

S441
.S855

APPENDIX 11

OUTCOMES EVALUATION MATERIALS

36. Keep my secretary better informed of my whereabouts and schedule.
37. Listen
38. Better customer service
39. Get the names of all the small farmers and send them information.
40. Monitor and track interesting trends and share this information.
41. Develop local agricultural network meetings
42. Develop flyers on local agricultural agencies.
43. Will work with Kennebec county providers to organize information.
44. Will work to submit grant to organized farmer-run research group.
45. Communication
46. Presentation of our organization, the small farmer.

2. Do you think that you will use the resource notebook in the future?

1	1	2	2	3	13	4	13	5	6
not at all		somewhat				very much			

47. Overall how would you rate this conference as helpful to you in your work?

1	0	2	2	3	7	4	22	5	6
not at all		somewhat				very much			

Additional Comments:

1. Great Food! Should have made a bigger deal out of it as a part of the conference.
2. Do this again
3. To long networking period
4. Great lunch
5. Enjoyable to visit and see MOFGA's headquarters
6. What next, follow-up?
7. Need a list of all the different agencies and agricultural groups and what they provide.
8. Next time (and there should be a next time, every other year) small group discussions on a few issues would be interesting.
9. Nice job!
10. Perhaps develop a survey for small farmers to determine where their questions are in regards to the various agencies and their programs. Determine what types of information they are looking for.
11. I had the opportunity to make a job contact find out details about VISTA openings in time and tide with the farm share. I made useful contacts with other farmers and Wagn members.

12. Plan open house forum/ to showcase our county.
13. Look at USDA farm bill programs for opportunities to make them more accessible to small farmers.
14. Try to improve product availability.
15. Inform farmers of other programs.
16. Train support staff in proper way to direct.
- ↳ Clients to resources when I am out of the office.
18. Create listings of service agencies in region
19. Meet more frequently with other services agencies in region.
20. Assist in supplying market info
21. Learn about other resources available to help farmers
22. Improve methods of outreach
23. Promote and possibly teach agricultural education.
24. Guide summer resident's children in vegetable garden tours.
25. Be sensitive to needs of summer farms in delivering conservation technology.
26. Be sensitive to the needs of small farms in delivering programs.
27. Try to be a little better in responding to requests.
28. Attempt to be better at outreach
29. Combine various communication strategies/outreach
30. Provide business management/risk strategy education
31. Develop a list of references for farmers by crop/specialty
32. Encourage better communication between agencies.
33. Outreach
34. Field contact
35. Help to get UMCE to put a list together of its specialists available to farmers, and making the list available to growers to save them time when trying to get help. Does the MAC listings include enough people? (I don't know)

If you work for a small farm organization

ME

Meeting The Needs of Maine Small Farm Sector Evaluation

If you work with Small Farms:

1. As a result of today's conference did you:

a) Increase your awareness of small farm issues

1 0 2 2 3 8 4 23 5 3

not at all

somewhat

very much

b) Learn strategies for reaching small farm operators with ways that might work for you

1 0 2 5 3 15 4 13 5 2

not at all

somewhat

very much

c) Learn how your organization can better serve the small farm sector of Maine

1 0 2 4 3 16 4 9 5 6

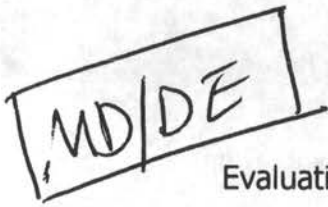
not at all

somewhat

very much

d) Can you list two things that you will do in order to meet the needs of small farm operators in Maine

1. I plan to act on one of Judy's points-agency to agency, communication (via e-mail or directory of some type)
2. Listen even harder
3. Be available more
4. Attend more small farm related functions.
5. Networking
6. Learning about other agriculture programs
7. Follow up contacts, made today
8. Use staff of other agriculture service providers to promote our services.
9. Attend agriculture trade shows with pamphlets regarding agency programs.
10. Attend small farm workshops as a resource person.
11. Have meetings within our working group.



Evaluation Summary – Shore Small Farm Forum

A total of 51 people attended the Shore Small Farm Forum on March 9, 2002, in Salisbury, MD. Of the 51 participants, there were:

- 11 Extension agents
- 1 state employee
- 6 federal employees
- 4 nonprofit reps
- 19 farmers
- 8 University
- 2 media

91% of the participants rated the Forum as "excellent", while the remaining 9% rated the Forum as "above average." All participants learned something new. Participants felt that the most important things they learned were:

- How important marketing is for small farms
- That small farms have a future
- Marketing is selling relationships, not just products
- The diversity of small farms
- That there is tremendous support and many resources available for small farms
- New marketing approaches and tailoring production to customer needs
- Large range of services available from extension Service
- Services are available from different agencies
- Huge amount of need for support and information for small farmers
- Customer relations

Participants also made some recommendations for future events, including:

Animal agriculture, including beef production, grazing land, geese and ducks.

Starting a small, family farm
CSAs and customer relations/publicity on the Lower Eastern Shore

Regarding the structure of future events, participants suggested:

- More break out group discussions
- On farm programs
- More in depth coverage of fewer topics
- More involvement of underserved farmers

Lastly, participants raised the need for a network of landowners and farmers looking to farm, and the need for a central clearinghouse to list all events.

State-Level Small Farms Workshops Evaluation Summaries

Maryland/Delaware

Maine

New Hampshire

New York

Pennsylvania

Vermont

General comments about workshop for professional development at the state level:

- State teams should identify the training and development needs in their own states and then develop strategies. (2)
- More input from farmers
- Identify way to increase financial support to small farms from land grants
- Get something “on the ground” soon so that training will be implemented at the state level.
- More farmer involvement in the state team planning and training (3)
- Tour small farms with a discussion about the factors covered in the above exercise
- Keep the resource fair

- Professional Development Coordinators and Small Farm Contacts incorporated into extension and research groups
- Save some time to have mixed session (i.e. NGO's, extension, and government agencies together)
- Have break out discussion that combines service providers and identifies ways to collaborate.
- Will implement a farmer to farmer networking session instead.

The toolbox workshops:

Comments on replication of the following workshops in state trainings:

General comments about all three workshops—

- It was a good concept and would like to replicate at the state level (2)

Becoming an Effective Resource for Small Farm Businesses: Understanding the Connection Between Family/Personal Issues and Business Decision Making

- Useful and important to include in state trainings (5)
- Use and expand the role plays of good vs. bad examples

Farmer to Farmer Learning—Keys to Success

- Will provide this session focusing on successful farmer to farmer groups (2)
- Will replicate this (4)
- Most useful/ applicable to our services (2)

Reaching and Recruiting the Small Farm Audience

- Will not replicate (4)
- The topic is important, but the information was not relevant (2)
- Ideas were good

What would you improve upon in the following workshops for your state training?

