

# Ten Steps to Faster, Better Publications

**W**eb and print publications produced through the Publishing Unit of Extension Communications are a vital part of most Extension programs. Authors of official, numbered Extension publications may be specialists, agents, or others. When agents serve as originating authors, they often collaborate with a specialist as co-author. Now that the System has reorganized into Priority Program Teams (PPTs), authorship approval rests with the PPT coordinators and assistant directors.

The first author serves as the primary contact for the Publishing Unit throughout the publishing process. The primary contact submits the publication, receives proofs from the Publishing Unit, and is responsible for communicating with and getting input from co-authors at all stages of the process.

Only the first author is listed in the bar at the top of the Web version, but all authors are listed in the actual publication. The first author bears primary responsibility for the accuracy and currency of the information.

The process for submitting publications is described on the Extension Intranet under Publishing Requests.

## The Basics

**1 Write publications with your audience in mind.** Think of three types of people in your intended audience: the most knowledgeable, the least knowledgeable, and the ones in the middle. For whom are you writing this publication? Extension publications should be written at the level of understanding of your customers, not your university colleagues. Whoever your audience is, avoid technical jargon and long sentences. Avoid long, theoretical discussions. Emphasize the practical. In short, write to *express*, not to *impress*.

When submitting publications for minor revisions, be sure to mark changes on the latest *printed* version of the document. For a Web only publication, print out the PDF version and clearly mark your changes on it. Supply tables or large blocks of text in an electronic form. Major revisions should be submitted electronically as if they were new publications. Check with the Publishing Unit to determine the best way to submit each revision.

**2 Be sure that all authors, administrative assistants, and others involved in preparing the publication have copies of (and follow) these guidelines.**

**3 Realize that tables, photos, original artwork, and other graphic elements take more time than text-only publications.** Plan ahead, and talk with the Publishing Unit. We'll be glad to meet with you to discuss your publication or project.

## Submitting Manuscripts and Supplementary Materials

**4 Arrange review of all Extension publications by three professionals in addition to the authors of the publication.** Reviewers should include (a) an Extension specialist in your PPT or a closely related area, (b) an Extension agent in your PPT, and (c) another professional in an appropriate area.

Give reviewers enough time with the manuscript to do it justice. Ask each reviewer to complete a Form T and return it with the reviewed manuscript. Make the changes you deem appropriate, and keep the Form Ts in your files. Turn in only the complete, final version of a manuscript. That is, don't submit a rough draft expecting to revise it or incorporate reviewers' changes later.

## 5 **Submit all elements of publications together. These include the following:**

- Publishing Request Form, completely filled out and signed.
- A hard (paper) copy, including all figures and other graphics, as well as cutlines or figure captions.
- The document in one of the following electronic forms:
  - On disk in MS Word (preferred method)
  - As an MS Word attachment to e-mail
  - With the URL if it is on the Web

6 **Prepare publication for submission.** Type manuscripts as simply as possible. Don't indent at the beginning of paragraphs; instead, double-space between paragraphs. Use only one space at the end of sentences. If you use a 10- to 12-point font, two to three *double-spaced* pages will equal one page of printed text (without photos or graphics).

It is all right to use italics for emphasis (but don't overdo it) and for headings, to use bold type, and to center headings.

**Format:** Whenever possible, publications will be formatted to accommodate online viewing and printing—that is, in 8½ x 11 inch format, as a fact sheet with the same type header as the one on this publication. If there is a good reason for having your publication in a different format, such as a three-panel brochure, indicate that request on the Publishing Request Form and send a sample.

**Tables:** Use the Tables feature in MS Word to create tables for publications. Don't use the column feature in your word processing program. That feature is not compatible with our publishing software.

**Headings:** Use as many headings as you wish but as few heading *levels* as possible.

**Electronic files:** Include *all text* for the body of the publication (or book chapter) in a single file. Cutlines and figure captions may be included at the end of the main text file or may be in a separate file. If you submit electronic files of photos or graphics, also put these in a separate file.

## 7 **Submit graphic elements properly.**

Provide a hard copy (an electronic file is optional) if you use graphics. Photos should be scanned at a high enough quality to be used in printed publications. Submit scanned photos or graphics of any kind as 300 DPI (or better) images in TIFF or JPEG format. DPI refers to the sharpness or clarity of an image as defined by the number of dots of color per inch.

If you are researching images for your publication on the Internet, limit your search to quality stock photography company Web sites. These sites have powerful keyword driven search engines and usually offer thousands of high-quality, high-resolution images for a fee. Traditional image media is always acceptable. Request copies of slides, transparencies, or photo prints from your image source. Also ask your designer for help. He or she can provide guidance on what options will be best for your particular publication.

When you publish on the Web, your output medium is not paper but a monitor. Monitors are low resolution devices that require small, low resolution images. To optimize an image for use on the Web, the resolution or DPI is reduced to the smallest ratio possible (usually 72 DPI), the color palette is reduced, and the image is finally compressed into a GIF or JPEG format, usually resulting in the loss of some image detail. When the image you downloaded from the Internet is reproduced in a 4-color publication, the result is less than desirable. Significant color depth and image detail will be lost.

Most digital cameras offer several image quality options. A 153KB file at a 640 x 480 pixel resolution is more than adequate for Internet use but not for print reproduction.

For print reproduction quality, you need at least a 1000 x 1000 pixel resolution for a detailed, sharp 4 x 6 image. For a larger printed image, a higher quality resolution setting (with least compression) of a 2-megapixel camera would be required.

## **Submit All Supplementary Material Along With Publications**

8 **Get permission to use artwork or quoted material from a copyrighted source before you submit the manuscript, and acknowledge the source in the publication.** You need to get permission even when using other states' Extension publications. Remember that all written and graphic work has a natural copyright. Turn in a copy of the permission letter with the manuscript.

9 **Plan to use as little artwork as possible for your purpose.** It adds to both cost and turnaround time. If you have artwork, turn it in with the manuscript. In general, photos should be black-and-white unless color is critical to the effectiveness of the publication. They should be up-to-date, in proper focus with good contrast, and free of distracting elements. Color photographs should have sharp, clear color. Number all illustrations and photographs properly, and identify front and top/bottom orientation of slides. Write clear

and understandable captions, and turn them in on disk along with the manuscript.

If you need assistance with photographs or original artwork, call the Publishing Unit as early as possible. In some cases, a manuscript due date will not coincide with the proper season to get the photographs you need.

## Stay on Schedule

**10** **Return proofs by the date the editor requests.** Keep changes to a minimum. Changes made when the publication has already been edited and designed slow down turnaround time and create opportunities for errors. Only the primary contact works with the Publishing Unit. The primary contact solicits input from all co-authors and sends only one corrected proof back to the Publishing Unit.

When your publication is ready to go to the printer, the Publishing Unit will create a PDF and notify you that it is posted on the Web. Please check it as soon as possible and notify us if you see any problems. If your publication is for Web only, the Publishing Unit will notify you as soon as it is on the Web.



**For more information,** call the Publishing Unit at 334-844-5690.

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