

THE MONTANA EXTENSION SERVICE
FIELD STAFF PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL PROCESS

by

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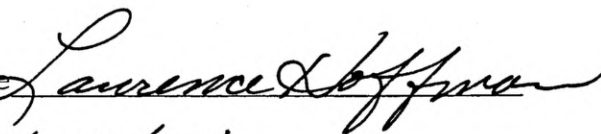
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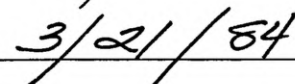


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ABSTRACT

This professional paper was developed to evaluate the Montana Extension Service's "Performance Appraisal for Field Staff." It was conducted to see if the appraisal system and process met the objectives and purpose set up in the appraisal form instructions. The main objectives and purpose of the appraisal system is to develop both programs and extension staff.

The procedure to prove or disprove the appraisal statement of purpose was to review and draw conclusions from four main sources of information; 1) literature, 2) Montana Extension staff survey results, 3) personnel director surveys from sixteen states, and 4) national extension study on appraisals.

Upon review of the materials it became evident that the Montana Extension Service's Appraisal System has the makings for a good appraisal format. With all of its good points it still has room for improvement and development of its process and forms used.

The changes can be summarized in six areas; 1) attitude change by employees, 2) evaluation system must be brought in line with total program development, 3) appraisal questions and rating style need to be developed, 4) appraisal needs to be done on a continuing basis, 5) process must give a means to communicate freely at all stages, and 6) training of supervisors and field staff must be supported and strengthened. Field staff, supervisors and administration need to develop a system and manage it so that appraisal information and process becomes a natural part of a daily routine.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the early sixties, organizations have been searching for the "best" system for evaluating their employees. Organizations have been doing it so that they may rate employees for merit or promotional raises while in the same process creating incentives for making employees more productive.

This professional paper will look at what should be derived from an adequate performance appraisal to meet administrative needs and organizational goals. Second, this paper will look at the parts that the supervisor and administration play in the motivation and satisfaction of the employee. Finally, the Montana Cooperative Extension Performance Appraisal for Field Staff will be reviewed to see how it can better help the supervisor and administration meet employee needs as well as the organization's objectives.

As the paper develops, the changes in employee evaluation methods from the sixties to the present will be noted. With these changes one notes a shift in terminology. What was called a merit rating during the sixties (formal rating of hourly paid employees) has now

become known as a performance evaluation or appraisal. With this in mind, the use of the terms "evaluation," "evaluation appraisal," "performance appraisal," or "appraisal" will be used interchangeably and defined as the systematic, formal evaluation of an employee with the respect to his/her job performance and potential for future development (1).

The formal performance appraisal is recommended for personnel evaluation, but as you will read in this paper, certain elements are required to make it a benefit both to the employee and to the organization. Throughout this paper the strengths and weaknesses of current evaluation processes will be discussed in order to demonstrate this point.

This analysis will be applied in an assessment of the Montana Cooperative Extension Service's Performance Appraisal for Field Staff (PAFS).

Chapter Two explains why evaluations are needed, how they are developed, and what a performance appraisal system needs in order to meet Extension Service objectives.

Chapter Three reviews and analyzes the attitudes and opinions of extension field and administrative staff. It also reviews studies of performance appraisals made by public and private organizations. These materials, plus data on the structure and substance of appraisal systems used by Extension Services in other states, provide a set

of criteria by which the Montana Extension Service's PAFS system can be evaluated.

Chapter Four combines the insights from Chapters Two and Three and focuses them on the Montana system. Evaluation criteria from four sources (literature reviews, field staff surveys, studies, and personnel director surveys) will be summarized and used to assess the Montana Performance Appraisal for Field Staff System.

It will be possible to determine whether a new evaluation program is needed or whether the present system can be altered to better meet the needs of employee and employer in the Montana Extension Service.

CHAPTER 2

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS ARE A
NECESSITY FOR A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION

An organization has very little choice as to whether or not it should formally or informally evaluate its employees and their job performance. Just as people must be paid a fair wage or salary for working, it is inevitable that the performance of all employees will be evaluated by someone at some time. A survey of approximately one thousand firms indicated that eighty percent have some type of formal evaluation system, the majority of which were started since the 1960's (2).

Since performance evaluations are inevitable, organizations should be continually aware of their usefulness and potential. While understanding the usefulness and potential of evaluations, organizations must keep in mind that the performance appraisal process must be reviewed periodically (3).

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IS A RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

It is a fact that an employee is an agency's most valuable resource and that much of this is wasted by not properly developing, evaluating, and training the employee.

There are several key human resource development practices that will benefit both the employee and the agency. Employees must be evaluated to find strengths and weaknesses. Training programs can then be created which will develop the employee's talents. A good rule for administration is not to require something of their employees unless it can be measured and presented as feedback to both management and employees. It is important to have a new employee know where he/she stands and what goals must be achieved, so that an employee feels a sense of accomplishment and involvement from the first day of employment. This type of appraisal system, as an added benefit, can help in the placement of employees in the position that will best use their abilities and accomplishments. Such management practices will help to produce a better employee, and, in turn, improve the efficiency of the organization (4).

Management must recognize personnel development as a serious effort to help people improve. Supervisors and top management of an organization must be aware of and be effective in the following techniques; 1) communicating expected results, 2) encouraging continuous performance and improvement, 3) staying abreast of the best managerial and recruiting methods, 4) making available education and training, 5) conducting evaluation of performance, and 6) providing motivation and rewards (5). Effectiveness in

management is a career-long process that will produce benefits for all parties involved. A performance appraisal system utilizes these techniques in assisting management in developing their employees.

Without a formal program to keep job descriptions and evaluations current, assure incumbent qualifications, and control staffing profiles, it is unrealistic to expect an agency's professional staff to maintain a high level of competence. In 1978, for example, the NCR Corporation sought to test whether or not a formal performance evaluation system would; 1) raise the expertise level of its engineers, 2) provide a job description through the use of an evaluation, and 3) develop staffing profiles to guide human resource development. The implementation plan was developed utilizing a participative management strategy, a common implementation date, and six month follow-up analysis. Employee reaction was mixed, with most merely seeing the project as a path for "self-improvement." The quality engineering division, however, showed evidence of noticeable productivity improvements as more employees began to take advantage of educational opportunities. The management felt that the system had merit and put it into full operation in the rest of their divisions (6).

A performance appraisal system is also a good means to head off problems. Most administrations and organizations ignore the problems until they become critical or even

insolvable. If an agency is to meet problems head on, then one sure means to accomplish that end is to use a process that will include a cross checking system within it, such as those found in most performance evaluation systems (7). The Savings and Loan Association of America, for example, has used performance appraisals since 1981 to help identify employee problems and provide counseling for the employee as needed. Personal problems, ranging from alcoholism and drug addiction, to marital and financial difficulties have been identified through their system as interfering with job performance. Through early detection, the employee, as well as the agency, is helped. The association feels that a performance appraisal system that allows two-way communication repays the time and efforts taken two-fold in productivity and organizational support (8).

Most public agency managers, as well as private business managers, feel a need to evaluate a person's performance, and draw from it a means to encourage employee sensitivity to the importance to produce (9). In recent years, several international meetings have re-examined public personnel management to come up with reasons for; 1) low productivity of public employees, 2) breakdown in discipline of public employees, 3) lack of public employee accountability, 4) lack of public sensitivity, and 5) the negative image of public employees which is held by the people. Two conferences held since 1979 have come to one

conclusion in their examination of the five problem areas. They see the failure of public service ethics as the major contributory factor of low productivity and image. The bottom line on public employees conduct is personal integrity. Sustaining the personal integrity of each and every member of society, public as well as private, would greatly reduce corruption. The problem, of course, remains to decide how and what programs should be instituted to motivate such integrity.

The Montana Extension Service, as with all other public agencies, must have an appraisal process for staff and agency development that can help to deal with many major management problems; 1) communications, 2) change, 3) turnover, 4) productivity, 5) costs, 6) control, 7) morale, 8) planning, and 9) development (10).

To be beneficial an appraisal system must have nine basic factors: 1) The process must create a two-way communication between employees and managerial staff. There must be time for feedback and a common language must be spoken at all levels. 2) The process must be able to change with the times. Changes should not create adverse impacts on individuals or organization strategies. 3) The process must encourage employees to remain in the agency because of the worth, incentives, and benefits of the organization and not out of need or obligation. 4) The process must create productivity through the use of

analytical and operational tools. 5) The process needs to increase productivity and get more out of the public dollar. Employees' productivity must be improved through communications, problem management, better evaluation and appraisals, planning, and control. 6) The process must have standards and adjust the performance of employees to reach or exceed the standards. 7) The process must eliminate the low morale factors from the organization. Low morale factors are "drags" on the organization. 8) The process must work from the premise that the quality of planning is more important than the quantity. The framework must develop and manage essential planning activities at all levels of the organization. 9) And last, but not least, the process must manage development. It should encourage self development (11).

