

DECCCI Monthly Update

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Greetings! Welcome to the Delaware Climate Change Coordination Initiative (DECCCI) monthly update. This is the first of our monthly reports and we look forward to sharing activities, ideas and materials with everyone. Our team is made up Jenn Volk, Associate Director of UD Cooperative Extension, Wylie Feaster, Student Research Assistant and myself Jerri Husch, PhD, the DECCCI project Coordinator. Our job is to gather, organize, analyze and share as much as we can about climate change activities that affect all of us. Given this broad mandate, we want to emphasize that all DECCCI activities are designed to be broadly inclusive and representative of the variety of perspectives held by the diverse populations that UD Cooperative Extension and the University serve. We look forward to engaging multiple stakeholders in all of the activities that will be part of DECCCI.

The Challenge

Dealing with the impact of climate change requires a broad and diverse network of stakeholders from different sectors working together to address critical climate change issues---and adapting to climate change is both technical innovation and social change. From floods, to droughts, to increased health and economic risks, the complexity of the social response—the changes people need to make---- may appear to be overwhelming. Given the complicated social, political, environmental and economic issues communities now face, there is an immediate need to “make sense” of the climate change context in Delaware.

There is a need for timely and specific data that is appropriate for policy making and action decisions. There is a need for reliable and relevant insights into the diversity of cultural contexts that Cooperative Extension works in in Delaware, and there is a need to understand the technical, management and administrative capacities of state, county and local non-profit, private sector and governmental agencies and departments to deal with climate change. In addition, there is a need to be clear about university expectations and advocacy strategies, stakeholder networks and alliances and the private sector. Finally, there is a need to capture the reality of Delaware climate change adaptation contexts within which Cooperative Extension functions.

Understanding “who is doing what, where, when and how” of Cooperative Extension and Delaware climate change policies, strategies and activities, can offer the clarity needed to transform the complex “landscape” of activities into understandable patterns and trends that can inform action. Once the current patterns of climate change adaptation activities are better understood, that information (“evidence”) can be used to inform practical climate change related policy decisions, strategies and program/project action. Recognizing the current status and make-up of Cooperative Extension, community, county and state responses to climate change,

will inform the implementation of appropriate activities, avoid duplication of efforts and loss of limited resources.

This includes:

- Assessing existing Climate Change activities in UD Cooperative Extension, across UD, in Delaware counties and across the region
- Coordinating climate change research and outreach activities within UD Cooperative Extension and across other constituents
- Meeting with partners across the University, state, and region
- Identifying, examining, and pursuing funding opportunities
- Determining gaps in climate change related research, education and activities
- Recommending potential activities and outlining priority actions

What We're Doing: September

One of the first areas of focus has been the creation of a DECCCI data repository where we're collecting, coding and analysing all kinds of data and information related to climate change in Extension, the University, Delaware, the US and internationally. As we continue to grow the repository we'll share links to climate change information that will be of interest and useful to people and organizations. This will include links to background articles, research papers, interviews, podcasts, strategic plans, policy papers, program descriptions as well as project reviews, innovative practices, etc.

In September, during our first month of activity we've been impressed by just how much new information is emerging about climate change! From new climate change discussions in Delaware, to new US national legislation and policies, to UN meetings focussed on climate change, to evolving discussions about "Climate Smart Agriculture" resources and funding, to the tragedy emerging across Florida, Puerto Rico and others locations hit my monster hurricanes---clearly climate change is making news.

In addition to beginning our repository and collecting and categorizing this abundant material, we've been gathering names of people to meet, and groups and organizations to learn more about. This introduction included one of our September highlights---- being part of the September UD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) Festival. On Thursday, 27 September, we spent the afternoon meeting people and collecting people's responses to our "Climate Change 4 Questions". The four questions are designed to help gain insight into what people think, feel and are doing about climate change. The simple questions are conversation starters and ask:

- "How did/do you learn about climate change?"
- "What does the term climate change make you think of?"
- "How does the term climate change make you feel?"
- "What actions are you taking in relation to climate change?"



Collecting responses to the DECCCI “Climate Change 4 Questions”

In the coming months we’ll be reaching out across UD Extension and other UD departments, asking people these four questions. This as well as more formal interviews, polls and surveys will offer a better understanding of who is doing what, where, when and why about climate change. Rest assured that as we gather more information we will share what we are finding.

In October we will continue to address research issues and will be reaching out to speak with people across Extension and the University. This will include meeting with:

- Members of Extension programs and related organizations
- University of Delaware faculty, staff and students
- County and local community representatives
- Community researchers and activists

As part of our conversations with these groups we will outline DECCCI goals and outcomes and answer questions related to:

- What is DECCCI and who is the research for?
- What expectations do Extension and various stakeholder groups have for DECCCI research, assessments and findings?
- What information is needed by whom?
- Who are the intended users of the DECCCI repository and report(s)?
- How will the findings be used by different stakeholders?

We look forward to meeting and engaging with the vibrant populations of Delaware around this challenging issue.

For more information, questions and ideas about DECCCI, please contact,

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