

Sustainable Agriculture Distance Learning

Final Report for ENC97-002.2

Project Type: Professional Development Program

Funds awarded in 1997: \$57,700.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/2000

Matching Non-Federal Funds: \$28,850.00

Region: North Central

State: North Dakota

Project Coordinator:

[Thomas Hanson](#)

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Project Information

Abstract:

Three training sessions have been completed including Holistic Resource Management, Alternative Marketing Methods, and Intensive Grazing Management. These sessions have utilized the two-way video systems in both Dakotas and have thus enabled use of an out-of-state instructor and producers who could conveniently drive to a nearby site, not requiring a long commute to participate. Agents and others taking the training are appreciative of the reduced travel distances with this system. Evaluations of the completed sessions have indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the material presented and the delivery system. College seniors have also participated with reports on special projects which they have been working on. Significant hand-out materials have been handed out at the individual sites during the training.

Project Objectives:

1. To expand Extension agents' and federal and state agencies' field staff understanding of critical sustainable agriculture biological topics.
2. To offer high quality interactive instruction in an effective manner convenient for instructors and students.
3. To expand the utilization of sustainable agriculture concepts in the programming carried out by agriculture and students.
4. To increase interaction between NRCS, Extension, and producers that practice sustainable agriculture concepts.

Education & Outreach Initiatives

Objective:

Description:

Methods

The IVN/RDT systems were used to facilitate more convenient attendance by Extension agents, NRCS staff, and others. It also allowed use of out-of-state speakers to be instructors and participate in questions without requiring significant travel and additional time and expense. Busy producers were able to participate as the sites were set up to include those closest to them requiring only a short time away from home. Slides and video were incorporated to aid in describing topic information.

Outreach and Publications

Handout-Holistic Resource Management—includes explanations of succession, the Holistic Management Model, the water cycle, and a paradigms exercise.

Power Point presentation (John Ikerd)—Missouri Farmers on the Road to Sustainability, Keys to Profits in Niche Markets, What Makes Niche Markets Work?, Are Niche Markets Sustainable?

Charts and photos (John Ikerd)—Best Opportunities for Sustainable Niche Markets

Video—Above described Ikerd presentation, CSA panel, direct marketing panel

Video—“Defining marketing Opportunities for Sustainable Agriculture” (Dave Kraenzel)

Overheads (Don Kirby)—“Basic Range Plant Physiology”

Handout (Kent Alderin)—Electric Fencing Supplier List

Outcomes and impacts:

Evaluations received for the sessions completed indicated for the most part satisfaction with the material presented and the IVN/RDTN system. Requests for a tape of the sessions have been received. Sessions similar to the ones given have been offered to producers through Extension programming. Several instructors involved have since been invited to participate in Extension sponsored events involving producers regarding the topic areas discussed in the training sessions.

Holistic Resource Management (Wayne Berry-Instructor)

February 10, 1998

IVN=Bismarck, Dickinson, Minot, Fargo, Williston

RDTN=Rapid City, Aberdeen, Brookings, Pierre

65 in attendance from Extension and NRCS

Wayne Berry is agriculture instructor at UND-Williston and rancher in eastern Montana

Alternative Marketing Methods

May 7, 1998

IVN=Bismarck, Dickinson, Minot, Fargo, Devils Lake

RDTN=Rapid City, Aberdeen, Brookings, Pierre

51 in attendance from Extension, Farm Credit Services, independent banks

John Ikerd, Dave Kraenzel=instructors

6 farmers participated on 2 panels

Intensive Rotational Grazing

April 8, 1999

IVN=Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, Fargo

RDTN=Pierre, Brookings, Spearfish, Aberdeen, Mitchell

27 in attendance from Extension and NRCS

Instructor list attached as appendix
No farmer participation-all calving and unable to leave farm

Project Outcomes

Recommendations:

Future Recommendations

Marketing will always be a topic which should be stressed. A full Holistic Management course may be offered in the future. The intensive rotational grazing topic needs more research in the northern plains native ranges to garner support from the range scientists. Tours of producers using intensive rotational management is a potential activity to build on these sessions.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or SARE.



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This site is maintained by SARE Outreach for the SARE program and is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award No. 2019-38640-29881. SARE Outreach operates under cooperative agreements with the University of Maryland to develop and disseminate information about sustainable agriculture. [USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.](#)