Since performance evaluations are necessary and not just recommended, the following questions should be kept in mind when we are developing a system for any organization: 1) What is the purpose of the evaluation? 2) What criteria should be evaluated? 3) What method of performance evaluation is best suited to accomplish the purpose? Throughout this discussion it will be demonstrated that performance evaluation can become a developmental experience for subordinates (12).

The following paragraphs of this chapter will briefly discuss each of the above mentioned areas. The needed time

to do justice to each individual area is not available. Each area will be discussed briefly in order to develop some conclusions that can be applied in evaluating the Montana Cooperative Extension Services' "Performance Appraisal for Field Staff."

APPRAISAL SHOULD HAVE A PURPOSE

Many varieties of performance evaluation programs are now in use by various organizations. In most organizations, the evaluation program is designed to provide both the individual and organization with information about job performance. The one main fact that should be clarified prior to any performance evaluation is that all concerned must be aware of the objectives of the system. As one reviews the material in this chapter, two broad statements can be derived as to the purpose of performance evaluation. The first is to reach a judgemental conclusion about job performance. The second is to develop employees through the program (13).

The major purpose of performance evaluation for the employee is his development and job satisfaction and for the organization it is a motivational tool to increase productivity (14).

APPRAISE PERFORMANCE, NOT PERSONALITY

It is the employees' performance, not the employee

himself, that should be the subject of the analysis. In spite of the common sense of this statement, the fact is that traditional personal rating systems focused attention primarily on personal traits and characteristics of people rather than on the what was accomplished or developed through efforts of the individual (15). The Montana Extension Service Performance Appraisal of Field Staff of the early seventies had these same shortfalls. Approximately sixty-six percent of the questions used in the field staff performance appraisal reflected personal traits (16). Emphasis was placed directly on items such as tact, initiative, integrity, ingenuity, dependability, and the like.

Another error in past evaluations was assuming that people can analyze all of the faults of an employee, add them up in some fashion, and come to some neat overall conclusion -- expressed by an objective, a percentage or numerical value, a letter category, or some other device -- that made it possible to compare the individual, as a whole, to someone else. This is a most doubtful assumption. Individuals in the same profession may differ from each other in such a way that the strengths of one is in the very areas in which the other is weak. One employee may be good at meeting and dealing with people, but not as good in expressing himself in writing; the other may be just the opposite, facile at paper-and-pencil articulation,

but shy and dull when it comes to face-to-face communication. If the job requires both skills in some measure, who is to say which employee is the better of the two? No supervisor and appraiser can justifiably "play God." Employees all have shortcomings, but they also have good points that complement the entire team effort (17).

A solution to this problem within an appraisal rating system is to abandon overall scores, while retaining the analytical part of the report. This section of a report can point out certain areas of activity or aptitude in which the individual excels and others in which he needs improvement. But it refrains from placing the total person into only one grand category derived from the above mentioned elements. An employee is usually able to recognize and accept his shortcomings in very specific aspects of his work, but finds invidious and ego-shattering any attempt to pin a descriptive label on his total worth. Without such summary ratings, it is doubtful that there would be as many challenges to supervisory judgments in the form of appeals against appraisals.

Employees are not as likely to object to the "profile" of their behavior, but may well resent any over-simplified conclusions drawn from it. They may rightly feel that what they excel in offsets what they do poorly. In any event, an analytical profile of performance can be even more useful in future applications than the summary evaluation,

since the latter, with its usual "halo" effect, may detract attention from the concrete performance elements that are really important (18).

The alternative, and the one more commonly advocated at the present time, is to require evaluation simply of actual and concrete achievements or behavior on the job, without trying to translate this into a picture of the employee's personality. This approach is, of course, consistent with the concept of management by objectives wherein evaluation is concentrated on results, not just on technique. The supervisor, who sees only a segment of the employee's life and behavior, is less likely to appreciate the person's generic traits than he is to gauge what emerges from the employee's mind or hands as a work product. Hence, the reporting system that is likely to evoke the most reliable findings is one that asks supervisors to cite and measure specific instances of performance in terms of what the job demands are (19).

The act of evaluating performance is one of relating the work of individuals, in respect to factors found significant in the work, against some set of standards or norms. The standard may be subjective (as in the case of the quality of reports) or objective (as in a case of client contacts), but it must be there. The aim is to make the standard as objective and consistent as possible. Otherwise evaluations will have low reliability, for the

criterion of comparison will vary from one supervisor to another, and with one supervisor as applied to different employees. This has been one of the most frustrating aspects of efforts aimed at improving performance appraisal, and it will continue to attract the interest of researchers in the field. The only existing consensus appears to be that employee participation is important in setting work standards. Under this approach, the norms may not be perfect, but at least those who are being measured against them will have had a hand in their establishment (20).

Individual performance requires ability, motivation, and direction. Employees need to know what is expected of them. Even employees whose jobs require a high degree of self-direction or who are personally inclined to define their own work responsibly require definition of their objectives and the standards by which their work will be evaluated. In government, where overall goals are especially difficult to define, establishing clear and meaningful objectives for individual employees is a challenging task, but the challenge must be met. Establishment of objectives is a crucial first step in moving toward higher performance and a crucial last step in evaluating performance and providing feedback to employees on how well they are doing their jobs (21).

There are, to be sure, some difficulties and problems

with any evaluations that report actual performance and specific behavior. Standard evaluation forms cannot fit all occupations. Each occupation calls for quite different kinds of tasks, and there are vastly different criteria for and ways of observing their accomplishment. Perhaps the only things common to all employees are the basic human personality traits, and this explains why early rating systems tended to concentrate on them (22). Performance evaluation has become a very highly sophisticated professional specialty. Since appraisal programs are typically expensive, it is critical that the organization derive real benefits therefrom. Without good communications, the benefits will not be reaped by the employee or the agency (23).

The performance evaluation process must reward good performance (pay, promotion, transfer, etc.), identify training needs, and have provisions for providing feedback to employees. An effective system is one which includes evaluation criteria that are related to the purpose of the system and organization and information which measures the criteria (24).

Which method should be used in an organization also becomes a major issue when it is trying to come up with the best means to develop both employees and organization. Some eight methods or devices for evaluation have been used historically and some are still being used or used in

combination; 1) production records, 2) man-to-man comparison - on the basis of a particular factor, 3) rating schedules - numerical scales based on averages, 4) standardized scales on each factor, 5) critical incident - major performance requirements, 6) free-written or narrative reports, 7) coaching appraisal, 8) single or multiple appraisal - one or more, supervisors, peers (25). As previously stated, an organization must select the method or methods that gives the results desired.

Evaluations should be done in a systematic manner that gives feedback more than once a year. The system should allow the employee to meet with the evaluator often enough to develop confidence in feedback and trust in the evaluators concern for the employee. Time set aside for each evaluation should consist of several one hour to one and a half hour blocks rather than a single long session. The evaluators' time commitment to the employee increases, but the benefits for the employee and organization increase as well (26).

Besides the length of evaluation sessions the organization should also be aware of the "fiscal timing" as well. Salary reviews, or contract negotiations, and performance reviews should be separated.

It is widely accepted that performance is not the only criterion used in determining salary increases and

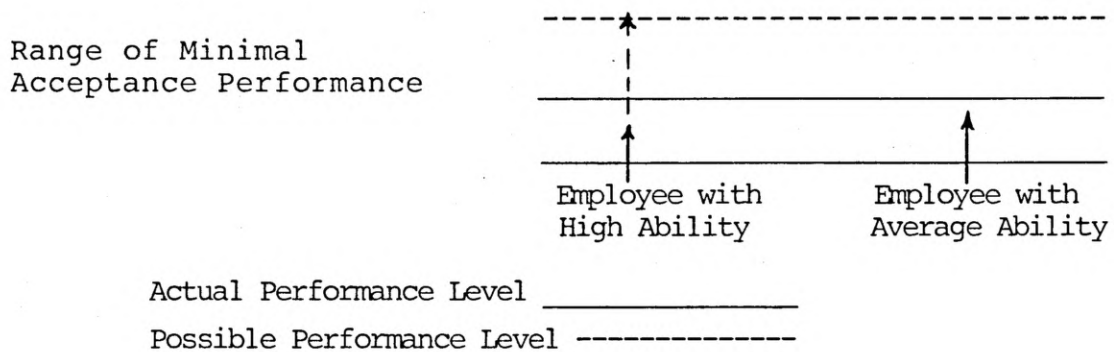
promotions, nor is it necessarily the most heavily weighted factor. Yet firms that continue to use the once-a-year combined performance and salary review ignore this fact. When performance and salary are discussed together, it is difficult to avoid the implicit statement, "Here is how we perceive your performance and so here is your salary increase." It may not be the supervisor's intention, but that is what the employee will hear. The employee feels that what the supervisor is saying is that the most important criterion in determining salary increases is performance, and the individual is therefore likely to begin comparing his or her performance and rewards with others in the organization. If the person believes that others who are poorer performers receive higher rewards, then he or she will perceive an inequity in the reward system. "Performance isn't the way to a good salary increase," the employee thinks. "What's the sense in performing at a high level?" (27).

