Appraisal Manual

Tennessee Extension Performance Appraisal System for Extension Agents, Extension Agents and County Directors, and Area Extension Specialists

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I. Introduction 4
Guiding Principles 4
Performance Appraisal Outcomes 5
Communication Matters 6
II. Performance Factors and Criteria 7
III. Conducting the Appraisal 9
Roles and Responsibilities 9
Process 10
Extension Agents 11
County Directors. 11
Area Extension Specialists 12
Enhanced Annual and Annual Reviews 12
Rebuttal of the Overall Performance Appraisal Score and Rating 13
SUPER Appraisal 14
Comments 16
Appraisal Interview 16
IV. Goals 18
Establishing Goals for the Coming Year 18
Review of Goals for the Current Year 19
V. Assessing Performance 21
Annual Summarized Data 21
Suggested Approach to Assessing Performance 21
Supervisor's Files 22
Information Sources and Alignment to Criteria 23
Performance Factors Averages 25
Performance Factors Comments 25
Impact of Leave of Absence on Performance Appraisal 26
Understanding Low Performance 27
County Director's Performance Appraisal Checklist 28
VI. Avoiding Common Rating Errors 30
Halo Effect/Horns Effect 30
Recency Effect 30

Primacy Effect 31
Leniency Effect 31
Central Tendency Effect 31
Interpersonal Errors 31
Contrast Errors 31
VII. Contacts. 32
VIII. References 33
Appendix A – Performance Appraisal Criteria, Description, and Ratings 36
Appendix B – Definitions of Key Concepts 52
Base Programs 52
Professional Development. 53
Professional Organizations 53
Appendix C – Accessing Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures 54
Appendix D – Performance Review Summary Form 55

Contents

I. Introduction

The Cooperative Extension System in Tennessee is comprised of the University of Tennessee Extension (UT Extension) and the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program (TSU Extension). The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided land grant university status to both the University of Tennessee (1862) and Tennessee State University (1890). Tennessee is one of only 18 states with both 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions.

A hallmark of UT Extension and TSU Extension is strong cooperation between the two organizations. In fact, more than one-third of Tennessee counties have both UT and TSU Extension Agents working collaboratively in joint UT-TSU Extension offices. Despite this high level of cooperation, both the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University have maintained separate performance appraisal forms.
In October, 2014, a team of 18 UT and TSU personnel (Performance Appraisal Revision Committee) began work to revise the performance appraisal system for three job positions; Extension Agents, Extension Agents and County Directors (herein referred to County Directors), and Extension Area Specialists to provide one joint appraisal form, criteria, and process to be used by both organizations.

Guiding Principles

The process of creating the appraisal system followed these guiding principles:

- To provide a research-based, efficient, and high-functioning appraisal experience that reflects the excellence of UT and TSU Extension.
- To encourage ongoing communication and feedback between supervisors and employees to enhance positive professional growth and development.
- To provide a performance appraisal experience that is effective, fair, transparent and consistent.

Performance Appraisal Revision Team

The Performance Appraisal Revision Team provided excellent leadership for the performance factors, criteria, and descriptions as well as the outline for this manual.

- Joseph Donaldson, Chair, 4-H Youth Development/ALEC
- Hunter Isbell, 4-H Youth Development/ALEC
- Thomas Broyles, TSU CAHNS
- Troy Dugger, Hickman Co.
- Tracy Hagan, Lawrence Co.
- Connie Heiskell, Eastern region
- Mary Beth Henley, Franklin Co.
- Martin Koon, Central Region
- Latif Lighari, TSU CAHNS
- Dallas Manning, Central Region
- Tyrone Miller, TSU CAHNS
- Gary Rodgers, Hardeman Co.
- Izetta Slade, Professor of Practice
- Justin Thomas, Bradley Co.
- John Toman, EESD
- Anthony Tuggle, Rutherford Co.
- Glenn Turner, Sevier Co.

- To foster an environment of continuous improvement that elevates performance management and professional development.
- To provide education and training to all Extension employees to ensure a successful performance management experience.
- To provide a legal document that improves accountability and informs personnel decisions.

Performance Appraisal Outcomes

A literature review conducted by Donaldson (2011) found a number of potential positive outcomes of performance appraisal systems. These potential outcomes include increased communication between supervisors and employees and improved action plans Bennett (1981); other benefits are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Performance Appraisal's Potential Outcomes

Outcomes	Sources
Distinguish employees for merit pay	Bamberger & Meshoulan, 2000
Increase communications between supervisors and employees	Bennett, 1981
Set action plans for the coming year	Wright & Evans, 2008; Bennett, 1981
Promote overall organizational and employee effectiveness	Daley, 1992
Improve the quality of personnel decisions such as promotions	Murphy & Cleveland, 1995
Increase employee engagement in and commitment to their jobs	Gilliland & Langdom, 1998; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995
Improve employee self-development and recognition	Brown & Larson, 1962
Improve employee job performance	Gililand & Langdom, 1998

An effective performance appraisal system should be viewed as such by both supervisors and employees (Schuman & Olufs, 1988). It is imperative that performance appraisals be based on job descriptions and be implemented with fidelity. If not, potential negative outcomes of a poorly designed and poorly executed performance appraisal system are conflict and misunderstanding between employee and supervisor (Baker, 1988) and reduced teamwork (Middlewood, 2001). Research has shown that the employees' perception of the performance appraisal system is related to their job satisfaction (Lawler, 1994; Taylor et al., 1995).

Communication Matters

Performance appraisal is a process of interpreting and measuring the degree of effectiveness, standards achieved, or performance goals met (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984). Much more time should be spent listening and coaching employees during the year than is spent on the formal appraisal process and forms. Feedback is critical. Supervisors are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- Are you genuinely aware of what the employee is doing during the year? Does the team you lead suffer from a communications drought at any time during the year? Do you plan time to briefly meet one-on-one with employees throughout the year to check-in on their performance and coach them to be successful?
- Do you stockpile issues? In other words, do you save issues to discuss in the performance appraisal interview rather than addressing them during the year? Are you addressing performances issues in a timely manner?
- Is there adequate communication between the supervisor and the employee so that the employee understands the appraisal process?
- What is the employee's perception of performance appraisal? For an effective appraisal process, it should be seen as a positive process not a negative, "gotcha" process.

Best Practices for Using this Manual

The following are suggested practices for using this manual:

- Schedule time annually for yourself to review the entire manual.
- Schedule time at least quarterly for yourself to carefully review the appraisal criteria and consider your work performance, plans, and goals.
- Review one section (Introduction, Performance Factors and Criteria, Conducting the Appraisal, Goals, and Assessing Performance) in each weekly office conference five weeks prior to the date appraisals are due to County Directors.
- Review the manual prior to and during each step in the appraisal process.
- Review the performance factors, criteria, and descriptions. If anything seems confusing, contact your supervisor.

II. Performance Factors and Criteria

The Performance Appraisal Revision Team reviewed the job descriptions and PDQs for the entire sample, noting the most frequent job responsibilities across the entire sample. This review identified 14 major job responsibilities: individual annual plan, implementing, evaluation, reporting, resource management, base programs, access, reach, and engagement, outcomes/impacts, policy compliance, professional development, technology and innovation, interpersonal skills, leadership and optimizing human capital (Donaldson, et.al, 2015). This work was predicated on the idea that major job responsibilities should be represented as the performance criteria.

The University of Tennessee (2013) and Tennessee State University (2015) use a five-part scale for all system-wide appraisals. In addition to these system-wide appraisal forms, two other forms were studied that also had a five-part scale:

- University of Florida IFAS Extension, 2014 (University of Florida and Florida A&M State University)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension, 2015 (Virginia Tech and Virginia State University)

Regarding research of Extension personnel, two sources were studied to understand extension agents' perspectives on appraisal (Davis & Verma, 1993) and extension agents' competencies (Laki, Jayarante, Moore, & Kistler, 2014). The Tennessee Extension Program Planning and Evaluation Model (Donaldson, 2008) and Ohio State University Extension Core Competencies (2015) were also reviewed to identify performance factors and criteria, and descriptions of each criterion.

