

**1998 Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) Project  
Evaluation**

Project Years 1996-1998

prepared by

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**Educative Summary:**

The Management Intensive Grazing Project was designed to meet the following objectives: to develop educational grazing resources, produce a set of video tapes, organize and facilitate a series of in-depth workshops for the North Central USDA field personnel, develop a cadre of USDA field staff who can conduct grazing schools and to evaluate the effectiveness of resource materials and schools with intended audiences.

One hundred fifty-one (n=151) participants completed and returned the Management Intensive Grazing Workshop evaluation data collection instrument, from seven workshops in the North Central Region. The intent of this evaluative report will focus on the participants' perceptions and opinions regarding content, relevance of materials, and improvement of future grazing schools.

Future evaluative efforts will explore the Management Intensive Grazing Project video tape series and field staff's use of materials/knowledge gained through MIG grazing school participation.

1998 Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) Project Evaluation- Final Report

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### Background

Pasture-based forage livestock systems are an integral component of agricultural ecosystems throughout the North Central Region. Many traditional systems have proven to be low in profit potential and environmental sustainability. Several new concepts in management and technological tools have been developed over the past two decades. Many livestock producers are hesitant to try a system that is so totally different from their "traditional" livestock systems. In addition there are few extension agents and specialists from Land Grant Universities with an understanding of the practical concepts of Management Intensive Grazing (MIG). Thus, many extension agents and other farm agency personnel either lack confidence, are skeptical or hesitant about teaching or recommending MIG as an alternative livestock management system.

Therefore, this project attempts to provide educational training and tools for field level USDA personnel (Extension, NRCS, and SWCD) and other interested agency personnel (farm lenders, environmental organizations and high school Ag-Science teachers) to carry out educational programs in MIG systems.

### Objectives

The objectives of the Management Intensive Grazing Project are as follows:

1. To develop educational grazing resources into an in-depth and well designed teaching curriculum for USDA field staff, Ag-Science teachers, farmers and related agencies in order that they may teach the principles of MIG.
2. Produce a set of nine (9) video tapes which will cover key topics: forage/grazing/livestock management.
3. To organize a series of in-depth workshops (minimum six workshops lasting three days each) for North Central USDA field personnel to present teaching materials on MIG systems.
4. To develop a cadre of USDA field staff, Ag-Science teachers, farmers and personnel from related agencies with MIG grazing expertise who can organize and conduct grazing schools for livestock producers throughout the Midwest.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials and schools with the intended audiences.

The intent of this evaluative report will focus on the participants' perceptions and opinions regarding content, relevance of materials, and improvement of future grazing schools. In order to begin to meet the objectives, the MIG Project implemented seven (7), three day, regional workshops.

Table 1: Summary of Workshop Sites

State	Contact/University	Returned Instruments
Ohio (July 16-18, 1996)	Henry Bartholomew/ The Ohio State University	20
Michigan 1 (August 5-7, 1996)	Richard Leep/ Michigan State University	11
Indiana (September 24-26, 1996)	Keith Johnson/ Purdue University	29 (one blank)
Michigan 2 (October 15-17, 1996)	Steve Deming/ Michigan State University	26
Illinois (November 19-21, 1996)	Edward Ballard/ University of Illinois	24
Michigan 3 (October 7-9, 1997)	Steve Deming/ Michigan State University	25
Iowa (November 18-20, 1997)	Anthony Harvey/ Iowa State University	16

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were asked to complete a three-page evaluation in order to access the perceptions and opinions of participants, impact of the workshop and to secure suggestions to improve future MIG training opportunities.

#### Methodology

At the end of each three day workshop, participants were asked to complete an anonymous, three-page evaluation to be returned to facilitator. The evaluation instrument was designed to measure participants' perceptions regarding the usefulness of the workshop and materials, how new knowledge may be utilized and collection of suggestions to improve future MIG programs. The evaluation instrument was reviewed by each workshop facilitator for content validity and the structure of the questions. Modifications were made upon suggestion and review with MSU evaluation specialist.

This post-activity evaluation has limitations. The data were collected utilizing a post-training measurement questionnaire that focused on immediate participant perceptions about the workshop. Evaluations may be hastily completed, participants may be exhausted from their three-day workshop and the rush to return home is present. Nevertheless, the post-activity survey is an effective, inexpensive method of gathering feedback and participant recommendations to improve future programs.

## Data Analysis

One hundred fifty-one (n=151) participants completed and returned the Management Intensive Grazing Workshop evaluation data collection instrument. Missing or not legible responses were not recorded. Each workshop facilitator received a "preliminary report" demonstrating frequencies of responses along with recorded statements to open-ended questions several weeks after completion of their specific workshop. This sharing of information enabled the workshop facilitator the opportunity to attempt to meet the needs of future MIG workshops, as evident by the selections in the "topics" at later workshops. One evaluation form was not completed but for a "written comment."