Figure 1 shows the results of an employee's perception of inequity in the reward system. Unintentionally, the organization encourages mediocre performance. Employees who don't have the ability to perform well will be quite happy with their rewards; those who have the ability will see no reason to give their best. Members of this latter group will do one of two things: either they will give up, accept the way things are, and

reduce their performance level to that of employees of lesser ability, or they leave the organization in search of a firm or agency willing to pay for excellent performance.

Figure 1

Result of Perceived Inequity
in the Reward System



To keep these problems from developing, the salary review should be conducted separately from the performance evaluation. The primary advantage of doing so is that during the performance evaluation, the discussion will be on performance only. When there is no discussion of rewards in the form of a salary increase, the talk between supervisor and subordinate will not be so emotionally charged that an objective appraisal of the employee's ability becomes impossible. The supervisor will no longer feel pressed by the situation to justify a salary decision in terms of job performance.

When the salary review is conducted later, there

can be more open discussion of the factors that determine a pay raise. Most employees know that these factors are elements of the decision process, and they will respect a supervisor for discussing them openly instead of pretending they don't exist. The way is thus opened to increased understanding and communication. Conducting salary review and performance review at separate times and with an openness about the factors that enter into the process of determining a salary increase enables an employee to know from the beginning what to expect from the organization.

Figure 2

Traditional Relationship Between
Job Satisfaction and Time on the Job

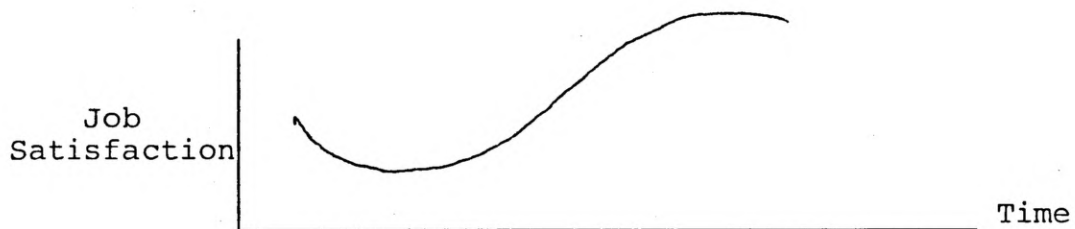
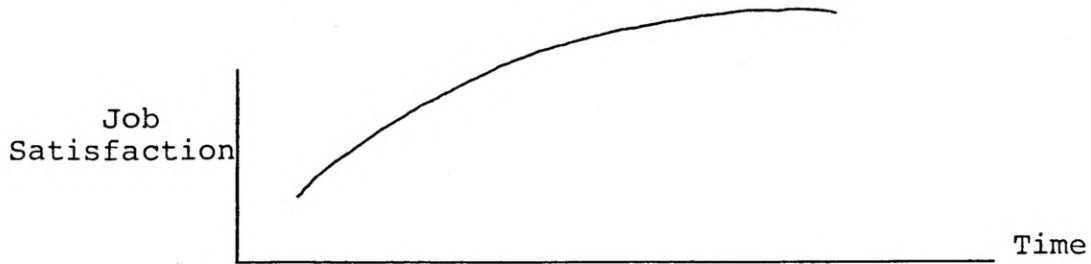


Figure 3

Predicted Relationship Between Job
Satisfaction and Time on the Job



When job satisfaction is related to an employee's time on the job, the traditional system of joining performance evaluation and salary review has tended to produce an inverted S-shaped curve (see Figure 2) (28). As a new employee becomes familiar with a job, his or her expectations that the organization will deliver the desired rewards are high, so job satisfaction is also likely to be high. However, after being on the job for some time, perhaps after the first combined performance evaluation/salary review, the employee finds his or her expectations unfulfilled and job satisfaction declines. At this point, the person either leaves the company or accepts the situation, lowering performance and expectations accordingly.

The burden of changing the employee's expectations rests with the supervisor. It helps if the supervisor can deliver intrinsic psychological rewards to the employee, such as complimenting the subordinate in front of peers, allowing the employee to become involved in planning for the organization, or assigning meaningful tasks to the employee even if it means giving up some of the supervisor's own responsibilities. Separating the performance review from the salary review and increasing the emphasis on psychological rewards decreases the dissatisfaction felt by employees who compare their inputs (performance) and financial outcomes (rewards) with those

of their peers. Figure 3 shows the projected relationship between job satisfaction and the employee's time on the job when a salary review and performance review are conducted separately (29).

By giving the employee a different set of expectations, the organization may be able to begin to satisfy the employee of outstanding ability and raise his or her level of job satisfaction. As the employee acquires some of the other factors that enter into the process of determining rewards, the level of job satisfaction will continue to rise. The increase in job satisfaction will continue until just before retirement, when it will plateau or perhaps decline slightly as the employee realizes that the short time left with the company will not block future opportunities (30).

RATING SCALES AND QUESTIONS INFLUENCE SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

The rating system has by far the most extensive application and acceptance within public services of all analytical systems. In order for a rating system to be effective, it must be perceived as a complete and fair system by field staff and management alike. It must also insure that the employee perceives that it is the program and not his personality that is being evaluated (31) (32).

Rating scales and questions used in the rating procedures can make or break a performance appraisal. One

must keep in mind that the rating scales and questions asked influence the way the participants react and answer. The questions should be structured so that, to the extent possible, a natural relationship exists between the response categories and the behaviors to be measured (33). Rating scales and questions asked must go hand in hand and must be developed to complement each other.

Rating methods have problems and errors that we must all be aware of if we are to take a good look at the overall performance of the Extension Service. The major problems and errors in a system are technical in nature including poor reliability and validity, limited practicality, and rater misuse (34). In some situations, raters are too harsh or too easy in their evaluations. These are referred to as strictness or leniency rater errors. These kinds of rating errors typically occur when a rater applies personal standards to the particular performance evaluation system being used. All raters and ratees interpret the meaning of words used in a rating procedure differently. An example would be "meets expectations" in the Extension performance appraisal form being understood differently by different supervisors, who must come together at the final rating sessions to give merit or step increases (35).

Another problem is termed the halo effect. The term "halo" suggests that there is a positive or negative aura

around an individual employee. This aura influences the rater's evaluation in about the same way for all performance dimensions considered. The halo effect is due to the rater's inability to discriminate between the different dimensions being rated. It is also caused by the rater assuming that a particular dimension is extremely important. The rating on this dimension influences all of the other evaluation dimensions.

The central tendency error occurs when a rater fails to assign either extremely high or extremely low ratings. That is, the rater tends to rate almost all ratees around the average. This type of evaluation error provides little information for making promotion, compensation, training, career planning, and development decisions. Playing it safe by rating everyone average does not enable the manager to integrate performance evaluation with reward or employee development programs (36).

In many performance evaluation programs, the most recent behaviors of ratees tend to color ratings. Using only the most recent behaviors to make evaluations can result in what is called the recency of events error. Forgetting to include important past behaviors can introduce a strong bias into the evaluation. Ratees usually are aware of this tendency and become visible, interested, productive, and cooperative just before the formal evaluation occurs (37) (38) (39).

According to research (40), these various rating errors can be minimized if; 1) each dimension addresses a single job activity, 2) the rater observes the ratee on a regular basis, 3) terms like "average" are not used on a rating scale, 4) raters do not evaluate large numbers of subordinates, 5) raters are trained to avoid such errors, 6) dimensions being evaluated are meaningful, clearly stated, and important, 7) the appraisal process used is done over a period of time (continuous) and not just at the end of a fiscal period (41) (42) (43), 8) provisions are made for the employee to appeal adverse ratings (44), and 9) people must have written, as well as oral, communications (45).

SUMMARY

Since performance appraisals are essential, management must design a procedure that meets the organization's and employee's needs. This chapter has discussed a number of evaluation practices that help avoid common pitfalls of past evaluation systems. The next chapter focuses specifically on the Montana Extension Service's Performance Appraisal System.

