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## 1999-2000 Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Annual Report

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## Piscataquis County 1999/2000 Annual Report



The Piscataquis County office of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension serves the citizens of our county with hands-on, educational information and programs. Our programs are designed with citizen input and tailored to meet specific local needs. Our county office is also part of a statewide organization and the national extension system. This allows our county office to bring more resources, programs and learning opportunities to the people of our communities.

This annual report shares with you some of the important accomplishments of our programs and financial information about Extension at the state and county level.

*Our mission is to help Maine people improve their lives through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on issues and needs.*

Visit our homepage at: <http://www.umext.maine.edu>

### Piscataquis County Highlights

**Nutrient Management Plans:** In the past year livestock owners learned about the new Nutrient Management Law that they must comply with to manage their animal's manure if they have more than 50 animal units on their farm. This fall Piscataquis County Extension will hold a hands-on meeting to help dairy, beef, sheep, and deer farmers develop a Nutrient Management Plan for their farm using their livestock, crop and soil information.

**Flower Gardening Class:** Home gardeners in Piscataquis County had the opportunity to participate in Success with Flowers...A Basic Gardening Course held this spring at the Piscataquis County office. County Educators from three counties taught folks how to choose the best site for a flower garden, how to prepare the garden soil, choose flowering annuals, perennials and bulbs that do well in Maine. They also learned design tips to lay out an attractive flower garden, plus planting and care for flowering annuals, perennials and bulbs.



## **Piscataquis County Highlights (cont.)**

**4-H Parade of Breeds:** Despite the coolness of the weather, over eighty youth, volunteers, parents and instructors attended the first 4-H Parade of Breeds event. Christie and Mary-Beth Flanders led the opening ceremony. The following individuals demonstrated their particular skills and/or horse breeds: Suffox Punch Draft Horse, Barrels & Games, Walk/Trot Dressage, Native Arabian Costume, Hunter/Jumper, Standardbreds, Appaloosa, Norwegian Fjord, Pony of America, and Arabian. There were also booths teaching about nutrient management, the 4-H program as well as vendors selling food and other products.



**Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation** scholarship winner Patty Blockler, daughter of Sharon and Nate Blockler of Dover-Foxcroft was awarded one of four \$1000 4-H Post-secondary scholarships. Patty was one of more than 100 applicants for this scholarship. She plans to study recreational therapy at the Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont.

**Dairy Sheep in Piscataquis County:** Sheep producers in Piscataquis County are

investigating an alternative enterprise utilizing sheep's milk to produce an aged cheese. Extension has sponsored a special tour to Vermont Shepherd to study how this small group of farmers has developed an aged cheese product that is marketed in the larger cities and through the internet. Extension will be assisting farmers as they investigate the feasibility of such an enterprise.



**Summer Fun Shops for Kids:** In June, the Nutrition Aides visited Brownville, Milo, Dover-Foxcroft, Greenville, Monson and Sangerville Schools conducting one-day Food and Fitness Funshop 2000. Students in grades K-4 enjoyed learning about food through a variety of games and crafts. They even got to prepare their own lunch of fresh vegetables, fruit and burritos. With over 80 kids participating at the six sites, the program was a success. Thanks to all the schools, volunteers and participants for helping to make this a totally successful program.

**E.Commerce for Home-Based Business:** This program gave home business owners practical information about options for using the Internet as a business promotion and marketing tool. This workshop was designed for those who are seriously interested in marketing products or services through the



## **Piscataquis County Highlights** (cont.)

Internet. Topics included: the design and components of successful websites, Internet service providers, search engines, business name registration, and experiences of business owners who have been using the Internet.

**Parenting News** is a newsletter for parents or caregivers of children from birth to age five. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the readers are age 20-40 years old. The purpose of the newsletter is to connect parents and caregivers with timely researched-based information that can be read quickly and used in a fun way with their children.

**Parenting News** helps readers:

- have a regular source of child development and nutrition information
- apply the appropriate research-based information to child rearing practices
- learn new skills to promote healthy parenting choices

The newsletter is issued and distributed to residents in the Piscataquis County region. The current mailing list of the monthly newsletter numbers 226.



**Caring for Kids** is an introductory level class that teaches about babysitting and child care. The program covers topics of child development, discipline, and creative play with children, safety and first aid as well as job responsibilities of the babysitter.

Youth learn about the growth and development of children, as well as basic skills of diapering and feeding while caring for kids. They also learn to recognize and handle emergency situations to insure personal and child safety, plus they develop positive feelings and confidence about themselves as a capable, responsible babysitter.



**Sabbatical Leave:** Donna Lamb, Extension Educator spent six months traveling the country to meet with many types of people involved in small scale livestock production, including farmers, ranchers, Livestock Advisor volunteers, Extension Staff, and University Research Staff to study how Extension works with small scale livestock producers in different states. In the process of traveling to other states she has been able to amass a vast library of literature on a variety of livestock species that includes general animal care information, marketing methods, and development of farmer cooperatives. One of the meetings that was attended included the National Small Farm Conference where the national small farm agenda was

## **Piscataquis County Highlights (cont.)**

discussed as well as current programs being conducted in various states. Farmers and ranchers were on the program to discuss their innovative marketing or management methods that they use to succeed in their selected agriculture enterprise.

Donna looks forward to sharing her Sabbatical experiences with the people of Piscataquis County.

## **UMCE Statewide Highlights**

**"Garden Pro" Boosts Expertise Among Garden Center Staff:** Maine's retail ornamental horticultural industry members (nurseries, greenhouses, and garden centers) face increasing competition from mass-market retailers. In addition, homeowners have many questions about plant selection, design, installation and maintenance. In response, in 1997 UMCE developed "Garden Pro," a train-the-trainer educational program for garden center personnel. Garden Pro provides basic information about plant biology, answers to common questions and a place for those in the industry to get research-based answers. Garden Pro businesses increased individual sales by an average of \$1,400 in the spring 2000 gardening season.

