Y2K Small Business Initiative & UF/IFAS Y2K Strategy

The Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), and the Small Business Administration are working cooperatively to prepare a series of workshops and materials to assist small businesses and agriculture in preparing for the next millennium. They are now focusing in the Y2K problem. This provides UF/IFAS with an opportunity to strengthen/refocus our Y2K effort initiated in 1997.

UF/IFAS-IT revised its ongoing Y2K strategy to coordinate with these groups to deliver the information to Florida clients, and continue to address internal problems/issues. Fundamentally, this strategy identifies issues and deficiencies that need to be addressed; sets goals; creates the mechanisms necessary to achieve the goals; and implements these mechanisms.

- Previous work

  A Y2K team has been in place for 2 years. The team is composed of Tom Hintz (Team leader), Peter Kearney, David Williams, and Fedro Zazueta. In the past, The focus of the Y2Kteam was to insure that UF/IFAS business applications are Y2K compliant, that computer hardware is tested, to and provide resources for Faculty and Staff related to this issue.

  In the business area alone 839 programs and 158 data files were modified to insure compliance. This required 2991 person-hours (1.44 person-years) at a human resource cost to UF-IFAS of $60,000. A report of the status of computer hardware shows that about 71% of computers are compliant, 25% need manual intervention for compliance and 4% are non-compliant.

- Current issues/deficiencies that need to be addressed:

  Internal to UF/IFAS

  1. Y2K Embedded systems (Instrumentation, standalone equipment, etc.). Further efforts need to be made to increase faculty and staff's awareness of potential problems with embedded systems, identifying the problems and possible corrective measures.
  2. Y2K Contingency Planning, particularly for the business operations. Business processes need to be put in place that can be initiated when and if Y2K problems arise.

  External to UF/IFAS (UF/IFAS constituents such as extension audiences)

  1. Increase awareness and ability of external constituents to manage Y2K related

problems.

- Current Goals

  Given the immediacy of the year 2000, there is a need to escalate the efforts to increase awareness and competency in dealing with Y2K problems. We have 4 immediate goals:

  1. Train our staff (particularly county staff) in dealing with the problem and to assist our external constituents in dealing with the problem.
  2. Train external constituents to plan and prepare for Y2K.
  3. Address the embedded system issues.
  4. Develop contingency plans for business systems.

- Change in the integration of the UF/IFAS Y2K team

  Changes were made to the UF/IFAS-IT Y2K Team to effectively address the above goals. Jim Shonkwiler (Director, Planning and Business Affairs) was added to the team to bring a business perspective for contingency planning internal to UF/IFAS. Elizabeth Bolton (FL513 chair) was added to the team to bring a small-business perspective to the team.

- Current Plans

  1. UF/IFAS Y2K team will attend Year2000 Outreach Initiative Workshop in Orlando on February 23rd and 24th
  2. In Service Training will be conducted for County Faculty and Staff with related responsibilities during April. Tentative locations where training will take place are Marianna, Gainesville and Ft. Pierce.
  3. 8 Workshops targeted to small business and agriculture will be conducted in May, June and July. Our goal is to coordinate these with SMP FL513. Locations being considered for the workshops are Homestead, Orlando, Hillsborough/Bradenton, Ft. Myers, Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Pensacola.

  We expect the workshop in Orlando to be helpful in arriving to a short-term strategy for embedded systems and contingency planning. We also expect to obtain substantial educational materials for delivery to internal and external constituents.