Initiative 4: Producing and conserving traditional and alternative forms of energy.

Florida is the fourth most populous state in the nation. It ranks third in total fuel and electrical energy consumed annually, but it produces less that 1% of the total energy it consumes. Florida's demand for electricity is expected to rise 30% during the next 10 years. Almost 90% of Florida's energy is produced using fossil fuels. Thus, it is imperative that the state enter the bioenergy and bioproducts arena with special emphasis on improving self-sufficiency, alternative energy sources, addressing climate change, and stimulating economic development by transforming agricultural products into energy.

Rising fuel prices, environmental concerns, pressures for oil independence, and federal energy policy are creating a strong market for renewable energy. Within the United States, Florida has the climate, soils, land, and water to produce year-round diverse, fast-growing, high-yielding biomass feedstocks. Abundant opportunities exist in Florida to grow and process biofuel-producing crops without competing with food production. Florida Extension can provide the research-based information needed to produce, deliver, and process bio-based energy products while conserving natural resources.

Broad-based education and awareness are needed to enhance participation in utility conservation programs, enhance energy efficiency, and improve consumer choices about energy use. By using a conservation and efficiency approach, Florida Extension education programs can help residents acquire a better understanding of their roles and learn practices they can implement to reduce their individual and community energy consumption.

P1 – Conservation Practices and Efficiency Improvement
Save energy by educating citizens and business people about the social, economic and environmental effects of energy use in Florida and conservation practices they can adopt as an integral part of their everyday lives.

P2– Alternative Energy Solutions
Expand the energy landscape by teaching citizens and business owners about the availability, viability, applicability, and use of alternative energy and water (as related to energy) sources.

P3 – Community Capacity Development
Improve community energy policy and management decision-making quality and capacity by educating professionals in the built environment, government, and industry about how to foster environmental, economic and social forces to shape sound foundations for change.