

Kentucky Cooperative Extension System Training Project

Final Report for ES97-015

Project Type: Professional Development Program

Funds awarded in 1997: \$50,000.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/2000

Matching Non-Federal Funds: \$79,250.00

Region: Southern

State: Kentucky

Principal Investigator:

[Dr. Marion Simon](#)

Kentucky State University

Project Information

Abstract:

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension System Training Project, "The Third Thursday Thing," successfully developed multidisciplinary teams of farmers, 1890 and 1862 professionals and paraprofessionals, NRCS and USDA agency professionals and technicians, Kentucky Department of Agriculture and state agencies, state and private universities and colleges, Heifer Project, Intl., agribusinessmen, and consumers to address sustainable agriculture issues in Kentucky. Nearly 85 people regularly attend the monthly workshops with over 1,200 farmers and over 250 agricultural professionals attending throughout the period. Eighteen minorities and nearly 40 women regularly attend. Topics covered many subjects areas in production, marketing, value added, policy, and human issues. The training provided continuing education through monthly, hands on workshops and biennial statewide sustainable agriculture small farm field days at the Kentucky State University Research Farm. These monthly workshops at the same location allowed trainees to see the natural progression of crop and livestock activities; the impacts of weather, multiple cropping systems and innovative cropping practices, gave them the opportunity to identify plants and insects in different stages of maturity; and provided the opportunity to recognize plant diseases, beneficial insects, and the timeliness/growth cycle of the different crops and enterprises. The shared learning experiences were designed by Extension and research professionals and paraprofessionals (1890 and 1862), agricultural industry personnel, farmers, state and federal agency personnel, non profits, and veterinarians.

Project Objectives:

1. To educate 1862 and 1890 Extension professionals and paraprofessionals about sustainable agriculture. Behavior change: An increased awareness and acceptance of the practicality of sustainable agriculture.

The Kentucky State University Research Farm has been developed as a demonstration of sustainable agriculture. The Research Farm will host monthly mini

field days and statewide field days to show and educate the participants about the sustainable agriculture practices that are utilized on the farm. The funds will also cover partial costs of continuing training and education for Extension staff (and research staff who are involved in fanner education projects) in the area of sustainable agriculture travel to training meetings both instate and out of state.

2. To educate 1862 and 1890 Extension professionals and paraprofessionals about practical uses of organic agriculture. Behavior change: An increased awareness of the practicality of organic agriculture for selected farming practices with a particular emphasis on limited resource farms.

The Kentucky State University Research Farm has developed several projects that are certified organic. The Research Farm will host monthly mini field days and statewide field days to show, tell and educate participants about the use of organic agriculture and reduced use of pesticides.

3. To educate farmer leaders (members of the Kentucky Agricultural Advancement Council and Area Agricultural Advancement Councils), NRCS and agency employees and farmers about sustainable agriculture and organic agriculture and the need for leaders to share this information throughout their local communities.

Selected mini field days and statewide field days (described in 91 and #2) will include the above clientele. This project will also include three on farm demonstration projects for use in field days. Funds will also cover the costs of a meeting of the Kentucky Agricultural Advancement Council which will focus on continuing needs for (progress of) sustainable agriculture as identified by the statewide focus groups during the development of the Sustainable Agriculture Plan for Kentucky which was developed in 1995 and discussed at the first statewide Agricultural Advancement Council meeting in 1996.

Introduction:

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension System Training Project has successfully developed multidisciplinary teams of farmers, 1890 and 1862 Extension and Research professionals and paraprofessionals, NRCS and other USDA agency professionals and technicians, Kentucky Department of Agriculture and other state agency staff, state and private universities and colleges, Heifer Project, Intl., agribusinessmen, consumer advocates and veterinarians to address sustainable agriculture issues in Kentucky. Nearly 85 people regularly attend the monthly workshops with over 1,200 farmers and over 250 agricultural professionals attending throughout the period. Many participants regularly commute for three to four hours to attend, many adjust work schedules, and all discuss shared learning experiences. Participants have attended from coast to coast in the U.S. and Europe. Enthusiasm is high as participants look forward to the next Third Thursday. Topics covered have included many subjects and subject areas. Marketing and economics topics have included direct marketing, livestock and grain marketing, farm planning and farm records, certified kitchens, alternative marketing methods, advertising, consumer marketing, USDA programs including FSA, RD, Crop Insurance, and NRCS, and consumer awareness issues. Organic, alternative, and traditional methods of sustainable production of grain, tobacco, vegetables, fruits and nuts, livestock, poultry, aquaculture, bees, ostriches and alternative animals, pawpaws, forages, herbs and beneficial insects have been studied. Production issues have included water quality, cover crops, soil quality and tilth, and environmentally friendly agricultural production. Socio-economic issues have included the special needs of small, minority and/or limited resource farmers, as well as, the social and economic needs of farm families and family farm sustainability in a local, regional and global economy. The natural progression of the Kentucky State University Research Farm

has provided an excellent site for the hands on training.

