Oregon Ask an Expert

Overview

The Oregon State University Extension Service has introduced Ask an Expert on websites across the state. This project is an effort to (1) continue the Extension tradition of delivering public education and information with increasingly limited resources, and (2) increase engagement with new and existing audiences using online communication methods that Oregonians have come to expect.

What is Ask an Expert?
Ask an Expert is a national web-based system, supported by eXtension, that helps Extension faculty, staff, and volunteers respond more efficiently to questions they receive each day. Questions submitted through Ask an Expert widgets—small question boxes installed on Extension websites—are then routed to appropriate Experts.

Ask an Expert in Oregon
OSU has invested in the development of eXtension’s national Ask an Expert system and is now expanding on existing Ask an Expert efforts (e.g., the eOrganic Community of Practice and statewide Master Gardener Program.)

A primary goal of Oregon’s Ask an Expert project is to answer questions with objective, research-based information in less than two business days.

Ask an Expert Roles
Here in Oregon, Ask an Expert is supported by OSU Extension faculty, staff and trained volunteers who fulfill the following roles:

• **Question Monitors**—Each of Extension’s five program areas have identified Question Monitors who will check incoming questions at least three times per business day and route those inquiries to appropriate OSU Experts.

• **Experts**—OSU Extension Service Experts (e.g., faculty, staff and trained volunteers) will review questions assigned to them by the Question Monitors and respond directly to the question submitter using eXtension’s web-based Ask an Expert system.

• **Ask an Expert Coordinator**—The Ask an Expert Coordinator assists Question Wranglers, monitors the technical performance of the Ask an Expert system, and works with program leaders to implement adjustments, as necessary.