ALVSCE Poster Forum Submission

Poster to be presented by Juan Arias, Gila County Cooperative Extension

Arizona Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP): Who, What, Where?

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FRTEP agents are an active, often overlooked asset of UA Cooperative Extension. Seven agents located on 5 sovereign nations conduct programming similar to county offices, with added expectation of consideration of tribal council processes and culture. FRTEP agents are soft funded, competing nationally for all salary and program dollars. Unique challenges FRTEP agents encounter include: 1. Need to gain community’s trust over time, 2. Respecting traditional knowledge, while incorporating science-based information, 3. Episodic (short-term) volunteering, 4. Cultural concerns sharing personal data (e.g. fingerprinting for 4-H volunteers) 5. Lack of office/meeting room infrastructure for agents, and 6. Tribal Council processes/timing. Successful tribal extension programs include directed efforts at building partnerships within the tribe (e.g. Bureau of Indian Affairs, NRCS, CDC, etc.), involving the community in program content decisions, and combining science with traditional knowledge, not ignoring positives resulting from historical tribal practices/knowledge. This poster highlights some Arizona FRTEP programs and successes.