

Making Contacts for Iowa State University Extension

This information provides some basic tips for anyone who wants to talk with decision makers about the importance of Iowa State University Extension's educational programs and applied research.

Who should be contacted?

- Your state representative and senator — You can find information about your senator at <http://www3.legis.state.ia.us/ga/legislators.do?ch=s>. For information about your representative, go to <http://www3.legis.state.ia.us/ga/legislators.do?ch=h>. Your local Extension office has information about legislative districts.
- The governor — You can contact him by mail at Governor Chet Culver, Office of the Governor, State Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50319, by phone at (515) 281-5211, by FAX at (515) 281-2661, or by E-mail at the following Web site: <http://www.governor.iowa.gov/administration/contact/>
- Board of Regents, State of Iowa — You can find information about board members and public meetings at <http://www2.state.ia.us/regents/>. You can contact the Board of Regents by phone at (515) 281-3934 or by FAX at (515) 281-6420.
- Other opinion leaders and decision makers — Talk to others who may have good contact with legislators and/or the governor.
- Organizations and agencies – As you meet with and work with others, it is appropriate to talk about the importance of Iowa State University Extension. Encourage anyone interested to help share that message with decision makers.

What are the basic ground rules?

- Be brief, concise, and polite. Treat the office with respect.
- Thank him/her for listening.
- Follow up with additional information if appropriate.
- Use your own words to explain why Iowa State University Extension is important to you, your family, the community, particular industries, etc.
- Be reasonable and constructive. Indicate that you understand the complexity of the issue(s) and be willing to consider trade-offs.

What is the best way to make a contact?

There is no one best way. The main point is to do it! Choose whatever method you prefer.

- Making a personal contact – Talk directly with your legislator if it can be arranged. Be prepared to share your views briefly and clearly. You may want to

follow up with a note and/or more information. Remember that a conversation with a legislator's aide also can provide a valuable contact.

- Writing a letter – Write about only one issue. Keep it brief and tell why this issue is important to you, outlining your own experiences. Use your own words. The letter can be handwritten, but it needs to be easy to read. Give your address and sign your name clearly. Here's how to address your letter.

For Senators:

For Representatives:

The Honorable . . .

The Honorable . . .

Iowa State Senate

Iowa House of Representatives

State Capitol

State Capitol

Des Moines, IA 50319

Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Senator (last name):

Dear Representative (last name):

- Sending E-mail – This is an effective method for contacting your legislators. The hints for writing letters also apply here. It is extremely important to send E-mail to only your own legislators and to include your complete address so that they know you are a constituent. You can find E-mail addresses through the Web sites mentioned at the beginning of this document.

- Making a phone call – This is a useful way to share an opinion on an issue quickly, particularly a yes or no message just prior to a legislative vote. It may be less effective for trying to explain why programs are important to you. You can contact your legislators at the Capitol during the legislative session. To reach your senator, call (515) 281-3371. To reach your representative, call (515) 281-3221.

When do I need to make contact?

Now and anytime! The 2008 (second regular) session of the 82nd Iowa General Assembly convened on January 14, 2008. Visit <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/> for information on the session. It is imperative that legislators and the governor hear from citizens while state budget decisions are being made in committee. It is extremely important they continue to hear from constituents about Iowa State University Extension and how it affects their lives. They also need to hear how Iowa State University Extension can help them serve their constituents.

Thank you for making contacts on behalf of Iowa State University Extension. It is crucial that policy makers hear from their constituents.