Adapting Online Extension Programming to in-Person Experiences

Isaac Sponheim, Thomas Bass, Dr. Shannon Arnold and Dr. Dustin Perry

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Agricultural & Technology Education

Introduction

According to the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN), both the frequency in which disasters and animal health emergencies occur and the price associated with those disasters are on the rise. To address these issues, agriculturists have been charged with understanding a variety of realistic threats to agricultural infrastructure and production including:

- Factors that can affect disease spread in livestock
- Biosecurity
- The importance of sound management practices.

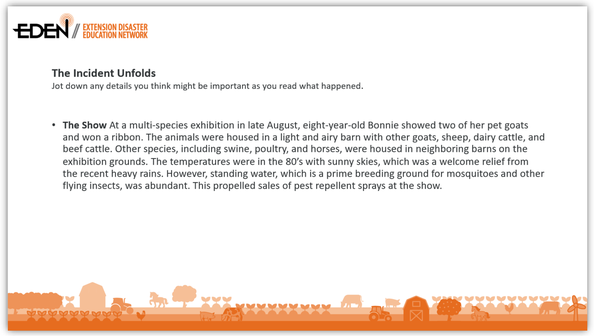

Fig. 1. Shows a sample slide from the PowerPoint component of the project

What are we Doing?

This project seeks to offer a facilitated face-to-face group learning alternative to a successful online course in animal emergency prevention and management. EDEN's online module adaptation project is a USDA supported effort intended to address this need by converting a recently updated (2021) animal agrosecurity and emergency management course from an online individual format into an offline format with support materials to be delivered in face-to-face group settings by a secondary agricultural educator, 4-H leader, extension educator, or other qualified facilitator.

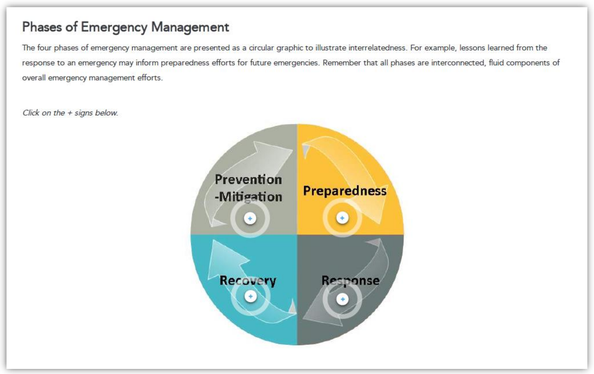

Fig. 2. Shows the phases of emergency management that students use as their response framework in the course

Project Goal

The desired outcome of this project is to provide a resource to high school aged students as well as post-secondary young adults. In addition to secondary agricultural education and senior-level 4-H programming, many states offer professional development programs for young adults directly involved with this challenge, such as Montana Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers. However, education is still dealing with the lingering effects of Covid-19 and a mass movement from in-person learning to more isolated online settings.
Currently, EDEN's courses are designed for extension professionals who can dedicate 4-6 hours to an online module. The content is highly specialized and covers a wide array of potential emergencies or disasters that could affect an agricultural operation, including natural disasters such as blizzards, tornados, or earthquakes, as well as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) threats. The goal of this project is to strategically narrow content from the online course and modify the delivery method to one more conducive to in- person group delivery, such as classrooms or workshops.

Next Steps

As the current steps are completed, design elements will move into the primary work space. Most of the needed digital assets have been secured. These include EDEN graphics, color pallets, and fonts. Developing instructional templates, as well as templates for both the facilitator and learner guidebooks, is the current priority in conjunction with the work of translating the original course into one more founded in face-to-face delivery methods (PowerPoint).
Upon completion, the course will be released for use EDEN Delegates (primarily Land Grant faculty and staff across the country and U.S. territories), and their partnered or affiliated youth and young adult programs. Contingent upon continued program support, data could be collected on preferred delivery method of the adapted course. Participant age, region, and background would all be useful variables to analyze to better inform any future revisions of the course.

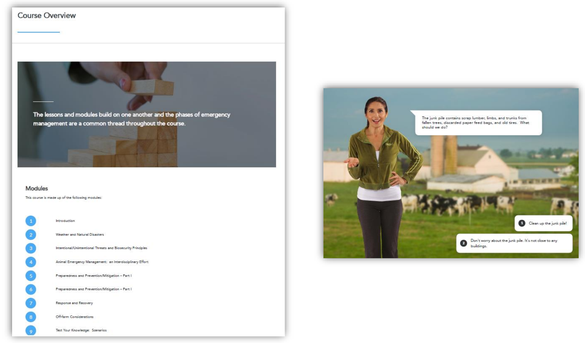

Fig. 3. Shows two screenshots of the original online course. The image on the left gives a course overview, and the image of the right comes from one of the final assessments in module 9.

Funding

This project was supported with funding from the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) utilizing Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (FADI) funding from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture under NIFA/USDA Agreement No. 2018-37620-28830.