This review of appraisal forms, research, and other applicable resources confirmed the 14 major appraisal criteria from the review of job descriptions and PDQs. Yet, it also provided two additional criteria, customer service and work habits, for a total of 16. Customer service was mentioned in the Ohio State University Extension Competencies (2015), University of Tennessee system-wide appraisal form (2013), Tennessee State University system-wide appraisal form (2015), and Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent appraisal form (2015). Work habits was mentioned in Laki, Jayarante, Moore & Kistler (2014), Ohio State University Extension Competencies (2015), University of Tennessee system-wide appraisal form (2013), Tennessee State University system-wide appraisal form (2015), and Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent appraisal form (2015). Both customer service and work habits were viewed as important performance appraisal criteria by the Performance Appraisal Revision Team members.

The 16 criteria were then organized into major categories or performance factors. Table 2 shows the selected performance factors, criteria, and applicable references which were used to author the descriptions of each criterion. See Appendix A for the complete descriptions for each criterion.

Table 2.
New Performance Factors, Criteria, and References

Performance Factors	Criteria	References
Program Development	• Individual Annual Plan	• A, B, C, E, F
Program Management	• Implementing • Evaluation • Reporting • Resource Management	• A, B, E, H • A, C, E, H, I • A, H, I • A, C, D, H, I
Program Accomplishments	• Base Programs • Access, Reach and Engagement • Outcomes/Impacts	• A, C • A, D, F, H • A, F, H, I
Professionalism	• Customer Service • Policy Compliance • Professional Development • Technology and Innovation • Work Habits	• D, F, G, H • A, C • A, C, D, E, H • B, C, D, E • C, D, F, G, H
Community and Organizational Leadership	• Interpersonal Skills • Leadership • Optimizing Human Capital	• A, C, D, F, G, H • A, C, D, G, H • A, C, D, G, H, I

Note. The following letters are used to identify references as follows:

A. Donaldson, et. al Document Review (2015)
B. Davis & Verma, (1993)
C. Laki, Jayarante, Moore, & Kistler, (2014)
D. Ohio State University Extension Competencies (2015)
E. University of Florida IFAS Extension (2014)
F. University of Tennessee (2013)
G. Tennessee State University (2015)
H. Virginia Cooperative Extension (2015)
I. Donaldson (2008)

Supervisors need a thorough understanding of key definitions, policies, and procedures to understand and use the performance appraisal criteria and descriptions. See Appendix B for standard definitions of concepts, such as base programs. See Appendix C for a list of common policies and procedures.

III. Conducting the Appraisal

Roles and Responsibilities

It is important that everyone understands the responsibilities of different positions in the organization relative to appraisal.

The regional director:

- Provides instruction and answers questions in the appraisal process for all personnel in the region.
- Coordinates and advises county directors in the appraisal process.
- Finalizes ratings and comments in coordination with the county directors.

The county director:

- Reviews the IAP and makes any applicable suggestions.
- Coaches the agents and answers questions in all aspects of the appraisal process.
- Makes preliminary ratings and comments.
- Conducts the appraisal interview.

The regional program leader:

- Reads and rates all individual annual plans which produces the program development score.
- Responds to questions from the regional director and/or the county director regarding the performance of individual employees.

The EESD staff:

- Provides instruction and answers questions in the appraisal process from regional directors and others.
- Addresses questions and issues from regional directors regarding the appraisal process and forms.

All individuals have a role in understanding the appraisal process, performance factors, criteria, and in implementing a confidential appraisal process.

Process

Extension work has a relatively long business cycle that often occurs over a 19-month period. This business cycle may be described in three phases:

- Phase I – focuses on needs assessment and planning to produce a plan for the coming year and may occur over a five-month period;
- Phase II – involves a 12-month period of delivering, reporting, and evaluating educational programs; and
- Phase III – consists of the appraisal process, occurring over three months, for the previous performance period.

To add to the complexity, business cycles overlap so that when appraisal is being completed for one year, the new year has already started! This makes it imperative that supervisors and employees study the appraisal process so that it is implemented fairly and consistently across counties and regions.

Individual Annual Plan

The performance appraisal process begins with submission of the Individual Annual Plan (IAP) for the coming year. Both the IAP comments and ratings from Regional Program Leaders will transfer to the program development section of the performance appraisal form (Appendix D). IAPs should reflect the flexibility, focus, and efficiency demanded for organizations in the 21st Century. In addition, the performance appraisal and annual planning deadlines cannot be achieved with lengthy plans. In sum, an efficient process requires a streamlined and reasonable approach to annual planning without multiple reviews, edits, and resubmission of plans.

How is the appraisal process implemented for new employees? Extension Agents, County Directors, and Extension Area Specialists who have a start date of January 1 through June 30 will create an IAP for the remainder of the current year. These employees will be coached by county directors and regional program leaders in conducting a needs assessment, learning about the county/area they are assigned, and creating an IAP for the remainder of the current year. While the timeframe for completing the IAP and the timeframe covered in the IAP will be different, all other aspects of the appraisal process will be the same as employees who have worked more than one year.

Those hired on or after July 1 will create an IAP during the year of the appraisal with the needs assessment and goals sections completed. These employees should be coached by county directors and regional program leaders in conducting a needs assessment, learning about the county/area they are assigned, and creating an IAP for the coming year.

The following discussion outlines the appraisal process at the end of the year for Extension Agents, County Directors, and Extension Area Specialists.

Extension Agents

1. Agent
    - Considers performance factors, criteria, and annual summarized data
    - Creates goals for the coming year, reviews goals for previous year
    - Enters comments in employee section
2. County Director
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the coming year, goals for the previous year, makes supervisory comments, and coaches Agent
    - Makes preliminary rating
3. County Director and Regional Director
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the previous year, goals for the coming year, reviews any input from Regional Program Leaders, and discusses employee's performance and goals
    - Finalize ratings, supervisory comments for every performance factor, and goals
4. County Director and Agent
    - County Director conducts formal appraisal interview with Agent
    - Agent finalizes comments in employee section
    - Signs the appraisal form
5. County Director
    - Submits forms to regional office
6. Regional Director
    - Submits forms to Dean/Associate Dean

County Directors

1. County Director
    - Considers performance factors, criteria, and annual summarized data
    - Creates goals for the coming year, reviews goals for previous year
    - Enters comments in employee section
2. Regional Director
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the coming year, goals for the previous year, makes supervisory comments, and coaches County Director
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the previous year, goals for the coming year, reviews any input from Regional Program Leaders and county Extension personnel (if applicable)
    - Regional Director finalizes ratings, goals, and makes supervisory comments for every performance factor
3. County Director and Regional Director
    - Regional Director conducts formal appraisal interview with County Director
    - County Director finalizes employee comments
    - Signs the appraisal form
4. Regional Director
    - Submits forms to Dean/Associate Dean

Area Extension Specialists

1. Area Specialist
    - Considers performance factors, criteria, and annual summarized data
    - Creates goals for the coming year, reviews goals for previous year
    - Enters comments in employee section
2. Regional Director
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the coming year, goals for the previous year, makes supervisory comments, and coaches Area Specialist
    - Reviews annual summarized data, goals for the previous year, goals for the coming year, reviews any input from Regional Program Leaders, County Directors, and Department Heads (if applicable)
    - Regional Director finalizes ratings, goals, and makes supervisory comments for every performance factor
3. Area Specialist and Regional Director
    - Regional Director conducts formal appraisal interview with Area Specialist
    - Area Specialist finalizes comments in the employee section
    - Signs the appraisal form
4. Regional Director
    - Submits forms to Dean/Associate Dean

Enhanced Annual and Annual Reviews

All Extension personnel receive annual performance reviews and participate in a formal performance appraisal interview. For Extension Agents and County Directors, the appraisal process allows for an enhanced review every three years. The enhanced review follows the process outlined above. The annual review follows the same process except ratings are finalized by the county director. The enhanced review would be used rather than the annual review as follows:

- If the employee is on a performance improvement plan, only the enhanced review is used.
- During a county director's first year in that role, the enhanced review will be used for all employees

Milestones for the Enhanced Annual Review

- Submit the IAP for the coming year to county directors (by October 31) who submit to regional program leaders (by November 4).
- Extension agents, county directors and extension area specialists should ensure that they have completed Impact Statements and updated employee profile, professional development, and impact summaries on or about December 1.
- Submit area extension specialists' performance appraisal to the regional director on or about December 1.
- It is suggested that county directors individually coach extension agents in December and share preliminary performance appraisal ratings and comments with individual extension agents prior to meeting with the regional director.
- The regional director and county director finalize the agents' scores via in-person meeting in which the county director's appraisal is also conducted.
- The county director conducts the appraisal interview with the extension personnel and submits signed appraisal forms to the regional director on or about February 15.
- Regional Directors submit signed forms to the Deans Office on or about February 24.

supervised by the county director.