General comments about all three workshops—

- Consider combining family / personal and farmer to farmer learning into one session
- Identify areas of need for our own state before deciding panels (2)

Farmer to Farmer Learning—Keys to Success

- More structure
- Use more innovative models

Reaching and Recruiting the Small Farm Audience

- Modify the approach (3)
- Focus on building on current services
- Make it less academic and more interactive
- Identify how we can improve on reaching the small farm audience
- Have a panel of farmers answer questions

- Categorization led to too many assumptions
- Represent more farmers to talk about their unique needs
- The commonalities are too broad
- Make the characteristics more broad
- Find a different way to categorize and record—to busy trying to figure which category the comments should go in.
- Go slower or add more information
- Emphasize the flexibility of the definitions and subgroups
- Create more time for discussion of individual's perceptions of small farms rather than use the grid.
- Reorganize grid sheet
- Pass out typology, without discussion.

Listening exercise from the small farm panel:

What is worth replicating—the valuable aspects from this discussion?

- It was a useful exercise, will replicate (3)
- Tied in well to farmer panel
- More of an interactive discussion

What parts would you improve?

- More time to devote to discussion about listening exercise
- Too structured
- Test provider's perception of panelists needs; panelists give feedback on this (3)
- Give more time to analyze the operations
- Have another issue besides typology to organize the listening exercise around.

The service and education provider networking and discussion:

What is worth replicating—the valuable aspects from this discussion?

- Will not replicate at the state level (3)
- Valuable exercise (3)
- Learned that service providers feel that they know what is best for farmers
- Small group discussion was great to have in combination with the larger group presentations
- Sharing stories helpful to increase understanding and avoid duplication (2)

What would you modify from this session?

- Change the format to focus on what providers are currently doing to support small farms and how that can be improved.
- Needs a strong moderator to avoid a grip session
- Use independent recorder to avoid in-house jargon
- Have successful examples of small farm services present
- Have service providers listen more

The Next Step Survey: Results

These are the results from the survey that we sent out in early May. The questions were based on the Feb. 2001 workshop content in Albany, NY and are intended for you to use in planning your state's small farm professional development. The number of respondents = 14. The number in parentheses equals the number of people if more than one person gave that response.

Comments on the farmer panel *Characterizing Northeast Small Farmers*:

What is worth replicating—the valuable aspects from this panel:

- Most valuable part of the Albany conference (2).
- Effective in heightening awareness and needs (2)
- Identifying “agency” characterizations and responses
- A good starting point—laid the foundation for questions and interactions throughout the conference (2)
- Revealed the diversity of farmer operations and people (4)
- The enthusiastic and positive farmers
- The format (farmers give introduction of themselves and their operations then question/ answer session with service providers)(2)

What about the panel session could be improved upon for subsequent trainings:

- More than one panel focusing on different managing styles and systems
- Increase farmer participation (2)
- More interaction and exchange with service providers about needs and ideas for assistance (2)
- All panelists should have a positive perspective (2)
- Print farmer bios before hand so attendees can formulate questions
- Avoid redundancy
- Use the discussion to point out the diversity not to define or characterize

The grid and the ERS/ USDA typology breakout-group discussion:

What is worth replicating—the valuable aspects from this discussion?

- Typology info useful. Would use to apply to farms within the state—the panel helped represent this.
- The overall format
- Farmers associated with the characteristics on the grid
- Good as an illustration that it is difficult to categorize individual farmers
- Just looking at specific aspects of the grid, e.g. marketing, measures of success and underserved audiences. (2)

What would you modify about this discussion in your own state training?

- Would not use the grid and typology discussion—did not find it useful (5)
- Spend less time on analysis and discussion
- Use this time to emphasize the diversity in the small farm sector (2)

❖ **The service and education provider networking and discussion:**

a. What would you replicate from this session?

b. What would you modify from this session?

❖ **The toolbox workshops:**

- *Becoming an Effective Resource for Small Farm Businesses: Understanding the Connection Between Family/Personal Issues and Business Decision Making*
- *Farmer to Farmer Learning—Keys to Success*
- *Reaching and Recruiting the Small Farm Audience*

What would you replicate from the toolbox workshops above?

What would you improve upon for your state training?

❖ **Based on your experience from the workshop, do you have any other suggestions to pass on to state teams as they begin to plan small farm professional development in their own states?**

Thank you for your time.

The Next Step Survey

Meeting the Needs of Northeast Small Farmers: The Next Step

This questionnaire is based on the workshop that was held in February 2001. It is intended to provide information for your state teams as they begin planning the next phase of this project. We approached the regional training with the following goals in mind:

- To heighten awareness about the Northeast small farm sector
- Build skills to better serve the small farm sector
- Encourage development of programs and services.

Our hopes are that you will replicate parts of the February training with these goals for your own state in mind.

Please answer the following questions with your own state small farms professional development ideas in mind and return them by April 30th. We will compile this information and get it to you state teams as soon as possible.

❖ **The farmer panel *Characterizing the Northeast Small Farmers*:**

a. What would you replicate from the panel session in your state training (what was valuable and what “worked” given the goals of the workshop)?

b. What would you modify (improve, change or replace) from the panel session for your state training?

❖ **The grid and the ERS/ USDA typology breakout-group discussion:
(Enclosed in your packet is a summary of this session that may be helpful in planning your own professional development workshops and in answering this question.)**

a. What parts of the grid and ERS typology discussion would you replicate?

b. What would you modify about this discussion?

We also intended for this session to be listening exercise from the small farm panel beforehand:

What parts of the listening exercise would you replicate in your state training?

What parts would you improve?

		systems approach to solving problems		
		Constantly assessing needs—losing sight of objectives		
		Creating the right settings		
		Follow-up		

How might you think or work differently to be more effective or help your colleagues be more effective?

Reaching, recruiting, and keeping small farmers involved	Program design and models	Partnering and Collaborations
Conduct more needs and interest assessment (4)	Learn from NGO's	Use collaboration for better planning and ideas (3)
Farmer/ educator interaction to plan programs (3)	Provide tools/ assistance diverse, alternative enterprises	More professional development
Targeted information (2)	More one on one work	Multi-state county extension teams
Clarify target audience (2)	Focus more on marketing than on production	
Train for communication with this sector	Take a systems approach	
	Use more examples (case studies)	
	Use more farmer trainers	
	Do more demos	
	Leadership training for farmers	

What are your next steps and specific actions as a result of this workshop.

- Encourage university to be more supportive of sustainable agriculture and small farms
- Share models
- Work to transform agricultural policy
- Use ideas learned in the workshops in programs

who value our approaches		
Reputation as a resource	Workbook format for publications	
	Issue awareness	
	Developing research in area of small farm markets	
	Bridge gap between farmers and consumers	
	Distance education course	
	Video development as vehicle for discussion	
	Small farm focused research	

What challenges do you and other service providers and educators in your institution continue to face in serving the small farm audience?