The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Descriptive statistics--such as percentages, means and standard deviations-- were used to summarize data. Responses to open-ended questions were entered into the Word Perfect 6.1 program and analyzed using qualitative techniques. The data from the evaluation can be effectively divided into four categories: a) demographic information, b) content of workshop, c) objectives, procedures and impacts of the workshop and d) logistics. Similar workshops were conducted in seven locations, with slight variations in topics presented, and the data will be presented accordingly, i.e., Ohio, Michigan 1, Indiana, Michigan 2, Illinois, Michigan 3 and Iowa. An overall mean score for specific findings is also provided when appropriate.

### a) Demographic information:

Participants were asked to complete the following information: age, gender, organizational affiliation, number of years providing agriculture education and selection of class(es) of livestock which the individual currently provides educational support. Table 2 represents participant demographic information represented by mean score, with overall standard deviation.

Table 2: Demographic information

Demographic Information	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=29	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Age	36.7	36.9	41.6	39.5	40.9	37.2	42.8	39.51 SD 10.6
Years of experience	13.7	7.6	15.3	12.2	16.9	4.3	9.2	12.19 SD 9.7

Participant gender was represented as follows: 99 male, 29 female and 23 nonrespondents. Respondents demonstrated a large range in each respective category, age, ranged from 19 to 72 years and experience in providing agriculture education, ranged from 0 to 40 plus years. This may suggest a need for a progressive, experienced-based workshops regarding Management Intensive Grazing in order to meet the needs of professionals at various career tenure. A participant from Ohio stated, "I had little or no knowledge & didn't really get the basics I feel I needed. What's a pasture management plan? Example??" , while another suggested, "...advertise next time as a moderate to advanced course, did not seem basic introduction for me..."

An Iowa participant stated, "I learned a lot but at the same time a lot of the information was way over my head and I didn't grasp some of it."

A variety of field staff from various organizations participated in the MIG Project workshops. Table 3, provides a view of the diversity by organizational affiliation, with 13 nonrespondents. Several comments were also made, such as, "Great workshop- need more w/CES & NRCS," while others were interested in meeting their specific organizational needs, "Should be geared more toward helping NRCS and SWCD personnel write conservation plans incorporating grazing as a conservation practice."

Table 3: Participation by Organization Affiliation (n=151)

Organization	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Extension	2	2	12	7	11	3	0	37 (24.5%)
NRCS	8	4	9	9	10	5	12	57 (37.7%)
SWDC	8	2	0	7	1	4	1	23 (13.9%)
Other	2	1	5	2	0	11	1	21 (8.6%)

Workshop participants were also asked to select the class(es) of livestock to which educational support is currently provided. Table 4, also suggests the diversity of need among workshop participants and their constituents as demonstrated by their selected responses concerning their local educational support roles.

Table 4: Local Educational Support Provided to Clientele by Participants

Class	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Beef/Comm.	16	5	18	16	5	5	7	72
Beef/ Purebred	12	1	9	6	13	4	6	51
Beef/ Stockers	11	5	8	12	14	6	7	63
Dairy/ Heifers	7	6	8	13	8	4	1	47
Dairy/ cows	12	7	10	14	11	6	1	61
Sheep	8	4	10	7	7	4	4	44
Goats/meat	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	7
Goats/milk	1	1	0	4	1	1	0	8
Goats/hair	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	6
Deer/elk	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	5

b) Content of Workshop

This segment of the evaluation asked the participants to rate the quality of various aspects of the Management Intensive Grazing Workshop. Table 5 is presented in order for the stakeholders to view their mean scores and compare to other sites. An overall mean is provided.

Table 5: Quality of Content and Facilitators

Statement	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Relevance of topics	4.6	4.1	4.8	4.5	4.7	4.3	3.9	4.47
Quality of teaching materials	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.4	3.7	4.27
Facilitators' knowledge of subject matter	4.8	4.2	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.2	4.55
Facilitators' preparation	4.7	4.0	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.43
Activities/ group presentations	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.20

Scale: 5-Highly relevant, 4-quite relevant, 3-relevant, 2-somewhat relevant, 1-not relevant.

Findings shown in Table 5 demonstrate participants perceived the content materials to be "quite relevant". The two lowest scored statements, "quality of teaching materials" and "activities/group presentations" received several suggestions to improve, while still receiving a rating of above "4-quite relevant". A participant from the Indiana Workshop stated, "Would liked to have more of the teaching materials used made available to us to use in our educational efforts," and a Michigan participant suggested, "Organize pasture walks more. Have each session tell the group what we are going to learn. Maybe have only one pasture walk but have an evening session on the case study."