Over 250 people attended the first statewide Stewardship Farming Field Day (September, 1997) at Kentucky State University. This expanded to over 450 people from four states and over 50 Kentucky counties attending the Small Farm Field Day (September, 1999), the second statewide field day sponsored through this project and hosted by Kentucky State University Land Grant Program which was held in conjunction with the proclamation of Kentucky Farm Safety Awareness Week. Nearly 50 sustainable agriculture topics were presented with five tracks during each of these statewide activities. The statewide field days showed strong multidisciplinary commitment between Kentucky's 1890 and 1862 research and Extension efforts, farmers, agribusinessmen, SARE, USDA and state agencies, Langston University, Berea College, the MANNRS student organization, and consumer groups.

The sustainable agriculture training is showing impacts across Kentucky. Notable impacts and outcomes of the trainings to date show advances in the areas of sustainable agriculture, environmental awareness and protection, organic and alternative production methods, marketing, farmer cooperation, alternative meat marketing opportunities, and the development of multidisciplinary teams to reach common goals. Additional states have enquired into the model program and Tennessee State University intends to start a similar workshop series in 2000. Several outcomes of the project are summarized below.

- Extension Agents and Small Farm Extension paraprofessionals indicate an increased knowledge of sustainable agriculture and sustainable production techniques. They indicate a heightened understanding and respect for organic and reduced input production techniques, and are better able to respond to marketing and production questions for these alternative production methods.
- The sustainable agriculture training sessions have included training on Kentucky's legislated Water Quality Act which must be implemented by 2002. Of the 85 farmers who regularly attend the monthly field days, all indicate they have developed plans, or are currently developing plans.
- Following the statewide 1997 Stewardship Farming Field Day, five farmers constructed unheated greenhouses. They returned to teach three workshops to discuss their experiences and design modifications. All indicated they are expanding their unheated greenhouses. Several other farmers plan to expand their operations to include cold frames.
- The use of cover crops, compost, manure, legumes and green manures to increase soil nitrogen has been presented often. Over 30 farmers have implemented these systems on a few acres or rows of tomatoes.
- Through linkages developed during the sustainable agriculture training meetings, several farmers have developed equipment sharing cooperatives.
- Through linkages developed during the sustainable agriculture training meetings, the Partnership for Family Farms organization was formed. This coalition is working to resolve constraints to marketing alternative plant and animal farm products, particularly those associated with marketing pastured poultry, rabbits, organically grown and/or hormone free beef, sheep, and pork products, aquaculture, value added products, and other direct marketed products or products that do not have traditional marketing systems in place. This organization includes partners from the University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, KY Department for Agriculture, KY Health and Human Services, Berea College, Morehead State University, Heifer Project, Intl., farmers, and consumer groups. In 1999, Partners acquired a Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) marketing grant to upgrade existing custom processing plants to USDA standards and to construct a mobile processing unit for

poultry. One custom processing plant was upgraded to USDA standards and will service farmers from a 100 mile radius to Cynthiana, KY over 100 farmers have indicated they will utilize this facility. A mobile processing unit was constructed via joint grants from KDA, Heifer Project, Intl., and SARE the unit is housed at the Kentucky State University Research Farm. This endeavor ties in closely with three other SARE projects which address pastured poultry and farm raised shrimp as viable farm enterprises. The mobile processing unit was used for one Third Thursday training session in 2000 and educational videotapes are currently being made (rough footage taped October November, 2000) for training with the mobile processing unit. Upon final approval, some 100 farmers are expected to utilize the mobile processing unit.

- Ten farm families have developed a cooperative, similar to community supported agriculture, for marketing their organic vegetables. They have developed customers over a region of 70 miles.

The initiative was started by two minority farm families who are regular participants in the Third Thursday Workshops. They incorporated their Third Thursday marketing training as they developed this cooperative effort, incorporated e mail, FAX, and a website into the organization, developed a logo and signs for their cars and trucks, and purchased a van for product distribution.

