

PERCEPTIONS OF WHO SHOULD PERFORM
SELECTED 4-H TASKS IN MONTANA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana. Data for the study were gathered through the use of a mailed questionnaire sent to a population of 14 county agents, 13 4-H program assistants, and 310 4-H leaders. Information from the returned questionnaires was coded and entered into a word processing program to create a non-document data file. The program, "HISTOGRAM," taken from the Montana State University Statistical Package (Lund, 1983), was used to statistically analyze the data.

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that over half of the assistants and almost half of the leaders had three years or less of extension experience. There were differences in the perceptions of program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform the majority of the selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana. County agents saw themselves as having primary responsibility for many of the selected tasks and indicated very limited primary responsibility for the program assistant. Program assistants saw a much broader role of primary responsibility for themselves than did the agents. The 4-H leaders indicated program assistants and county agents "should" perform the majority of the selected tasks but saw limited primary responsibility for both groups. There was not always a clear understanding of who should perform the selected tasks; county agents and program assistants saw themselves as performing but not having primary responsibility for many of the same tasks.

As a result of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: the role of the program assistant should be communicated to individuals involved in the 4-H program; a determination of primary responsibility should be made on all selected tasks; job descriptions for program assistants should be written in a clear, unambiguous style; county agents should delegate primary responsibility for those tasks which have been assigned to program assistants in the job description; the program assistant's responsibility needs to be developed in accordance with the job description; job descriptions for program assistants should be periodically updated to meet program priority changes; and program leaders should carefully study the data and develop additional recommendations for use at the local level.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The Cooperative Extension Service was created by the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. It is the educational arm of the United States Department of Agriculture and an extension of the Land Grant University system. The Cooperative Extension Service provides educational programs in four areas: (1) agriculture, (2) home economics, (3) community development and (4) 4-H.

Four-H is America's largest out-of-school education program for boys and girls; it currently involves nearly 600,000 Extension-trained adult volunteer leaders (National Needs Assessment, 1983). The mission of 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes which will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society.

In an effort to assist as many youth as possible in this mission, paraprofessionals have been a part of the 4-H and youth programs. For example, Prawl (1984) reported that in 1979 paraprofessional contributions equaled 1,461 staff years.

In the late 60's, recommendations were made for expanding the 4-H program. Two key reports, A People and a Spirit (Joint USDA-NASULGC Study Committee, 1968) and 4-H in the 70's (ECOP 4-H Youth Subcommittee, 1971), were published as a part of a new direction in Extension. Among

the recommendations of these reports were doubling 4-H enrollment by 1974 and employing "4-H program assistants and 4-H program aides to extend the reach and maximize the effectiveness of the professional staff."

In 1973, as a means of implementing these recommendations, Congress approved an additional \$7.5 million for 4-H beyond regular appropriations. The determination was that \$2.5 million be used for involvement of 4-H in rural community development programs and that \$5 million be used to expand 4-H in urban areas. In response to these new federal funds (1973), the Montana Cooperative Extension Service hired four 4-H program assistants, two in Billings and two in Great Falls, to work with urban youth on 4-H related activities. In 1979, Fergus County hired a 4-H program assistant solely out of budgeted county funds. Since then other Montana counties have followed this trend. At the time of this study, five county program assistants were federally funded, four urban and one rural. The other program assistants were county funded.

The researcher believed there were differences in the perceptions of who should be responsible for selected tasks as viewed by 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders, and that identification of those differences would assist the Cooperative Extension Service in determining how to best meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to compare the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to determine:

- (1) how county agents perceive their role and the role of the 4-H program assistant regarding who should perform selected tasks,
- (2) how 4-H program assistants perceive their role and the role of the county agent regarding who should perform selected tasks, and
- (3) how 4-H leaders perceive the role of the 4-H program assistant and the role of the county agent regarding who should perform selected tasks.

Need for the Study

Extension is unique in structure and function. It has not been restricted to a single program or activity, but rather has been allowed to adjust to changing societal needs. Society has allowed few organizations this flexibility. Extension has defined its role as education, even though the subject matter and audiences have changed over time. Generally speaking, Extension has broadened its role with existing clientele and at the same time has acquired new audiences.

With budget reductions and limited funding the possibility that additional Extension professionals will be added in Montana over the next few years appears doubtful. Some shifting in emphasis will continue in response to changing program priorities. Reaching more people with reduced funds might be accomplished by the use of additional paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessionals are of great value to 4-H. They add to the program a leadership and skill element that cannot be supplied in the necessary quantity by the volunteer route (Prawl, 1984).

Mortvedt (1977) reports many 4-H agents perform about the same tasks as their program assistants. When both groups emphasize activities, program quality cannot improve as much as if the agent acts as a program manager. Choice of an agent/program assistant team approach may make their work seem the same and the program assistant team approach commands only about half the agent's wages.

With an increased work load and limited funding, in order to avoid duplication and maximize the effectiveness of the 4-H staff, it is extremely important that the role of the 4-H program assistant be completely understood by all individuals concerned. The 4-H agent will need to assume more sophisticated tasks and delegate to the program assistant tasks which the 4-H agent traditionally has performed. Four-H leaders will need to work more closely with the program assistant and have a better understanding of the assistant's role and why it is needed.

It was determined, after a comprehensive computer search, that no current national or state level studies have been made regarding 4-H program assistants. This study gathered information to be used as a basis for analyzing the perceptions of Montana 4-H program assistants, 4-H agents and 4-H leaders regarding selected tasks.

Information from this study will aid extension administrators in developing state-level programs. It should provide information which will allow administrators to better utilize the time and efforts of 4-H

program assistants to more accurately meet the needs of clientele locally. Administrators will be in a better position to prepare realistic job descriptions, thus providing the program assistant with a clearer understanding of their role and areas of responsibility.

