the 4-H DOT program to allow part-time paraprofessionals to be hired.

The Today’s MOM program began in 1987. The program was designed for low-income pregnant women and new mothers. The goal of this program is to provide nutrition information that increases the chances of low-income women having and maintaining a healthy baby.

Present

Due to level funding at the federal level, the number of participating counties has been reduced over the years. As of March 1998 the adult phase of the program is operating in 40 counties, and the youth phase is in 6.

EFNEP has been a true Extension program. It is a grass roots effort that begins on the level of the family and uses only the resources the family has available. Adjustments are made to meet the needs of the individual family.

It is recognized in Alabama, as well as nationally, that as the program continues, challenges will be met and a profound impact will be made on the lives of the nation’s families.

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Alabama Cooperative Extension System
CIRCULAR HE-574
Alabama Led The Way!

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), conducted throughout the nation by Extension, began in 1968. However, EFNEP actually was an expansion of a pilot project conducted in five Alabama counties—Baldwin, Calhoun, Houston, Marion, and Walker—to test ways to reach limited resource families with homemaking skills and education.

The Pilot Project

The Pilot Project Involving Young Homemakers in Low-Income Rural Areas of Alabama was a cooperative 5-year project (July 1, 1964, through June 30, 1969) between the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University, and Federal Extension Service, USDA. The three primary areas considered in the Pilot Project were:

- To develop and test methods of reaching and teaching homemakers.
- To develop and test educational materials.
- To determine if paraprofessionals could be trained to teach low-socioeconomic homemakers so they could understand and apply what they learned.

EFNEP

When money was appropriated for a nationwide nutrition program aimed at limited-resource families in 1968, Alabama’s study was used as a model for the national program. This was the time the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program came into being.

The objectives of EFNEP are to help limited-resource families and youth acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed:

- To incorporate nutritionally sound diets into their daily living patterns.
- For changed behavior that will contribute to personal development and the improvement of total family diet.

EFNEP is administered by the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with State Cooperative Extension Services in 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Micronesia, and American Samoa.

The federal staff monitors and evaluates the nationwide EFNEP program and implements federally mandated procedures. It also provides administrative and technical support to coordinate state program activities.

State Cooperative Extension Services at land-grant universities coordinate and manage EFNEP in their states. Program coordinators and specialists prepare training and resource materials for county and area program professionals, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and participants.

County and Area Extension agents conduct EFNEP as part of the county Extension program. They provide on-the-job training and supervise part-time paraprofessionals and volunteers who teach the homemakers and youth.

Paraprofessionals, called Program Assistants in Alabama, work with homemakers individually in the home or in small groups; they work with youth groups.

The program assistants, indigenous to the community, teach homemakers and youths the essentials of good nutrition, proper food storage and sanitation, and skills in buying, preparing, growing, and preserving foods, preparing and serving low-cost meals, and managing available resources.

Past

Alabama initiated EFNEP in 19 counties in January 1969. By July 1972 the adult phase was statewide.

The youth program, called 4-H DOT (Diet’s Our Thing), was implemented in 10 counties in January 1970 with volunteers working with the young people. The remaining 57 counties were added in 1977. In March 1979 a pilot program was begun that expanded