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Maintaining the Cutting Edge

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The opportunities and challenges that Extension Specialists face in crafting their trade to meet current and future needs were examined. Methods for enhancing the effectiveness of professional performance were identified for practicing specialists and graduate students.

These strategies included both individual and institutional approaches aimed at improving analytical and communicative skills. Among some of the recommendations were: new coursework for graduate students that stress the interpretation of economic concepts; a new "Extension school" program in public policy analysis on national and macro-economic issues; more specialist exchanges and mini sabbatics focused on problem areas rather than academic specialties. It was further recommended that the AAEA and its appropriate committees take the lead in promoting continued professional education not only for Extension agricultural economists but all Land Grant University professionals committed to analysis and outreach.