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS
FOR FIELD STAFF (PAFS)EXTENSION SERVICE FIELD STAFF
AND ADMINISTRATION VIEW OF PAFS

When an evaluation of a particular performance appraisal system is to take place, what better way to get to the heart of the subject than to survey the participants. The strengths and weaknesses of systems viewed by those in the actual system, both from the managerial and employee points of view, are helpful in seeing it from the inside and not just from the research side of developing evaluation processes.

Employees are a prime, but curiously under-utilized source of information on how to improve public-service operations. To the extent to which their understanding of policy is enhanced, their commitment to implementing the program will be increased. To the extent that the sense of participation increases employee security, relieves fears, or satisfies a desire to be treated as a responsible adult, it may create mutual trust and a desire to contribute will enhance organizational performance (46).

The following paragraphs are developed around a survey (Appendix A) conducted by the author in 1982 to evaluate

the need for a change of the Montana Extension Service's "Performance Appraisal for Field Staff" (PAFS). The survey was given to thirteen field staff and seven administrative personnel of the Montana Extension Service on a randomly selected basis. The selection was performed by a colleague, and the names of participants were kept anonymous. This technique was used in order to achieve the most honest, and unbiased responses possible (47). Eighty-four percent of the questionnaires were returned from the field staff and administration collectively. Thirty percent of the participants requested feedback and felt comfortable identifying themselves on returned surveys.

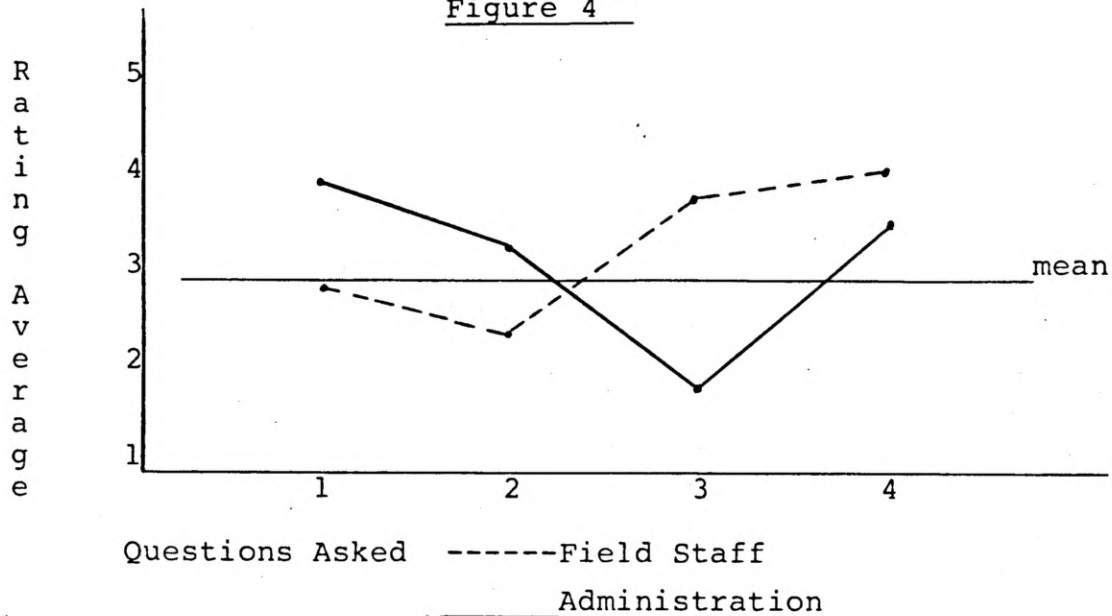
Respondents were asked to answer the following questions using a scale of one to five (one being low and five being high):

1) How do you feel the present Extension evaluation meets the needs of Extension?

2) How do you feel the evaluation system rates in Program Development?

3) What roles do "personalities" play in the final analysis?

4) Do evaluation ratings of programs relate directly to salary?

Figure 4

One can summarize the responses to these four questions by looking at Figure 4. The field staff felt that the evaluation system did not meet their program needs, but administration felt the opposite. Field staff related that the evaluation did not really help them in program development, while the administration felt positive about it. Field staff, in the final analysis, felt personalities played a major part in good or bad evaluations and the administration felt it to be a low priority. On the last rated question, the field staff and administration were in agreement that the ratings in the evaluation has a direct relationship to salaries. Material contained in the following paragraphs provides that which will help in arriving at a final conclusion on whether or not a change in the Montana Extension Service Performance

Appraisal for Field Staff is necessary.

The following are summaries of survey questions five through seven. The questions were designed to have the responding person use their own thoughts and words.

Question 5: What area(s) of the evaluation system do you feel has the most positive effect?

Field Staff Responses

- try to accomplish goals because of evaluation
- forces supervisor to find out about field staff programs
- written comments most meaningful
- provide areas for counseling
- aids in program development
- uniform throughout State
- very positive

Administrative Responses

- allows the opportunity to review needed training
- non-threatening atmosphere
- salary increase because of good work
- provides a means to mutually agree on specific criteria to improve performance
- one-on-one with feedback
- listing strengths and weaknesses
- bases merit pay adjustment

Question 6: What area (s) of the evaluation system do you feel has the most negative effect?

Field Staff Responses

- forced average system
- difficult to quantify efforts
- doesn't ask the right questions for program development
- used to satisfy administration needs

Administrative Responses

- reports in the entire system are unrelated
- paperwork
- extra justification for field staff
- field staff image threat and salary adjustments

Field Staff Responses
(Continued)

- doesn't look at the total program
- time limitation
- the basic document
- innovative program idea stressed too much
- constant evaluation of programs with large clientele numbers
- personalities play too big a part in money allocations -- rewards of a good job sometimes lacking

Administration Responses
(Continued)

- negative feelings because of rating disagreements
- attitude of field staff

Question 7: What do you see as the main purpose of the evaluation process?

Field Staff Responses

- to keep field staff productive
- shows dictates of supervisor being followed
- gives supervisor something to do, look at problems and opportunities
- accountability and time
- requirement of administration
- helps review past year's progress
- process designed to look at methods, performance, and role of field staff
- program improvement

Administration Responses

- review once a year
Extension programs
- conform to requirements
- accountability to legislative persons
- increase personnel's competence as educators
- improve effectiveness of programming
- provide opportunity to improve field staff professional growth
- positive and negative feedback

Other comments that were mentioned by individual field staff that should be reviewed and brought in during the process of system evaluation include;

- should be a way to help employees tailor growth and programs

- should help field staff plan, conduct, and evaluate a professional's program

- concerned that evaluations are done in pencil by supervisor

- part of the evaluation should consist of seeing field staff in action

- evaluation pro's and con's vary with expertise of each supervisor

- supervisors should develop support systems

Along with field staff, comments from the administration staff also mentioned items that could help in the system design:

- the system, itself, by design, should not produce negative effects

- there is no perfect evaluation system

- the helpfulness of evaluation is directly related to field staff and supervisor's attitude

- small amount of merit adjustments are made based on performance ratings

- personalities contribute only to evaluation when it affects field staff's ability to perform requirements

The results of the two surveys can be summarized in terms of the following twelve points:

- 1) Staff are not totally satisfied with the performance appraisal or process.
- 2) The system needs to be developed to change attitudes.
- 3) Personalities must be taken out of the process of appraisal as much as humanly possible.
- 4) Salaries and performance evaluation must be separated more than they are now.
- 5) Written comments of weaknesses and strengths should be placed on a point-to-point progress form.
- 6) Counseling can come from a good appraisal system.
- 7) The appraisal should work toward training needs and professional improvement as an objective.
- 8) Appraisal questions need to be developed for program improvement.
- 9) All reports need to be related for future progress.
- 10) The procedure should be simplified.
- 11) The threat factor must be eliminated.
- 12) Supervisor and field staff must develop awareness of the goals of appraisal and receive support training.

To come up with a valid conclusion on what direction should be taken with the process and format of the Montana system, more needs to be done than reviewing comments from

the participants. We must take a look at other organizations with the same purpose before deciding how to proceed.

PAFS BY UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND COLLEAGUE STATES

To develop an evaluation or appraisal system for any organization, you must compare systems that have the same goal or purpose. With this as a main thought, one needs to review Extension appraisal systems across the United States.

In 1979, the American Institutes for Research completed a contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to review and possibly revise personnel practices and performance appraisals on a national basis. Some 1,500 agents from eight states participated in the research. The data from these questionnaires determined performance domains to be included in the performance evaluation system. The study analyzed and developed; 1) three position classes, e.g., agriculture, home economics and family living, and 4-H and youth development, 2) the development of instruments and procedures of the three position classes, and 3) the design of a performance evaluation system for all three position classes (48).