- If the current year overall score differs by at least five points over the previous year, the annual review is changed to an enhanced review for that year.
- The enhanced review is used in all cases where an employee's overall rating is needs improvement or unsatisfactory.

For employees hired during the performance period, the "other" type of appraisal should be marked on the appraisal form.

Rebuttal of the Overall Performance Appraisal Score and Rating

Employees have the opportunity for rebuttal of the overall score and overall rating by writing to their immediate supervisor. If the employee is not satisfied with the response, they may write to their supervisor's supervisor. The employee may continue the rebuttal by writing to the next person in the supervisory line one level at a time. (For rebuttal of across-the-board pay increase decisions due to unsatisfactory performance, employees should write directly to the Dean.)

In situations when an employee has reason to disagree with the performance appraisal, the employee may respond to the content or conduct of the performance evaluation in writing within 30 days following the performance appraisal interview between the supervisor and employee.

If an employee chooses this option, the employee's response should be forwarded to their supervisor and a copy should be submitted to the TSU Vice President, Business and Finances, Human Resources (for TSU employees) or the Extension Human Resources Officer (for UT employees). If appropriate, the supervisor may respond in writing within 30 days of receiving the employee's response. Employees are encouraged to request, in writing to their supervisor, their annual performance evaluation be conducted in a timely manner.

Policy Highlight

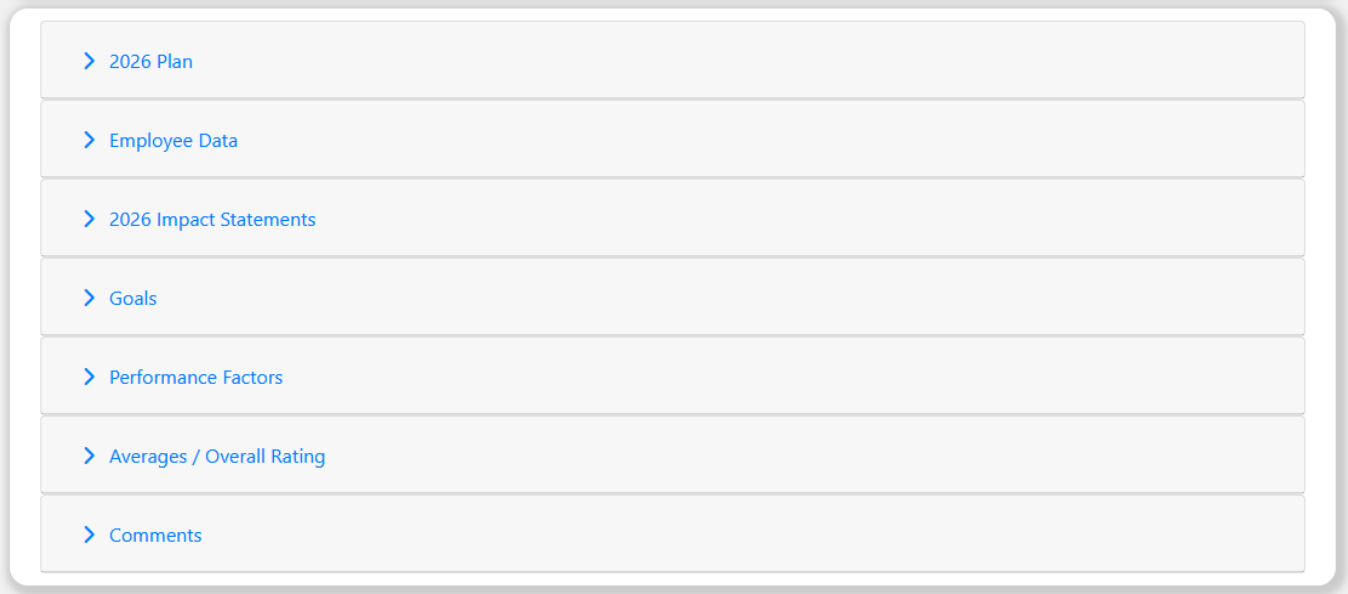
See TSU Performance Evaluation Policy 6.29, Review with Employee

- Each formal performance evaluation will be thoroughly discussed with the applicable employee to point out areas that need improvement or are unacceptable.
- Employees are encouraged to comment about their work performance, in writing or verbally, and to discuss working conditions and offer suggestions for improving business operations.
- The employee should sign the performance report to acknowledge awareness of its contents and discussion with the supervisor.
- The employee's signature does not necessarily mean the employee fully agrees with the contents of the report and the employee may so state on the form before signing.

SUPER Appraisal

The appraisal module in the System for University Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting (SUPER) will be used for the entire appraisal process. The appraisal is accessed through Employee Profile. In Figure A, the appraisal sections are shown: Employee Information, Annual Plan, Employee Data, Impact Statements, Goals, Performance Factors, Averages/Overall Rating, and Comments. The right arrows next to the section can be used to display the section.

Figure A. *SUPER Navigation*



Timeline

See the SUPER Implementation Schedule for the current timeline.

Comments

Supervisors and employees make comments on the appraisal form. Supervisors are required to make comments on each performance factor (program development, program management, program accomplishments, professionalism, and community and organizational development). Supervisors make may comments in reviewing goals for the coming year, establishing goals for the coming year, and overall comments.

Supervisors must be sensitive to the fact that all appraisal forms are legal documents and property of Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee. Comments about personal matters, including medical/health issues, are never appropriate.

Comments must be instructive and demonstrative in nature and contribute to employee development and achievement of professional and organizational goals.

Employees are required to make overall comments. Employees are encouraged to describe anything they need help with, how their supervisor can assist on accomplishing goals, and/or resources needed.

Appraisal Interview

Supervisors and employees should have discussions regarding performance on a regular basis throughout the year; open dialogue improves performance, programs, and customer service. Employees should receive feedback from their supervisor during the year so that the appraisal interview is a summary of these discussions. Ratings should not come as a surprise to employees. In fact, when ratings come as a surprise to employees, it is indicative of the need for more communication.

The performance appraisal interview is an opportunity to review performance, consider lessons learned, assess progress during the rating period, and establish goals and objectives for next period. However, if there are any disagreements about ratings, handle dissent professionally. Disagreements should be noted as a matter of record either in the comments section of the performance appraisal or via separate documentation

Avoiding "Sandwich Effect" in Appraisal Interviews

While it is paramount to express positive aspects of the employee's performance, supervisors have a tendency to say positive things about performance followed by negative things and then more positive things. This creates a "sandwich effect" where the employee anticipates something negative as soon as they hear something positive (Sherman, Bohlander & Snell, 1998).

A better approach for supervisors is to use the appraisal form as a guide for the interview:

- Discuss the performance factors one at a time, noting those areas that were rated less than and/or greater than *meets expectations*.
- Review goals for the current year and discuss goals for the coming year.
- Make sure to inquire if the employee has questions about the appraisal or otherwise.

following the performance appraisal interview.

To prepare for the performance appraisal interview, supervisors should schedule sufficient time to focus on the interview; one hour is recommended. Choose a meeting space that will be free of interruptions, no interruptions from other staff members, nor interruptions from phone calls or texts. Both employees and supervisors should turn off cell phones during the appraisal interview. Best practices for conducting the performance appraisal interview include:

- Conduct a performance appraisal interview annually with each employee.
- Conduct a performance appraisal interview after meeting with Regional Director.
- Performance appraisal interviews should only be conducted with the door closed; a private setting ensures that both supervisors and employees feel comfortable talking openly.
- Performance appraisal interviews should be conducted on a consistent basis with all employees.
- Allow for sufficient time to prepare for and conduct the interview.
- Be aware of non-verbal communications: emotions, body language, space and tone of voice.
- Eliminate barriers for the appraisal interview. If a small conference table is available, that would be preferred over a supervisor sitting behind his/her desk.
- Participate in active listening.

The following topics are essential to an effective appraisal interview:

- Express appreciation for the work completed by the employee.
- Discuss the performance factors one at a time, and especially discuss those areas that are *unsatisfactory*, *needs improvement, exceeds expectations*, and/or *exemplary*.
- Review goals for the current year and discuss the goals for the coming year.
- Make sure to ask if the employee has any questions about the appraisal or otherwise.