- Following the February, 1999 workshop on farm records and USDA and state agencies, one woman who had been denied several loan applications for home repair by private banks (her roof was actually falling), referred to her workshop materials and filed a housing loan application with USDA Rural Development. She immediately qualified for, and received, a low interest housing loan to repair her house. Several other participants have filed applications for USDA services after learning the benefits of these agencies through the Third Thursdays.

- In January, 1999, Kentucky State University (KSU) sponsored a van to the Southern SAWG conference with two agents and seven farmers from the Third Thursday group. Several other Third Thursday regulars including agents, researchers, specialists, farmers, and farm publication editors also participated making our delegation nearly 20. In January, 2000, KSU sponsored three vans and the University of Kentucky sponsored one car to transport farmers and agents to Southern SAWG. Kentucky's delegation numbered 40, all from our Third Thursday Sustainable Agriculture group. Additionally, one Third Thursday regular attended the Southern SARE PDP 2000 Workshop meeting as Kentucky's representative farmer and is the designee for 2001. Because of this effort, Kentucky has consistently had the largest delegation to SAWG with a large contingency of minorities and women.

- Farmer leadership in the area of sustainable agriculture has improved significantly during this project. Of the 85 regular farmer participants, 15-20 are minorities and over half are women. Over 70 of these farmers have participated in SAWG, the Southern Marketing Outreach Conference, the One Hundred Farmers Conference, the Kentucky Ministerial Institute, the SARE workshop, and other activities. They have spoken at Third Thursdays, local Extension meetings, 4-H clubs, worked with school projects, and have hosted field days. Fifteen are active leaders in their local farmer's markets; several are active in Community Farm Alliance, Farm Bureau, Cattlemen's Associations, Extension Boards and Advisory Groups, Southern SAWG, the Kentucky Women in Agriculture Committee, USDA county committees, and commodity organizations; three are on The Governor's Commission for Family Farms; one was on the National Commission for Small Farms while six testified at the hearings; and one is on the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission.

- Agriculture professional leadership in the area of sustainable agriculture has improved significantly. Of the Third Thursday participants, several have attended

SAWG, over 75 have taught workshops, and many have indicated more commitment to sustainable agriculture throughout their on going programs.

- There is a heightened respect for interdisciplinary research and extension efforts in Kentucky. Along with this, is more inclusion of diverse groups into training workshops, program planning, and research design/planning. There is more farmer input into research projects and more cooperation among the state universities and colleges and USDA and state agencies. The sustainable agriculture movement is one driving force behind this change. The Third Thursday methodology for shared learning experiences and networking between land grant and non land grant colleges and universities, researchers and extension personnel at all levels, farmers, consumers, USDA and state agencies, minority farmers, women farmers, organic and traditional producers has played a role in this change.

- Within the Kentucky State University Land Grant Program, there is much more interaction among farmers, researchers and extension staff, more farmer and extension involvement in research planning; and a strengthened commitment to sustainable agriculture. Essentially all Land Grant Program projects now include a strong commitment to sustainable agriculture and/or human health. All research farm experimental projects have an Extension component for public education. All research Principal Investigators have been involved in teaching Third Thursday workshops and are committed to the Third Thursday program.

- Between 15-20 minority farmers and 40 women farmers and veterinarians are actively involved in the training workshops. These were not previously actively involved in Extension activities. Additionally, nearly 25 agricultural professional and paraprofessionals who are women and minorities regularly attend these workshops.

- Tennessee State University has made the commitment to start a Third Tuesday Workshop series modeled after the Kentucky project to commence in 2001.

- An organic ostrich producer began attending the workshops for production information and became interested in value added marketing. She developed "Red Rooster" ostrich jerky which she currently markets in truckstops throughout the southeastern U.S.

- Ten Third Thursday organic vegetable producers are selling through farmer's markets, they are also in leadership roles within the farmer's markets providing organization and management skills to the respective farmer's markets.

- Two Third Thursday cooperators established contracts for organically grown summer squash for baby food.

- Three Third Thursday producers are selling non hormone beef products, five are selling nonhormone sheep products.

- One Third Thursday cooperator produces cane for sorghum and sells sorghum syrup as a value-added product. This cooperator conducted a demonstration during the 1999 Small Farm Field Day.

- Five Third Thursday participants have installed, or plan to install, certified kitchens.

Education & Outreach Initiatives

Objective:

Description:

Methods

Background Information

Agriculture in Kentucky ranges from the mountainous, highly erodible Appalachian region in the east, through the karst areas in the central regions, to the Mississippi River bottomland in the west. Many areas are highly erodible with numerous above and below ground rivers and streams. Wildlife and environmental concerns, coupled with rapidly expanding development in many areas, make non point source pollution, water quality, sustainable agriculture, sustainable communities and environmental issues significant concerns.

Kentucky is high in the numbers of small farms and is the state where small farms contribute the most to the state's economy. Small farms are highly dependent on tobacco and are at risk given the current political and economic issues surrounding tobacco. Agricultural professionals, particularly those in Extension, research and USDA agencies, are seeking answers and methodologies to help sustain these small farm families, particularly those who are at risk of losing their primary source of farm income.

These agricultural professionals are working with the agricultural community and others to develop sustainable farming systems that efficiently utilize the farm's resource base and onfarm resources. They are evaluating alternative farm enterprises, cropping, production and marketing systems, and providing educational programs for producers and consumers. They are looking at quality of life, safety, and stress management issues as farmers and their communities are in transition. As they prepare and develop programs, they must not only consider the agriculture profitability and sustainability issues, but must be capable of working with diverse groups and coordinating multi disciplinary projects. Because many of the farms are small, limited resource farms, the need is greater for low cost, sustainable practices to be developed and utilized.

The Design of the Monthly Sustainable Agriculture "Third Thursday Thing" Workshops

The 1997-2000 Kentucky Extension System SARE PDP Training Project was designed to provide hands on training for County Extension Agents For Agriculture (1890 and 1862), Small Farm Assistants (1890 paraprofessionals), area and state specialists, researchers and agents (1890 and 1862), state and federal agencies (particularly USDA NRCS and FSA, Kentucky Departments of Water Quality and Agriculture), and farmer leaders. It was a joint 1890-1862 initiative between Kentucky State University and the University of Kentucky with Kentucky State University taking the lead role. The training project provided continuing education by supporting monthly workshops and two biennial statewide sustainable agriculture small farm field days. The primary methodology used was monthly sustainable agriculture workshops, hands on training, at the Kentucky State University Research Farm. These monthly workshops at the same location allowed trainees to see the natural progression of crop and livestock activities; the impacts of weather, multiple cropping systems and innovative cropping practices; gave them the opportunity to identify plants and insects in different stages of maturity; and provided the opportunity to recognize plant diseases, beneficial insects, and the timeliness/growth cycle of the different crops and enterprises. The shared learning experiences were designed by Extension and research professionals and paraprofessionals (1890 and 1862), agricultural industry personnel, farmers, state and federal agency personnel, non profits, and veterinarians. Many farmer groups participated including traditional livestock and crop farmers, Farm Bureau and beef cattle associations as well as non traditional farmer groups including organic growers, the Family Farm Coalition, Heifer Project,

International, Partners for Family Farms, and the Community Farm Alliance. Monthly trainings originally followed a mini-field day, multiple enterprise format, but were revised in 1999 to focus in depth on a specific monthly topic, with different topics scheduled into the workshop series. The Kentucky State University Research Farm was uniquely designed for this concept in that every research project has an Extension demonstration component, the farm was designed from the beginning to be sustainable and environmentally friendly, several parts of the farm are certified organic, and there is a documented environmental and water quality plan for the farm. The farm is small, with several small farm components built into its design. The farm has karst, highly erodible soils, silviculture areas, several ponds, springs, streams, and areas that are suitable for cultivation. However, the most unique part is a Research, Extension, and Administrative staff who strongly support sustainable, environmentally conscious agriculture.

The yearly timetable of activities was designed by an overall planning committee, plus input from participants, paraprofessionals and agents. However, it was revised, as needed, to cover urgent needs or impending legislation. Each workshop encouraged shared learning experiences between agricultural professionals, farmers and others with a designated time period for this activity. Presenters included 1890 and 1862 Extension and research professionals and paraprofessionals, USDA and state agencies, non-land grant institutions, non-profits, farmers, consumer groups and others. The SARE-PDP (1997-2000) project covered a small portion of the travel (primarily working lunches for participants), tent rental and three honorariums. The majority of the travel, lodging and instruction were in kind contributions by 1890 and 1862 Research and Extension staff, USDA and state agencies, farmers, non profits and others. Through these partnerships, the one year project funded July, 1997 was expanded from July, 1997 through August, 2000, with Kentucky State University cost sharing the initiative from January, 1997 through December, 2000.

Strengths of the workshop series include its appeal to non-traditional farmers who take active roles in the teaching and operation of the workshops. Even though the workshops are designed for agricultural professionals, they have had a strong appeal to women and minority farmers who do not attend traditional Extension training meetings. This appears to be due to several reasons: (1) they are hosted by an 1890 Institution, (2) they have a hands on approach where all questions and agreements/disagreements are welcomed and encouraged, (3) farmers as well as professionals are presenters, (4) there is a relaxed, informal atmosphere where everyone dresses casually and are prepared for farm walks regardless of the weather, (5) the workshop topics can be immediately revised to address immediate needs (flooding, drought, natural disasters) or impending legislation, (6) all participants have input into the program planning, (7) the training programs include organics, alternative crops, and many topics outside the traditional Extension training topics, and 8) parents are encouraged to bring their children a key for outreach programs for farm women.

From the agricultural professionals view, the strengths include opportunities to discuss research and Educational efforts into non traditional production methods, new crops and enterprises, and to the opportunity to challenge and expand their thinking about traditional production practices and farm enterprises. However, the greatest strength of the workshop series, is that it provides a medium for information and idea exchange between all participants as equals land grant and non land grant colleges and universities, farmers and researchers, USDA and state agencies, Extension professionals and paraprofessionals with non traditional farmers, minority farmers, and women farmers. This free exchange of information has helped researchers to identify new research areas, Extension persons to accept new practices, and has, without original plans to do so, encouraged minorities and

women to take active roles in sustainable agriculture efforts in Kentucky.

Outreach and Publications

1. Materials presented at the monthly workshops were collected and notes taken during the presentations, These materials were placed in a reference binder. Some workshops were videotaped.
2. There was statewide television coverage of the two statewide field days and the 1st national PawPaw Conference which was held in cooperation with the October, 1999 Third Thursday.
3. Writers and editors for the statewide agriculture newspaper, The Farmer's Pride, and the regional (KY-OH-IN) agricultural newspaper, Farmweek, regularly attend the Third Thursday workshops and feature the topics and activities of the workshops in their respective newspapers.
4. Poster and oral presentations on the Third Thursday Sustainable Agriculture Workshop series have been presented at the 1998, 1999, and 2000 SARE-PDP and SAWG Annual Workshops; the 1999/2000 Kentucky Women in Agriculture Conferences; the 2000 North Carolina State A&T University's Women in Agriculture Conference; the 1998 SARE Leadership in Partnership Conference; numerous county and area Extension meetings; the 1999 Small Farm State Field Day; the 2000 Small Farm School Meals Initiative Southeast Regional Workshop; the 2000 Annual Meetings of the National Extension Directors and Administrators Association; the 1999 2nd National Small Farm Conference; and the 1999 Regional Small Farmer Marketing Outreach Conference.
5. There are currently some 600 people on the monthly mailing list, plus e mails are sent to all county Extension offices announcing each workshop. Many agents then send the announcement to their local newspapers. The "Third Thursday" of each month date helps attendees to identify with the workshops, plus many participants remember the September Biennial Small Farm Field Day which also occurs on the Third Thursday.
6. List of Publications, Professional Presentations, and Poster Presentations
Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing: Sustainable Agriculture Training at the Kentucky State University Research Farm," Poster presentation, SARE-PDP Annual Meetings, 1998.
Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing: Sustainable Agriculture Training at the Kentucky State University Research Farm," Poster presentation, USDA Small Farm School Meals Initiative Southeast Regional Workshop, Georgetown, KY, 2000.
Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing: Sustainable Agriculture Training at the Kentucky State University Research Farm," Poster presentation, Kentucky State University Statewide Field Day, 1999.
Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing: Sustainable Agriculture Training at the Kentucky State University Research Farm," Poster presentation, USDA 1890 Marketing Outreach Conference, Memphis, TN, 1999.
Simon, Marion and Robert Hadad. "The Kentucky SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Education Project." Invited presentation. Southern SARE PDP (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Professional Development Program) State Coordinators Annual Meeting, Raleigh, NC, 1997.
Simon, Marion and Robert M. Stone. "The Kentucky SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Training Project." Invited presentation. Southern SARE PDP (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Professional Development Program) Annual Meeting, Memphis, TN, 1998.

Simon, Marion. "The Kentucky SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Training Project and the Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program's Small Farm Program." Invited poster. SARE 1998 Leadership in Partnership Conference, Nov. 9-10, 1998, Frankfort, KY.

Simon, Marion. "The Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program's Small Farm Program and SARE-PDP Project." Invited presentation. Association of Kentucky Extension Specialists. Lexington, KY, 1998.

Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing:" Kentucky State University's SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Training Project." Invited poster. Southern SARE-PDP (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Professional Development Program) Annual Meeting, Jekyll Island, GA, 1999.

Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing:" Kentucky State University's SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Training Project." Invited poster. Southern SARE-PDP (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Professional Development Program) Annual Meeting, Jekyll Island, GA, 2000.

Simon, Marion. "The Third Thursday Thing:" Kentucky State University's SARE-PDP Sustainable Agriculture Training Project." Invited presenter. Association of Extension Directors and Administrators. Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 2000.

Stone, Mac. "Learning from Farmer Led Research at the Kentucky State University Research Farm." *Plowshares & Pioneers*, University of Kentucky publ., Betty King, ed., Dec., 1998.

The conservation educational efforts of the Kentucky State University Research Farm (and Land Grant Program) which includes "The Third Thursday Thing" sustainable agricultural workshops received regional, state and national recognition from the Conservation Districts.

"The Third Thursday Thing" has been featured in the Southern Region and National SARE publications and newsletters.

Outcomes and impacts:

Objectives

1. To educate 1862 and 1890 Extension professionals and paraprofessionals about sustainable agriculture. Behavior change: An increased awareness and acceptance of the practicality of sustainable agriculture.
 2. To educate 1862 and 1890 Extension professionals and paraprofessionals about practical uses of organic agriculture. Behavior change: An increased awareness of the practicality of organic agriculture for selected farming practices with a particular emphasis on limited resource farms.
- Extension Agents and Small Farm Extension paraprofessionals indicate an increased knowledge of sustainable agriculture and sustainable production techniques. They indicate a heightened understanding and respect for organic and reduced input production techniques, and are better able to respond to marketing and production questions for these alternative production methods.
 - Agriculture professional leadership in the area of sustainable agriculture has improved significantly. Of the Third Thursday participants, several have attended SAWG, over 75 have taught workshops, and many have indicated more commitment to sustainable agriculture throughout their on going programs. Nearly 25 agricultural professional and paraprofessionals who are women and minorities regularly attend these workshops.
 - There has been a heightened respect for interdisciplinary research and extension

efforts in Kentucky. Along with this, is more inclusion of diverse groups into training workshops, program planning, and research design/planning. There is more farmer input into research projects and more cooperation among the state universities and colleges and USDA and state agencies. As a methodology for shared learning experiences and networking between land grant and non land grant researchers and extension personal at the local and state level, farmers, consumers, USDA and state agencies, minority farmers, women farmers, organic and traditional producers, this monthly endeavor has provided outreach and networking between diverse groups and diverse populations.

- Within Kentucky State University Land Grant Program, there is much more interaction among farmers, researchers and extension staff, more farmer and extension involvement in research planning; and a stronger commitment to sustainable agriculture. Essentially all Land Grant Program projects now include a strong commitment to sustainable agriculture and health and all research farm experimental projects have an Extension component for public education. All research Principal Investigators have been involved in teaching Third Thursday Workshops.

- Tennessee State University has now made the commitment to start a Third Tuesday Workshop series modeled after, and in collaboration with, the Kentucky project.

- Through linkages developed during the sustainable agriculture training meetings, the Partnership for Family Farms organization was formed. This coalition is working to resolve constraints to marketing alternative plant and animal farm products, particularly those associated with marketing pastured poultry, rabbits, organically grown and/or hormone free beef, sheep, and pork products, aquaculture, value added products, and other direct marketed products or products that do not have traditional marketing systems in place. This organization includes partners from the University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, KY Department for Agriculture, KY Health and Human Services, Berea College, Morehead State University, Heifer Project, Intl., farmers, and consumer groups. In 1999, Partners acquired a Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) marketing grant to upgrade existing custom processing plants to USDA standards and to construct a mobile processing unit for poultry. One custom processing plant was upgraded to USDA standards and will service farmers from a 100 mile radius to Cynthiana, KY over 100 farmers have indicated they will utilize this facility. A mobile processing unit was constructed via joint grants from KDA, Heifer Project, Intl., and SARE the unit is housed at the Kentucky State University Research Farm. This endeavor ties in closely with three other SARE projects which address pastured poultry and farm raised shrimp as viable farm enterprises. The mobile processing unit was used for one Third Thursday training session in 2000 and educational videotapes are currently being made (taping October November, 2000) for training with the mobile processing unit. Some 100 farmers are expected to utilize this facility.

3. To educate farmer leaders (members of the Kentucky Agricultural Advancement Council and Area Agricultural Advancement Councils), NRCS and agency employees and farmers about sustainable agriculture and organic agriculture and the need for leaders to share this information throughout their local communities.

- Funds covered the costs of a meeting of the Kentucky Agricultural Advancement Council which focused on continuing agriculture needs as identified by the statewide focus groups.

The sustainable agriculture training sessions have included training on Kentucky's legislated Water Quality Act which must be implemented by 2002. Of the 85 farmers who regularly attend the monthly field days, all indicate they have developed plans,

or are currently developing plans.

- Following the statewide 1997 Stewardship Farming Field Day, five farmers constructed the unheated greenhouses. They returned to teach three workshops to discuss their experiences and design modifications. All indicated they are expanding their unheated greenhouses. Several other farmers plan to expand their operations to include cold frames.

- Ten farm families have developed a cooperative, similar to community supported agriculture, for marketing their organic vegetables. They have developed customers over a region of 70 miles. The initiative was started by two minority farm families who are regular participants in the Third Thursday Workshops. They incorporated their Third Thursday marketing training as they developed this cooperative effort, incorporated e mail, FAX, and a website into the organization, developed a logo and signs for their cars and trucks, and purchased a van for product distribution.

- In January, 1999, KSU sponsored a van to the Southern SAWG conference with two agents and seven farmers from the Third Thursday group. Several other Third Thursday regulars including agents, researchers, specialists, farmers, and farm publication editors also participated making our delegation nearly 20. In January, 2000, KSU sponsored three vans and UK sponsored one car to transport farmers and agents to Southern SAWG. Kentucky's delegation numbered 40 from our Third Thursday Sustainable Agriculture group with a large contingency of minorities and women. Additionally, one Third Thursday regular attended the Southern SARE PDP meeting as Kentucky's representative farmer.

- Farmer leadership in the area of sustainable agriculture has improved significantly during this project. Of the 85 regular farmer participants, 15-20 are minorities and over half are women. Over 70 of these farmers have participated in SAWG, the Southern Marketing Outreach Conference, the One Hundred Farmers Conference, the Kentucky Ministerial Institute, the SARE workshop, and other activities. They have spoken at Third Thursdays, local Extension meetings, 4-H clubs, worked with school projects, and have hosted field days. Fifteen are active leaders in their local farmer's markets , several are active in Community Farm Alliance, Farm Bureau, Cattlemen's Associations, Extension Boards and Advisory Groups, Southern SAWG, the Kentucky Women in Agriculture Committee, USDA county committees, and commodity organizations; three are on The Governor's Commission for Family Farms; one was on the National Commission for Small Farms while six testified at the hearings; and one is on the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission.

- Between 15-20 minority farmers and 40 women farmers and veterinarians are actively involved in the training workshops. These farmers were not previously actively involved in Extension activities.

- Ten Third Thursday organic vegetable producers are selling through farmer's markets. They all have leadership roles within their respective cooperatives.

Project Outcomes

Recommendations:

The Kentucky model has shown in-depth monthly workshops (1999-2000 format) to be an improvement over the 1997-98 mini field days that covered several topics. A two year plan for programming, rather than the current one year plan, will strengthen the workshop series, yet the workshops must be flexible to address urgent needs and forthcoming policy changes and/or state and USDA initiatives.

Packaging the workshop series in loose leaf notebooks and videoing the workshops for reproduction and distribution will increase the visibility of the workshops as materials can be distributed across the state and across the region. This was done to a limited degree during this initial period. The hands on approach will somewhat limit the dissemination of the entire workshop; however, KSU has plans to test up linking at least one of the workshops for remote site educational programs when our facilities are in place.

At the regional level, I recommend that SARE make this project more effective by continued funding of this and partnership efforts to start similar programs in other locations. I realize this approach is most attractive to small and non traditional farmers who want to interact with Land Grant staff, to have input into research and Extension efforts, and want hands on information. It has been particularly effective with women and minority farmers who do not regularly attend traditional county Extension training meetings. It appeals to agents who are located in small farm regions; who are looking for information concerning alternative production and marketing practices; who are looking at non traditional enterprises, particularly commodities that do not have historically strong Land Grant research bases but are being grown in their counties and are often farmer research based; and agents whose priority areas are horticulture or working with non traditional clientele. It is an excellent outreach model for 1890 and small farm outreach, even though it was, and continues to be, designed for professionals, technicians and paraprofessionals within the Land Grant and USDA system. I view this as the strength of the program, especially as farmers and others came to us at KSU asking to attend and to be active participants in the training as educators, trainees, and cooperators in on farm research and demonstration projects. I particularly think this model has placed Kentucky's 1890 Land Grant Program researchers in direct contact with farmers (end users). This has resulted in farmers being placed on advisory committees, has re directed research efforts toward applied research needs of this clientele, and has generated new sustainable agriculture initiatives across our entire 1890 Land Grant Program. Through this project, researchers are now conducting more on farm tests with farmers they have met through this project. It has strengthened multidisciplinary and disciplinary 1890 1862 joint research and educational efforts, and has strengthened multiagency efforts toward sustainable agriculture initiatives. It has strengthened farmer based research projects and on farm demonstration efforts.

At the USDA SARE national level, I encourage SARE to evaluate this model as an educational outreach model for small farmers in addition to a hands on professional training program. I encourage USDA SARE to look into funding joint and similar projects in areas where there are large numbers of small farms, minority farmers, women farmers, and/or farmers who are involved in non traditional enterprises and farming systems such as organics. The evaluation should consider the benefits to professionals of working hands on with diverse audiences and non traditional farmers in shared learning workshops. The evaluation should also consider the benefits to county level professionals of developing, accessing, and/or leading farmer based research projects, particularly for those enterprises or marketing systems that do not have historical Land Grant research bases.

A hypothesis to further educational program design: develop hands on educational programs that include farmers, agricultural professionals and paraprofessionals from state, federal, land grant and non land grant institutions, non profits, consumer advocates, and agribusinessmen as equal partners in the shared learning experiences, both as trainers and trainees. Encourage the free exchange of information and concerns around the specific topic areas with designated time periods for this free flow of information (essentially share information and concerns

rather than one way teaching). I feel this will lead to enhanced multidisciplinary, multi-agency efforts in the area of sustainable agriculture and increased acceptance of sustainable agriculture by the community.

Potential Contributions

Professional participants have an increased knowledge of conducting hands on training in a relaxed farm setting. They have seen and participated in on farm demonstrations and the multiple uses of such demonstrations. They have shared learning experiences with farmers, professionals and paraprofessionals from land grant, non land grant, and state and federal agencies, and with consumers and agribusinessmen. This has strengthen their networking and sense of value of all who contribute. The trainees now have a more diverse pool of resources for responding to information requests, a pool that has often gone untapped. Trainees have a strengthen respect for alternative production systems that are often not covered through traditional professional training programs. This has strengthen their understanding of these alternative production systems and their ability to evaluate these systems for an individual producer.

They have studied production and marketing systems for a wide diversity of crops and enterprises many of which are new and, basically, have no research base for making Extension recommendations. These trainees have become acquainted with producers of these crops and enterprises, and with non traditional sources of information such as ATTRA and OFRF (Organic Farming Research Foundation). They now have sources for information on these rare and nontraditional enterprises and are familiar with conducting on farm, test demonstrations to evaluate these enterprises.

They have studied many sustainable agriculture ideas and philosophies. They have discussed the pros and cons of these systems. They have discussed individual enterprises and how these fit into the total farm, the farming system, and, essentially, the community. They have discussed and been challenged in their thinking about both traditional and non traditional production systems. The professionals and farmers who have been involved in these repetitive training workshops should have a strengthened understanding of sustainable agriculture and its many facets. They should be prepared to assist other professionals and farmers to be able to logically evaluate sustainable systems and to serve as resource people on sustainable agriculture issues.

Participants, particularly land grant professionals and paraprofessionals, have indicated an increased understanding and acceptance of non traditional production practices, particularly organic and reduced input agriculture. They have indicated an increased acceptance of ATTRA and other sources of information in the absence of land grant research based information. They have indicated more understanding of new crops and enterprises and marketing opportunities. They have indicated increased understanding of the need for certified kitchens and USDA inspected facilities for value added marketing (particularly with processed products). Land grant professionals, particularly research professionals, have gained closer ties with farmers and are soliciting more farmer input into their projects.



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