

Communication Bridges Between Meetings of County Extension Council Committees

Bridges Between Committee Meetings

The purpose of this guide sheet is to offer suggestions for communicating effectively by letter to committee members.

Some reasons you might write to members are to:

- Announce details for a committee meeting.
- Remind about assignments to be completed.
- Confirm appointment to a position.
- Explain role and responsibilities of members.
- Thank and congratulate member.
- Mention current activities.

Too often, letters are written to a “thing” (committee) instead of a “person” (Mr. Smith). Consequently, they don’t get the attention and action desired. When writing to groups of

people, try to personalize letters. It will more likely result in the desired reaction.

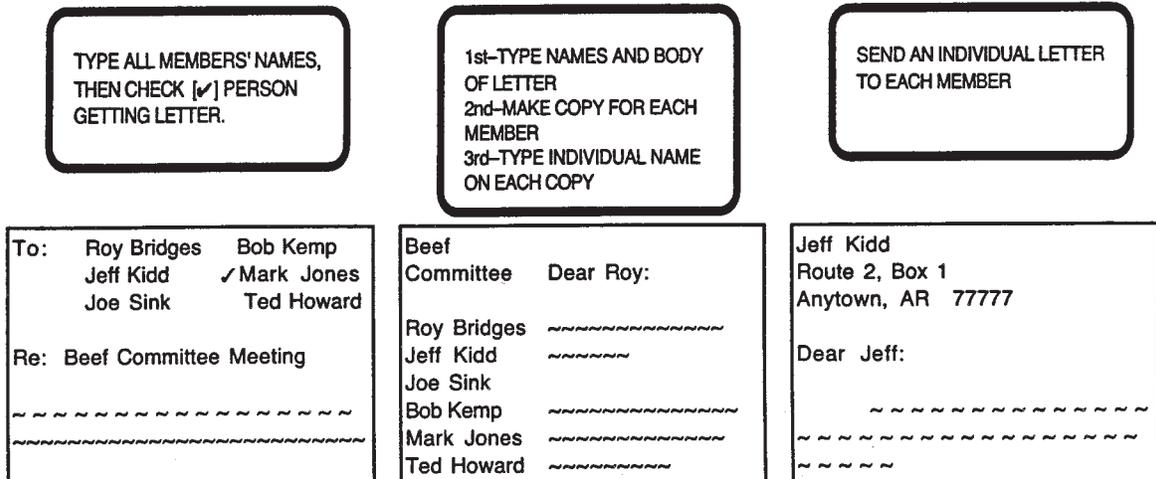
Tips for Personalizing Letters to Members

When a committee isn’t too large, maybe fewer than 15 people, consider a method that makes the letter appear to be written just to the person who’ll receive it. (See “methods” in Figure 1.)

Tips for Preparing Newsletters for Members

A newsletter is an excellent way to “bridge the gap” between meetings – to keep an organization united in its understanding of and commitment to the group’s aims. Most voluntary organizations have several standing committees, each in charge of one area of the overall organizational mission. Since these committees meet independently of one another, continuity of purpose across groups must be stressed.

Figure 1



One way to focus attention on the organization's structure and keep members alert to where they fit in is shown in Figure 2.

Ideas for Newsletter Contents

- Calendar of activities
- Features about individual committees
 - what they've been doing
 - highlight special events
 - summary of meetings
- Special recognition for a committee or person
- What is coming up soon that needs attention (such as some volunteer opportunities)
- New committee added
- New members appointed

- Information on member's role and responsibilities
- Congratulations to individuals appointed to positions
- Information about community events of special interest
- Things to be thinking about: Plant some seeds!

Announcing a Committee Meeting

A letter shouldn't be the **ONLY** method of contacting committee members when initiating a committee meeting. However, it can be effective as a **FOLLOW-UP** to other personal contacts. Since a letter influences attendance, it should be well prepared.

Figure 2

TYPE ORGANIZATIONS, NAMES AND TITLES OF COMMITTEES ON THE LEFT SIDE OF PAGE.