The "Topic" section of the evaluation asked the participants to rate the topics based on usefulness to their perceived teaching and learning needs. The scale used the following rating structure, 0-not applicable/did not attend session, 1-low usefulness, 3-moderate usefulness and 5-high usefulness. The seven regional MIG Workshops utilized most of the same topics with various additions and deletions as designed by each regional facilitator/team. Table 6 represents the mean scores by topic, reported by site. A (-) demonstrates the specific topic was not included on evaluation instrument for that site.

Table 6: Usefulness of Topics (Mean Scores by Site)  
Scale: 0-not applicable/did not attend, 1-low, 3-moderate, 5-high

Topic	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16
Concepts/mission	4.30	2.70	4.43	-	4.39	4.08	4.00
Evaluate soils resources	4.00	-	4.14	-	3.39	-	3.22
Matching forage to livestock	4.30	-	4.29	-	-	-	3.78
Plant ID	4.25	-	4.36	-	3.22	-	3.36
Economics	4.10	3.27	-	3.24	3.57	3.88	4.07
Plant growth/mgt	4.00	3.55	4.50	4.32	3.87	4.24	3.36
Software	3.25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matching animal to forage	4.35	-	4.30	-	3.78	-	-
Animal requirements	4.21	3.91	4.15	4.04	4.13	-	4.00
Grazing systems/environment	4.25	2.73	3.96	3.29	3.50	-	3.50
Estimate forage	4.50	-	4.22	-	-	-	3.50
Paddock layout/H2O	4.70	3.46	4.39	4.35	4.13	4.44	4.23
Field trips	4.35	Farm 2.78 Dairy 2.67	-	-	3.96	-	4.29
Soil fertility	4.20	3.64	-	4.00	3.90	3.76	3.50
Goal setting	4.16	-	-	-	-	-	3.29
Grazing panel	4.70	3.18	4.48	3.92	4.87	-	4.64
Case farm study	-	3.36	4.30	4.00	3.78	-	3.50
Extend grazing season	-	-	-	3.96	4.13	3.68	4.25
Fencing	-	-	4.72	-	4.22	4.20	-
Operations current/future	-	-	-	3.75	-	3.70	-
New Grazier profiles	-	-	-	3.84	-	-	-
Effective teacher-now the expert	-	3.27	-	3.39	-	2.84	-
Troubleshooting pastures	-	-	-	3.79	-	-	-
How to get involved?	-	-	-	3.54	-	-	-
Determining stock density	-	-	4.32	-	-	4.32	-

Topic	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16
Providing H2O to grazing livestock	-	-	4.63	-	-	4.60	3.64
Water Quality	-	-	-	-	-	3.36	3.22
Supplement Dairy Cow	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.66
Feed-Breed Strategy	-	-	-	-	-	3.68	-
Pasture Estabimprove	-	-	-	-	-	4.42	-
Evaluating available forage	-	-	4.26	-	3.74	-	-

Usefulness Scale: 0-not applicable/did not attend, 1-low, 3-moderate, 5-high

Effort was taken not to group similar topics, but list "all" topics as stated on each site's workshop agenda. This also enables various site facilitators the opportunity to explore other sites' participant perceptions regarding topics not offered at their respective site. There is not an "overall" mean score due to the variety of topics offered. Upon qualitative review of comments regarding areas to improve workshops, most suggestions were of a positive nature. A commonality throughout sites suggested a preference for more hands-on and experienced based educational activities.

Indiana: "More interaction with animal scientists, nutritionists. Producer information is great, but lots of people are having success with different techniques. What is the basis? Why does it work?..other approaches?" "Would like to see more economics, costs and \$ returns involved in all of the presentations and talks. Really liked producer presentations and the information and experiences shared by the out-of-state speakers."

Michigan: "Diet changes from winter/summer in areas where they cannot be outside. More background on case study, perhaps visited the site." "Economics only involved dairy-need less lecture, more time for questions and practicality stuff." "Have a veterinarian teach on disease, etc." "Have moderator for panel to avoid using the time for just one or two topics.." "All need to be much more practical level, less classroom agronomy and nutrition lecturing style. Disappointing: economics drives everything!! We need some in-depth analysis here..." "Break out sessions w/mix of people encouraging less disciplined knowledge transfer."

Ohio: "For field trips more intensive grazing would help." "Should [provide] example pasture mgt plan. Evaluate student's knowledge level." "More plant ID practice & estimating forage dry matter." "Grazier panel was helpful."