The following topics are suggested for an appraisal interview:

- What is the employee's biggest accomplishment this year?
- What did the employee most improve upon since last year?
- What can the supervisor and/or organization do to assist you with programming?
- What can the supervisor and/or organization do to assist you with your professional growth?
- Are there any resources you need to help you with your programming and/or professional growth?

IV. Goals

Establishing Goals for the Coming Year

Effective goal-setting is a critical part of a successful appraisal system. Goal-setting should increase communications between supervisors and employees (Bennett, 1981), set action plans for the coming year (Wright & Evans, 2008; Bennett, 1981), and promote overall organization and employee effectiveness (Daley, 1992).

Employees should set goals for the coming year that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-oriented (SMART). The following discussion is adapted from:

> Doran, G. T. (1981). There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives, *Management Review, 70*, (11), pp. 35-36.

- Specific – Specific goals are concrete, detailed, focused, well-defined, straightforward, and action-oriented.
- Measurable – Appropriate measures help employees make progress toward completing objectives. Progress measurements also allow for course corrections along the way for both direction and pace. If you set an objective that is measurable, you will have tangible evidence of completion of the objective.
- Achievable – Achievable objectives are those that your employee can actually accomplish (something he or she can realistically do within the time frame set), not an aspiration or vision. Achievable objectives need to challenge your employee but not so much so as to be unattainable or to cause frustration in being unable to complete them.
- Realistic – Realistic objectives are those that you have the resources to accomplish, including skills, funding, equipment, time and staff.
- Time Oriented – Time Oriented Objectives are those that have deadlines for completion. The time frames create a sense of urgency, and lead to action. The deadlines, just as with overall objectives, must be achievable and realistic. For a complex objective, break it into small parts, and set a deadline for completion of each phase (Doran, 1981).

Employees may set one, two, or three goals for the year. Goals may relate to personal development, professional development, and/or program goals. As a best practice, professional development and program goals should relate the performance criteria. The following goals are provided for illustration:

- Increase County 4-H Honor Club Membership from 40 to 50 members (20% increase).
- Complete 12 hours of Extension inservice courses related to forage management.
- Become physically active for at least 60 minutes on most days of the week to improve health.

While it is acceptable to create healthy lifestyle goals (such as "Walk 45 minutes every morning"), employees should never disclose personal or medical information on the appraisal form. Key applicable federal and state laws govern how employers must treat employees, including:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities. The ADA also establishes requirements for telecommunications relay services.
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) mandates the protection and confidential handling of medical information.

Supervisors should never discuss personal or medical information with employees. An example of the goal description, timeframe and evaluation are shown in Figure B.

Description	Timeframe	Evaluation
Increase extramural funding for FCS programs by 30% (from $4,500 to $6,500).	January – December	Compare funding received in the current year to next year.
Submit five entries for the TAAA&S Communications Award program.	First Quarter	Quality is shown by judges' scorecards.
Serve as chair for Residential and Consumer Horticulture Leadership Team.	January – December	Compare the current year's leadership team activities to previous years.
Complete six hours of graduate courses in agricultural leadership, education, and communications.	August – December	Courses and grades will be shown on college transcript.
Recruit 20 new participants for the Master Gardener program.	January – December	SUPER Enrollment records.

Figure B. *Example Goal Description, Timeframe, and Evaluation*

As a best practice, supervisors and employees should discuss goals during coaching sessions in December of each year. Ideally, goals would be finalized in December.

Review of Goals for the Current Year

When the supervisor reviews goals for the current year, he/she will indicate one of three dispositions:

- Accomplished means that the goal was met as stated.
- Progress indicates that the goal was not entirely accomplished but some major progress was made towards meeting the goal during the year.

- No Progress indicates that progress was not made and the supervisor and employee should assess the reason(s) why no progress was made. The supervisors and employee should also determine if the goal is appropriate to set as a goal for the coming year.

In many cases, the supervisor will be able to observe whether or not the goal was met. In other cases, the employee's annual summarized data will indicate whether or not the goal was met. It is appropriate for the supervisor to ask the employee if their individual goals were met.

In addition to marking a disposition of accomplished, progress, or no progress, the supervisor may make comments regarding the goals. If all goals are accomplished, then supervisory comments are not required, but positive reinforcement is recommended. See Figure C for an example of the *Review of Goals for the Current Year* section of the performance appraisal form.

Review of Goals for the Current Year

Goal 1	Increase extramural funding for FCS programs by 30% (from $4,500 to $6,500).	☐ Accomplished ☐ Progress ☒ No Progress
Goal 2	Recruit 20 new participants for the Master Food Volunteer program.	☐ Accomplished ☒ Progress ☐ No Progress
Goal 3	Complete six hours of graduate courses in agricultural leadership, education, and communications.	☒ Accomplished ☐ Progress ☐ No Progress
Comments	Extramural funding has remained the same. Excellent progress was made in the Master Food Volunteer program with 15 new participants/certified volunteers.	

Figure C. *Review of Goals for the Current Year*

V. Assessing Performance

Annual Summarized Data

Annual summarized data from SUPER modules will be displayed in the appraisal for the year of the appraisal. The data elements listed below, when summarized on an annual basis, have utility for appraisal purposes. The data elements are listed with the SUPER module where the data originates. The employee profile data comes from the SUPER profile module, professional development data comes from the training/registration module, and impact summaries come from the delivery module:

- Employee Information/Data
    - Position Information (Profile)
    - Contacts by Method (Delivery)
    - Professional Development (K@TE/SUPER)
    - Courses Facilitated/Taught (Profile)
    - College Courses Taught (Profile)
    - Publications (Profile)
    - Presentations Seminars (Profile)
    - Fee Based Programming Fund Development (Profile)
    - Research Grants (Profile)
    - Education (Profile)
    - Certification/Licensure (Profile)
    - Professional Service (Profile)
    - Committees (Profile)
    - Mentoring/Advising (Profile)
    - Honors and Achievements (Profile)
    - Organizational Memberships (Profile)
    - Community Memberships (Profile)
- Impact Statements (Delivery)

The summarized data has a critical role in documenting and measuring performance. Employees should examine the data for self-appraisal and program evaluation and improvement purposes. Supervisors should consider the data for coaching the employee in performance, developing appropriate goals, and making appraisal ratings.

Suggested Approach to Assessing Performance

Foremost, the employee should have already received coaching regarding major performance issues during the year. As an illustration, if reports are not submitted in an accurate and timely manner, the supervisor needs to coach the employee at the time the report is due. Also, just because coaching took place does not mean the employee will receive a rating of meets expectations or higher. Keeping open lines of communication provides an opportunity for both the supervisor and employee to understand what is causing the performance issue and address it. To continue the reporting example, an employee may not know how to utilize reports to improve programming efforts and/or may not understand what constitutes impact and how to effectively

share it with stakeholders. Furthermore, this illustrates the developmental orientation of performance appraisal which should be encouraged rather than a "gotcha" orientation which is unacceptable.

Supervisors should first review the performance factors and criteria. This serves as a reminder of the various performance levels, and it is important before assessing performance so that the review conducted represents the stated criteria. This serves as a reminder and it also contributes to consistency and fairness in reviewing employees with the same job titles. The following is one approach to assessing performance. In all cases, the data is for the year of the appraisal.

- Review Employee Profile
- Review Professional Development
- Review Impact Summaries
- Review Goals for the Current Year
- Review Goals for the Coming Year
- Review any notes, reprimands, letters of commendation, and performance-based examples.
    - Review Program Area Reports that are applicable to the employee's position (i.e., County 4-H Youth Enrollment Report)
    - Request input from the Regional Program Leader in cases where the Regional Program Leader had shared performance concerns and/or the employee had significant regional assignments (such as FCE advisor, leadership team leader, or Regional 4-H All Star Advisor)

In making these various reviews, note specific areas that represent performance strengths, challenges, areas of improvement, and goals.

Supervisor's Files

County Directors should have one file for every employee specific to appraisal. It should include information such as notes, reprimands, letters of commendation, and performance-based examples. Regional Directors should have one appraisal file for every county. To both assess performance and prepare for the appraisal interview, supervisors should review the file, among other information sources.

While these files are important, they are not maintained to "prove" given performance ratings, and they are not more critical than observation and annual summarized data such as impact statements. They are maintained to show examples to employees and look for ways to develop employees and the organization. The files show quality of work in a way that numbers alone may not. The files should only reflect the employee's performance, knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or behavior.

