



## Answer the "So What?" Question for Extension

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**Abstract:** "Answer the 'So What?' Question for Extension" explains that, if you're writing for *JOE*, you must do just that. "August *JOE*" highlights three interesting articles and mentions the topics of many more.

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According to the [JOE Submission Guidelines](#), *JOE* "expands and updates the research and knowledge base for U.S. Extension professionals and other outreach educators to improve their effectiveness" and serves "as a forum for emerging and contemporary issues affecting U.S. Cooperative Extension education." In other words, if you're writing for *JOE*, you should answer the "so what?" question for Extension.

While Features are allotted an "extra" 1,000 words to emphasize "the implications of the data or concepts for as wide an audience of U.S. Extension professionals as possible," all submissions should put their topics in an Extension context. There are plenty of more discipline-specific journals for technical articles that do not do this.

Unlike those more discipline-specific journals, *JOE* is heterogeneous and draws its readers from a wide variety of disciplines. What they have in common is Extension and outreach education. So *JOE* articles, no matter how technical and complex, should tie their subjects to Extension in order to attract and inform as wide a readership as possible.

This isn't always easy. *JOE* has quite tight article-length restrictions. In an effort to meet those restrictions, researchers, loathe to sacrifice any of their hard-won data, are tempted to let go of what they regard as the "soft stuff," instead—the implications, the answers to "so what?" That's a mistake. If you make it, I will call you on it and either reject your article or return it for revision before accepting it as suitable for review.

And don't forget those Extension implications in your abstracts. That's your best chance to attract the wide readership your article deserves.

It's called the *Journal of Extension* for a reason, folks.

### August *JOE*

The first two Features in this issue present two case studies to very good effect. "[Extension, the Land-Grant Mission, and Civic Agriculture: Cultivating Change](#)" describes a structure that "enables Extension professionals to expand their repertoire of community interaction models and engage citizens as agrifood citizens and leaders in order to move towards sustainable development." And the results reported in "[How Do We Know if Our Contests Are 'Fair'?](#)" indicate that "perceptions can differ drastically from actuality, which has ramifications for 4-H and all areas of Extension work that rely on client input."

The authors of "[Catalyzing Transformation: Conditions in Extension Educational Environments That Promote Change](#)" explain that "few scholars and practitioners have examined the conditions in Extension learning environments that promote transformation" and proceed to rectify that omission.

There are also articles on serving Latino farmers, on a strategy for initiating Hispanic 4-H clubs, on economic development, on the Web, on using innovative teaching methods, on animal identification, and on so much more. What an issue!

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