

## Strengthening Michigan's Economy: Roles for MAES and MSUE

### Issues Identification Process: Questions and Answers

*Note: Here are some of the questions that have been asked about the 2005-2006 MSUE/MAES issues identification process. Members of the Process Design Team have provided these answers. We will continue to add questions and answers so check this site regularly. Please send any questions to Beth Moore at mooreeee@msu.edu.*

- Q.** Aren't we going to be duplicating efforts with the AoE stakeholder input process and the focus groups that counties are conducting? Isn't it likely that some of the same people will be asked to participate in both processes?
- A.** It is possible that someone who is part of a particular stakeholder group will also be involved with the county process. However, the questions and the scope are different. For the AoE team, the focus is on a specific issue, looking at it from a statewide perspective. For the counties, the focus is on the priority issues affecting the county.
- Q.** When we do this issue identification process, what if the public wants us to work on issues where we don't have the capacity or resources?
- A.** It is likely that some of those issues will come up. Part of the issues prioritization process with stakeholders is to ask the questions:
- Does this fit within the mission of MSUE and/or MAES?
  - Are there practical or political realities that affect the decision on this priority?
  - Are there others working on this issue that we might partner with?
- Q.** How does the web survey fit in with the focus groups that counties are conducting?
- A.** Each county can access their survey results at any time. This data can be used as part of the focus group discussions. It may also be useful when the county staff members are writing programmatic goals and their plan of work.
- Q.** We are supposed to be asking questions about research needs? How do you help people better understand what that means.
- A.** When thinking about research needs people should consider specific needs and challenges for commodities, regions, industries, families or communities. Are there specific challenges or emerging trends and/or threats in these areas? Are there new economic or other opportunities? Are there areas that are better addressed by other entities? Try to focus on knowledge and information gaps as opposed to basic, applied, or other confusing issues.
- Q.** The facilitation guide for counties talks about giving the county focus group participants "assignments" between the two sessions to bring back county-specific data. That seems extremely unlikely! These are busy people and they do not have time for such things.
- A.** "Assignments" can really mean asking people who represent various interests to bring data or perspectives regarding that specific topic area (e.g. ask someone representing schools to bring data on youth demographics and issues). This term may also mean simply raising some questions in the first session that you ask people to think about between sessions.

- Q.** What if we want to do more than just the two sessions in our county?
- A.** There is certainly nothing to prevent multiple sessions—particularly in different parts of the county, or directed toward specific audiences. The two-session idea is intended to provide opportunity for a core group in the county to consider broader statewide trends and perspectives and then determine the implications for the county.
- Q.** We understand that the survey for the general citizenry will be available to counties as a PDF file. What are we supposed to do with it?
- A.** You, as a county staff, can decide what seems most appropriate. You can simply promote the web survey, or you can choose to also print the PDF file and circulate it at various locations and programs in the county. If you do that, please understand that your office will need to enter all results from this “paper” survey.
- Q.** The web survey seems to contain some repetitive questions. Why is that?
- A.** The first six questions are the same as the questions asked on the State of the State Survey (SOSS) conducted in August by the MSU Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. We are repeating those questions on this web survey to be able to better assess the validity of the results.
- Q.** This is supposed to be a joint MAES/MSUE process. How are the people associated with the Experiment Station in my county going to be involved in this process?
- A.** Talk with the field station manager about your plans for the county process. Invite the station manager, as well as advisory committee members (county residents) to attend these discussions. Ask for suggestions of other stakeholders who should be included in the process.
- Q.** We have shared information about the web survey with some of our partner organizations. The director of one of those agencies asked if we would share the results on the priority issues when the survey is complete. Is that possible?
- A.** Yes, we will definitely want to share the results from the MSUE/MAES issue identification process with community partners and constituents. Each county should begin to plan a variety of strategies for sharing such information during the next year. Suggestions will also be posted on this website.

It is great to hear about the interest in the web survey. The issue identification design team will soon be posting a [results page](#) so that MSUE and MAES staff can view the results, available by county, whenever they choose. The web survey will be posted until March 1, 2006. You can decide when and how you wish to share these results with others.

It is also important to remember that the stakeholder web survey is just one of several methods that our two organizations are using to gather input from a broad range of Michigan residents. The AoE teams are meeting with stakeholder groups and partners, counties are holding priority-setting sessions, questions were asked on a statewide MSU public policy survey (posted as SOSS results), there were a small number of public focus groups, and then there will be a web survey for MSU faculty and staff. The information gathered from all of these

individual pieces is, or will be, available through the issue identification web site:  
[www.msue.msu.edu/issueid/](http://www.msue.msu.edu/issueid/).