While these files are not the official personnel files, they are legal documents, property of the Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee. Regional directors are encouraged to periodically audit these files to ensure that the information present reflects the employee's performance, knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or behavior.

These files are discoverable in the event of a lawsuit. Documents in this file must not contain any sensitive information such as date of birth, marital status, dependent information, Social Security numbers, medical information, immigration status, national origin, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, criminal history, financial history, subjective statement or accusations.

These files, like all personnel information, must be maintained in a locked filing cabinet or computer in a secure location in the Extension office. The files must be kept as long as the individual is employed and three years after they leave employment unless the individual was involved in an appraisal appeal process in which case they are retained forever.

Information Sources and Alignment to Criteria

Table 4 shows alignment between information sources that may be considered in assessing performance and performance criteria. All of the information sources listed in Table 4 are in SUPER except for direct observation. Direct observation includes the supervisor's observation and direct feedback from clients and stakeholders. In the case of the county director, the regional director may request feedback from the county Extension personnel supervised by the county director and other stakeholders.

Extension operations are made more efficient and reliable through SUPER. As an illustration of SUPER's utility, consider a supervisor assessing the professional development criterion. The supervisor needs two information sources, the employee's professional development plan and the employee's record of professional development during the past year, and both of these are displayed in SUPER.

It is critically important that Table 4 not be misinterpreted. The performance appraisal interview is not a presentation. The employee should not be bringing these materials to the supervisor. Likewise, Table 4 is not an exhaustive list of information sources that may be used to assess performance. The information sources are examples, and in all cases, quality must be considered. Consider an employee who has a record of professional development consistent with their professional development plan and job assignments. However, the employee is chronically late to the professional development sessions. The employee is neither fully participating in the professional development opportunities nor exhibiting positive work habits.

Table 4.
Information Sources and Alignment to Criteria

Information Source	Criteria
Impact Summaries	• Implementing • Evaluation • Reporting • Base Programs • Outcomes/Impacts • Technology and Innovation • Work Habits • Optimizing Human Capital • Access. Reach and Engagement
Program Area Reports (such as Annual TNCEP Report and Annual 4-H Youth Enrollment Report)	• Base Programs • Policy Compliance • Work Habits • Optimizing Human Capital
Employee Profile	• Resource Management • Professional Development • Leadership • Technology and Innovation • Work Habits
County Budget	• Resource Management (County Director) • Leadership (County Director) • Policy Compliance (County Director)
County Cost-Benefit Analysis	• Resource Management (County Director) • Leadership (County Director)
Direct Observation	• Outcomes/Impacts • Customer Service • Policy Compliance • Work Habits • Interpersonal Skills
Individual Annual Plan	• Individual Annual Plan • Customer Service
Professional Development Plan	• Professional Development

Performance Factors Averages

The supervisor rates the employee on the performance criteria which are organized by performance factor. The criteria ratings are summed and averaged within a performance factor to produce a score for each factor. The scores are summed for the overall rating (Figure D). *An overall rating of 14 or below requires a performance improvement plan. County directors should contact the regional director who will advise on the performance improvement plan.*

	Overall Rating	***Total Points***
☐	Exemplary	= 23-25
☐	Exceeds Expectations	= 19-22
☐	Meets Expectations	= 15-18
☐	Needs Improvement*	= 10-14
☐	Unsatisfactory*	= 9 or less

**An overall rating of 14 or below requires a performance improvement plan.*

Figure D. *Overall Ratings and Total Points*

Performance Factors Comments

Supervisors must provide comments for all five performance factors. The comments should be aligned with the performance factor and may represent performance strengths, challenges, areas of improvement, and goals. While the space for comments on the performance appraisal form is limited, an employee should receive other forms of feedback during the year such as coaching during a one-on-one conversation with their supervisor or a letter of commendation from a regional program leader so that comments on the appraisal form summarize previous communications. Example comments are shown in Figure E.

Averages	***Score***
Sum of ***Program Development*** Criteria Rating	5
Sum of ***Program Management*** Criteria Rating *Supervisor Comments*:* Exemplary performance in most areas except physical office resources do not meet program and staff needs.	3
Sum of ***Program Accomplishments*** Criteria Rating *Supervisor Comments*:* New residential horticulture programs demonstrated an area of strength. Continue working with new audiences and programs.	5
Sum of ***Professionalism*** Criteria Rating *Supervisor Comments*:* Your performance builds and maintains effective relationships with colleagues, volunteers, clients, and partners.	4
Sum of ***Community and Organizational Leadership*** Criteria Rating *Supervisor Comments*:* Your work demonstrated positive efforts to foster communication among staff. Strive for more effective volunteer management.	4
Overall Score =	21

**Supporting comments are required.*

Figure E. *Example Supervisor Comments for Performance Factors*

Impact of Leave of Absence on Performance Appraisal

A leave of absence may affect an employee's quantity of work, but will not necessarily affect the quality of work performed. Supervisors must use care to ensure that ratings and comments cannot be perceived as an adverse action based on the employee's absence during an approved leave of absence. Doing so may violate federal and state laws.

If an employee is on an approved leave of absence (such as Family Medical Leave, Maternity Leave, and Military Service Leave) during the review period, the actual dates that the employee is actively at work will be recorded on the appraisal form. The employee will be reviewed on work performed during this review period. If an employee is on an approved leave of absence for the entire review period, record this on a performance appraisal form so that a record can be placed in his/her personnel file.

Family Medical Leave Act

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of

group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
- any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" OR
- 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

Tennessee Maternity Leave Act and FMLA

Tennessee provides protection to working expectant mothers under two different laws, the Tennessee Maternity Leave Act and FMLA. These laws help to protect employees from adverse employment actions as a result of their maternity leave. Under the Tennessee Maternity Leave Act, certain female employees in Tennessee are granted 4 months of leave for the pregnancy, childbirth, and care of the newborn.

- Federal law also applies to Tennessee expectant mothers with FMLA. Under FMLA, employees with over a year of employment in a business may be granted 12 weeks of unpaid time off for the birth or adoption of a child.
- Tennessee businesses with 50 or more employees must by law grant these 12 weeks of maternity of leave. In addition, Tennessee employers may not terminate an employee for taking protected leave or allow maternity leave to negatively affect an area of employment.
- Both the Tennessee Maternity Leave Act and the FMLA provide that health insurance coverage from a Tennessee employer will continue during maternity leave although the employee must pay the premiums.

Military Service

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is the federal law that protects civilian job rights and benefits for veterans and Reserve members. This law stipulates that employees may be absent from work for five years, cumulative, for military duty. An additional two years is provided for those convalescing from injuries received while on military duty.

Understanding Low Performance

The supervisor should consider causes of low performance (ratings of *unsatisfactory* and/or *needs improvement*). Sherman, Bohlander, and Snell (1998) have described the sources of ineffective performance in terms of organizational policies and practices, job concerns, personal problems (see Table 5). While the source of low performance does not have bearing on the actual rating, understanding the source helps to set a course of action, for example setting appropriate

goals or creating a performance improvement plan. The supervisor should never bring up personal problems to the employee, only work habits and behaviors. However, the supervisor does have an important role in making sure employees are aware of the Employee Assistance Program that can help them to access services to address personal and family issues.

Table 5. *Sources of Low Performance (Sherman, Bohlander & Snell, 1998)*

Organizational Policies and Practices	Job Concerns	Personal Problems
• Ineffective job placement • Insufficient job training • Ineffectual employment practices • Permissiveness with enforcing policies or job standards • Heavy-handed management • Lack of attention to employee needs or concerns • Inadequate communication within the organization • Unclear reporting channels	• Inability to perform the job • Excessive workload • Unclear or constantly changing work requirements • Boredom with the job • Lack of professional development or job growth opportunities • Conflict between supervisors and employees • Interpersonal problems among employees • Unsafe working conditions • Inadequate equipment or materials • Lack of job skills • Low work ethic • Lack of effort	• Marital problems • Financial worries • Depression, anxiety, fear and other emotional issues • Conflict between work and family needs • Physical limitations, including disabilities • Other family problems

County Director's Performance Appraisal Checklist

The following checklist has been adapted from:

> AT&T (1987, Dec.). *The Performance Management Process, Part 1 and 2*. Straight Talk, nos. 8 and 9. In Sherman, A., Bohlander, G., & Snell, S. (1998). *Managing human resources* (11th ed.). Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing.