Resource availability	Attitudes	Program design, outreach, and recruitment	Partnering and Collaborations	Other
Time constraints (12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farmers ▪ Service providers 	The perception that small farms are less important than large ones (3)	Defining/targeting the audience (6)	Balancing between collaboration and cooptation (2)	National policy issues affecting agriculture
Adequate staffing (3)	Perception of farmers that extension does not meet their needs (2)	One on one time		The average age of small farms—decline in # farms
Costs of programming (2)	Evaluation of large group impacts vs. one on one	Centralized/non-targeted programming		Decline in farmer attendance
Shortage of tools for business analysis		Farmer leadership		
Balancing duties with a diverse ag sector		Beginning farmers		
		Designing effective promotion and outreach		
		Integrating a		

Appendix Materials

**2002 Professional Development Workshop
evaluation form and evaluation results**

Next-Steps survey form and survey results

**State-level workshops evaluation
summaries**

Email survey results summary

**Email survey and telephone interview
comments**

2002 PDP Workshop Evaluation Form

What Did We Learn Today and How Will We Apply It?

Kathy Ruhf, New England Small Farm Institute

Use the following questions to guide your discussion. *Please turn these in after you have completed them.*

Consider the following areas when answering the questions below:

- **Targeting** small farmers or sub-sectors of the small farm audience
- **Reaching and recruiting** participation by the small farm audience
- **Designing and implementing** effective programming
- **Engaging** in effective partnerships.

1. What are your current successes in serving your small farm sector (either directly or by assisting and supporting others)? What strategies and techniques create success?

2. What challenges do you and other service educators in your institution continue to face regarding serving the small farm audience?

3. How might you think or work differently to be more effective, or help your colleagues to be more effective in serving the small farm audience?

4. Given what you have heard in this workshop, what specific actions or next steps might you consider (for your own activities, or to assist others with their activities) to improve the effectiveness of service to the small farm sector in your state?

Thank you and have a safe trip home!

2002 PDP Workshop Evaluation Results

Small Farms: Why Focus on Them and How to Build Programs that Meet Their Needs

NE SARE Professional Development Coordinators

USDA-CSREES NE State Small Farm Contacts

February 20, 2002

Evaluation Summary (N= 25):

The number in parentheses is the number of times it was referred to. Note: there were multiple answers to each question.

What are your current successes in serving your small farm sector?

Reaching, recruiting, and keeping small farmers involved	Program design and models	Partnering and Collaborations
Target and recruiting through issues relevant to audience (2)	One-on-one is a draw for farmers (10)	Partnerships/collaborations across institutions and organizations (7)
Serving a large number of farmers who are interested in specific topic (most are small) (2)	Working with farmer to farmer learning networks (4)	Farmer involvement in projects
Needs assessment (2) ▪ Through focus groups	Small groups (2)	
Long-term relationships	Encouragement of farmers to take leadership roles (2)	
Getting involved in areas outside expertise	Focus on marketing	
One person designated to work with the sector	Providing in-depth transformative learning opportunities with a farmer-to-farmer focus	
Flexibility and innovation	Broad educational programming	
Being responsive to farmer's needs	Open and committed effort, using a small farm project as a catalyst	
Meetings within short distance of farmers	On-farm demos	
Follow-up is important	Participatory activities	
Reaching interesting audiences of small farmers	Small very interactive courses	

12. Very good idea, a bi-annual event that would involve agencies to man booths where non-agency people would be involved (keep agency's impute as it is very important, but increase non-agency involvement).
13. As a vender/booth I very much appreciated specific time set aside for "networking". Often, opportunities squeezed into break or mealtime. Time set aside was very effective.
14. The speakers were excellent. It was always profitable to hear the farmers prospective.
15. Good speakers, good meeting place, good food!
16. I feel inspired to "step it up a notch" in terms of the service I provide to growers and the public at large.
17. This was well organized, food was great. 10 points (out of ten) for locally produced food! Well attended! Great forum for mixing producers and service providers. Good sharing of ideas. Well done!

If you are a small farm owner/operator

1. As a result of today's conference did you:

A. Increase your knowledge of how to work with organizations that serve small farms in Maine

1	1	2	1	3	10	4	16	5	4
not at all		somewhat				very much			

B. Become more aware of what services and resources are available to you

1	1	2	0	3	10	4	15	5	6
not at all		somewhat				very much			

C. Learn from other farmers how to get what you need

1	1	2	2	3	14	4	7	5	7
not at all		somewhat				very much			

D. Can you list two things that you will do in order to get the support you need from the organizations that work with small farm operators

1. Write a business plan
2. Contact SBA
3. Become a regular "customer" of the Cooperative Extension Office
4. Go to WAGN meetings
5. Get more involved-Contact WAGN as I heard my be good things about how willing to help they are.
6. Visit the Lewiston NRCS-to look at soil maps.
7. Write down our plan for future so they can see that we are serious.
8. Make our name known to these organizations.
9. Contact them by e-mail and phone
10. Contact "Get real, get Maine"
11. Contact More often Maine farm Bureau
12. Subscribe to info on shrubs from U.M

13. Request source of info for identification of shrubs.
14. Make more calls
15. Listen more to what they have to say
16. Be more active in the organization
17. Be better prepared when contacting agency
18. Go to meetings
19. Ask questions
20. Use extension as reference more
21. Volunteer for Board positions
22. We have and will continue to join every organization, get every newsletter, go to every conference, etc. This is how we are finding what we need. Leave no stone unturned.
23. Acquaint yourself with resources before you need their help/advice to save that step when time is an element.
24. Involve yourself, attend workshops etc.
25. Research organizations that support small farmers
26. Make direct contact with such organizations.
27. County extension
28. Apply for SARE grants
29. Support WAGN
30. Support agencies through volunteerism
31. Getting involved at local level
32. Call on agencies when there are questions
33. Keep in contact via e-mail
34. Ask!
35. Join the Maine Farm Bureau
36. Contact the Maine Department of Agriculture

- 37. Research
- 38. Write
- 39. More personal contact
- 40. Attend more workshops
- 41. Call them more often
- 42. Invite them out to our garden
- 43. Increase my farm
- 44. Work with the programs
- 45. Put my e-mail address out there

2. Do you think that you will use the resource notebook in the future?

1	1	2	1	3	6	4	13	5	10
not at all			somewhat			very much			

46. Overall how would you rate this conference as helpful to you and your farm?

1	0	2	0	3	7	4	10	5	13
not at all			somewhat			very much			

Additional comments:

1. Good networking
2. The "network" time is the most productive time for me. Just being able to connect the name to a face is a positive point. I would encourage events like this again. We all need to interact. Thank you for this event, when's the next one? Great lunch!
3. I think this conference was a good idea. I think it's important to provide spaces where farmers/groups/people can get together, make connections and share ideas. I feel I was able to make some good contacts, although I wish there had been more farmers from the Androscoggin area to connect with.
4. Thank you for putting this conference together.
5. Evaluation of this program based on these surveys may not be accurate, greater value may be forthcoming as needs are recognized—good to do it anyhow.
6. I thought the conference was very well done.
7. Thank you!
8. Communication between agencies is very important. This conference was a great idea. The benefit to us is not that great because we have done our homework. We already waded through a lot of the mail of agencies with actions pursuit and so not too much was new. However our experiences has been a farmer can go from one agency to the next and not find what they need even though it is available. It is possible to miss out on grants, loans or other programs because you just didn't knock on the front door.

9. Thank you for the day
10. I already work for many of these organizations and was par to this program, so I know much of this already. This should have been invaluable for new farmers!
11. Thank you, great work, great lunch
12. It would have been helpful if 1-day conferences could be on some Saturday too for those of us farmers who work outside the home.
13. The contacts made are very important. The agencies have always been helpful to me and my family and these workshops only strengthened that relationship.
14. Good to put faces to our phone contacts of last 2 years. Good to meet farmers in our county.



**Listening to Farmers:
A Skill-Building Workshop for Professionals Serving New Hampshire Agriculture**

WORKSHOP EVALUATION—Compiled Answers

Out of 39 total returned surveys

How well did this workshop improve your understanding and skills in the following areas?

	☺	☹	☹
Better understanding of the values, goals, and decision making process that agricultural operators use	29	10	
Better listening skills to hear the issues, concerns and needs of farmers	28	8	3
Improved understanding of family and business connections	28	11	
Enhanced team-building skills with other service providers to better collaborate, share ideas and deliver resources to meet the needs of the agricultural client	20	18	1
Improved understanding of the diversity, needs, and challenges of small and entry level agriculturists	27	9	3

[note: the numbers 1 to 18 in front of some of the responses are the ongoing responses on one evaluation. For example, some replies continued from section to section, so those numbers correspond with one person, like the three different responses for the three different questions from farmer number 1.]

Did the session you attended meet your expectations? Yes 27 No 1 Partially 8
Why or why not?

1. I had no expectations. I hated the title "Listening to Farmers" because it implied that we don't listen, and didn't indicate what the workshop was for.
2. Too much time spent on case studies with too little time devoted to developing better listening skills.
3. A very good mix of agencies and bringing together the farmers was excellent! Should have done this a long time ago.
4. Did not have any expectations.
5. I had few expectations going into it, but gained a great deal from it.

As an agency, I would like to know more how to help growers.

6. Great example of a non-traditional innovative ag practice that has been successful—largely in the absence of support of the local ag community.
7. It improved by understanding of how to assess farmers needs.
9. Excellent opportunity to hear from ag business owners and the pressures (social/environmental) upon them in their communities. Helps us to scope our support.

Loved the case studies!

10. Networking with ag service providers, diversity of ag operators.
11. Good to hear where the ag pros are coming from and whether it matches farmers' needs.
12. Good to hear diversity of issues, problems facing producers. Sharon Danes is an excellent presenter, get her back!

Excellent facilitator/ kept group on task and on time.

13. It let the state agencies and govt. agencies know—they need to gather and share info between agencies and pass on to the farmers.
14. It was on an orchard and I don't really know much about this area.

Farmer presenters did a good job.

15. Our keynote needed more time so better examples could be given to each of the models. She is an excellent speaker and presenter but she seemed to have too much to cover in keynote address.
16. Getting the agency people together to hear that we have a mutual job to do was important. Not enough time to really explore team resources and team planning.
17. I didn't know what to expect but I was impressed.
18. A chance to meet with fellow farmers and know that the issues I face they also face.

Networking opportunities and new ideas welcomed.

Please provide any thoughts or suggestions you care to that could improve the methods used to present and explain the topics:

1. I liked the methods (case studies). I would rather have been able to choose which group I wanted to be in, based on my subject matter expertise. But having the direct contact with farmers is always valuable and worth the time.
2. The idea of one person (agency) being able to follow their farmer all the way through the process is great in theory but not reality—we are operating in an under staffed condition. Until our numbers rise we won't have the ability to follow a farmer from start to finish.

Do away with lengthy flip chart presentations at end of exercises. Too many redundancies

3. The breakout rooms were not supportive to groups 5-7... too noisy and small. Needed to see more directors of agencies, possibly legislative folks. Field staff can only do so much; message needs to go back to Washington on how we are doing business and how we served all customers. We are losing the very background of agriculture, the family farm is being bought by larger corporations and we are losing our identity.
4. The suggestion for letting new farmers know about available services is essential. I knew not of all available services—and am impressed with the support system for us. Education is key to keeping public and farmers abreast of new and existing services and general agricultural information. Public outreach through more visibility—whether at a farmer's market or even at a local farmstand or what have you.
5. Aside from Sharon Danes' presentation (which I loved), I did not see any decision making process shared by farmers. No discussion as to how farmers make decisions—we talked about their situation, our listening and then some brainstorming. I would have loved to hear how they make their management and production decisions.
6. Have a follow-up meeting with organizations and agencies to talk more about how we can/should work together.

I would suggest making sure there is a distance between group meetings as 5, 6 and 7 were very noisy and hard to hear.

7. There is need for more grower/farmer case studies. Farmers discussing their operations and what help they can derive from different agencies.
8. I don't find group reporting to be a very worthwhile use of time.
9. More opportunity or an exercise that would develop collaboration among agencies and ag professionals with the output being a take home resource list for ag owners and service providers.
10. More opportunities to hear directly from farmers—less talk from ag service professionals.
11. The keynote speaker tried to convey too much research in too little time and was unable to transfer the research into real life ag situations.
12. Encourage farmers themselves to meet as a follow-up. Have Extension form networks, focus groups.
13. Definitely need an agency contact for legal advice and council to help the farmer with local (town, selectman) problems, i.e. current use, taxation, and fighting legal red tape. We need a voice legally.
14. The methods used were okay for the presentations.

More of these type of sessions to involve more new farmers.

Ag providers need to not feel only solution is \$s—need to be more creative to deal with providing resources—staff time allocated to work with producers.

15. [Provide] better explanation on goal of case study—did not use the example case well to explain the process. You only let farmer and agency example case but did not go over all the process. Should have main questions listed for all individuals.

16. Could have used greater diversity of farm types in terms of: length of time in business, single vs. Family run business, male vs. female run business.

17. A keynote speaker idea: a farmer or farm couple with extensive experience working with farm/ag/nat'l resource organizations.

I liked that the farmers came to teach us. I learned from them, good to hear their needs from them and the answers the other agencies gave; it helps me in referring people.

18. The group of professionals that were brought together was perfect. It just needed to be a 2-day session in order to learn more about each organization.

Any other comments:

1. Keynote speaker needed and deserved more time; she was very good.
Too many case studies on animal ag vs. Crop/plant science—does not reflect the relative status of each in the state.

2. The highlight of the meeting was the farmer involvement—they did a great job sharing and tell us (govt.) what we could do better.

Great job!

Farmer input is critical. We need to gear our programs and services to the farmers needs and point of view.