Definitions

- (1) County Agent: A staff member of the Cooperative Extension Service and Land Grant University with a professional background in either agriculture, home economics, or human development and who serves as a county administrator and educator for 4-H programs. (The terms "4-H agent," "county agent," "agent," and "professional" are used synonymously throughout this study.)
- (2) 4-H: The youth education program of the Cooperative Extension Service.
- (3) 4-H Program Assistant: A paid member of the County Cooperative Extension Service's staff who assists professionals. Their educational qualifications are usually (but not always) less than those of the professionals. Many work on a part-time basis and usually for less salary than professionals. (The terms "4-H program assistant," "program assistant," "assistant," and "paraprofessional" are used interchangeably throughout this study.)
- (4) 4-H Leader: An adult who serves as a leader of youth in a local 4-H club and gives his/her time, ideals, expertise, and resources without receiving or expecting pay. (The terms "volunteer," "volunteer leader," "4-H leader," and "leader" are used synonymously in this study.)

Limitations

- (1) The population for the study was limited to 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders in the fourteen Montana counties where 4-H program assistants were employed.
- (2) The population was limited to those Montana county agents and 4-H program assistants who were employed at the time of the survey and to those 4-H leaders who were serving at the time of the survey.

Assumptions

- (1) It was assumed that there were differences in the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the county 4-H program.
- (2) It was assumed that agents and assistants are responsible for specific tasks.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population for the study was determined by selecting the 14 Montana counties where 4-H program assistants were employed or recently had been employed. The population included county agents, program assistants, and 4-H leaders from those 14 counties.

On May 2, 1986, a letter from the State 4-H and Youth Program Coordinator (Appendix A) was sent to each County Agent Chairperson explaining the purpose of the study and asking for their cooperation and participation. The letter asked each county for permission to use the

list of 4-H leader names and addresses which were available in the State 4-H Office.

The county agents directly in charge of the 4-H program in those counties where program assistants were employed were selected for the study in addition to all program assistants employed at that time by the Montana Cooperative Extension Service. Because of the size of the population of 4-H leaders (1,340), a random sample was used to identify those who would be surveyed.

The sample size was determined by calculating the number of responses needed to give a confidence interval of .95. Thus a random sample, with replacement of 350, was selected with the aid of the program, "SAMPLE," taken from the Montana State University Statistical Package (Lund, 1983). After duplicate numbers were eliminated, 310 numbers were then matched to the 1,340 numbers assigned to the 4-H leaders in order to determine the names of the leaders to be used in the survey.

Instrument Design

A mailed questionnaire (Appendix B) was used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire was designed to gather demographic information to aid in identifying and characterizing the respondents and to obtain information about the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program.

Program assistant job descriptions from various counties and the review of literature provided the basic information for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then further developed with the assistance

of the State 4-H and Youth Program Coordinator of the Montana Cooperative Extension Service and Montana State University Agricultural Education Staff.

Statements were developed which represented tasks that could be performed by the county agent, the program assistant, or both. Respondents were asked to rate the level of responsibility of the county agent and the level of responsibility of the program assistant by checking the boxes of their choice for each survey item. Respondents were asked to make two responses for each task -- one under the "Agent's Responsibility" category and one under the "Program Assistant's Responsibility" category. Choices of response included: "Must," "Should," "Not Sure," "Should Not," and "Must Not." A "must" response indicated the task was the primary responsibility of the person in that position. A "must not" response indicated that the person in that position had no responsibility for the task. A "should" response indicated the task should be performed by the person in that position, but they do not have primary responsibility for it. A "should not" response indicated it was questionable whether a person in that position should perform the task. A "not sure" response indicated the respondent could not decide who should be responsible for the task.

The tasks were designed to cover six different areas of responsibility which included:

- (1) Planning, Organizing and Conducting 4-H Events,
- (2) Recruiting and 4-H Promotional Activities,
- (3) Leader and Member Training,
- (4) Activities to Keep Current with Technology,

(5) 4-H Related Activities, and

(6) Evaluation of 4-H Programs and Participants.

All of the work done in formulating the questionnaire was conducted under the advisement of the researcher's graduate committee members and major advisor.

The questionnaire was field tested by sending it to 11 respondents which included: a Montana Cooperative Extension Service Area Supervisor, a State 4-H Program Specialist, a former 4-H program assistant, two 4-H agents, and six 4-H leaders. All respondents were from counties not included in the survey. Revisions to the questionnaire were made in accordance with information obtained from the pretest and the advice of individuals listed above.

A cover letter including a brief explanation of the study and directions (Appendix C), along with the questionnaire, was mailed to the potential respondents on July 18, 1986. Non-respondents were sent a follow-up letter (Appendix D) on August 8, 1986, which again described the study and asked for their assistance. A final letter to non-respondents (Appendix D) explaining the importance of their input, along with the questionnaire used in the initial mailing, was sent September 5, 1986. All surveys were mailed with a postage-paid return envelope enclosed. This process resulted in a 72 percent return rate.

Analysis

A word processing program was used to create a non-document data file containing coded responses from all of the returns. The program, "HISTOGRAM," taken from the Montana State University Statistical Package (Lund, 1983) was used to arrange the data for ease of statistical

analysis. Tables were then developed to portray the statistical analysis in a descriptive form.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Need for the Paraprofessional

As Extension has broadened its role with existing clientele and at the same time acquired new audiences, a demand for additional personnel has resulted. The chances that additional Extension professionals will be added over the next decade are slim. Some shifting in emphasis will continue in response to changing program priorities. As a result, the use of paraprofessionals is likely to increase (Prawl, 1984).

The Four-H in Century-III report recognized the value of paraprofessionals. To accomplish the desired expansion of 4-H in the first decade of Century-III, "There must be an increase of at least 50 percent in the professional and paraprofessional staff devoted to 4-H" (Brown, 1977).

Four-H in Century-III is the response to the charge of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) to the task force to look into the first decade of our country's third century and recommend directions and thrusts that will keep 4-H strong and growing.

Redefining Roles

Adding paraprofessional positions to County Extension staffs has created a need to redefine many professional roles. However, some agents have difficulty changing from doing everything themselves to

being program managers; the most recent program area to be caught in the dilemma is 4-H (Mortvedt, 1977).

A clear division of the tasks of 4-H professionals and program assistants is vital. So is the differentiation in the level of their responsibilities. People in both positions need to be able to identify their own duties to work effectively toward program goals.