**Extension Helps Teens Learn to Lead:** Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. That's why skill building programs, such as, Tanglewood 4-H Camp's Outdoor Teen Leader Training Program, are so important. More than 800



teens have participated in the program to date, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence and increasing their ability to work in groups to achieve common goals. Eighty percent of the youth participating have made college and career choices in natural sciences.

**Producers Find New Markets and Apply New Strategies:** In 1999 as a result of UMCE assistance, 772 clients reported expanding and or finding new markets opportunities for agricultural products; 442 firms implemented strategies to increase product value or the price received for their product; and 13 new jobs were created by agricultural enterprises.



**Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring for Safe Shellfish:** UMCE has trained over 500 coastal monitoring volunteers to collect data. These data are used by local and state regulatory agencies in overseeing marine food safety. Over the past five years, with the assistance of this volunteer effort the Department of Marine Resources has been able to open 60,000 acres of shellfish areas that were previously closed.

**Equine Survey:** The State Extension Livestock Team is conducting an "Equine Survey" to look for ways to improve programming in that that will support the equine industry. The surveys have been mailed to a variety of horse and equine clubs, organizations and businesses. Also the survey may be completed online by visiting the following web site.

<http://www.ume.maine.edu/EQUINE>

**Food Safety Programs Reach Citizens Statewide:** Unsafe food handling creates health



### Statewide Highlights (cont.)

hazards for Maine people daily, especially for higher risk populations, such as children and the elderly. Cooperative Extension food safety information reached an estimated 7,000 people last year. More than 1,500 people attended food safety programs and learned how to prepare serve and store food safely.

**Compost School Increases Profits and Job Opportunities:** While 50 percent of all disposable waste in the U.S. is made up of organic material, only 3 percent of this waste is



being recycled into the soil by composting. UMCE's Compost School was established to provide training to people interested in managing or operating compost facilities. Graduates of the Compost School report increased profits of 1.5 million dollars through changes in marketing strategies. Graduates created 12 new composting facilities and created 15 new jobs.

**Pest Management Program Saves Money in Strawberry Crop Production:** Extension's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program helps growers develop a systematic approach to control pests that are economically and environmentally sustainable. In 1999, the strawberry IPM program reduced insecticide applications by 30 percent, which saved

growers money and helped protect the environment.

**Potato Growers Save Money and Protect the Environment:** As a result of UMCE's Integrated Pest Management program in Aroostook County, potato growers saved an average of two fungicide applications, resulting in a savings of nearly \$20/acre, or an industry wide savings of nearly \$1.3 million. This prevented over 100,000 pounds of pesticides from being released into the environment.

**Using current technology:** The Piscataquis County Extension Office has developed an extensive web site to help folks in the county. Please visit our home page at <http://www.umext.maine.edu/counties/piscataq.htm>

### State Support for Piscataquis County

1999

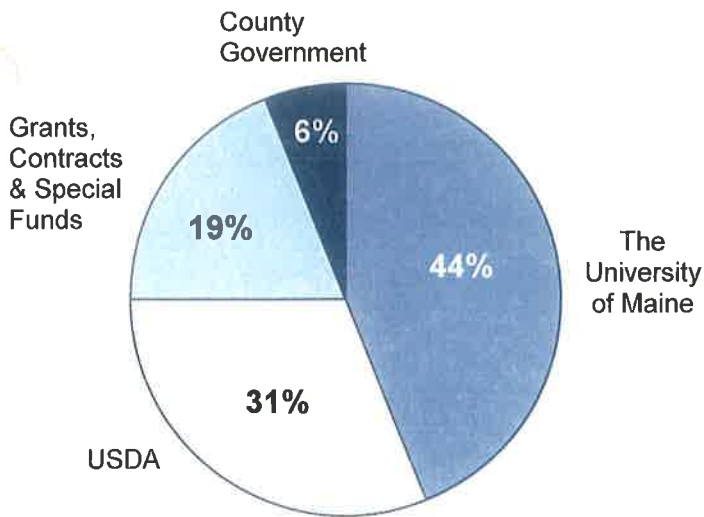
Local Salaries and Benefits	\$267,650
Computer Equipment & Networking	8,812
Publications	6,250
Telephone	1,500
Travel	10,972

**Total** **\$295,184**

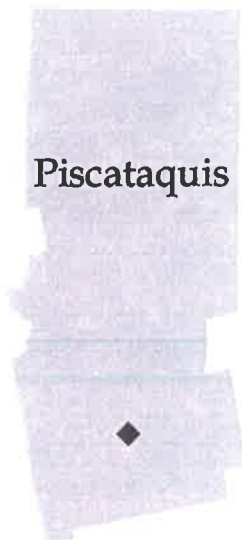
### County Support for Piscataquis County 2000 Budget

Secretarial Support	\$18,525 ✓
Supplies	1,875 ✓
Telephone	2,000 ✓
Postage	200 ✓
Equipment	3,450 ✓
Association Exp.	100 ✓
Library	450 ✓
AV/Photo	60 ✓

**Total** **\$26,387**  
660



University of Maine Cooperative Extension's successful educational programs result from a three-way federal, state and county partnership. UMCE uses funding from Maine counties and the university to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private agencies.



### For More Information about Piscataquis County:

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 1-800-287-1491 (in Maine)  
 FAX: (207) 564-3302  
 E-mail: [cespsq@umext.maine.edu](mailto:cespsq@umext.maine.edu)



### County Extension Act

The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices:

Cooperative extension work shall consist of giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties an organization known as a "county extension association." The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county of counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefor. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.