Keep up the effort to help farmers.

3. Do this annually with more farmers; maybe focus on more small, diverse farm operations.

5 All in all, a good workshop well worth everyone's time. If understanding decision-making processes by farmers was one of your goals, you may want to revisit agenda. With that said though, your agenda provided a very education, enlightening day. I thank you for your hard work and for providing this opportunity!

6 We talked about the need [to enhance team skills and share resources/ideas] but not the how.

7 Let us have more of these types of workshops.

8 Although the session only partially met my expectations, I still feel the day was very worthwhile. Sharon Danes was excellent. Any chance to "network" is valuable.

9. Great concept and agenda. Good facility and location. Keynote presentation may have been too academic based.

Excellent models for change and reaction to change.

10. Great workshop

11. We should consider the next steps to meet the needs expressed by the farmers (and implement them).

12. Good idea to have us sit together through lunch for further understanding of our farmers' issues.

One of the needs of our farmers was not met by any of the groups. They would like an apprentice(s) to train to take over the farm in 10 to 15 years when they retire. Current programs are all geared to organic farmers which they are not. Isn't it time for the rest of the farm community to start internships, etc to help both current and future farmers? Sounds like FarmLink in NB is working but it is a whole farm transfer system and they are not ready for it yet, but will be.

Keynote presentation was excellent. Wish Sharon could have had more time.

14. Now if we can just keep the professionals active in keeping in touch with the farmer.

Please keep these groups working on a more regular basis.

15. Sharon did a great job bringing it back together at the end!

16. Needed more time to develop teamwork, and consistency in framing questions to groups. Most important: what do they (farmers) want/need from us? And how will we respond to that need?

Good job to get this diverse group together.

Farmer stipends make a difference for farmers to attend, especially women farmers.

NY Workshop Evaluation Summary

Meeting the Needs of New York State Small Farmers: Professional Development Workshop Series 2 - Evaluation Summary

Total attendees: ~ 126

N= 65

Has your understanding of the connection between farm families and business goals changed as a result of this workshop?

Y--40 N--24

If yes why?

- Learned better listening and communication skills (10)
- Understanding the importance of linkage between farm families and business goals. (6)
- The importance of respecting farm family goals (5)
- Not all farm families are the same. (3)
- Better understanding of the resource available for this issue (3)
- Have a better understanding of the complexities in farm family business goal and decision-making. (2)
- The importance of the interconnection between agri-service and farmers
- The farm family goals and issues may take precedence over farm business goals

If no, why?

Already have experience working with this sector (6)

Already am familiar with this information (3)

Presentations were repetitive (2)

Business goals are the same for large and small farms

Did your perception of your role in helping farm families to address their goals change as a consequence of this workshop?

Y--32 N--26

If yes, why?

Learned the necessity of collaborating and referring with other agriservice providers about this issue. (6)

The importance of outreach to this sector (3)

Understanding my role in referring (2)

More of an understanding of the reasons why a farmer will or will not use resources

More of an understanding of resources available

The importance of identifying farmer needs and goals

If no, why?

"My role is not to solve personal problems"

Have you developed new ideas and/ or skills in serving the small farm sector as a result of this workshop?

Y—47 N—12

If yes, what are they?

Methods of outreach to farmers (9)

Developed a network with other agencies for referrals (6)

Learned different resources available to farmers (6)

Communication and listening skills (5)

The contributions of small farms to rural communities (2)

Top down program driven planning doesn't apply to all farmers

Skills in working with the human side of farming

Limitations of certain programs

The percentage of small farms in the state

The effectiveness of farmer-to-farmer learning

How farmers best like to receive information

If no, why?

Nothing new (2)

Workshop session ratings (1 not valuable at all to 5 very valuable):

Becoming an Effective Resource for Small Farm Businesses: The Intersection of Family and Business

1—4 2—5 3—15 4—27 5—10

What was most valuable?

Communication skills (10)

Interaction with the farmer (5)

Group interaction (4)

Listening skills (3)

The connection between business and family

Improvements:

More examples less detail (3)

Info was good but speaker not dynamic (3)

Was run on the premise that small farms have serious problems (2)

It was too long—have more than one speaker (2)

Many already experienced in this area (2)

Involve other agencies

Examples from the Field: Agriservice Provider Panel

1—1 2—6 3—24 4—21 5—7

What was most valuable?

Opportunity to learn from other agencies (services and perspectives) (15)

Networking opportunity (2)

“Excellent!”

Good ideas and examples

Variety of presentations

Improvements:

More agencies (4)

Nothing new (2)

Agency profiles in participant packet (2)

Different questions
More interactive
Less time on this
Different panel format
Speakers more prepared
Unclear objectives

Team Projects: Farmer Case Scenarios

1—2 2—5 3—4 4—26 5—28

What was most valuable?

Dialogue between farmer and different agencies (20)
Excellent multi-agency discussion (6)
Real case example (4)
To hear from farmer with positive attitudes (2)
The tie in with the first session

Improvements:

Different questions (2)
Different farmers
Would like to hear all scenarios
More time devoted to this
Desert island scenario was not helpful
Unclear objectives

Overall, I found this workshop...

very useful	somewhat useful	not at all useful
33	34	1

As a result of this training, I intend to (direct quotes)...

- Keep approaching small farmers to become better acquainted with them and their challenges. Will try to work with other agencies more often
- Have a better understanding in approaching the small farm audience in our small farms group.
- Follow up on my promises today...to get back in touch with one our small farm case studies.
- Consider the family side of family farms when educating farm or non-farm audiences
- Increase collaboration and stay the course of facilitating farmer to farmer information transfer.
- Approach giving advice differently
- Contact others to provide a uninformed support team when dealing with a management problems
- Keep in touch with other agencies—at least try to do it more than I have been
- Get into farming hopefully with the help of the agencies here
- Contact other agencies more often
- Have more outside presenters in our trainings
- Remain aware of them many services/programs which could help farm families who are struggling
- Think more, observe more, presume less
- Be more aware of small farmers needs and how our agency can meet these needs

- Make all of my employees aware of the discussion today.
- Provide a different program at the beginning farmer workshop
- Do a better job
- Swim to the next island
- Collaborate with other agencies and keep updated on their programs
- Keep doing my job to the best of my abilities using the resources available to me
- Be encouraged to keep on "keeping on"
- Keep abreast of small scale agriculture issues
- Promote working with small farm operations to other agency personnel.
- Work on being a better listener
- Consider small farm "issues" when providing services
- Continue to adapt the info learned at this meeting
- Pursue the linkage among service providers for distributing information
- Continue to do my best to relate to each individual, given their personality
- Spend more time assessing rather than assuming problem
- Better serve the small farm community in my county
- Work on communication
- Relate better to farmers as an agency rep with the experience that I picked up here
- Hold a new farmer workshop with farmer presenters and agriservice providers represented.
- Network through publication with other agriservice providers
- Spend more time analyzing each farm for its individuality, not as a smaller version of the larger farm enterprises.
- Work harder to help meet the needs of small farms
- Use these new resources to add to my toolbox
- Refer farmers to most appropriate resource
- Broaden network
- Follow up with extension to carry out at the field level

→ [PA] Evaluation Form Attached.