Scheduling

1. In December, schedule the individual employee appraisal interview with all employees to occur the first two weeks of February (see Performance Appraisal Schedule in Table 3). At a minimum, the appraisal interview should be scheduled 10 to 14 days in advance.
2. From 10 to14 days in advance of the appraisal interview, remind the employee to review performance, goals for the current year, and goals for the coming year.
3. Clearly state to the employee that this will be the formal, annual performance appraisal interview.

Preparing for the Performance Appraisal Interview

4. Review performance documentation collected throughout the year including program area reports. Pay particular attention to work patterns that have developed.
5. Be prepared to provide specific examples of *unsatisfactory, needs improvement, exceeds expectations,* and *exemplary* performance.
6. If performance rates as *exceeds expectations* or *exemplary*, be prepared to reinforce this performance.
7. If performance rates *unsatisfactory* or *needs improvement*, be prepared to discuss how to correct this performance. If the regional director advises, be prepared to discuss the performance improvement plan that takes corrective action.

Conducting the Performance Appraisal Interview

8. Select a quiet location that is comfortable, free of distractions, and private.
9. Discuss the performance factors one at a time, and especially discuss those areas that are less than and/or greater than *meets expectations*.
10. Be specific and descriptive rather than general or judgmental. Focus on growth and development.
11. Maintain a professional and supportive approach. Be a teacher rather than a preacher; be a concerned coach rather than a controlling manager.

Completing the Performance Appraisal Process

12. Send original, signed appraisal forms to the regional director.

Perspectives on Appraisal

"A well- designed and well-executed performance appraisal system could lead to greater efficiency, effectiveness, and improved employee morale" (Davis & Verma, 1993, p. 1).

"Ideally, performance appraisal is a tool used by both parties in the employment relationship to reduce uncertainty by informing [professionals] about job performance, job opportunities, rewards, and sanctions" (Fay, 2006, p. 2).

"Agents are trained professionals and wish to be treated as professionals when they're evaluated on job performance" (Davis & Verma, 1993, p. 1).

"Valid, reliable performance appraisal systems are important to any profession. They should be the basis for professional development of individuals, improvement of the services rendered, and summative decisions made with regard to an employee (merit pay, job placement, promotion, or termination, etc.)" (Donaldson and French, 2013)

VI. Avoiding Common Rating Errors

Conducting an appraisal is one of the most important supervisory skills. The following questions are provided to assist supervisors to sharpen their skills as leaders of an effective appraisal system.

- Do you give too much weight to an employee's plan to conduct some program or accomplish some task? When assessing performance, ask yourself if the employee has followed through with plans.
- Do you focus on the individual being reviewed and the stated performance appraisal criteria? It is crucial that supervisors are rating employee performance against the criteria and descriptions rather than against other individual employees.
- Do you focus on the review period or are your ratings influenced by past ratings? Every year stands on its own merits; do not expect that an employee will be rated "Needs Improvement" just because they earned that rating the previous year.
- Are you looking at the data and basing the appraisal rating on facts rather than the employee's salesmanship?
- Are you working to change the behavior rather than the person (Sherman, Bohlander & Snell, 1998)?
- Have you focused on solving problems (Sherman, Bohlander & Snell, 1998)?

The most commonly documented rating errors are halo effect, horns effect, primacy effect, recency effect, leniency effect, central tendency effect, interpersonal errors, and contrast errors. Supervisors must be aware of these errors and work to avoid them. The following descriptions are summarized from a literature review by Donaldson (2011).

Halo Effect/Horns Effect

The halo effect is seen when the supervisor allows one good aspect of the employee's character or performance to influence the entire evaluation; rating the employee the same on every trait. The horns effect is seen when the supervisor allows one negative aspect of the employee's performance to influence the entire evaluation (Broadwell, 1985; Guion, 1998; Lambert, 1984; Thorndike, 1920). However, it is very possible that one aspect of performance influences multiple dimensions. An employee who is exemplary at managing volunteers is also likely to have an exemplary base program.

Recency Effect

When supervisors base the employee's evaluation on the past few months or weeks rather than giving an honest consideration to the entire 12-month performance, they are guilty of the recency effect (Broadwell, 1985).

Primacy Effect

Primacy effect occurs when supervisors make up their mind early in the year about an employee's performance rating without considering the entire performance period. It may be described as "the first impression was the last impression" error. It is the opposite of recency effect.

Leniency Effect

The leniency effect is seen when the supervisor avoids honest rankings in order to avoid conflict. Raters who do this often rate all employees *Meets Expectations* on all of the criteria when some aspects of performance are lower and others are higher than *Meets Expectations* (Baker 1988; Lewis, 1997; Shore & Strauss, 2008).

Central Tendency Effect

Central tendency effect is a lack of rating differentiation between employees on the supervisor's team. The supervisor does this based on the assumption that their direct reports will discuss their performance appraisal ratings. The supervisor does not want any dissension based on the appearance of favoritism or unfair treatment (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984; Daley, 1992).

Interpersonal Errors

Interpersonal errors occur when the employee's likeability (Varma & Pichler, 2007), race, ethnicity, gender, and/or religion are considered in the rating (Guion, 1998). Sometimes supervisors give favorable ratings to employees who have similar values or interests to themselves. Interpersonal errors differ from leniency errors where appraisers assign high ratings to all employees and halo effects where appraisers are unduly influenced by one or very few performance dimensions. Another example of interpersonal error occurs when the supervisor perceives that his/her career advancement depends on the performance of the employee. The supervisor may provide a higher rating than the employee earned to keep the employee happy and performing.

Contrast Errors

Contrast errors occur when supervisors compare employees to each other, rather than objectively comparing all employees to prescribed performance standards (Daley, 1992). Broadwell (1985) points out the unfairness of contrast errors after supervisors and employees have agreed to the job's performance standards, but the standards are not considered in the appraisal. The performance standards (or criteria) used for performance appraisal should be based on research and best practice literature, job description, and agreement regarding the standards between employees and their appraisers (French & Malo, 1987).

VII. Contacts

Do you have questions about any aspect of the performance appraisal factors, criteria, descriptions, forms, and/or process? County extension agents should always first direct questions to their county director. Unresolved issues should be directed to the regional director. Regional directors should direct their questions to the applicable Extension Evaluation and Staff Development Director or TSU Director of County Operations:

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Appendix A – Performance Appraisal Criteria, Description, and Ratings

Performance Factor: Program Development

Individual Annual Plan

Unacceptable (1)				Acceptable (5)
Individual Annual Plan is poorly constructed, lacks alignment, or is missing one or more components. Sources and information are not adequate to justify the educational program, and the advisory committee did not adequately represent the county or area served. Issues were not clearly identified.				Individual Annual Plan shows alignment among needs assessment, plans for the coming year, collaborators/partners/volunteers, evaluation, and funding. Advisory committee input was obtained in developing the Individual Annual Plan. The committee is representative of the county or area served.

Performance Factor: Program Management

Implementing

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Rarely uses research based information in programming. Program delivery is rarely adapted to meet clientele needs. Demonstrates no collaboration and/or Extension marketing efforts.	Occasionally uses research based information in programming. Program delivery is occasionally adapted to meet clientele needs. Lacks collaboration and/or Extension marketing efforts.	Uses research based information in programming. Program delivery is routinely adapted to meet the needs of the clientele and various delivery methods are used. Plans a regular, on-going effort to market Extension. Uses materials provided by specialists.	Uses real life problems to teach subject matter with relevance to clientele. Collaborates well across program areas with other units and organizations.	Leads major collaborations or partnerships across program areas with other units and/or organizations. Adopts new methods and demonstrates connectivity and engagement with various audiences.

Performance Factor: Program Management

Evaluation

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Provides no evaluation results and no program impact.	Has a plan for program evaluation with minimal accomplishment or progress toward goals.	Indicator data is fully aligned with program objectives and standard measurement tools properly demonstrate accomplishment or progress toward improving the program.	Program evaluation results contribute to improved programs and outcomes demonstrate progressive clientele behavioral or practice change.	Program evaluation represents the highest levels of program quality and outcome measurement with results showing improved quality of life, economic, and/or environmental conditions.

