

**Extension Employment
Opportunities Following the
Completion of a M.S. degree in
Animal Science**

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Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Opportunities/Challenges**
- **The future**
- **Recommendations**

History Lesson

- **Why was the Cooperative Extension Service created?**
 - Created by Congress
 - Concern for education of the average citizen
- **Morrill Act (1862)**
 - Provided for a university in each state to provide education to citizens in agricultural and mechanical fields
 - Known as "Land-Grant Universities"
- **Hatch Act (1887)**
 - Establish research farms
 - Agricultural, mechanical, and related problems faced by rural citizens
- **Smith Lever Act (1914)**
 - Established the Cooperative Extension Service

Funding Mechanisms

- Vary by state
- Include:
 - Federal, state, county, and grant \$\$
 - Proportions vary by:
 - State, position, program etc.

What Experiences and Training Should You Have?

- **Experience with livestock**
- **Experience in teaching or extension**
- **Sound technical training**
- **Communication skills**
- **Ability to translate highly technical data into information**
- **Experience with youth (4-H positions)**
- **Ability and willingness to relocate**

Experience With Livestock

- Growing up on a livestock operation
- Meaningful employment opportunities in livestock production
 - Internships
 - Paid/unpaid?
 - Externships
 - Study abroad
 - Work at the university farms

Experience in Teaching or Extension

- Teaching assistant opportunities in various courses
- Take the time to shadow extension personnel
- Attend extension-sponsored programs
 - Learn from people who are successful
- Find a mentor

Sound Technical Training

- **Discipline(s) in animal sciences**
 - E.g. Nutrition, physiology, genetics, management
- **Take advantage of breadth of knowledge gained in your B.S.**
- **Good grasp of how the discipline and technical knowledge fits production economics**
 - **Returns have to outweigh the costs**

Sound Technical Training

- **Breadth of knowledge and technical skills needed will depend on:**
 - The position description
 - The corporate culture in a county or regional office
- **County positions**
 - Typically cover the waterfront
 - Will likely rely on B.S. training considerably
- **Area positions**
 - Chance to specialize
 - M.S. training will become more important

Written Communication Skills

- **Good writing skills take work, practice, and the ability to ask for help**
- **Writing your thesis is not the same writing style as you will use in an Extension position**
- **Learn to work with local/regional media**
- **Take advantage of expertise in your organization**

Oral Communication Skills

- **Take advantage of opportunities to speak in front of groups**
 - Peers, scientists, producers, students
 - Field days, classroom, other venues
- **Practice speaking**
 - Toastmasters
 - Other venues
- **Learn how to field questions**

Data vs. Information

- **Data**
 - **Factual information (as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation**
- **Information**
 - **The communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence**
 - **Knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction**

Ability to Translate Data to Information

- More of an art than a science
- Understand your audience
 - Youth/4-H
 - Highly educated producers
 - Somewhere in the middle
 - Allied industry personnel
- Utilize the KISS principle
- Ability to do this effectively comes with experience

Ability to Translate Data to Information

- **Most livestock producers do not read the Journal of Animal Science or the Journal of Dairy Science!**
- **It's up to you to:**
 - **Decide if the information is applicable**
 - **If it is, determine how and where it applies**
 - **Turn the data into information**
 - **Lay out the pros and cons**
 - **Make recommendations**

Experience with Youth

- 4-H
- FFA
- Showmanship
- Livestock, horse, meat, dairy judging and evaluation contests
- Experience with camps

Ability and Willingness to Relocate

- **Getting the first job is difficult**
- **You must be willing to move and relocate for the first job**
 - **Gain some experience and then look at other opportunities (if you desire)**
- **Don't close the door on good jobs just because you think you don't want to spend the rest of your life there**

Nationwide Trends in Cooperative Extension

- Movement toward more regionalization
- Establishment of regional centers
- County offices supported by county only funds
 - Many counties are supporting a 4-H position
- Specialization at the regional center level
 - Various agricultural disciplines

Trends

- Outlook varies by state
- Dependent on state budgets
- Many states are adopting the regional model
 - Creates need for more M.S. level technical specialists
 - County offices staffed by a 4-H/youth person



Example Required Qualifications, County-based Position

- **Bachelor's degree in an agricultural discipline related to the position responsibilities and the academic capacity to successfully enroll in a relevant graduate program in the future.**
- **Skills that demonstrate knowledge and expertise in an agricultural discipline**
- **Program development and educational design skills to assess needs and issues**
- **Information and technology skills necessary to reach and teach diverse audiences; work and communicate effectively; manage time and resources; and enhance one's ability to find, evaluate and disseminate information.**

Qualifications, County-Based Position-Continued

- **Communication skills in listening, developing and conveying a clear, concise message**
- **Organizational management skills including the ability to conduct oneself professionally, be self-directed in the work environment, work flexible and extended hours, be comfortable with extensive travel, and manage time and resources (including grant writing) to efficiency accomplish the duties of the position.**
- **Familiarity with various ethnic and socioeconomic audiences**
- **Personal vehicle and valid driver's license**



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Example Required Qualifications

- **Extension Educator- 4H Youth/Animal Science**
- **Required:**
 - **Master's degree with one degree in Youth Development, Animal Science or closely related field. Outstanding teaching skills, excellent oral & written communication skills and experience with computer and information technologies. Criminal history background check will be conducted. Must meet driver standards according to UNL policy and have a valid driver's license.**

Example Required Qualifications

- **Extension Educator- 4H Youth/Animal Science**
- **Preferred:**
 - **Outstanding organizational skills, leadership skills, and interpersonal skills. A capacity for teamwork and the ability to work with diverse populations. The ability to generate grants & other outside funds. Some travel is required.**

Summary-Skill Set Needed

- Experience with livestock
- Experience in teaching or extension
- Sound technical training
- Communication skills
- Ability to translate highly technical data into information
- Experience with youth (4-H positions)
- Ability and willingness to relocate

Questions?