An Assessment of Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Program Needs on American Indian Reservations in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington

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Purpose
The purpose of the study was to compare perceptions between individuals living American Indian reservations and outreach professionals working on American Indian reservations so that to understand and point out possible program gaps that exist on these American Indian reservations.

The Article
The article provides the results of a needs assessment entailing American Indians and outreach professionals on reservations in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. Two surveys with identical questions targeted two different sample populations on these reservations. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. An identical survey was directed (via Internet) to agricultural and natural resource outreach professionals working on American Indian reservations. Surveys consisted of a set of 36 questions about agricultural and natural resource issues that may create challenges on American Indian reservation lands. It was found that American Indian reservation residents were most concerned about preventing wildfire, conflict among tribal officials, invasive weed control, responding to wildfire, and lack of organization and leadership among tribal leaders. Outreach professionals believed reservation concerns were invasive weed control, riparian area management, planning for sustainable agriculture, water quality, and ability of farm families to pay their bills.

What this Means for the Field
Having an understanding of the perceptions between American Indian reservation residents and outreach professionals provides Extension and other outreach provides guidance in planning, implementing, and evaluating agricultural and natural resource management programs of American Indian reservations. Periodical measurement and acknowledgement of perceptual differences can only help Extension and land-grant universities design and implement educational programs that directly affect American Indians living on reservation lands.

Citation

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