Problems in dividing responsibility for 4-H tasks were made clear in a study done in 1975 in Ohio by Mortvedt and Karr. Questionnaires were sent to the 92 4-H agents and 84 program assistants employed at the time in Ohio. A total of 87 percent of both groups responded. A real problem in dividing responsibilities is evident in the results of this study. The 4-H agents accepted major responsibility for all but 2 of the 22 tasks, although 13 came from either the Kiesow role model for 4-H program assistants or the Ohio program assistant job description. The program assistants thought they and the agents shared responsibility for several tasks in which both were involved (Mortvedt, 1977).

Mortvedt's study indicated there is a real need to look at authority and delegation of authority. As 4-H programs grow and county agents move toward higher levels of managerial behavior, they will spend less time directing, controlling and coordinating programs, and more time managing, planning, and organizing. Correspondingly, the program assistants will carry out more tasks involving directing, controlling and coordinating programs, and activities. It is vital that as changes in responsibility occur there is increased delegation of authority.

A continuing need for a division of tasks and for a differentiation in level of responsibility between professionals and paraprofessionals

exists. A clear determination of the tasks of each person will provide the beginning for a constructive, work-oriented relationship. With a firm basis of expectations, strengths can be tapped and disagreements negotiated. Periodic reassessments will need to be made for possible task and authority reallocation (Mortvedt, 1977).

Implementing Curricula

In a presentation to the 4-H and other youth sections of the Southern Agricultural Workers Association in Memphis, Tennessee, Milton Boyce reviewed the importance of selection, role and training of the 4-H program assistant. The ever-increasing demand for Extension-type workers has magnified the shortage of professional personnel to manage these programs. To meet these demands, the continuing and timely training of program assistants is necessary to enhance their value to the Extension team (Boyce, 1970). Boyce's suggestions for implementing curricula are:

- (1) The program assistant should be screened for dependability, leadership ability, and good judgement.
- (2) Job descriptions should be designed to spell out specific duties and responsibilities; they should also include several job levels so that the assistant perceives opportunities for advancement.
- (3) A clear delineation of the Extension Agent's role and that of the program assistant should be established.
- (4) There should be pre-service orientation to ensure a more productive working climate.
- (5) On-the-job training should include an in-service education program.
- (6) Encouragement to continue education should be given those seeking advancement.
- (7) Someone should be assigned to have general charge of the program assistants.

- (8) The pre-service and in-service training programs and the total Extension program should be evaluated on a continuing basis (Boyce, 1970).

Tasks Performed

At Ohio State University, Dr. John Rickey Byrd (1976) designed a study which closely resembles this present study. The study was designed to: (1) identify the tasks perceived as appropriate for the development of the role position of the 4-H program assistant, (2) identify the tasks perceived as performed by the 4-H program assistant, (3) compare the perceptions of 4-H extension agent, 4-H program assistant, and volunteer leader to determine the consensus among the positions, (4) determine the relationship between the years of service, age, sex, years of formal education, and location of residents (rural and urban), and the mean scores of tasks identified as appropriate for the role of 4-H program assistant.

Data were collected by mailed questionnaires from 38 Extension agents with 4-H responsibility, 47 4-H program assistants, and 82 4-H volunteer leaders who were located in counties that employed 4-H program assistants on a yearly basis during 1975 and 1976. A two-part questionnaire was used. Part I was designed to collect information about the respondents': (1) years of service, (2) age, (3) sex, (4) years of formal education, and (5) location of residence. Part II was designed to secure data on task appropriateness and to determine the percentage of program assistants who were currently performing the tasks.

Considerable disagreement was found within the Cooperative Extension Service as to the categorization of tasks performed by 4-H

program assistants into functional categories. Also extension agents with 4-H responsibility, 4-H program assistants and 4-H volunteer leaders were not in consensus on task appropriateness for 4-H program assistants in the areas of program evaluation and determining program objectives, communication between the program assistants and the local citizens, volunteer leaders and extension agents, and availability of resources of the 4-H program.

In his research, Byrd (1976) found a high level of consensus among 4-H agents, 4-H program assistants, and 4-H volunteer leaders on the appropriateness and percentage of tasks being performed by the 4-H program assistant. There also tended to be a consensus in appropriateness when analyzing the tasks by each positional group as follows: (1) years of service, (2) age, (3) location of residence, and (4) years of formal education.

Although there tended to be a consensus in perception of appropriateness by 4-H program assistants when analyzing the tasks by sex of the 4-H program assistants and 4-H leaders, these perceptions tended to vary significantly when compared to extension agents. This research would indicate that while there are areas of consensus, there are also areas where perceptions vary significantly and need to be identified.

A 1982 study conducted by Michael Davis at North Carolina State University focused on a staffing pattern employing 4-H program assistants within county units of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service to examine differences in perceptions of the difficulty, importance, and training emphasis of the 22 tasks assigned the 4-H program assistant role. Further inquiry was made into the

relationship between task consensus of position groups and 4-H program assistant self-assessed task competency.

The relevance of the Davis study to this research is that tasks to be performed by program assistants were identified and an assessment of the training needed to accomplish those tasks was made.

Summary

The review of literature indicated there is a growing need for the use of 4-H program assistants or paraprofessionals and that their roles need to be clearly defined. It was also apparent from reviewing the literature that the agents, assistants, and leaders do not in all cases have a clear understanding of the role of the assistant. Agents and program assistants may be assuming responsibility for similar tasks. It would appear that some agents may have difficulty delegating tasks, that in part have been the agent's responsibility, to a paraprofessional. With limited funding and changes in program priorities, there is also a need for the areas of responsibility to be periodically reassessed.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the responses of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana. The results of the study are presented in eight sections as follows:

- (1) Demographic Data
- (2) Planning, Organizing and Conducting 4-H Events
- (3) Recruiting and 4-H Promotional Activities
- (4) Leader and Member Training
- (5) Activities to Keep Current with Technology
- (6) 4-H Related Activities
- (7) Evaluation of 4-H Programs and Participants
- (8) Summary of "must" responses

Demographic Data

Data presented in this section provide a summary of responses by the three groups: county agents, program assistants, and 4-H leaders. It also provides the years of experience with the Extension Service in the capacity of county agent, program assistant, or 4-H leader. For purposes of analysis, responses were categorized as follows: 5.00-4.50 = "must," 4.49-3.50 = "should," 3.49-2.50 = "not sure," 2.49-1.50 = "should not," and 1.49-1.00 = "must not." For the purpose of clarifying

means, the following abbreviations will be used in brackets: Ag = agents, As = assistants, and Ld = leaders.

Data in Table 1 show that questionnaires were sent to a total of 337 individuals, with 244 returns being received for a response rate of 72%. The 244 individuals consisted of 14 county agents, 13 program assistants, and 217 4-H leaders. A response rate of 100% was obtained from county agents and program assistants.

Forty-six of the questionnaires returned by 4-H leaders were not used because questions were not answered or were answered improperly. Of the 46 questionnaires not used, 21 leaders indicated they did not have enough experience to answer the questions, 13 leaders which had been identified as leaders indicated on the questionnaire that they were program assistants. Since it could not be determined from which basis they answered the questions, these returns were not used. In addition, 12 leaders answered only one-half of each dual-response question. Thus, a 55.2% usable return rate from 310 4-H leaders resulted in a confidence level of 94.8%.

Table 1. Summary of questionnaires returned by respondents.

Respondents	Number Sent	Number Received	Number Usable	Percent Usable
Agents	14	14	14	100.0
Assistants	13	13	13	100.0
4-H Leaders	<u>310</u>	<u>217</u>	<u>171</u>	55.2
Total	337	244	198	58.7

The data in Table 2 indicate that two agents had 1-3 years of experience, two had 4-6 years of experience, two had 7-10 years of experience, six had 11-20 years of experience, and one had over 20 years of experience. The assistants' responses indicated one had under 1 year of experience, seven had 1-3 years of experience, three had 4-6 years of experience, and one had 7-10 years of experience. Of the 4-H leaders responding, 13 had less than one year of experience, 59 had 1-3 years of experience, 41 had 4-6 years of experience, 25 had 7-10 years of experience, 14 had 11-20 years of experience, and eight had over 20 years of experience.

Table 2. Summary of years of experience as county agent, program assistant, or 4-H leader.

Years	Agents	Assistants	4-H Leaders
Under 1	0	1	13
1-3	2	7	59
4-6	2	3	41
7-10	2	1	25
11-20	6	0	14
Over 20	1	0	8

Planning, Organizing and Conducting 4-H Events

The data in Table 3 present the perceptions of agents, assistants, and 4-H leaders with regard to planning, organizing and conducting 4-H events. All three groups indicated agents "should" organize new 4-H

Table 3. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing planning, organizing and conducting 4-H events.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility
Organize new 4-H clubs.	4.00	4.43	4.08	4.58	3.88	4.03
Assist 4-H Council officers in planning and conducting 4-H Council meetings.	4.69	2.92	3.92	3.33	4.21	3.92
Provide leadership for county 4-H health, safety, and citizenship activities.	3.21	3.29	3.83	3.42	3.79	4.11
Organize County 4-H Demonstration Day.	4.31	3.40	3.82	3.50	3.78	4.15
Organize and coordinate the 4-H division of the county fair.	4.71	4.07	4.75	4.08	4.58	4.29
Work with camp counselors and camp committee members in planning and conducting county 4-H camp.	4.29	4.36	4.33	4.00	4.05	4.28
Conduct County 4-H Demonstration Day.	3.85	3.57	3.64	3.33	3.80	4.08
Prepare the annual County 4-H Plan of Work.	4.93	3.31	4.58	3.50	4.19	3.86
Help 4-H leaders establish a plan of club activities based on member needs	4.07	4.14	3.50	3.50	3.54	3.94
Organize exchange trips.	3.43	3.64	3.50	3.50	4.05	3.79

clubs ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.88-4.43). However, the assistant mean indicates they "must" organize new clubs ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58). The agents indicated that assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.3) and agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.0) "should" organize new clubs, and the leaders report a similar perception for assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.03) and agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.88).

The mean range as indicated above shows the high and low mean for all three groups. The third mean would fall within that range. This procedure will be used whenever the means of all three groups fall within the same category.

The mean indicated agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.69) assist 4-H council officers in planning and conducting 4-H council meetings, while they reported a "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.92) for the assistants. The assistants also indicated a "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33) for assisting 4-H council officers and reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.92) for agents. The leaders indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.92) "should" assist 4-H council officers in planning and conducting 4-H council meetings.

The leaders indicated that the agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.79) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11) "should" provide leadership for county 4-H health, safety, and citizenship activities. The assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42) indicated they were "not sure" if they should perform the task and reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83) for the agents. The agents ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 3.21 - As 3.29) indicated they were "not sure" who should perform the task.

The leaders and assistants indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ = Ld 3.78 -As 3.82) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = As 3.50 - Ld 4.15) "should" organize County 4-H Demonstration Day, while the agents reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.31) for

themselves. Agents indicated they were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40) if assistants should organize County 4-H Demonstration Day.

All three groups reported that agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.58-4.75) and assistants "should" ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.07-4.29) organize and coordinate the 4-H division of the county fair. Responses from the three groups also indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.05-4.33) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.0-4.36) "should" work with camp counselors and camp committee members in planning and conducting county 4-H camp. Correspondingly, all three groups also reported that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.5-4.07) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.50-4.14) "should" help 4-H leaders establish a plan of club activities based on member needs.

Agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.85) reported they and the assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57) "should" conduct County 4-H Demonstration Day activities. The leaders reported a similar perception of agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.8) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08). The assistants indicated they were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33) if they should conduct County 4-H Demonstration Day activities and reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.64) for the agents.

County agents indicated they "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.93) prepare the annual county 4-H plan of work, and were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) if the assistants should prepare the plan. The assistants also reported for this task a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) for the agents and a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50) for themselves. The leaders indicated both agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.86) "should" prepare the plan of work.

The agents indicated they were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43) if they should organize exchange trips and reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.64) for the assistants. The assistants indicated they "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50) organize

exchange trips and also reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50) for the agents. The leaders reported a similar perception for assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.79) and agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05).

Recruiting and 4-H Promotional Activities

The data in Table 4 show that all three groups felt recruitment of 4-H leaders "should" ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.60-4.21) be performed by the agent. However, the leaders indicated that they were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.02) if the assistant should recruit 4-H leaders. The assistants reported a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50) for recruitment, while they reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00) for the agents. The agents reported a similar perception for assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.43) and agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21).

The program assistants reported a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) for recruitment of 4-H members and a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00) for agents. The leaders indicated they were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30) if agents should recruit 4-H members, but they reported assistants "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.01) recruit 4-H members. The agents reported "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.93, agents; $\bar{x}$ = 4.14, assistants) recruit members for both groups.

All three groups ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.18-4.42) perceived encourage 4-H members to apply for out-of-county trips as an activity that "should" be performed by agents. The assistants, however, reported a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.50) for encouragement of 4-H members and a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42) for the agents. The agents reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 4.29 - As 4.36) for both groups, with a similar perception by the leaders ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 4.18 - As 4.29) with regard to encouragement of 4-H members.

Table 4. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing recruiting and 4-H promotional activities.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility
Recruit 4-H leaders.	4.21	4.43	4.00	4.50	3.60	3.02
Recruit 4-H members.	3.93	4.14	4.00	4.58	3.30	4.01
Encourage 4-H members to apply for out-of-county trips.	4.29	4.36	4.42	4.50	4.18	4.29
Prepare monthly newsletter for 4-H families.	4.15	4.14	4.08	3.82	3.80	4.06
Identify key citizens who might support or work with 4-H youth.	4.43	4.07	4.42	4.42	4.18	4.08
Explain 4-H programs and procedures to 4-H leaders and the public.	4.86	4.21	4.75	4.58	4.43	4.10
Assume responsibility for promotion and publicity through the news media.	4.00	3.93	3.92	3.92	4.20	4.08

All three groups indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.8-4.15) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.82-4.14) "should" prepare monthly newsletters for 4-H families and that both agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.18-4.43) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.07-4.42) "should" identify key citizens who might support or work with 4-H youth. The three groups also indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.92-4.20) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.93-4.08) "should" assume responsibility for promotion and publicity through the news media.

The assistants reported a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) for explain 4-H programs and procedures to 4-H leaders and the public as well as a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.75) for the agents. The agents indicated they "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.86) explain 4-H programs and procedures, while they reported a "should" response for both leaders ($\bar{x}$ = 4.43) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10).

Leader and Member Training

The data in Table 5 indicate agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.54) organize county 4-H project training for leaders and reported a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.64) for the assistants. The program assistants and leaders both indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = As 4.42 - Ld 4.34) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = As 3.50- Ld 3.99) "should" organize county 4-H project training.

The perception of all three groups was that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.67-3.69) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.67-4.20) "should" organize county 4-H project training for members. Similarly, all three groups reported agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.70-4.08) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.50-4.20) "should" train junior leaders to function as effective leaders. In addition, the three groups indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.92-3.98) and

Table 5. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing leader and member training.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility
Organize county 4-H project training for leaders.	4.54	3.64	4.42	3.50	4.34	3.99
Organize county 4-H project training for members.	3.69	3.79	3.67	3.67	3.67	4.20
Train junior leaders to function as effective leaders.	3.93	3.50	4.08	3.82	3.70	4.20
Work with older 4-H members to provide interesting county programs for youth.	3.93	3.79	3.92	3.92	3.98	4.25
Counsel with 4-H leaders on how to work with parents and other leaders.	4.50	3.86	4.67	3.92	4.20	3.95
Conduct project and leadership training meetings for 4-H leaders.	4.46	4.07	4.58	4.00	4.18	4.10
Plan and develop training programs for 4-H leaders.	4.69	3.86	4.67	3.91	4.20	3.95
Train 4-H leaders (youth and adult) to lead youth programs.	4.43	4.07	4.42	4.00	4.03	4.11

Table 5--continued.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility
Prepare material for teaching 4-H leaders and members.	4.46	3.86	4.00	4.17	4.12	3.95
Help 4-H youth develop skills for dealing with everyday life experiences.	4.38	4.29	4.25	4.33	3.72	4.05

assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.79-4.25) "should" work with older 4-H members to provide interesting county programs for youth.

The data indicate that agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 4.50 - As 4.67) and assistants "should" ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 3.86 - As 3.92) counsel with 4-H leaders on how to work with parents and other leaders. The leaders' perception was that agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.95) "should" counsel with leaders.

Conducting project and leadership training meetings for 4-H leaders was perceived by agents and assistants as a "must" ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 4.46 - As 4.58) for agents and a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = As 4.0 - Ag 4.07) for assistants. The leaders indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.18) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10) "should" conduct project and leadership training.

Agents and assistants indicated that agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ = As 4.67 - Ag 4.69) and assistants "should" ($\bar{x}$ = Ag 3.86 - As 3.91) plan and develop training programs for 4-H leaders. The leaders indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.95) "should" plan and develop training programs.

All three groups reported agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.03-4.43) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.0-4.11) "should" train 4-H leaders (youth and adult) to lead youth programs. The three groups indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.0-4.46) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.86-4.17) "should" prepare material for teaching 4-H leaders and members, and that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.72-4.38) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.05-4.33) "should" help 4-H youth develop skills for dealing with everyday life experiences.

Activities to Keep Current with Technology

Data in Table 6 show that program assistants indicated both assistants and agents ($\bar{x} = 4.75$) "must" stay abreast of both adult and youth opportunities beyond the county level (state-national-international). Leaders also indicated a "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.68$) for agents but a "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.18$) for assistants with this task. The county agents' perception is that both agents ($\bar{x} = 4.07$) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) "should" stay abreast of both adult and youth opportunities.

Agents indicated they "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.64$) attend in-service training offered through the State Extension Service and reported that assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) attend. Correspondingly, leaders reported a "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.51$) for agents and a "should" attend ($\bar{x} = 4.43$) for assistants. Program assistants indicated agents ($\bar{x} = 4.42$) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) "should" attend in-service training. In addition, all three groups reported agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.33-4.40) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.93-4.19) "should" attend formal classes relative to the job.

The agents' perception was that they "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.64$) participate in extension seminars for self-improvement and assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) participate. Assistants and leaders indicated that agents ($\bar{x} = 4.42$ - Ld 4.43) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 4.12$ - As 4.25) "should" participate in extension seminars. The three groups also indicated agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.77-4.83) and assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 3.81$ -4.36) participate in County Extension Agent staff conferences.

Program assistants reported that they ($\bar{x} = 4.67$) and agents ($\bar{x} = 4.67$) "must" keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs. Agents also

Table 6. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing keeping current with technology.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility	Agent's Responsibility	Assist's Responsibility
Stay abreast of both adult and youth opportunities beyond the county level (state-national-international).	4.07	4.21	4.75	4.75	4.68	4.18
Attend in-service training offered through the State Extension Service.	4.64	4.21	4.42	4.08	4.51	4.43
Attend formal classes relative to the job.	4.38	3.93	4.33	4.25	4.40	4.19
Participate in Extension seminars for self-improvement.	4.64	4.21	4.42	4.25	4.43	4.12
Keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs.	4.50	4.36	4.75	4.67	4.44	4.50
Participate in County Extension Agent staff conferences.	4.79	4.36	4.83	4.25	4.77	3.81

indicated they "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.50$) keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs and that assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.36$) stay informed and up-to-date. It is interesting to note that leaders reported just the opposite, with a "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.50$) for assistants and a "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.44$) for agents. However, the difference in means is very small and insignificant.

4-H Related Activities

Table 7 presents data concerning 4-H related activities. Agents were "not sure" ($\bar{x} = 3.14$) if they should visit all 4-H clubs at least once a year. Agents indicated assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 3.64$) visit clubs at least once a year. The perceptions of the assistants and leaders were that both agents ($\bar{x} = \text{As } 3.50 - \text{Ld } 4.01$) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 3.75$) "should" visit all 4-H clubs at least once a year.

Agents reported they were "not sure" ($\bar{x} = 3.23$) if they should handle 4-H office visits, phone calls, and home visits, but indicated assistants "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.50$) handle visits and phone calls. Assistants and leaders indicated agents ($\bar{x} = 3.53-4.00$) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 3.93-4.42$) "should" handle the visits.

Assistants' perception was that they and the agent "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.58$) initiate new and innovative ideas in the 4-H program. Agents also indicated they "must" ($\bar{x} = 4.71$) initiate new and innovative ideas and assistants "should" ($\bar{x} = 4.07$) initiate new and innovative ideas. The leaders' perception was that agents ($\bar{x} = 4.31$) and assistants ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) "should" initiate new ideas.

Table 7. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing 4-H related activities.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility
Visit all 4-H clubs at least once a year.	3.14	3.64	3.50	3.75	4.01	3.75
Handle 4-H office visits, phone calls, and home visits.	3.23	4.50	4.00	4.42	3.53	3.93
Initiate new and innovative ideas in the 4-H program.	4.71	4.07	4.58	4.58	4.31	4.21
Maintain records as required by the State 4-H Office.	4.23	4.07	4.25	4.33	4.35	4.22
Maintain an accurate record of 4-H program results at the county level.	4.36	3.93	4.42	4.08	4.27	4.10
Resolve complaints or disagreements between 4-H leaders.	4.64	3.00	4.42	3.08	3.98	3.42
Accompany 4-H members on exchange trips.	2.93	2.71	2.92	2.83	3.33	3.51
Attend Montana 4-H Congress with members representing the county.	3.38	3.29	3.50	3.33	3.66	3.67
Work with County 4-H Advisory Committee.	4.71	4.07	4.75	4.25	4.54	4.28

All three groups reported agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.27-4.42) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.93-4.10) "should" maintain records as required by the state 4-H office. Also, they indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.27-4.42) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.93-4.10) "should" maintain an accurate record of 4-H program results at the county level.

The data indicate that agents "must" ($\bar{x}$ = 4.64) resolve complaints or disagreements between 4-H leaders, but were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00) if assistants should. Correspondingly, program assistants were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.08) if they should resolve complaints and indicate agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42) "should" resolve complaints or disagreements. The leaders' perception was that agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.99) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42) "should" resolve complaints or disagreements between 4-H leaders.

Both agents and assistants indicated they were "not sure" if agents ($\bar{x}$ = As 2.92 - Ag 2.93) or assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 2.71-2.83) should accompany 4-H members on exchange trips. Leaders reported a "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33) for agents and a "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.51) for assistants to accompany 4-H leaders on trips.

Agents indicated they were "not sure" whether they ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38) or program assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29) should attend 4-H Congress with members representing the county. Assistants indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50) "should" attend 4-H Congress with members, but were "not sure" if they ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33) should attend. Leaders indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.66) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67) "should" attend 4-H Congress with members. All three groups indicated that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.54-4.75) "must" and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 4.07-4.28) "should" work with the County 4-H Advisory Committee.

Evaluation of 4-H Programs and Participants

The data in Table 8 indicate the perceptions of county agents and program assistants were that agents ($\bar{x}$ = As 4.75 - Ag 4.79) "must" and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = As 4.33 - Ag 3.57) "should" evaluate effectiveness of methods and procedures used in youth programs. The leaders indicated both agents ($\bar{x}$ = 4.41) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 4.04) "should" evaluate effectiveness.

The perceptions of all three groups were that agents ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.86-4.21) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ range = 3.93-4.17) "should" assist 4-H leaders in evaluating growth and development of 4-H members in terms of educational goals. Agents also indicated they ($\bar{x}$ = 4.43) "should" periodically evaluate leaders' effectiveness in various program areas and reported a "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.08) for assistants. The leaders and assistants indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = Ld 3.78 - As 3.92) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = Ld 3.61 - As 3.67) "should" periodically evaluate leaders' effectiveness in various program areas.

The data indicate leaders were "not sure" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.48) if agents should attend local 4-H club meetings to help evaluate programs, but indicated assistants "should" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.84) attend local meetings. Agents reported they ($\bar{x}$ = 3.62) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.86) "should" attend local 4-H club meetings to help evaluate programs. Assistants indicated agents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.58) and assistants ($\bar{x}$ = 3.92) "should" attend local club meetings and help evaluate programs.

Table 8. Mean of agents', assistants' and leaders' perceptions of tasks describing evaluation of 4-H programs and participants.

Tasks	Agents		Assistants		Leaders	
	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility	Agent's Responsi- bility	Assist's Responsi- bility
Evaluate effectiveness of methods and procedures used in youth programs.	4.79	3.57	4.75	4.33	4.41	4.04
Assist 4-H leaders in evaluating growth and development of 4-H members in terms of educational goals.	4.21	3.93	4.17	4.17	3.86	3.97
Periodically evaluate leaders' effectiveness in various program areas.	4.43	3.08	3.92	3.67	3.78	3.61
Attend local 4-H club meetings to help evaluate programs.	3.61	3.86	3.58	3.92	3.48	3.84

Summary of "Must" Responses

The researcher felt that the relationships between who should perform tasks were not clear based on the previous presentation. Consequently, a comparison of those activities having a mean of 4.5 ("must") was made and is presented in the following two tables.

The data in Table 9 present a summary of the perceptions of agents, assistants, and leaders with regards to "must" tasks for the agent as perceived by the three groups. County agents indicated they had primary responsibility for 16 (35%) of the 46 selected tasks, program assistants indicated the agents had primary responsibility for 12 (26%) of the tasks, and 4-H leaders indicated agents had primary responsibility for 5 (11%) of the tasks.

Table 9. Summary of "must" tasks for the agent as perceived by the three groups.

Tasks	Groups		
	Agents	Assistants	Leaders
Assist 4-H Council officers in planning and conducting 4-H Council meetings.	xx		
Organize and coordinate the 4-H division of the county fair.	xx	xx	xx
Prepare the annual County 4-H Plan of Work.	xx	xx	
Explain 4-H programs and procedures to 4-H leaders and the public.	xx	xx	
Organize county 4-H project training for leaders.	xx		

Table 9--continued.

Tasks	Groups		
	Agents	Assistants	Leaders
Counsel with 4-H leaders on how to work with parents and other leaders.	xx	xx	
Conduct project and leadership training meetings for 4-H leaders.	xx	xx	
Plan and develop training programs for 4-H leaders.	xx	xx	
Stay abreast of both adult and youth opportunities beyond the county (state-national-international).		xx	xx
Attend in-service training offered through the State Extension Service.	xx		xx
Participate in Extension seminars for self-improvement.	xx		
Keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs.	xx	xx	
Participate in county extension agent staff conferences.	xx	xx	xx
Initiate new and innovative ideas in the 4-H program.	xx	xx	
Resolve complaints or disagreements between 4-H leaders.	xx		
Work with County 4-H Advisory Committee.	xx	xx	xx
Evaluate effectiveness of methods and procedures used in youth programs.	xx	xx	

xx indicates a mean greater than 4.5

The data in Table 10 present a summary of the perceptions of agents, assistants, and leaders with regards to "must" tasks for the

program assistant as perceived by the three groups. Program assistants indicated they had primary responsibility for 8 (17%) of the 46 selected tasks, county agents indicated program assistants had primary responsibility for 1 (2%) of the tasks, and 4-H leaders indicated program assistants had primary responsibility for 1 (2%) of the tasks.

Table 10. Summary of "must" tasks for the assistant as perceived by the three groups.

Tasks	Groups		
	Agents	Assistants	Leaders
Organize new 4-H clubs.		xx	
Recruit 4-H leaders.		xx	
Recruit 4-H members.		xx	
Encourage 4-H members to apply for out-of-county trips.		xx	
Explain 4-H programs and procedures to 4-H leaders and the public.		xx	
Stay abreast of both adult and youth opportunities beyond the county (state-national-international).		xx	
Keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs.		xx	xx
Handle 4-H office visits, phone calls, and home visits.	xx		
Initiate new and innovative ideas in the 4-H program.		xx	

xx indicates a mean greater than 4.5

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the analysis and summarization of the data presented in this study, it was concluded that:

- (1) There is a definite need for improved communications to those involved in the 4-H program with regard to the responsibility of a program assistant.
- (2) There were differences in the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform the majority of the selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana. Differences were indicated in 59% of the selected tasks.
- (3) County agents saw themselves as having primary responsibility for many of the selected tasks and indicated very limited primary responsibility for the program assistant. Agents indicated they had primary responsibility for 35% of the tasks and that assistants had primary responsibility for 2% of the tasks.
- (4) Program assistants saw a much broader role of primary responsibility for themselves than did the agents. Assistants indicated primary responsibility for 17% of the selected tasks

and saw the agent as having primary responsibility for 26% of the tasks.

- (5) The 4-H leaders indicated program assistants and county agents "should" perform the majority of the selected tasks but saw limited primary responsibility for both groups. Leaders indicated assistants "should" perform 96% of the tasks and agents "should" perform 85% of the tasks. Leaders reported agents "must" perform 11% of the tasks and assistants "must" perform 2% of the tasks.
- (6) There was not a clear understanding between agent and assistant as to who should have the primary responsibility for the selected tasks. County agents indicated "not sure" on 22% of the tasks, program assistants indicated "not sure" on 11% of the tasks, and 4-H leaders indicated "not sure" on 6% of the tasks. On 52% of the tasks no primary responsibility was indicated.
- (7) County agents and program assistants saw themselves as performing but not having primary responsibility for many of the same tasks. Both groups indicated "should" on 35% of the same selected tasks.

Implications

The following implication has been drawn from the findings of this study:

- (1) One wonders if there are factors which prevent county agents from delegating responsibility to program assistants or if

there are reasons why agents don't see a need to delegate responsibility.

Recommendations

As a result of the study's findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- (1) The role of the program assistant should be communicated to individuals involved in the 4-H program.
- (2) A determination of primary responsibility should be made on all selected tasks.
- (3) Job descriptions for program assistants should be written in a clear, unambiguous style.
- (4) County agents should delegate primary responsibility for those tasks which have been assigned to program assistants in the job description.
- (5) The program assistant's responsibility needs to be developed in accordance with the job description.
- (6) Job descriptions for program assistants should be periodically updated to meet program priority changes.
- (7) Program leaders should carefully study the data and develop additional recommendations for use at the local level.

Summary

The data presented in this study compare the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana.

These perceptions should be examined by Cooperative Extension Service staff or anyone interested in the 4-H program in Montana and utilized to provide the program assistant and county agent with a clearer understanding of their individual role and responsibility.

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REFERENCES CITED

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**NOTIFICATION LETTER TO COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS
IN SELECTED COUNTIES**



Cooperative Extension Service

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND MONTANA COUNTIES COOPERATING

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59717

May 2, 1986

TO: County Extension Agents in Selected Counties

Dave Bertelson is a graduate student in Agricultural Education here at Montana State University. He needs your help in completing a professional paper for his Masters Degree.

Dave's study has been reviewed and approved by area supervisors. The major purpose of the study is to compare the perceptions of program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H Program.

We have a number of program assistants in Montana who are financed in different ways and are fulfilling different roles. Yet, there is a lot of commonality among the positions. With the current economic situation, utilization of program assistants may become increasingly important with the Extension Service.

The purpose of this letter is to:

1. Make you aware of the study and to ask your cooperation.
2. To ask your permission to use the list of leaders from your county as sent to the State 4-H Office in January. (NOTE: We have never utilized these lists previously as we have told you that the list is kept here only for liability protection purposes.) The list would be used to draw a random sample for the study. A letter and questionnaire would be sent to those selected. You will receive a copy of the letter and questionnaire.

We will really appreciate your helping with this paper. We will share the results with you when the paper is completed. Please send your response as soon as possible.

Call either your area supervisor or me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James F. Sargent
State Program Coordinator
for 4-H and Other Youth

JFS/ba

cc: Area Supervisors
Dr. Carl Hoffman
Dr. LeRoy Luft

4-H Staff
Agricultural Education
Dave Bertelson

APPENDIX B

MONTANA 4-H PROGRAM ASSISTANT SURVEY

☐ Under 1 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 11-20
☐ 1-3 ☐ 7-10 ☐ Over 20

- A "must" response indicates the task is the primary responsibility of that position.
- A "must not" response indicates that position has no responsibility for the task.
- A "should" response indicates the task should be performed by the person in that position, but they do not have primary responsibility for it.
- A "should not" response indicates it is questionable whether a person in that position should perform the task.
- A "not sure" response indicates the respondent cannot decide who should be responsible for a task.

[illegible]

MOUNTAIN 4-H PROGRAM ASSISTANT SURVEY

-2-

[illegible]

MONTANA 4-H PROGRAM ASSISTANT SURVEY

-3-

	AGENT'S RESPONSIBILITY					PROGRAM ASSISTANT'S RESPONSIBILITY				
	MUST	SHOULD	NOT SURE	SHOULD NOT	MUST NOT	MUST	SHOULD	NOT SURE	SHOULD NOT	MUST NOT
35) Prepare material for teaching 4-H Leaders and members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36) Explain 4-H programs and procedures to 4-H Leaders and the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37) Help 4-H youth develop skills for dealing with everyday life experiences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38) Help 4-H Leaders establish a plan of Club activities, based on member needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39) Keep informed and up-to-date on youth needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40) Participate in County Extension Agent staff conferences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41) Assume responsibility for promotion and publicity, through the news media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42) Resolve complaints or disagreements between 4-H Leaders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43) Organize exchange trips.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44) Accompany 4-H members on exchange trips.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45) Attend Montana 4-H Congress with members representing the county.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46) Work with County 4-H Advisory Committee.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This questionnaire is to be returned to:

David L. Bertelsen
 Dept. of Agricultural & Industrial Education
 Montana State University
 Bozeman, Montana 59717-0002

(July 1986)

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER ACCOMPANYING SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

July 18, 1986

Dear

We would like to invite you to participate in a study we are conducting. The major purpose of the study is to compare the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks to meet the needs of the 4-H program.

The information that you and selected other participants provide is extremely important because it will assist the Montana Cooperative Extension Service in determining how to best meet the needs of the 4-H program.

Would you please take about 15 minutes of your time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope. Due to the somewhat limited time frame of this study, your cooperation in returning the questionnaire as soon as possible will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David L. Bertelsen

David L. Bertelsen
Graduate Student

James F. Sargent
James F. Sargent
4-H and Youth Program Coordinator

DLB/JFS:jlh
Enclosure

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP LETTERS: AUGUST 8, 1986
AND SEPTEMBER 5, 1986



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

August 8, 1986

Dear

On July 18th, you were invited to participate in a study which we are conducting. The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of 4-H program assistants, county agents, and 4-H leaders regarding who should perform selected tasks in meeting the needs of the 4-H program.

The information that you and other participants provide is important because this research will assist the Montana Cooperative Extension Service in determining how to best meet the needs of the 4-H program.

For the purpose of this study, the definition used for a program assistant is: A paid member of the County Cooperative Extension Service's staff who assists the County Extension Agent(s).

If you have not already done so, would you please take about 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire forwarded to you earlier and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please note that there should be two responses for each task -- one under the "Agent's Responsibility" column and one under the "Program Assistant's Responsibility" column. Due to the limited time frame of this study, it is important to return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

David L. Bertelsen
Graduate Student

James F. Sargent
4-H and Youth Program Coordinator

DLB/JFS:jlh



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

September 5, 1986

Dear

During this time of year with fairs, harvesting, school starting, and the end of another 4-H year, we all find ourselves busier than we would like to be. Sometimes our best intentions fall by the wayside because of a lack of time.

About the middle of July, you should have received a questionnaire regarding who should perform selected tasks in meeting the needs of the 4-H program. As of this date, we have not received your reply. In the event you may have lost or misplaced it, we are enclosing another copy of the questionnaire with this letter.

Your input as a 4-H leader, program assistant, or county agent is important to us in determining how to best meet the needs of the 4-H program in Montana. Would you please take about fifteen minutes out of your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire? Questionnaires must be received by September 20th in order to be used in this study.

Again, thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

David L. Bertelsen
Graduate Student

James F. Sargent
4-H and Youth Program Coordinator

DLB/JFS:jlh
Enclosure