical procedures. Some actual comments:

By the time we do our performance appraisal the year is ½ over and they are very time consuming.

Doesn't happen enough!

The lack of a readily-usable, easily-measurable method of tracking positive changes (in attitudes, behavior, economic status, etc) for clientele as a result of our educational efforts, vs. Just keeping track of numbers, activities, etc.

Too time consuming. We are all stretched very thin!

Cumbersome paperwork involved and with no direct link to performance review -- it seems to be just a "requirement".

The forms could be simplified as well as the whole process to make it more time efficient and manageable.

Time!!! It's usually rushed. We rush to get the appraisals done to satisfy organizational requirements.

Timeliness - never done on time!

Large amounts of paperwork and staff time. Poorly organized evaluation summary reporting forms.

Too much emphasis on the technicalities of writing the plan-of-work, accomplishment reports, etc., and not leaving time to do job we were hired to do.

What Changes Educators Recommended

More observation by the supervisor and first-hand knowledge of educator performance. Some actual comments:

More direct communication from supervisors and involvement in some of my programs.

Supervisors observe and stay more in touch with what we are doing. Have the process be on-going throughout the year rather than a farcical once-a-year charade.

Supervisors need to have more time for contact with the field people that they supervise for more frequent one on one supervisor-employee contact; depend less

on paperwork.

Supervisor should observe at least one educational presentation/facilitation by me with my clientele each year.

Supervisors need more time to observe in the field and also time to interact individually with educators. Need more than an hour during the current once a year performance appraisal

My supervisor needs to spend more time with me to understand the impact my programming has on the clientele I work with. We need to talk on a regular basis about my progress.

Team approach to performance appraisals so more than one supervisor/observer contributes.

Each supervisor meet with staff at least twice between annual appraisals and review how well objectives are being met.

Supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of my work, supervisor should seek formal input from peers and clientele. Supervisor should observe my teaching more. Supervisor should sit down and help me plan and write goals and objectives.

More frequent meetings with supervisors, supervisors need to be more supportive, supervisors need to visit programs, evaluations should be done on neutral turf, supervisors and staff should be better prepared for evaluations.

It needs to be ongoing process with enough time to make this a real positive tool for professional development.

Increased communication with ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the performance cycle. Some actual comments:

Better verbal communication regarding what is expected of me and on-going feedback relating to my performance throughout the year.

Look more to the clientele for feedback. We serve the public not a management scheme.

More emphasis on relating organizational and professional development needs. For example, if a general deficiency among staff becomes evident then the organization should design training and provide opportunities for staff to develop needed skills.

Should be on going vs. once a year.

More performance feedback throughout the year. Strengthen the coaching aspect of the supervisor position.

Focus on areas for improvement. The idea of placing more emphasis on charting a course for improved performance is sensible. Attaching some meaningful consequences to performance appraisal is imperative. Finally, streamline the process some.

Greater communication and a system for ongoing feedback throughout year.

Regular communication and opportunities to interact and update our performance.

Discussion at beginning of program year as well as at the ending so you have some support in building your program as well as in evaluation of program.

Be more caring in trying to help staff recognize strong areas and areas needing improvement. Positive reinforcement would be a big help.

More direction, guidance and coaching needed from supervisor throughout the year.

More training for supervisors in feedback and coaching.

More supervisory training in performance management and implementation of consistent evaluation procedures. Some actual comments:

More awareness by leaders of the disastrous effects of poor management and supervisors.

Provide more training to supervisors in management focused on coaching and giving feedback.

Some supervisors are not competent in this area, subsequently the appraisals vary greatly from county to county and are not based on the educators' work but rather on how the supervisor views it. Supervisors need more training.

Train supervisors; develop more objective system; inform employees of organizational and unit goals and evaluation criteria.

Establish a method of tracking and coaching educators. Train Extension administrators in performance appraisal/management methods. Provide an opportunity for educators to evaluate the performance of administrators in that dimension of human resource administration. Require supervisors to be actively engaged in the professional improvement of educators they supervise.

Address cases of unsatisfactory educator performance and establish more of a linkage between pay and performance. Some actual comments:

Get rid of non-performing extension educators.

Reduce “red tape” and streamline all aspects of performance appraisal; reward team work and creativity; base performance on actual performance, do away with the “touchy feely” criteria; more flexibility is needed in a fast changing environment such as ours; use performance evaluations to inspire good workers and rid the organization of poor performers.

Work to change the system so high performance evaluations are awarded pay increases and promotions. Currently the system totally fails to recognize great efforts by some and non-performance by others not striving to reach program objectives.

Pay attention to the results, i.e., reward outstanding performance, punish poor performers.

That administration take a long hard realistic look at their employees and recognize folks with more dollars who always produce and are dependable and professional.

Reward those who accomplish a lot with more than good words and heavier workloads. Provide more encouragement, feedback and support in an on-going way.

Make more of a commitment to salary increases based on merit. More uniformity among supervisors regarding performance appraisal.

A system be put in place to recognize achievement and thus create a system for merit raises.

Tie performance and paychecks together; reward high performance with salary increases.

There needs to be an incentive for performance and it needs to relate to salary increase!!!

More efficient and relevant reporting system coupled with more timely and frequent reviews. Some actual comments:

Make it less time consuming. Have supervisor see me in action.

Make it uniform.

Keep the reporting system as simple as possible.

To have reviews more than once a year. To find a different way to track results or improve the present.

Scheduled mini-reviews with milestones related to goals and training/support to address needs.

Have quarterly reviews of agents instead of annually.

Have more periodic reviews during year.

Some of the forms we use could be streamlined so as not to duplicate information.

More on-going review of work plan throughout the year. The yearly review is done well, but more support and review in between would be very helpful.

More often than once a year.

Schedule more time for reviews and updates.

Mid-year mechanism to evaluate progress, re-evaluate, set priorities

That it be the same for everyone!

More mid year informal discussions on job performance instead of once a year. More discussions with supervisor on his goals before writing plans of work.

A better system to report all work accomplished, more encouragement for needs-based programs, less bureaucratic type behavior in organization.

Try to use it more as a job improvement tool; any changes needed to be made should not come at the expense of educator programming time. "Let's not be evaluated to death."

I'd like to see some self-evaluation pieces added. The professional should have input (written, observed and verbal) into their evaluation, before the evaluation is done. The professional would have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and accomplishments.

Increased use of multiple sources of performance feedback including peers and clientele. Some actual comments:

I believe the clientele we assist needs to be randomly surveyed either formally or

informally to determine how effectively and promptly we (the educator) have served their request for information and assistance. Their input into the educators performance is essential in order to provide a complete evaluation of the educator.

Evaluation forms sent to peers and clientele should be more user friendly, shorter and simpler.

Asking a “supervisor” to objectively evaluate an agent is not fair to either party. Most of us who are self-starters do not need a supervisor. A performance management system that utilized input from clientele worked with during the past year, as well as peers, could reveal much about the “real” performance of an agent.

Evaluations from clientele.

Require supervisors to observe and solicit feedback or appraisal from other sources.

Input from clientele and other agencies with whom I work should be included.

Get co-worker and clientele input.

Emphasize program outcomes reflected in a plan of work that serves as a basis for performance evaluation. Some actual comments:

Focus on program impact/results and do more appropriate performance planning related to this focus.

Need to better define successful program outcomes. Our program objectives need to be strengthened and better tied to performance evaluations.

More emphasis on measurable outcomes which match up with plan of work.

Clear and measurable objectives and outcomes are essential for accurate appraisal. However, supervisors working out of state offices cannot easily monitor county employee's performance.

Clarify what we are expected to do to be effective in our work.

Update position descriptions/responsibilities/goals on a more regular basis.