In the survey results from the field staff, they could rate the job performances in fourteen categories; 1)

involving community in program implementation, 2) conducting educational programs, 3) planning, 4) program promotion and public relations, 5) advising and assisting clientele, 6) supervising, 7) assessing community needs, 8) office management and administration tasks, 9) general interpersonal behaviors, 10) personal behaviors, 11) evaluating programs, 12) continuing professional behavior development, 13) working relations with staff, and 14) reporting (49).

From the job descriptions, performance appraisals collected, and the categories that ranked highest, a performance evaluation system was developed. The rationale for the performance evaluation system development was guided by two major concerns. One involved the following requirements of the system. It would; 1) encompass all three job classes, 2) relate to critical job duties of the three classes, 3) be free from non-job-related factors, 4) accomodate differences in entry and experienced field staff, 5) provide data for salary decisions, 6) relate to the planning and control function of the Cooperative Extension Service, 7) be capable of solving problems, and setting standards, 8) be administratively and economically feasible, and 9) be portable for use by all Extension Services.

The other major concern was that the system, to the extent feasible, would eliminate or ameliorate operational,

technical, and legal problems that have plagued performance evaluation systems in the past. The project staff relied upon accepted professional standards, a review of the literature, and information obtained from the comprehensive job analysis to develop a system which met these requirements (50).

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RECOMMENDED SYSTEM

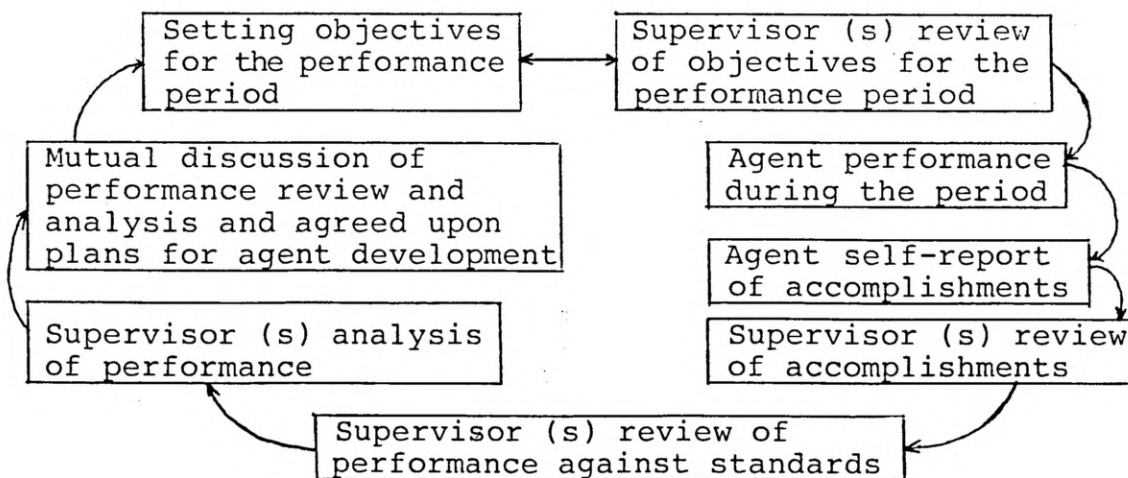
To begin with, the system should be objectively oriented. The basic input for an important component of the system is a set of objectives that are to be taken directly from each agent's annual plan of work, which is the operational planning control document. Second, the system should differentiate between key objectives, those designated as having a high priority and a substantial commitment of resources, and other objectives, work outcomes, and job behaviors. Third, the system should include a method for standardizing the values to be assigned to the individual objectives set by agents so that direct comparisons can be made between agents in different job classes and the various local offices within the entire state.

A fourth characteristic of the system is that it should be designed to integrate the functions of performance review, performance analysis, and planning for the next performance period. Thus, the system is designed

to make important inputs not only to personnel administration decisions, but to employee development actions and to the program planning and control functions.

Fifth, the system should involve the active participation of agents, local office supervisors, district and/or regional supervisors, and assistant directors and program leaders at the state level in the review, analysis, and planning aspects of the system. And, sixth, the system should attempt to place the reviewing supervisors more in a position of being a describer of performance than a direct evaluator of it. All this is designed to reinforce the concept of the performance appraisal process as a mutual development and learning experience rather than as a largely mechanistic evaluation effort (51). Description of the model system is summarized in Figure 5.

Figure 5
Annual Cycle of Performance Review
Analysis and Planning



To complement a study done for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the author administered a survey to Extension Personnel Directors in sixteen states (Appendix B). The balance of this chapter will look at evaluation procedures, forms, and high priority items of performance appraisal as Extension Service in sixteen states have developed their systems.

The evaluation survey forms and comments were directed to personnel administrators on a random basis. Of the fifty states, sixteen requests (thirty percent of the states) were sent out using the National Agricultural County Agent Directory as a source of names with a one hundred percent return.

In reviewing the performance appraisals received from the personnel staff of the sixteen states, it is not easy to come up with a concrete means to evaluate them for the development of the Montana Cooperative Extension's Performance Appraisal for Field Staff. To create a means to accomplish such an evaluation, we will use the Montana system. The results and conclusions derived from the questionnaire will then be based on comparisons with the Montana system. The items evaluated came from the Montana system and other items that showed promise in the literature reviews.

Results of the survey and questionnaire are summarized in twenty-nine items (Table 1).

TABLE 1

SIXTEEN STATE PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL SUMMARY

Appraisal Items	Percent of states surveyed with item in their performance appraisal system
1) Purpose of Appraisals	63%
2) Instructional Statements	69%
3) Rating Methods	
Average Scale	62%
Other Methods	38%
4) Support Information Needed	31%
5) Written Comments "A Must"	
Agent (Field Staff)	19%
Supervisor	25%
Both (Agent/Supervisor)	44%
None	12%
6) Signature of Reviewers	
Field Staff	81%
Supervisors	81%
7) Personal Concerns (Work Related)	25%
8) Professional Improvement	56%
9) Organization/Community Involvement	31%
10) Plan of Work Review	75%
11) Planning Execution	56%
12) Program Effectiveness	88%
13) Monthly, Quarterly, Etc. Reports	19%

Table 1 (Continued) Appraisal Items	Percent of states surveyed with item in their performance appraisal system
14) Working Relationships	63%
15) Listed performance Strengths	75%
16) Listed Performance Limitations	69%
17) Overall Appraisal Rating	63%
18) Written Appeal Process	19%
19) Evaluated (those that have formal system)	
Once a year	94%
More than once a year	6%
20) System Process	
Simple	50%
Complex	50%
21) Final Written Comments Needed	56%
22) Percent Questions Directed - Personal	
50% +	6%
26% - 49%	6%
25% - less	88%
23) Participation Oriented	
(By Field Staff)	
Minor Effort	56%
Major Effort	44%
*24) Productivity Oriented	
Positive	31%
Negative	69%

Table 1 (Continued)	Percent of states surveyed with item in their performance appraisal system
*25) Attitude Developed	
Positive	31%
Negative	69%
26) New System Past 3 Years	38%
(Upgraded systems included)	
*27) Orientated Toward Training	25%
28) No Formal Evaluation System	13%
29) One-on-One Performance Appraisal	
Yes	81%
No	19%

*Personal judgement of author made by interpretation of materials and instructions provided.

Table 2 will categorize these items into a more meaningful form so we can derive from them some assumptions. The items will be put in groups by percentages. The base for categories is on the standard grading curve (100% - 90%, 89% - 80%, 79% - 70%, 69% - 60%, 50% - below). The higher the percent, the more states involved (52).

TABLE 2

CATEGORIZATION OF PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL ITEMS

<u>Category I. 100% - 90%</u>	<u>Category V. 59% - below</u>
--evaluate one or more times per year	--rating method other than average scale
<u>Category II. 89% - 80%</u>	--supportive information needed
--written comments (one or more involved)	--personal concerns
--signatures of reviewee and reviewer	--professional improvements
--program effectiveness	--organization/community improvements
--personal questions (25% or more)	--planning execution
--one-on-one performance appraisals	--reports
<u>Category III. 79% - 70%</u>	--written appeal process
--plan of work review	--system process
--performance strengths	simple/complex
<u>Category IV. 69% - 60%</u>	--final written comments needed
--purpose of appraisals	--participation orientated (minor or major effort)
--instructions, statements	--positive production orientated
--average scale rating methods	--positive attitude developed
--working relations	--new system (upgraded systems included)
--performance limitation	--training orientated
--overall performance ratings	
--negative productivity ratings	
--negative attitude development	

If we use the assumption that anything below seventy percent on the grading scale is unproductive or of less value to most systems, we can easily determine the items that the majority of the states surveyed felt important. All states felt that individuals should be evaluated at

least once a year. Several felt that a person should be evaluated on a continuing basis. The majority also felt that written comments on an evaluation, a one-on-one performance appraisal and signatures of those involved were needed. They were also looking at the program of work, program effectiveness, performance strengths, and less personal involvement questions.