Performance Factor: Program Management

Reporting

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Does not complete and/or submit reports in a timely manner.	Completes and submits reports that are incomplete or with errors.	Submits complete and accurate reports in a timely manner. Keeps data up-to-date and readily accessible.	Reports are completed accurately showing program progress and accomplishments. Reports are frequently shared with stakeholders.	Completes all reports on time and consistently shares impact with stakeholders. Consistently reports progress and program outcomes. Utilizes the reports to improve programming efforts.

Performance Factor: Program Management

Resource Management

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Does not seek outside sources of funding to support extension programs and/or fails to manage accounts according to University policy.	Occasionally seeks outside sources of funding to support extension programs.	Routinely seeks and obtains extramural funding (including gifts, grants, and fees), maintains budgets and accounts to provide a quality program.	Secures and utilizes extramural funding (including gifts, grants, and fees) to enhance quality programs.	Secures and utilizes extramural funding (including gifts, grants, and fees) through a comprehensive program to invest in high quality and/or new programs.
County Director – Rarely meets fiscal needs of the county poor fiscal management; and/or physical resources meet minimal program and staff needs.	*County Director* – Occasionally meets fiscal needs of the county program; lacks fiscal management; and/or physical resources meet occasional program and staff needs.	*County Director* – Routinely meets fiscal needs of the county program; fosters transparency in resource management; meets expectations for fiscal management; physical resources are adequate, updated, clean, and address all program and staff needs.	*County Director* – Frequently provides fiscal resources to address emerging and new county program efforts; exceeds expectations for fiscal management; and works to improve physical resources to support innovative programs	*County Director* – Consistently provides fiscal resources to address emerging and new county program efforts; exceeds expectations for fiscal management; and has a long-term plan for physical resource needs of programs and staff

Performance Factor: Program Accomplishments

Base Programs

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Rarely shows effective base programming or responsiveness to community needs.	Occasionally conducts effective base programming.	Routinely conducts base programming efforts with participation levels that meet expectations for county or area served.	Frequently conducts base programming efforts with participation levels that exceed expectations for county or area served.	Consistently manages effective base programming. Anticipates and addresses emerging community needs or requests through effective base programming.

Performance Factor: Program Accomplishments

Access, Reach and Engagement

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Shows no effort in expanding access and reach, removing barriers, or increasing community engagement in Extension programs.	Occasionally able to expand access and reach, remove barriers, and increase community engagement in Extension programs.	Repeatably expands access and reach as well as strives to remove barriers to Extension programs. Seeks partnerships to assist with increasing Extension programming. Knows the laws and regulations related to access and engagement.	Successfully demonstrates an ability to expand access and reach as well as removing barriers to Extension programs through deliberate planning. Develops partnerships to assist in increasing Extension programming for all individuals across the county. Understands the laws and regulations related to access and engagement.	Engages stakeholders and fosters well-developed partnerships to assist in increasing Extension programming. Implements a sustainable approach to consistently engage individuals from all backgrounds and perspectives. Serves as a resource in the understanding of the laws and regulations related to access and engagement.

Performance Factor: Program Accomplishments

Outcomes/Impacts

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
No or minimal program participation or outcomes reported.	Occasionally documents outcomes and program participation.	Routinely documents outcomes which are at expected levels. Outcomes demonstrate clientele knowledge, attitude, and/or skills change.	Frequently documents outcomes which exceed expectations. Documented outcomes demonstrate progressive clientele behavior and/or practice change.	Consistently documents outcomes which exceed expectations. Documented outcomes demonstrate improved quality of life, economic and/or environmental conditions.

Performance Factor: Professionalism

Customer Service

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Does not communicate in response to client needs/requests and/or ignores client needs.	Occasionally fails to respond to client needs or requests.	Responds to client need or requests in a timely and professional manner. Works well with all clientele groups. Communicates respectfully to all requests.	Proactively addresses client needs or requests.	Anticipates and addresses emerging client needs or requests.

Performance Factor: Professionalism

Policy Compliance

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Does not follow nor demonstrates minimal knowledge of applicable policies.	Occasionally does not follow policy and/or lacks knowledge of applicable policies.	Understands and follows all applicable policies.	Interprets and encourages others to follow all applicable policies.	Recognized as a resource on applicable policies and procedures and is a role model to others.

Performance Factor: Professionalism

Professional Development

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Rarely attends recommended professional development opportunities. Is not a member of a professional organization.	Occasionally attends recommended professional development opportunities. Is a member of a professional organization, but only occasionally participates.	Attends relevant professional development opportunities. Is a member of professional organization and attends meetings. Has a current professional development plan.	Incorporates knowledge from relevant professional development into the Extension program. Seeks additional development resources through research literature. Actively participates on a professional organization committee.	Facilitates the professional development of agents and/or volunteers in specialized content. Receives recognition through relevant professional associations. Mentor and role model for new employees. Active in professional association at or beyond state level.

Performance Factor: Professionalism

Technology and Innovation

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Minimal use of technology.	Occasional use of technology.	Routine use of appropriate technology for communications. Takes advantage of training opportunities to stay on the cutting edge with technology advances in content and program delivery.	Serves as a resource for using the latest technology for communications and programming. Shares innovative practices.	Recognized by Extension professionals and volunteers as highly competent in using the latest technology and/or innovation for teaching, communications, programming, and/or technical assistance.

Performance Factor: Professionalism

Work Habits

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Often displays a negative, uncooperative attitude toward co-workers, clientele, work assignments and requirements. Is frequently non-compliant with established work rules and organizational policies/protocol. Rarely demonstrates the ability to manage time and resources to meet commitments within established time frames.	Occasionally displays a positive, cooperative attitude toward co-workers, clientele, work assignments and requirements. Is occasionally non-compliant with established work rules and organizational policies/protocol. Requires assistance to manage time and resources to meet commitments within established time frames.	Displays a positive, cooperative attitude toward co-workers, clientele, work assignments and requirements. Complies with established work rules and organizational policies/protocols. Manages time and resources, and demonstrates initiative to meet commitments within established time frames.	Contributes to an effective work environment by displaying a positive, cooperative attitude toward co-workers, clientele, work assignments and requirements. Frequently complies with established work rules and organizational policies/protocol. Frequently demonstrates the ability to manage time and resources to meet commitments within established time frames.	Inspires others to display a positive, cooperative attitude toward co-workers, clientele, work assignments and requirements. Almost always complies with established work rules and organizational policies/protocol. Coaches others to manage time and resources to meet commitments within established time frames.

Performance Factor: Community and Organizational Leadership

Interpersonal Skills

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Demonstrates minimal interpersonal skills as needed to serve as a leader or effective team member; minimal collaboration with other agents and coworkers; and/or rarely utilizes appropriate communication methods to communicate with others.	Occasionally communicates with other agents and coworkers; focused on personal recognition over success of the team; and/or occasionally collaborates with other colleagues, volunteers, clientele and partners.	Communicates with all agents and coworkers and supports other agents and coworkers with their programming efforts.	Focused on success of team over personal recognition; successful collaboration with other agents and co-workers; contributes to both team projects and harmony in the workplace.	Readily utilizes interpersonal skills to mentor, develop, and coach others. Brings out the best in others by inspiring, motivating, and guiding them toward a goal. Builds and maintains effective relationships with colleagues, volunteers, clientele and partners. Actively works to resolve conflicts and contributes to harmony in the workplace.
County Director – Fails to foster open communication among staff and/or rarely conducts office conferences.	*County Director* – Lacks open communication among staff and/or occasionally conducts office conferences.	*County Director* – Routinely fosters open communication among staff and routinely conducts office conferences.	*County Director* – Frequently fosters open communication and frequently conducts office conferences.	*County Director* – Consistently fosters open communication among staff through regular office conferences and effective one-on-one communication.

Performance Factor: Community and Organizational Leadership

Leadership

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Does not serve on any teams and/or special assignments at the county, region, or state level. Does not recognize the benefit to the organization or themselves by serving.	Occasionally serves on teams and/or committees only when specifically asked or directed. Consistently fails to follow through with commitments.	Routinely seeks and serves on county, multi-county and regional teams. Completes county, multi-county, regional and/or state assignments.	Frequently serves on county, multi-county, region, and/or statewide teams and is a participating member. Leads county, multi-county, regional and/or state assignments.	Consistently leads and serves on county, multi-county, region, statewide, multi-state, and/or national teams. Mentors others in these roles.
County Director – Demonstrates minimal county and stakeholder relationships, networking, and/or marketing of all Extension programs.	*County Director* – Occasionally demonstrates county and stakeholder relationships, networking, and/or marketing of all Extension programs.	*County Director* – Routinely demonstrates county and stakeholder relationships, networking, and marketing of all Extension programs. Meets quarterly with the County Agriculture Committee.	*County Director* – Frequently demonstrates effective county and stakeholder relationships, networking, and marketing of all Extension programs.	County Director – Consistently demonstrates exemplary county and stakeholder relationships, networking, and marketing of all Extension programs.