Illinois: "Binder real good...Need soil survey and soil survey book of area and animal use tables from it." "Field evaluation of pasture forage condition in season) would help."

Iowa: "The field trips were essential and put the frosting on the cake." "Schedule for breaks & give presenters a defined time limit. Flexibility is good but so are time limits!. "More consideration for our timber resource. Cattle & timber don't mix."

c) Objectives, Procedures and Impacts of the Workshop

This section of the evaluation measured the participants' overall perception of the workshop: the objectives, content/topics, teaching methods, length of workshop and how will the new knowledge be used. Specific attention was given to find if learner needs were met.

Table 7: Objectives and Procedures of MIG Workshop (mean)

Statements	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=29	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Workshops objectives clear	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.6	4.14
Contents/topics relevant	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.47
Technical content understandable	4.4	4.0	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.3	3.9	4.28
Teaching methods appropriate	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.27
Length of workshop	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.9	3.8	*	*4.05

Scale: Strongly Agree-5, Agree-4, Neither agree/disagree-3, Disagree-2, Strongly disagree-1

\* Iowa Workshop, "length of workshop" was missing on questionnaire.

Table 7 suggests procedures and methods of the MIG Workshops to be positively viewed by participants, as demonstrated by the overall mean selections near "4-Agree". All statements, excluding "Iowa-workshop objectives clear", were rated near the "agreed-4" selection. This can be interpreted as an accepted, "overall" positive perception concerning workshop design. The lowest scores, still above average, "length of workshop" and "workshop objectives were clearly stated", may need to be reviewed by MIG Project administrative team. Upon qualitative review of written comments, several individuals provided suggestions, i.e.,

Indiana participant stated, "... Hank Bartholomew-commented on train the trainer. I missed the concept & did not realize that was an objective",

Ohio, "Extend to a full week,"

Michigan, "We might need a follow-up training for trainers to work on teaching methods and concepts," and "Tight program-excellent-however some sessions (many) needed more time-perhaps delete effective teacher program- (it was good-but time constraints perhaps leave off)".

"Have training session in May and October with case study..." "Include more situations for the far North & shallow soils..."

Iowa, "... I feel 90% of this conference was directed to dairy & nothing else."

Effort was put forth to design the evaluative instrument to collect data on the perceptions and opinions of the participants regarding the impact of their participation and if their personal objectives were met. Participants were asked to select their "assessment" of impact of the workshop on: "your knowledge of MIG concepts/principles", "your interest in MIG", "your confidence in teaching concepts of MIG", "how will you utilize the new knowledge gained", "were personal objectives met" and "would you recommend the workshop to a colleague".

Table 8: Impact of Workshop

Impact statements	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Knowledge MIG concepts	4.2	3.9	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.3	3.9	4.16
Interest in MIG	4.4	3.3	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.5	4.1	4.24
Confidence teaching MIG	4.1	3.4	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.4	3.39

Scale: Greatly improved-5; Somewhat improved-3; No change-1

Assuming that a ranking of "3" suggests average impact, then the impact of the workshop upon participants ranked above average in all areas. Several comments were made regarding time of year workshops were held, i.e., "Field evaluation of pasture forage condition (in season) would help"-Illinois and "more on grotcytile & cool season grass for wet soils eg. Garrison grass-visits". The lowest mean score was "confidence in teaching MIG", a major objective of this project. As previously mentioned, participants are at various levels of understanding of MIG concepts and principles, therefore, this also may suggest the need to develop "introduction", "intermediate/advanced" levels for participants to become both knowledgeable and comfortable with sharing the concepts and principles of MIG in a positive manner. Varying needs of learners exist, as stated in comments.

Other data to support this suggestion of varying needs is demonstrated in Tables 9 and 10, respectively. The diverse levels of understanding, knowledge base and learning styles are also complicated by a previously mentioned phenomena of participants' varied organizational affiliations, roles and missions. Ultimately, agency staff needs "may" vary by local needs and organizational affiliation. Participants were asked if "personal objectives for attending this workshop were met." The selections were 1-not met, 3-satisfactorily met and 5-extremely met. The findings are presented by both organizational affiliation and workshop site.

