Innovative Extension: Branching out how we reach out

Delaware Annual Extension Conference

October 19, 2017

Innovation Competition

The theme of this year’s Annual Extension Conference is innovation. We will hear from national experts on how we can improve the way we do our business – reaching out to our clientele to produce a positive impact – by adapting, developing, or creating new products, systems, services, or processes.

Thanks to an endowment from Dr. Jan Seitz, we are also introducing the First Annual Extension Innovation Competition and one winning team will be awarded $5,000 at the conference on October 19th!

Teams must consist of:

- A minimum of 3 people,
- At least one team member from each university (DSU and UD), and
- Cross-programmatic teams will be looked upon favorably (although not required).

Teams will propose an innovative idea to address an issue that will benefit Delaware Cooperative Extension. Ideas may be related to (but not limited to):

- New ways to use technology,
- How we organize work,
- How we deliver content, or
- Experimenting with new tools or resources.

To help teams develop truly innovative ideas, a Creative Coach will be assigned to mentor the team through the ideation process and will provide feedback and direction throughout the summer and early fall. The Coaches are experienced Extension professionals from across the nation with innovation backgrounds. Teams should meet with their Coach via Zoom or other technology at least twice prior to the conference, but Coaches will make themselves available for additional mentoring if so desired.

At the conference, teams will pitch their innovative idea. The pitch may use any form of demonstration, speech, video, PowerPoint, use of props or displays – you can be as creative as you like! Pitches can be presented by the entire team or teams may appoint a pitch-person. While desirable to have all team members present on the day of the conference, this is not required.
The pitch should be less than 5 minutes (they will be timed with a strict cutoff) and include:

- The issue or challenge being addressed
- How this innovative idea addresses the issue
- Why the project is innovative (what’s different)
- Who the project will impact (audience)
- What the impact will be (the positive result)
- The timeline for completing the project (must be accomplished within 1 year)
- The budget for the project (how will you spend the funds)

Innovative pitches will be judged by a combination of peer voting and input from an Extension leadership panel. Pitches will be judged on the fulfillment of the items above and the following criteria:

- Team’s understanding of issue
- Team’s understanding of proposed solution to issue
- Creativity of idea (is it innovative or are there existing solutions or technology that could be used to address issue)
- Potential impact of idea
- Feasibility (is the idea practical with a reasonable budget and timeline)
- Usefulness of idea (can it extend further than team needs)
- Team’s composition

To participate in this competition, please complete this web form no later than, Friday, June 16, 2017. Creative coaches and additional competition details will be provided to participating teams by June 30th.