The categories of less importance can also be narrowed down by putting them in the following order and by ranking them in numerical importance, one being the most important; 1) purpose and instructions to field staff, 2) working relations and performance limitations, 3) attitude and productivity systems, 4) rating methods, 5) support information, 6) personal concerns, 7) professional improvement and training, 8) other organization and community involvement, 9) planning execution, 10) reports, 11) written appeal process for field staff, 12) simplification of evaluation process, and 13) new system or upgrading of all system needs.

To look at the total Extension Service direction, Table 3 compares the national summary report and the sixteen states within the author's study. The thirteen categories in the table comes from the summary of the national study conducted by the Extension Service. For the USDA these will be a major thrust in developing appraisal criteria for Extension personnel. Of the state

personnel directors responding to their survey, a comparison can be made on how they rated to the National Extension report. On Table 3 an (X) will be used to illustrate a majority (fifty percent or more) responding to the survey with that as a category in their appraisal forms and process. A (0) will be used to illustrate a minority (below fifty percent) responding to the survey with that as a category in their appraisal forms and process.

TABLE 3

NATIONAL EXTENSION DIRECTION SUMMARY

Major Points of National Report	Majority (X) Minority (0) State Survey Agreement
1) Program Development	X
2) Community involvement/needs	0
3) Office Management	0
4) Staff Relationships	0
5) Evaluating programs	X
6) Continuing professional improvement	0
7) Reporting and reports	0
8) Standardize the rating system	0
9) Active participation	0
10) Supervisor/reviewee relations	0
11) Field staff performance reviewed throughout the period	0
12) Agent self reporting accomplishments	0
13) Appeal mechanism	0

Table 3 , indicates that the only agreement in the two studies is that evaluations are needed and are performed and that most of the evaluation items center around program development and execution. The persons involved are left out of most evaluation systems, even though their development and self-worth should be included in order to have a productive organization. Comments from the personnel administration of the sixteen states surveyed support this statement. They felt that the negatives outweigh the positives in most evaluation systems and that the concerns were in communications, feedback opportunities, supervisor training, evaluation/salary syndrome, written comments, and attitude of most personnel using them. Looking at the Montana Extension Performance Appraisal system, it is obvious that it has potential and needs very little revision.

MONTANA EXTENSION SERVICE PAFS DIRECTION

In the last decade, a national trend of the Cooperative Extension Service and professional associations, such as the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, has been to develop new field staff evaluations and appraisal techniques to provide standards of comparison and to create a more positive attitude and meaning for their use (53).

Over the past seven years, the Montana Cooperative

Extension Service, as well as other extension services across the nation, has upgraded and changed the Performance Appraisal for Field Staff forms in hopes of coming up with a form that is both workable and acceptable to the field staff and useful for administration needs. The changes that took place from the early 1970's to the present on the appraisal form can be categorized in three major areas; 1) reduction of questions, 2) topic area consolidation, and 3) introduction of new rating criteria. Throughout these major changes, the Montana Cooperative Extension Service objectives of accountability, purpose of program, and field staff development have remained intact with only minor word alterations (54).

In serving the Montana Cooperative Extension Service during the past three appraisal form revisions and in reviewing the forms with fellow field staff and administration, I have arrived at the conclusion that the present appraisal form and procedures should be re-evaluated and changed.

The recent measures that were taken to upgrade the performance appraisal were well intended, but no major changes occurred. The appraisal procedure schedule remained the same; question items only changed order and were reduced in number; and the words in the rating criteria were altered. What was lacking in all of the attempts to develop the performance appraisal was a

comprehensive evaluation of the total system.

If the Montana Cooperative Extension Service is to meet the objectives and purposes of their appraisal system, they must subject it to systematic review and development. The performance appraisal needs to meet Extension goals, not only in the introductory statement of the appraisal, but in the body and process of the entire appraisal system.

EXTENSION APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

A message is being heard throughout public service organizations, a message that evaluation and appraisal is a "must do!" No longer can it be taken for granted that programs are good and appropriate. Both from within and without, organizations are being challenged to look at themselves, to evaluate what they are doing and to check to see if things are going as well as they could. Increasingly, evaluation processes are being used at county, state, and federal levels to support organization efforts to survive and prosper in an era of accountability and resource constraint (55).

The Montana Extension Service is operating in a new environment -- an environment of more open criticism and demands for justification of actions. During the 1970's, as the economy slowed and resources couldn't be stretched to cover demands, an era of increased consumer and taxpayer

scrutiny emerged. Organizations of all types were judged by new rules. These new rules focused on results, not just effort. For instance, the public schools were challenged to guarantee that graduates have basic competencies. Manufacturers were forced to consider the quality and performance of their products. In this environment of accountability, the public demands assurances that benefits result from the provision of goods and services (56).

All publicly funded agencies, not just the Extension Service, are vulnerable in these times. Taxpayers and sponsors want to know that they're getting their money's worth. In an era of accountability, Extension must be able to defend who is being served and how many people are being served. It also needs to document that programs are achieving positive results (57).

Many questions are making Extension face up to the need to change and upgrade their accountability and appraisal processes on the county, state, and federal levels. Not only the process, but the attitude of accountability, is important (58). In this context, the human element comes into the picture and if the organization's development of the evaluation and/or appraisal system is to work, a positive attempt must be made by the administration to involve those at the "grass roots" in the process of building such an appraisal system. If the organization creates a mechanism internally that

answers critical questions, becomes more responsive, effective and efficient, then the external inquiries of such an organization become routine and not major time factor of the entire operation (59).

In public management, the topic of employee appraisals and programs is on the minds and agendas continually of the personnel directors, department heads, administrators, and the staff for the development of their particular agency, organization or department within the organization. Productivity assessment, accountability process evaluation, and program effectiveness are the main reasons that a public service administrator relies on performance evaluations. The employee relies on such a process for personal growth and satisfaction, it is the responsibility of the overall make-up of the appraisal system to meet both the administration and employee needs (60).

Appraisal and accountability cannot be avoided by any publicly supported agency, including the Montana Extension Service. One must continually understand the rationale for conducting appraisals. In today's complex environment, where competition for limited resources exists, agencies must provide external accountability for public understanding and must maintain internal accountability to address program development and organizational management concerns. A purposeful evaluation and appraisal system can allow an organization to do both.

THE MONTANA APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The upgrading and redevelopment of the Montana Extension Service's Performance Appraisal System started back in the early seventies through field staff requests. It was aided by the support of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents and national administrators. Prior to this time, the evaluation and appraisal system had seldom been reviewed or used as a major employment tool to ensure progress. With the changing times, automation, and public awareness, the appraisal of an agency supported by tax dollars has become, without question, an achievable objective.

In the three major form changes of the Montana Extension Performance Appraisal System, sessions took place utilizing field staff and state staff input. The main drawback through the revision process was the time limitation factor. The committees were bound by time constraints to develop an appraisal system that was going to accomplish and meet the needs of the administration and field staff. The two to three day sit-down sessions that were used were too confining to bring together resources, evaluate the materials submitted, develop a working system, and pilot the system or to have it field tested. The intent of all involved, from the administration to the working committee of field staff, specialists and state staff, was sincere but ineffective in producing an

"acceptable" appraisal system for field staff and administration. This fact is shown by the never-ending dissatisfaction shown by the field staff in their responses to the system. Extension Services, such as the one in Mississippi, have hired professional consultants to evaluate and design an appraisal system for their field staff and gave them a period of time to do the task (61). Money and time are not always available, but an agency should be realistic on an issue that makes or breaks an agency's development.

Ten years ago, the purpose of the evaluation was to have annual counseling or a conference between each staff member and his or her immediate supervisor. The entire process or conference was based on the individual with only around one-third of it relating to program development. Recent years have brought change into the system that is headed in the right direction. Today, the overall purpose is: "To build, encourage, and promote the highest form of services that an employee can render, and simultaneously provide the employee a rewarding professional career through continuous professional growth (62). These changes in the evaluation purpose have taken place over the last seven years and along with it, more program development has been brought into the system.

The Montana Extension Service's Appraisal System has come a long way in ten years in its development of

appraising the program and the field staff. The objective of the "Performance Appraisal" is no longer an emphasis on "social adjustment" or "personal appearance," but on building and strengthening the Extension Service and the field staff program.

In a little over ten years, the appraisal format has climbed from a thirty-four percent program development directive to fifty percent and reduced the social aspect from sixty-six percent to fifty percent (Table 4). The weighting of program development has increased and social adjustment factors have decreased to create a balance.