Performance Factor: Community and Organizational Leadership

Optimizing Human Capital

Unsatisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (2)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Exemplary (5)
Minimally engages staff, volunteers, and/or participants as applicable for Extension operations and programming.	Occasionally engages staff, volunteers, and/or participants as applicable for Extension operations and programming.	Routinely engages staff, volunteers, and/or participants as applicable for Extension operations and programming. Effectively manages the volunteer process.	Frequently engages staff, volunteers, and/or participants as applicable for Extension operations and programming. Delegates appropriately to staff and volunteers to meet objectives of Extension operations and programming.	Consistently engages staff, volunteers, and/or participants as applicable for Extension operations and programming. Delegates appropriately and mentors staff and volunteers to meet objectives of Extension operations and programming.
County Director – Provides minimal direction of staff toward common goals, counseling, mentoring, and/or conflict management. Fails to conduct effective performance management.	*County Director* – Occasionally provides direction of staff toward common goals, counseling, mentoring, and/or conflict management. Performance management lacks effectiveness.	*County Director* – Routinely provides direction of staff toward common goals, counseling, mentoring, conflict management, and effective performance management.	*County Director* – Frequently provides direction of staff toward common goals, counseling, mentoring, conflict management, and effective performance management.	County Director – Almost always provides direction of staff toward common goals, counseling, mentoring, conflict management, and effective performance management.

Appendix B – Definitions of Key Concepts

Base Programs

Cooperative Extension Programs in Tennessee are characterized by four base programs: (1) 4-H Youth Development, (2) Agriculture and Natural Resources, (3) Family and Consumer Sciences, and (4) Community Resource and Economic Development (TSU) and Community Economic Development (UT). The term base program references programs *based* on: local needs, research/evidence, and Federal legislation. These four base programs correspond to the USDA-NIFA mission mandates for Cooperative Extension. Selected examples are shown below to illustrate alignment between Extension base programs and enabling Federal legislation.

Extension Base Programs Aligned with Federal Legislation

Extension Base Program	Program or Charge	Enabling Federal Legislation
4-H Youth Development	Diffusing knowledge and practices of positive youth development	• Smith-Lever Act of 1914 • National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977
Agriculture and Natural Resources	Diffusing knowledge and practices of production agriculture	• Smith-Lever Act of 1914 • National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977
	Forestry Education Programs including forest stewardship	• Clark-McNary Act of 1924 • Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978
	Pollinator protection education programs	• Agricultural Act of 2014
Family and Consumer Sciences	Diffusing knowledge and practices of Family and Consumer Sciences	• Smith-Lever Act of 1914 • National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977
	Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program	• Smith-Lever 3d EFNEP Funds Authorization of 1969
Community Resource and Economic Development/ Community Economic Development	Diffusing knowledge and practices of community development	• Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1972

The state priority programs are represented by the State Action Agendas and emanate from the base programs. Practically speaking, individual employees are best positioned to determine whether any given program is part of the Individual Annual Plan or their base programming effort. This practice works well for Cooperative Extension because it focuses energies on the end

results of societal, economic, and environmental improvements rather than categorization of named programs. It is recommended that for Extension Agents, County Directors, and Extension Area Specialists, approximately 60% effort be placed in priority programs, that is, those programs in their IAP, and approximately 40% effort be placed on base programs which may be unplanned.

Professional Development

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities including credentials such as academic degrees, formal coursework, continuing education opportunities, conferences, mentoring, seminars/webinars and inservice. Professional development is continuing education relative to the responsibilities of the employee's current position or career development plan.

Professional Organizations

Professional organizations are those aligned with the profession. These organizations are ones that promote professional development in process, techniques, competencies, and/or subject matter relevant to the job.

Appendix C – Accessing Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures

County Financial Transaction Manual
https://utia.tennessee.edu/ext/Documents/County%20Transaction%20Manual%208-15-13.pdf

Extension Volunteerism Toolkit
https://volunteerism.tennessee.edu

Guidelines Related to Attending National Agent Association Meetings
https://eesd.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/242/2024/07/Annual-MeetingsGuidelines.pdf

Marketing Toolkit Logo Guidelines
https://marketing.tennessee.edu/welcome-kit/

Promotion Guidelines for County and Area Extension Educators
https://eesd.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/242/2023/09/Electronic-Dossier-Handbook.pdf

UT Extension Faculty and Staff website
https://liveutk.sharepoint.com/sites/UTExtension

UT Extension Performance and Promotion website
https://eesd.tennessee.edu/human-resources/performance-promotion/

TSU Policy #6.29 Performance Evaluation
https://www.tnstate.edu/hr/documents/policiesandprocedures/Performance%20Evaluation.pdf

UT Staff Performance Reviews
https://liveutk.sharepoint.com/sites/UTHumanResources/SitePages/Staff-Performance-Reviews.aspx

Appendix D – Performance Review Summary Form

The University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University
Performance Review Summary Form
Extension Agent, Extension Agent and County Director, Extension Area Specialist

Employee Name (Last, First, MI):	
UT IRIS Personnel Number:	TSU T#:
Review Completed By:	Reviewer's Personnel Number:
Review Period Start:	Review Period End:
Appraisal Kind:	Position Name:

Performance Factors	***Criteria***	***Points (1-5)****
Program Development	Individual Annual Plan	
Program Management	Implementing	
	Evaluation	
	Reporting	
	Resource Management	
Program Accomplishments	Base Programs	
	Access, Reach & Engagement	
	Outcomes/Impacts	
Professionalism	Customer Service	
	Policy Compliance	
	Professional Development	
	Technology and Innovation	
	Work Habits	
Community and Organizational Leadership	Interpersonal Skills	
	Leadership	
	Optimizing Human Capital	

**5=exemplary, 4=exceeds expectations, 3=meets expectations, 2=needs improvement, and 1=unsatisfactory*

Employee Name (Last, First, MI):	
UT IRIS Personnel Number:	TSU T#:

Averages	***Score***
Sum of ***Program Development*** Criteria Rating *Supervisor Comments*:*	
Sum of ***Program Management*** Criteria Ratings *Supervisor Comments*:*	
Sum of ***Program Accomplishments*** Criteria Ratings *Supervisor Comments*:*	
Sum of ***Professionalism*** Criteria Ratings *Supervisor Comments*:*	
Sum of ***Community and Organizational Leadership*** Criteria Ratings *Supervisor Comments*:*	
Overall Score =	

**Supporting comments are required.*

	Overall Rating	***Total Points***
☐	Exemplary	= 23-25
☐	Exceeds Expectations	= 19-22
☐	Meets Expectations	= 15-18
☐	Needs Improvement*	= 10-14
☐	Unsatisfactory*	= 9 or less

**An overall rating of 14 or below requires a performance improvement plan.*

Review of Goals for the Current Year

Goal 1		☐ Accomplished ☐ Progress ☐ No Progress
Goal 2		☐ Accomplished ☐ Progress ☐ No Progress
Goal 3		☐ Accomplished ☐ Progress ☐ No Progress

Employee Name (Last, First, MI):	
UT IRIS Personnel Number:	TSU T#:

Establishment of Goals for the Coming Year
The goals and objectives should include both departmental goals and plans for personal and professional development. The time frame indicates when the goal should be accomplished. Evaluation indicates how accomplishment will be measured.

	Description	Timeframe	Evaluation
Goal 1			
Goal 2			
Goal 3			
Coming Year Goals Supervisor Comments			

Supervisor Comments:

This report represents my true and complete appraisal of this employee during the evaluation period.

County Director's Signature:	Date:
Regional Director's Signature:	Date:
Dean's/Associate Dean's Signature*:	Date:

**TSU Employee forms must be signed by TSU Associate Dean.*

I understand that my signature does not mean that I necessarily agree or disagree with the performance appraisal. It has been discussed with me, and I have received a copy of the performance appraisal document.

Employee's Signature:	Date: