



# Honey Bees on the Farm: Enhancing Agriculture and Conservation

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# Hello!

My name is Kirstin Bailey, with  
Center for Rural Affairs

- Background: Family farming for over 100 years
- Experience: Beekeeper for 8 years
- Project focus: Connecting women farmers and beekeepers for mutual benefits
- Addressing key challenges in agriculture and pollination





# Center for Rural Affairs

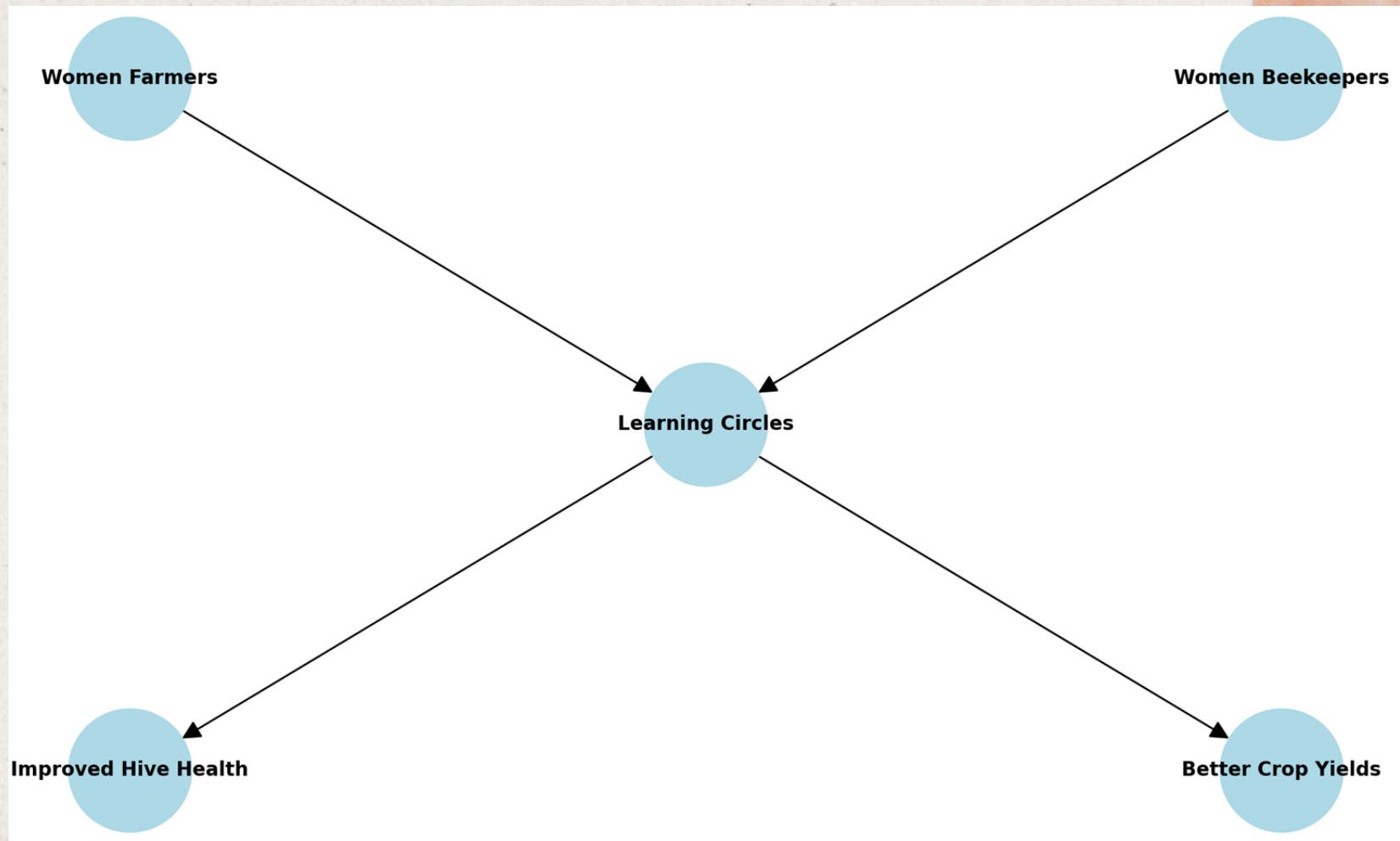
The Center for Rural Affairs is a dynamic, energetic non-profit organization working to build a better rural future for all. For over 51 years, we have worked from rural communities to create opportunities for beginning farmers, new business owners, and first-time advocates. The Center's work is fueled by our compassionate, mission-driven staff who work for the betterment of rural communities, stewardship, and the next generation.





# Project Overview

- ★ Used 'Learning Circles' for peer-led education
- ★ Connected women farmers and beekeepers
- ★ Focused on pollination, hive health, and conservation
- ★ Facilitated partnerships for co-locating hives on farms





# Learning Circles Key focus:



## Pollination Basics

- Importance of honey bees as pollinators for specialty crops.
- How pollination impacts crop yield, size, color, and taste.
- Planting diverse floral resources to support bees.
- Timing blooms to ensure continuous forage for pollinators.
- Small conservation practices that increase pollination success.

## Farm -Wise Beekeeping

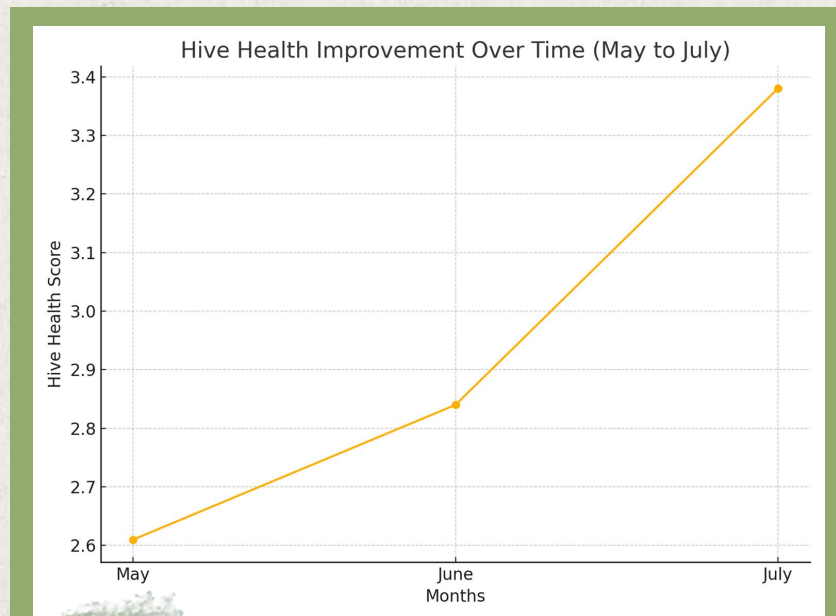
- Best practices for hive placement on farms: Avoid pesticide-treated crops, Ensure access to clean water and windbreaks, Provide diverse forage throughout the season.
- How farmers can minimize risks to honey bees.
- Understanding how land management impacts hive health.
- Creating mutually beneficial farm-beekeeper partnerships.

## Bee -Wise Farming

- Adapting beekeeping practices to farm environments.
- Communicating with farmers about hive placement and farm operations.
- Recognizing crop bloom times to maximize honey production.
- Minimizing hive disturbances during busy farm operations.
- Identifying and managing potential risks, like pesticide exposure.

# Key Outcomes and Impact

- Increased knowledge and confidence in hive management
- 88% of participants improved hive inspections



- Hive health and honey production improved
- Farmers reported better crop quality due to pollination





More frequent and  
detailed hive  
inspections

Improved hive  
placement practices

Adoption of  
pollinator - friendly  
farming methods



# Challenges, Lessons learned

## Building Confidence takes time

Provide hands on support and mentorship

## Hive placement and Land management are Critical

Hive health and productivity improve with education on hive placement and pollinator-friendly practices.

## Community and Peer support are key

Create inclusive supportive spaces where women can learn from each other

## Partnerships require communication and trust

establish clear expectations and maintain ongoing communication to build successful, long-term partnerships between farmers and beekeepers



# Practical Steps to Support Pollinators and Partnerships

- Create Opportunities for Hands-On Learning
  - **Host on - farm learning events or hive inspection days to build practical skills.**
  - **Use small peer groups to make learning approachable and foster mentorship.**
- Foster Inclusive Communities
  - Build support networks where farmers and beekeepers feel welcome.
  - Address barriers that might discourage new beekeepers, especially women.
- Focus on the Landscape
  - **Ensure hives are placed with access to clean water, diverse forage, and protection from pesticides.**
  - **Help farmers understand how their land management impacts pollinator health.**
- Start with Clear Agreements
  - Draft simple agreements for hive hosting: Who is responsible for what? Do the hives stay year round? Who tends the area around the hives if needed?
  - Communicate regularly to keep partnerships strong and adapt to challenges.



# Next Steps:

On Farm

In Community

In Organization

In Partnerships

Pollinator friendly practices

Bring people together, include  
support

Use peer lead education  
models

Clear communication, written  
agreements

# Thank You!

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