Participant Key:

- 1 = staff member of a government agency/educational institution service provider
 - 2 = staff member
 - 3 = farmer
 - 4 = other
- Relates to 5 needs*
school of service providers only

This Q. was used for farmers only

Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that you were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
1	Special program information scaled to small farms		1				
	Understanding service providers (Leaders)	1					
	Service providers ignore facilitation skills					1	
	Leadership training					1	
1	Analysis of "Numbers" & Statistics to interpret what they mean to small farms	1					
	Getting food products from small farms to where consumers can get it direct from farmers		1				
	Need for small scale processing equipment and regulations that favor value-added		1				
	Educating consumers to realize importance of source of food and quality of locally grown		1				
1	New Ideas	1					
	Course Availability					1	
	Marketing	1					
	Barriers small farms					1	
	Environment						
1	Small equipment needs			1			
	Easing of food sanitary/safety laws		1				
	Interacting with other farmers doing the same thing					1	
	Educational materials			1			
1	Putting ourselves in farmer's role - reaching out to farmers	1					Promote marketing cooperatives and direct farms to grower sales
	Less production technology - more emphasis on creative simplicity	1					Create a list of direct marketers for NC region
	Prioritization and time management	1					Meat marketing regulations
	Audiate financial measurements indicating what conditions the farm is in					1	Small scale food processing workshops
	Labeling legalities and discrimination against small producers						Farmers/rural people leadership training
1	Job interview skills when transiting out						Reduce rate loans such as FSA has available - on a broader scope
	Provide food supply process that accommodates small farm healthy food production						Extension promote additional producer cooperatives to market farm products to stores, restaurants, local grocery chains
							Reduce regulatory requirement to market farm products to consumer

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Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that your were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
1	Labeling Cannot use certain terms - organic, antibiotic free___not able to financially get approval. Find successful growers & find out why successful. What they are doing. Pass info on		1				
	Connect producer/market	1					
	Simple approach	1					
	Holistic approach					1	
	Small farmer processing needs			1			
1	Thinking of transition is more than one definition	1					
	The need to focus more at the task at hand					1	
	The lack of networking from farmer to farmer in this state					1	
	The need to be positive - if a PA farmer went out of state they'd be happier w/their opportunities that PA offers	1					
	The lack of networking with agencies here	1					
1							
1	Distribution of different food items		1				
	Unfair regulations direct marketing barriers			1			
	Time Management			1			
	Business planning				1		
1	Focus on better use of on-farm resources				1		
	Focus on increased profit & quality, not on increased production as a goal by itself				1		
	Link between producer and user		1				
1	Farmers transitioning from commodity production to producing specific products on small scale need sources of equipment -not enough manufacturers			1			
	Those who want to market locally need help in removing barriers that prevent him from selling into the local market				1		
	Who can facilitate organizing smaller operations into CO OPs or the like so that equipment, production techniques can be shared between growers in region or outside of region				1		
1	Does PSU offer cheese-making & ice cream making courses at PSU? Why did only 20 survive out of 300 Direct Milk Marketers?	1					

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Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that your were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
	Can grow beef on grazing only!! Need more "time-management" information and skills	1					
	Barriers to <u>growth</u> in Direct-Marketing system <u>discriminates</u> against Direct-Markets to favor <u>global commodity operations</u>		1				
	Pastured chickens produce eggs with 35% cholesterol		1				
	If you are paying 25% on interest, you are out-of-business						
1	Greater awareness of need for >education in food processing regulations (knew this but see the need for > education in this area)				1		
	Great awareness of need for > access to small farm equipment needs (this need could vary across the state)			1			
1	Transition from a commodity production/market to a retail production/market	1					
	Transition out of farming			1			
	Transition to new enterprise or _____					1	
	Transition to pass the farm to next generation					1	
	Regulatory barriers				1		
1	Regulatory barriers - labeling		1				
	Direct marketing		1				
1	Barriers within the regulatory environment				1		
	Small farm discrimination "hobby farmer"?					1	
1	Availability of specific production oriented courses at college level (most of these are no longer taught) maybe need to develop additional short courses (like ice cream short course)		1				
	Product labeling and product differentiation issues and regulations				1		
	Business management tools (already do a lot of this - but overall attendance and interest is lacking)	1					
	Benchmarking tools (<u>commodity specific</u> , lack of data except for dairy)			1			
2	Marketing - Develop expertise	1					
	Government regulations holding back small processors		1				

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Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that you were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
	Connect link between producers and end users	1					
	Business planning financial, time management			1			
2	Regulatory awareness			1			
	Marketing skills		1				
	Infra-structure lags transition		1				
	Benchmarks to us as times of trouble					1	
2							Ag Issue Group (3 or 4 agencies working with a few small farms to draw total business plan)
							Group letter-writing campaign
							Consulting advice on direct-marketing (hand-written, not typed)
							Need a trained Facilitator to tie everything together (must be the right mix of people)
							Nutrition/Family agencies need to work with/not against Ag production agencies (within Ag PSU Extension)
3							Help w/regulations and labeling issues (wasn't mentioned)
							Help w/h2o reticulation and pond building
							Business training program
3							Regulation change, include local
							Farmer education - Farmer to Farmer
							Customer education on food
							Easier product label and more small small processing equipment
							Resource for customers to locate direct safe farmers
3							Financial planning
							Clearing regulator hurdles or working around them
							_____requirements - Excessive security requirements keep many government programs out of reach
3							Marketing info
							Farmer to farmer groups
							Community leadership training
							Info on internet/print material
							Educational material on developing new enterprises

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Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that you were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
3	Consumers that are removed from food source need to be educated as to the food chain and be permitted to make informed buying decisions						Work with PDA? to start additional group to having matching funds. Develop and market product/variety etc.
	Small farms have problems buying large ingredients (equipment that's affordable, bulk, grains, etc?)						Co-op equipment - state to assist with several regional swapping. North to south to all for use of Tran planters, etc.
	Direct marketing is <u>absolutely essential</u> . Farmers can't make it growing a commodity.						Facilitate putting together farmers to help market each others products.
	We have set up a regulatory system that is hostile to the small direct marketer often small producers aren't taken seriously.						Develop - single web site to act as clearing house so farmers can research topics pertinent to them without working through each organizations materials.
	Business planning help s desparly needed. Red light, yellow light, green light - early waring signs						
3							Open minded thinking
							Better marketing
							Product differentiation
							Specific research on nutritional analysis and labeling
3 and 4	Need to revise government regulations to be more tranistion friendly						Be info on gov regulation and ways to work with the system
	Need for an offical "Signaling" system to honestly appraise farmers of their situation in time time to make changes, then help get the info they need to move in another direction						An understanding that it is generally more difficult to transition the farmer that the farm
4	Support (emotional)			1			
	More fair regulation for smaller producers		1				
	Good business plans/goals			1			
	More options for direct markets				1		
	Network o similar producers and what their experiences hav been with their transitions				1		
4	Links between farmer and consumers					1	
	Business management skills		1				
	Regulatory changes to support direct marketing			1			
	Helping to bring farmers together for colloborative marketing				1		
	Education for small scale processing		1				
4	The need for farmers in transition to find/identify their own markets						

Participant Key:

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Participant ID	5 needs farmers in transition have that your were not aware of before the workshop	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely	Most helpful to you in making a transition successful
	Greater knowledge of alternative solutions						
	More entrepreneurship by farmer in transitions					1	
	Regulatory issues/barriers						
	Knowledge of how to influence people in government						

PA EVAL. QUESTIONNAIRE

Transitions Workshop SURVEY Feb. 7, 2002

Before the Workshop gets started:

Are you a:

(Please circle the number below that best describes you.)

- 1) staff member of a government agency /educational institution service provider
- 2) staff member of a business service provider
- 3) farmer
- 4) other (please explain) _____

During the Workshop – Record Responses throughout the day.

(I) List up to 5 needs farmers in transition have that you were not aware of before the workshop.

1

2

3

4

5

(II) IF you are a producer, skip this question. For each of items in question # I, indicate the extent to which you are likely to change some aspect of your business to accommodate these needs *within six months* (Check only one response per item).

Item	Already Are Doing	Not Too Likely	Somewhat Likely	Moderately Likely	Very Likely
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

(III) IF you are a service provider, skip this question. The service providers during the panel and round table discussions identified ways they could respond to needs of farmers in transition.

Which 5 would be the most helpful to you in making a transition successful?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

(IV) Please share (on the back) any comments you think would be valuable to the workshop organizers.

VT

EVALUATION SUMMARY
Beginning Farmer Forum
March 13, 2002, Roylaton, VT
n = 38

Your occupation: n = 43

farmer 24 (56%) **agency personnel** 11 (26%) **other** 8 (19%)

*note: several people indicated more than one occupation (i.e., farmer & agency personnel)

**farmer category includes farmers, potential farmers, & part-time farmers

Did attending this forum:

	Not at all	Some	A lot
Improve your understanding of programs & resources available to beginning farmers? n = 38	0	22 (58%)	16 (42%)
Improve your understanding of the challenges that beginning farmers face? n = 38	2 (5%)	21 (55%)	15 (39%)
Help you make new contacts with people that work with beginning farmers? n = 38	2 (5%)	20 (53%)	16 (42%)

*all percentages rounded to nearest whole percent

Farmers: Will it help you connect with available agencies and services? If yes, how? n = 27

Yes 24 (89%) **No** 3 (11%)

Comments:

- Land to people
- Phone numbers and emails from it
- Knowing that they're there – that there are people out there to help you ... finding a person who can open doors
- Helped find out about upcoming CSA conference and a few agencies
- Know who to call about what
- Take home names
- Now I know where to go
- Gives me an idea of what is available and where to go
- Because I'm aware of who they are now (and that they're even out there!)
- Knowledge of available resources, human contact
- Know faces and names
- Forms, information, names and numbers
- Putting faces to names is important; bringing resources together

Agency People: Will it help you serve new and beginning farmers? If yes, how? n = 10

Yes 8 (80%) **No** 2 (20%)

Comments:

- By sharing the new information and new ideas
- Land to people
- Gaining clarity on what the real challenges are that farmers face
- Ideas for programs for training both farmers and service providers. Specifically, how my program can reach out to both.
- Valuable feedback about land trust programs

Do you agree with the actions that have been identified as top priorities for enhancing the success of beginning farmers in Vermont? If yes, what do you feel is the single most important of these actions? If no, why not and what do you think is more important?

- Yes, but still needs to be worked-flushed out by a small group – new movement!
- Yes – coordinator
- Yes – a beginning farmer coordinator
- Yes – coordinator – but need to go through another process to define priorities
- Yes – central agency with all
- Yes – coordinator – someone to compile all the info
- Yes – TAPA for farms
- Yes – coordinator is important, needs to focus on education
- Yes – coordinator – to point you in the right direction
- Yes – beginning farmer coordinator together with farm TAPA – 501c3
- Yes – beginning farmer coordinator together with farm TAPA – 501c3 (two people said the same)
- Yes – money – low interest/0% interest for qualifying beginners or even advanced farmers
- Yes – the most important action is to obtain grants or low interest money for beginning farmers
- Yes – very much, find a coordinator or administrator to do a number of items, over time, from the long list of possible actions
- Yes – establishing method/system for beginning farmers to reach help – agency or coordinator, common entry point needed
- Yes – next step – increase capacity for coordination for resources, access to resources, and advocacy for new farmers
- Yes – a central source of info – clearinghouse of information, hand holding
- Yes – a central source for information/assistance for beginning farmers
- Yes – tie low interest loans to education and mentoring
- Yes – financial, including low interest loans and business training for beginning farmers
- Yes – the farm TAPA needs to be a high priority – a coordinator can't work without it
- Yes – coordination of works for beginning farmers
- Yes – coordinator as hand holder
- Yes – but coordination is important but not most important – educating youth is most important
- Yes – agree with the top priorities, number 2
- Yes – I would agree and #2 is most important
- Yes – having a single point coordinator that can address all of these issues and absorb these concerns
- Yes – a coordinator is key to making something happen
- Yes – coordinator would be great, don't lose sight of other priorities if a coordinator is not possible
- No – money and TAPA are more important than coordinator position
- No – #4 and #5 should be priorities

*TAPA = Technical Assistance
 Farmers Assoc. - informal
 network of service providers for
 micro + small business start-ups.
 Not as focused.*

Any other comments?

- Not enough time to talk
- Excellent gathering, the work needs to continue, keep this group notified as it develops
- Thanks for a great day!
- Live stock producers need processing plants in Vermont; also large animal vets
- Certified organic land at UVM
- Would have liked to gain more resource information – contacts, phone numbers, specific agencies
- Would have like to have gotten more resource information –lists of agencies, phone numbers, etc.
- Excellent facilitation by Vern Grubinger
- Excellent facilitation by Vern Grubinger (two responses the same)
- Have another forum soon – send info to all participants on other farmer-assistance programs/courses/meetings, and updates on policies/decision process in Vermont
- Hope for follow-up, don't let this die in committee
- Time would have been more constructive if spent streamlining suggestions before prioritizing.

- Comprehensive website clearinghouse could hand much of this
- Nice job facilitating, Vern
- Forum was organized well!
- Advocate and coordinator may not be possible in one person
- Need follow to this work
- Need for follow-up to today's meeting
- Needs to be a separation between very new farmers (just getting into it or planning) with farmers with a few years' experience – their needs and concerns are different; more non-profits/organizations (like Intervale) that can provide new farmers with land without loans
- Great forum!
- More time to talk; name tags with agency info/farm name, etc.