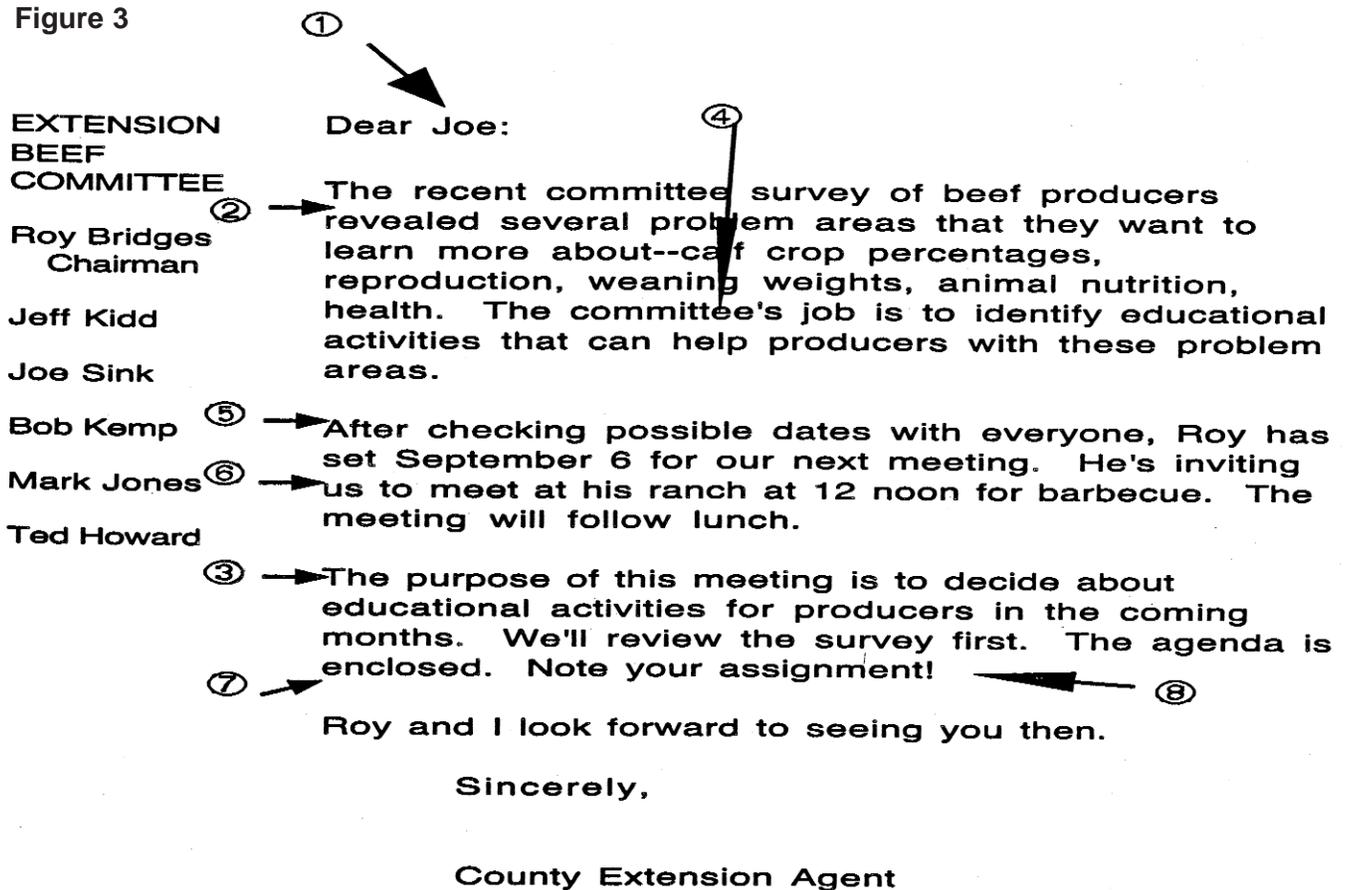
NEWSLETTER TITLE	
County	~~~~~
Extension	~~~~~
Council	~~~~~
_____	~~~~~
4-H and Youth	~~~~~
Family and Consumer	
Sciences	~~~~~
Water Quality	~~~~~
Rice	~~~~~
Beef	~~~~~
Community	
Development	~~~~~
FSNE	~~~~~

An effective letter can: (See Figure 3.)

- (1) Be personal – addressed to the member
- (2) Indicate something about the situation that needs attention
- (3) State the purpose of the meeting
- (4) Remind members of the committee's responsibility
- (5) Give date, time, and location of meeting
- (6) Indicate that the chairperson (not agent) is in charge
- (7) Provide meeting details (enclose an agenda)
- (8) Identify what members need to do before and during the meeting.

For more on strengthening committees, see other guide sheets.

Figure 3



Information in this publication has been adapted for Arkansas. Original materials were prepared by Mary G. Marshall and Burl B. Richardson, Program and Staff Development Specialists, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.