TABLE 4

MONTANA APPRAISAL SYSTEMS FOR FIELD STAFF
1970 - 1983

	Appraisal System	Area of Appraisal		Appraisal Items	
		*POW	Personal	Totals	
1)	Counseling/ Evaluation Report (1970)	18 or 34%	35 or 66%	53	100%
2)	Performance Appraisals (Mid 1970's)	16 or 53%	14 or 45%	30	100%
3)	Performance Appraisal (1983)	15 or 50%	15 or 50%	30	100%

The form used for Performance Appraisal has met the objective of providing an appraisal methodology, but the process does not, at this time, use the methodology

adequately to meet the overall purpose of developing the field staff and Extension program.

The Performance Appraisal process of the Extension Service still evaluates the field staff in a dual manner - the human and program elements. These two elements must be addressed, but cannot be used simultaneously and still achieve objective programs and improve the goals of the individual. The field staff surveyed indicated that their attitudes are negative about the use of these two elements simultaneously (63). The meaning of evaluation or appraisal in this process loses its merit. Just as the system separates out the quantitative measures with the Montana Extension Management Information System (MEMIS) to meet national accountability, the qualitative portion must also be kept separated to meet the human objectives. Dr. Eugene Koprowski, of the University of Colorado, said, "The 'people' aspect is important. Productivity can only be improved through technology or by changing people." (64)

In the Extension Service's appraisal process, the technology or program development factor crosses the human factor theoretically only once in the course of a yearly program, but it does it at a crucial time (65). It occurs when field staff are being given performance appraisals and contracts are being distributed for the coming fiscal year. The field staff look at the two as one, performance appraisal equals dollars at the contract time. But to meet

organizational objectives. The performance appraisal and contracts are not and should not be considered as being connected to each other.

The Extension Service has a need for performance appraisals relating to program development, including its contents, delivery, impacts, public understanding, and support. However, it also needs a personal appraisal that relates to the individual and promotes progress and self-development. Both of these appraisals are needed in order to accomplish political favor, program betterment, personal satisfaction, and drive in the field staff as well as the Montana Extension Service.

In the Extension Service, one must keep in mind two major issues in evaluating and appraising its employees; one is accountability and the other is to meet program needs. The accountability and program issues are used as a means of evaluation by the public sector and the Extension administration, as well as by the field staff to show areas of need and of growth. The end results of any evaluation or appraisal is the justification of the tax dollars to the public and to development of the individual staff member.

In the present system of the Montana Cooperative Extension Service, there are means to achieve accountability and program appraisals, but with little or no real connective relationships. The accountability portion is satisfied, as previously stated, by the system

called Montana Extension Management Information System (MEMIS). MEMIS was developed on the national level and modified for Montana. This process is quantitative in nature and provides the data to meet state and national needs.

The program development portion comes from four sources; 1) the Program of Work (POW), which begins each fiscal year with program direction developed by the field staff and then viewed by state specialists and area supervisor to collate future state programs and county needs, 2) the area supervisor contacts the field staff throughout the year, where they are observed and helped on an individual basis in personal and professional problems and program awareness, 3) the reports done monthly with an annual summarization of program progress, and 4) the final step of the next year, the annual Performance Appraisal, conducted by the area supervisor with the field staff to bring together the first three sources to evaluate and appraise the past fiscal year's work and programs. These four sources meet the requirements of the administration as appraisal tools and in reasoning of purpose, supports the field staff in their development.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In order to evaluate the Montana Extension's Performance Appraisal for Field Staff process, it is necessary to summarize items from the four major sources explored in the previous chapters. The four sources that were explored were: 1) literature reviews, 2) Montana Extension personnel, field, and administrative staff, 3) United States Department of Agriculture's study and government trends, and 4) Extension survey results from other states. The findings from these four sources produce the following list of purposes justification and criteria of evaluating Performance Appraisals Systems. They should be designed;

- 1) Literature Review of Performance Appraisals
 - to increase production
 - to create job satisfaction and motivation
 - to provide a means of open communications
 - to promote professional growth
 - to create participation and involvement in the process
 - to develop recognition and accomplishment
 - to meet employees' inner needs

- to head off problems
- to receive "immediate" feedback from upper levels
- to develop individual skills
- to create positive attitudes
- to train supervisors in performance appraising
- to create job enrichment programs
- to provide feedback more than once a year
- to allow supervisor to supervise
- to be used for professional development, not as a basis for merit raises
- to separate salary reviews from performance reviews
- to be reviewed periodically
- to evaluate program not personality
- to bring out strong points, as well as weak points of a program
- to provide direction
- to reduce rating inconsistencies
- to give both parties a means to express themselves in writing and verbally
- to evaluate staff more frequently
- to have rating scales and questions must complement each other
- to have a universally understood rating scale terminology

- to eliminate "average" on the scale system
- to have a sounding board

2) Montana Extension Personnel Survey Results

- to accomplish program goals/development
- to make it uniform throughout the state
- to have written comments
- to meet training needs
- to create a positive atmosphere
- to have two-way communications
- to have written and verbal feedback
- to have personalities play a lesser part
- to create positive attitudes
- to separate salary and program development
- to make paperwork meaningful
- to bring out problems and opportunities
- to satisfy staff
- to change attitudes
- to develop training in the process
- to simplify system

3) United States Department of Agriculture Study and Government Trends

- to have the system represent three position classes (4-H, Home Economics, Agriculture)
- to implement community programs
- to conduct educational programs
- to develop public relationships

- to advise and assist clientele
- to develop supervision
- to assist office management and administration
- to develop interpersonal behaviors
- to continue professional development
- to develop reporting justification
- to make the system objective
- to differentiate between key objectives
- to standardize values of ratings
- to integrate review of past, present, and future

programs

--to allow active participation in system development

--to have supervisor describe performance rather than evaluate it

4) Items Used in Seventy Percent of States Responding to Survey

- to evaluate one or more times
- to have written comments used
- to have signatures of reviewee and reviewer
- to measure program effectiveness
- to minimize personal questions
- to have one-on-one performance appraisals
- to review plan of work
- to review performance strengths

To further develop these findings on an appraisal

system so that one can bring them into focus with the Montana Extension appraisal system, we must compare each one of them. My comparison of these findings are reflected in Table 5. As one reviews these findings the characteristics of an ideal appraisal system can be summarized in forty-eight categories. Using these forty-eight categories for a comparison, we can evaluate the Montana Cooperative Extension Service's Performance Appraisal for Field Staff (PAFS). Through this method we can see to what extent the Montana PAFS meets the criteria of an evaluation system. The criteria were established through summarization of literature reviews, the Montana Extension Service Staff survey, the USDA study and Personnel Director surveys.

TABLE 5
EXTENT TO WHICH MONTANA PAFS
ACCOMPLISHES THE FOUR MAIN SOURCE DIRECTIVES

Item in Performance Appraisal Process	Extent of Agreement		
	Yes	Some	No
1) Increases production		X	
2) Creates job satisfaction/motivation		X	
3) Provides open communications		X	
4) Provides growth		X	
5) Participation and involvement		X	
6) Recognition and accomplishment		X	
7) Meets inner employee needs		X	

(Table 5 Continued)

Item in Performance Appraisal Process	Extent of Agreement		
	Yes	Some	No
8) Problem detector		late	
9) Immediate feedback			X
10) Develops individual skills		X	
11) Create positive attitudes		X	
12) Someone for employees to go to			X
13) Supervisors training		X	
14) Field staff training		little	
15) Job enrichment	X		
16) Systematic process - more than once a year			X
17) Allow supervisors to supervise		X	
18) Used as professional development, not merit or rate increases		X	
19) Performance/salary reviews separate		X	
20) Process reviewed periodically	X		
21)*Evaluation focuses on personality		X	
22) Brings out strong and weak points	X		
23) Provides direction		X	
24) Ratings used are consistent			X
25) Rating scales and questions complementary		X	
26) Rating scale terminology universally understood		X	
27)*"Average" used on rating scale	X		
28) Evaluates program goals, development, execution		X	
29) Creates uniformity throughout state		X	
30) Written comments meaningful		X	

(Table 5 Continued)

Item in Performance Appraisal Process	Extent of Agreement		
	Yes	Some	No
31) Brings out counseling		X	
32) Training needs brought out	X		
33) Training needs followed up on		X	
34) Questions relate to main appraisal purpose		X	
35) Paperwork has meaning(all reports connected)			X
36) Staff satisfied with process			X
37) Simple system			X
38) Appraisal forms represent all positions		X	
39) Represents county/community needs	X		
40) Evaluates education implementations		X	
41) Evaluates public awareness and relations		X	
42) Evaluates advise and clients relations		X	
43) Evaluates office relations		X	
44) Evaluates behavior		X	
45) Evaluates reports		X	
46) System is objective		X	
47) Show participants commitments	X		
48) Permits verbal and written exchange		X	
TOTALS	8	33	7

*Negative point for evaluation systems - all others are in a positive meaning.

