

Hello, I am Karoline Kent, a former 4-H State Council member, a 4-H alumni, a current 4-H volunteer, a Penn State Animal Science student, and a future Pennsylvania producer. I am sure many of you can see how I personally will be affected by the lack of funding to Penn State Extension, but I am just one person. The impact of extension reaches far beyond what most people think.

There are many different things that Penn State Extension does to better the commonwealth. It supports productive, profitable, and competitive business and a strong agriculture food system. Extension strengthens families, children, youth, and the elderly. It builds caring, safe, and healthy communities. It ensures the long-term vitality of Pennsylvania's natural resources. And, it enables people to better understand and deal with complex issues.

The one part of Penn State Extension that I hold very dear to my heart is the youth development of the Pennsylvania 4-H Program. I joined 4-H at the age of 13 because I was a young girl crazy for horses. At that point, I didn't know what the program was about. I just figured that I would sit around with other girls and learn about horses. I never knew that I would develop public speaking skill, leadership skills, or learn the importance of hard work and dedication. I thought that 4-H was just a club for farm kids, but I started going to state events and met youth that were doing projects I didn't even know the program offered. As I began to take on more leadership positions and attend the State Leadership Conference, State Capitol Days, and State Achievement Days, I decided to continue my 4-H story and apply for the 4-H State Council. I ended my career in the Program serving as the 2014-2015 4-H State Council President. That position gave me experience and connections that I would have never dreamed of having at the young age of 18. 4-H provides youth with opportunities for that they would not get to do otherwise. A future without extension means that the registered youth are deprived of opportunities to better themselves, their communities, their country, and their world. Not to mention all of the volunteers that spend countless hours supporting this program and the extension employees that have helped it grow to the magnitude it has reached.

Another part of extension that is extremely important and deserves recognition are the research programs. Not only will the employees lose their jobs, but Penn State students are at risk of losing their barns/their labs/ their programs/ their hands on experiences. Many students in Penn State's college of Agriculture were former 4-H members who grew up with the slogan "Learn by Doing". I personally had plans to work at the horse barn to continue to expand my equine knowledge, as well as save money to lessen the financial burden of college! That possibility will go away if the future of extension is not funded.

Those same research programs are heavily relied on in Pennsylvania's number one Industry, Agriculture. By 2050, the current population of 7.2 billion people is expected to rise to 9.6 billion. I guarantee you that this prediction is a topic that has weighed heavily on every single farmer. Just 2% of the world population is expected to feed and clothe everyone else. These people rely on research to make advances in their production practices. Penn State Extension is the very source for most of the research

Pennsylvania producers rely on. Extension offices even provide classes on how to do canning, harvesting, and tips on biosecurity. These things benefit the large scale producer down to the common home owner.

These days, farmers have to produce more with less. Without continuous advances they will not be able to keep up with the growing demand. The demand for food to nourish our bodies, fiber to clothe us and protect us from the elements, fuel to provide us with energy, and pharmaceuticals to heal us from our illnesses. Food, Fiber, Fuel, and Pharmaceuticals are the necessities to life, without them, nothing else would be possible.

It is time we stop underestimating the impact of Penn State Extension. It doesn't just affect me, or the 1,108 employees, or the 9,556 program volunteers, or even the 92,340 registered program members. Extension affects every single citizen in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If funding is not provided, Penn State Extension cannot self-support and will be forced to close. A future without extension in Pennsylvania would not be a bright one and would have a catastrophic economic impact.

Thank you all for your time and for your support of extension and the 4-H program.