Table 9: Personal Objectives Met by Organizational Affiliation (missing 17 cases)

Organization	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cases
Extension	4.19	.71	36
NRCS	3.98	.80	55
SWDC	3.86	.77	22
Other	4.43	.81	21
Overall	4.09	.79	134

1-not met, 3-satisfactorily met and 5-extremely met

Table 10: Personal Objectives Met by Workshop Site

Workshop	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cases
Michigan 1	3.81	.60	11
Ohio	4.11	.81	19
Indiana	4.48	.64	27
Michigan 2	4.12	.78	25
Illinois	4.00	.74	23
Michigan 3	4.16	.85	25
Iowa	3.71	.91	14

1-not met, 3-satisfactorily met and 5-extremely met

Eighty eight percent (88%) of participants who responded (133) would recommend this educational experience to a colleague. There were eighteen (18) missing responses and no negative responses, which suggests a useful, educational experience as perceived by the learners.

Table 11 demonstrates how the participants plan to utilize their knowledge gained from the MIG workshop. The cumulative percentages of participants' perceived use are: workshops-50.3%, advise farmers-84.1%, professional improvement-79.5% and share with colleagues-70.2%.

Table 11: Knowledge Gained to be Utilized by Participants (n=151)

Use of MIG knowledge gained	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16
Workshops	11(55%)	4(36.4%)	17(60.7%)	15(57.7%)	19(79.2%)	7(28%)	3(19%)
Advise farmers	17(85%)	8(72.7%)	24(85.7%)	26(100%)	23(95.8%)	7(28%)	14(87%)
Professional improvement	14(70%)	8(72.7%)	23(82.1%)	24(92.3%)	19(79.2%)	12(48%)	11(69%)
Share w/ colleagues	18(90%)	7(63.6%)	19(67.9%)	23(88.5%)	18(75%)	11(44%)	10(63%)

Key: number of participants selected item (%-of group who selected item)

d) Logistics

The section on logistics collected data regarding the learning environment, i.e., meals, rooms and open-ended requests. The participants were asked to rate their "feelings" in regard to meeting rooms and meals/coffee breaks on a scale from 5-excellent to 1-poor.

Table 12: Ratings on Meals and Meeting Rooms (Mean)

Category	Ohio n=20	Mich 1 n=11	Indiana n=28	Mich 2 n=26	Illinois n=24	Mich 3 n=25	Iowa n=16	Overall n=151
Meeting rooms	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.9	4.3
Meals	4.9	4.7	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.3	3.8	4.4

Scale: 5-Excellent, 4-Very good, 3-Good, 2-Fair, 1-Poor

Findings in Table 12 show participants were very satisfied with arrangements relating to meals and coffee breaks. Some participants wrote:

"Great food-too much !!" "...would like an exercise time, area, etc."  
"Lots of good food to eat-thanks!!".

For the most part, participants were satisfied with the rooms and facilities as indicated by the ranking of above "very good-4" mean score. Some statements included:

"Way too hot!!" "Great food and great information!!" "A little more centralized would be nice. A long trip down here. .. The first classroom was horrible. The 2 deadbolt bathrooms in our room & 1 shower for 4 people was not a positive experience. Thanks for all the information [signed]." "Dorms were very hot-a fan would be welcome (or at least a warning, so participants can bring one."

## Conclusion

Respondents demonstrated a large range in each respective demographic category, age, ranged from 19 to 72 years and experience in providing agriculture education, ranged from 0 to 40 plus years.

Participants are at various levels of understanding of MIG concepts and principles, therefore, this may suggest the need to develop novice, intermediate, advanced levels for participants to become both knowledgeable and comfortable with sharing the concepts and principles of MIG in a positive manner. Varying needs of learners exist, as stated in comments.

Varying learning needs are demonstrated. The diverse levels of understanding, knowledge base and learning styles are also complicated by a previously mentioned phenomena of participants' varied organizational affiliations, roles and missions. Ultimately, agency staff needs "may" vary by local needs and organizational affiliation/mission.

The cumulative percentages of participants' perceived use of knowledge gained: workshops-50.3%, advise farmers-84.1%, professional improvement-79.5% and share with colleagues-70.2%. Upon qualitative review, individual's selections of sharing with farmers instead of workshop format, may suggest a need for further training in adult education, group facilitation, and "train the trainer" concepts.

The overall mean score of personal objectives met (4.01), on a scale of 1-not met; 3-met and 5- extremely met, demonstrates a high level of perceived usefulness.

Eighty eight percent (88%) of participants who responded (133) would recommend this educational experience to a colleague. There were eighteen (18) missing responses and no negative responses, which suggests a useful, educational experience as perceived by the learners.

### Recommendation:

Participants suggested materials to be designed in a curriculum format. A user friendly facilitator's guide, with transparencies and materials to utilize would be beneficial.

Develop cluster teams to facilitate MIG workshops in specific states or regions. This may enable educators to utilize specific areas of expertise and experience, promote organizational collaboration with various USDA agencies, and develop a support network for professionals.