From reviewing the information on Table 5 , you can develop the Montana Cooperative Extension Service's Performance Appraisal for Field Staff. In the following paragraphs the material discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three will bring together the resources to develop the existing evaluation system.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM - A RE-EVALUATION

It is quite clear, from analysis of the basic problems of evaluation and of the various methods tried over the years in both the public and private areas, that no one package of ideas emerges as the final answer to the never-ending quest for serving constructive purpose and comporting with human needs. We hazard the prediction, nevertheless, that future developments will stress supervisor-employee understanding through various participative processes, profile analysis instead of summary ratings, evaluation of facts of performance rather than traits of standardized elements, special methods for each separate purpose (such as promotion, training, retention, or special recognition), and evaluating as the occasion demands instead of for pre-established periods (66).

Conscientious employees of an agency, whether on a state or field staff level, have mixed emotions over the concept of "performance appraisal." All persons involved

want it to be a positive experience, but when one identifies strengths and weaknesses, this is not always possible (67). An agency's process should relieve some of these feelings so that program and individuals involved can grow. If we remember the quote by John W. Gardner, "The sorting out of individuals according to ability is very nearly the most delicate and difficult process our society has to face", one can appreciate the development of an appraisal system to curb some of the frustrations, both on the employee's side and the administration side. The process must be able to bring into it methods that; 1) encourage and promote feedback, 2) identify employee training needs, 3) encourage supervisors to "tell it like it is," particularly in weak areas, 4) help to eliminate generalities when weak areas show up, 5) create an understanding of the performance appraisal, and 6) give the field staff a direction to go if supervisor ability is in question (68).

The Montana Extension Performance Appraisal for Field Staff has the ability to meet their criteria with few modifications of the present system. By using the forty-eight items outlined in Table 5 as the main or justified criteria for a performance appraisal system, one can start to develop a usable system. The upgrading of the system to meet national trends and staff needs would require; 1) an adjustment in process schedule, such as

described on Table 6, 2) format design and question directive changes and 3) training field staff and supervisors. With these three changes: 1) The purpose and objectives of the present system will be strengthened. 2) Communications and feedback will be enhanced because of the review style of the new format. 3) Training needs will be identified essential. 4) salary and performance of programs will be separated somewhat. 5) The field staff will be able to develop and feel somewhat comfortable with it because of written comments and justification. 6) Problems and attitudes will be confronted several times per year. 7) The process will initiate appraisal changes on a regular basis. 8) It will bring meaning and direction to all reports.

TABLE 6

STAFF REPORTS AND REVIEW SESSION
SCHEDULE FOR MONTANA EXTENSION SERVICE

PROGRAM OF WORK (POW) - October through September

Responsibility	Item	Fiscal Year POW	Target Date
Field Staff to Supervisor	Submit Plan of Work	Upcoming	April - May
Supervisor with Field Staff	Review plan of work (1st session)	Upcoming	May - June
Supervisor with Field Staff	Program Review (2nd session)	Present	Feb. - March
Supervisor with Field Staff	Program Review (3rd session)	Present	August - Sept.
Field Staff to Supervisor	Annual Reports	Present	September
Supervisor with Field Staff	Program Review PAFS (4th session)	Past	Oct. - Nov.
Supervisor to Field Staff	Field Staff Summary	Past	By December
Agent to Associate Director	Reaction Notification	Past	By January
**Associate Director with Field Staff	Review of Notification	Past	By February

**Only needed when a dispute or question arises on Reaction Notification

Monthly Reports NOT included on schedule.

MONTANA PAFS RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The administrators of the Montana Performance Appraisal for Field Staff must come up with several changes and improvements; 1) to meet the objectives and purpose of a performance evaluation, 2) to create a more positive attitude by the field staff, 3) to give the administration of Extension Service a means to develop the meaning of an evaluation and its relationship to the area supervisor, and 4) to bring the evaluation process in line with the total system of program development.

To meet these changes and improvements the Extension Service will have to make the following changes: 1) The questions and the form of the appraisal process should be designed to meet the objectives and purpose of employee performance appraisal. 2) Professional appraisals should be conducted at least four times per year on all employees (Table 6). The four sessions should be designed as follows;

Session I	Plan of Work for upcoming fiscal year
Session II	Program Review of present Plan of Work
Session III	Continue Program Review of present Plan of Work
Session IV	Program Review/Performance Appraisal of past fiscal year

3) The four sessions should be a face-to-face interview. 4) The rating system must be redefined. 5) The questions must be revised to create attitude changes and to relate closer

to program development. 6) The employee must be given the opportunity to accomplish program and professional needs with directives. 7) The process must provide an overall summary to field staff by the supervisor. 8) The field staff must have an opportunity to evaluate supervision and respond to their evaluation. 9) The administration will need to provide the mechanics for supervisor training and updating on a systematic yearly basis.

A new style or method will bring with it a need for more training and time for the supervisors. The time for the field staff will not increase or decrease because the evaluations should be in shorter segments, but more times per year. The supervisors and field staff will need to develop a system and manage it so that appraisal information collection becomes a natural part of their daily activities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MONTANA EXTENSION PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL SURVEY AND LETTERS
(FIELD STAFF - STATE STAFF)

FIELD STAFF INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear

I NEED YOUR HELP!

How many times have you heard those few but time-consuming words?

In development of my professional paper on "Professional Evaluation" I came to a phase that deals with attitude and field staff acceptance of an evaluation system.

With this I need your responses. Your name will not be used in the study workup or paper. Your comments will be put into a general form through the paper.

The questionnaire is enclosed with a return addressed envelope.

If you can find the time, I would appreciate your comments by January 1, 1983, so that I can start to pull the paper together. Paper completion is targeted for the Spring of 1983. The questionnaire is short so, hopefully, it will not take a lot of time.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Respectfully,

Laurence A. Hoffman
County Extension Agent

LAH:np

P.S. Maybe a new mouse trap can be invented - who knows.

STATE STAFF INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear

In the next couple of months I will be completing my professional paper on "Professional Evaluation" and before I meet that challenge some ground must be excavated.

The professional paper, as one knows, should bring in attitudes, thoughts, and outside observations. These are the main reasons why I am requesting your help.

Enclosed is a short questionnaire that I have put together, with the help of my instructors, to bring together some of the above feelings.

Questionnaires are being sent to other state staff but I am in hopes that the answers will be your personal thoughts.

Your name will not be used in the study workup or paper. Your comments will be used only in a generalization throughout the paper.

The questionnaire is enclosed along with a stamped addressed envelope. Please complete the questionnaire, put it in the envelope and mail it back to me.

If you can find the time, I would appreciate your comments by January 1, 1983, so that I can start to pull the paper together. Paper completion is targeted for the Spring of 1983.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Respectfully,

Laurence A. Hoffman
County Extension Agent

LAH: np

PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
(Field Staff and State Staff)

Please address the question (s) as you feel towards the present Extension Service system of evaluation. Be brief and to the point when explanation is requested. Thank you.

On a scale of one to five (five being high rating)

- 1) How do you feel the present extension evaluation system meets your needs?

Circle your choice 1 2 3 4 5

- 2) How do you feel evaluation system rates your program development?

Circle your choice 1 2 3 4 5

- 3) As an agent, how would you say that personalities play a part in the final analysis?

Circle your choice 1 2 3 4 5

- 4) As an agent, would you say that the evaluation rating of your program has a direct relation on your salary at contract time?

Circle your choice 1 2 3 4 5

- 5) What area (s) of the evaluation system do you feel has the most positive effect and why?

- 6) What area (s) of the evaluation system do you feel has the most negative effect and why?

- 7) What do you see as the main purpose of the evaluation process?

Other comments:

APPENDIX B

STATE PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
INTRODUCTORY LETTER

STATE PERSONNEL DIRECTORS INTRODUCTORY LETTER

In completing my Masters in Public Administration, a major criteria is the development of a professional paper.

For my professional paper I am examining professional (personnel) evaluation systems of the extension service throughout the United States. Upon completion of the task, I am in hopes of a greater understanding and a possible model for evaluation systems for programs and personnel development.

I would appreciate a copy of your states evaluation system used with your staff, if at all possible.

Two questions I would like answered, in addition to the copy of the evaluation if you would please, are:

1. What area (s) of your evaluation system do you feel has the most negative effect and why?
2. What do you see as the main purpose of your evaluation process?

In return, I'd be glad to send you a copy of the professional paper once it is completed. Please indicate when you return the request.

Thank you very much for your time and interest.

Respectfully,

Laurence A. Hoffman
P.O. Box 855
Helena, Montana 59624

LAH:np