Comments from Email & Telephone Surveys

Outcome 2: Enhanced understanding

Small farm characteristics, strategies, diversity

I learned more about the needs of the small farmer, and about some of the marketing strategies they are using. At the time I was in the middle of teaching a (college) class on agricultural marketing, and I brought back information from some of the speakers at the workshop and incorporated it into my class. DE

It helped me see the diversity of people involved in small farming, the diversity of mindsets. NY

I was surprised to see the farmers' enthusiasm about diversifying, about alternatives enterprises. I never paid much attention to this; it never entered my head that people would really want to do some of these things, like specialty crops. I've always worked with dairy. NY

(I gained) an insight and appreciation for what they are dealing with, more understanding of the details of their situations, the different crops they're growing, different marketing situations. It's really not so much that they're small, but that they're growing other crops, more diverse crops, not just corn and soybeans. MD

Personally, I learned a lot! My knowledge base was very limited. I didn't realize what they had to go through, what they did. It's harder than I thought. ME

It was all fairly new, and really good for me because I haven't worked directly with farmers a lot, It gave me a lot of background on the process they go through, how they market their products, their clientele. NY

The (USDA) definition of SF is new to me. I didn't realize that most of the farmers I work with, like a 400 acres potato farmer, is a small farm. ME

I learned more about SF, what they're doing and the infrastructure they need for sustainability, especially here in the North Country. And about the diversity (on-farm) that is so important to a SF, not having just a single income source. In the breakout sessions it was helpful to hear about the day-to-day problems the farmer has, and to work through a scenario with other people. There's a lot more to consider than I had really thought about from my perspective here, just working on the programs that I work on. NY

Probably (the workshop made) no difference in terms of outcomes. I'm a regulator, I work with nutrient management issues, but maybe I gained a little more sensitivity. Maybe a better understanding, ...the diversity and variety of what they're growing. It's like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. So maybe I'm a little more sympathetic. MD

I was already pretty familiar with SF needs, but my understanding was deepened. For example, hearing about one farmer who does rotational grazing

and direct marketing, his challenges and opportunities, the difference that shifting to rotational grazing had made for him. I know I got a lot of good ideas to work into the new project I'm developing (stream bank protection etc) but I don't remember exactly which ideas came from this particular workshop. PA

Needs, concerns of small-scale farmers

It contributed to a greater consciousness, not so much knowledge since I think I had the knowledge, but a higher awareness level of the needs of this audience, which can be fairly specific and different from the needs of other audiences. A greater consciousness that they shouldn't be overlooked. NY

It has been the closest thing I have experienced yet of what we need on "market research" for our services. As public agencies (for the most part) we don't have the resources to do the kind of market research and customer service feedback that private sector service firms do all the time to meet their customer's needs." Email ME

From the workshop, I had the recognition that the non-dairy SF businesses, like the vegetable growers who are doing the farmers market, that these folks have distinct needs, educationally and from agribusiness. Once you open the door in your mind that a farm business can be something other than a commercial dairy farm, then you suddenly become aware of the guy who's growing lettuce and selling at the farmers market, or the ones growing flowers, or making cider. Now I don't think of the issue so much in terms of "small dairies vs. large dairies", I think in terms of "small farm businesses."

It reinforces some of the concepts and experiences you have about SF. Hearing some of the comments directly from SF reinforces the attitudes and opinions about working with them. Like accessibility, the difficulty some of them have in getting to regional workshops, the time constraints. Where they get their information – mostly from other SF. And the question of how they are going to transition into retirement. The challenges of the small business continuing. They might have a viable small, part-time enterprise but it's difficult to divide up, it's hard for someone to come up with the capital required to buy it. NY

Hearing their attitudes towards big farms. At the first meeting this came out stronger than I expected. Like they felt that they're not being treated fairly, that they don't have the power and access that big farmers have. I heard this said about Farm Bureau, that FB just works for the big farms. I didn't hear this about Extension. NY

The most important thing I understood, is that the main problem that beginning farmers have is money: capital to start up, and then everything after that. We need more money available to them, in trusts, or from the banks, or what have you. That's the most difficult thing for them. I already knew that, but the workshop really brought that out, and reinforced it. VT

The speaker who talked about how to speak to farmers was really good. Also, the grower who talked about how farmers view agencies. She talked about how, if she wants to know what's available, and how to get help, she takes the

initiative and gets involved in working with these agencies. Farmers who just complain about the agencies need to get involved. ME

The workshop did a good job of reinforcing the fact that farm business transition planning, which is often seen as a legal/business/structural problem, really depends on interpersonal factors, communications, and management skills. NH

It reaffirmed what I think I already knew. But it also opened my eyes to the perceived discrimination that some SF feel. They perceive themselves as not being treated equally, that the larger farms get most of the attention. I think this is more of an education problem than a reality, but I was surprised... they're...almost angry. I'm not sure if they came away feeling any differently. But we agency people certainly got the message. That at least there's a perception problem. NY

Yes, I'm more knowledgeable about SF operations, and more aware of what they have to go through, and some of their frustrations. In our small groups we talked about skills needed in dealing with SF and their needs. It seemed like some of the SF feel that they are overlooked. I think they mentioned feeling overlooked by Farm Bureau, and they complained about meetings that they couldn't get to, maybe because both the spouses are tied up. I don't think that's true so much of our agency (FSA) because we deal with SF as much as with LF. But maybe SF need a little more help than LF, because they have more obstacles, like when they're purchasing inputs they don't have the volume a large farmer has. NY

What was most interesting about the workshop was hearing what the SF themselves had to say... that it's their own responsibility to get involved, to find out what's available. At the same time, I didn't realize how hard it was for some of them to get information (speaking now about beginning farmers) Some didn't have a clue where to start. ME

The workshop gave me a more accurate insight into the mindset of the "self-proclaimed SF", the "vocal minority" of SF. I've worked most of my life with the "silent majority" of SF. I have a lot of insight into these farmers, but the vocal minority is new for me. It's not that the vocal minority is all non-dairy farms. There are definitely some small dairy farms that I'd put in the vocal minority. But I haven't worked with them much. NY

Probably the single most important thing was that it placed firmly in all of our minds the fact that these farmers don't get off the farm much. They want to have information brought to them, and preferably right to the kitchen table. I personally don't find big farms any different from SF in this regard. You hear all about the time constraints the small farms have, and that they don't have anyone to take over while they come to a meeting. But the fact is on a large farm, the people you want to get to a meeting – the herdsman, the manager – it's difficult for the owner release them for a day to come to a meeting. NY

The need for more effective, targeted outreach and delivery

It's easy for them to get lost in the sauce. Yes, we have some definite challenges in delivery to this audience. But we have to get out and overcome them. There is

an ongoing debate as to whether their needs are any different from those of larger farms. And in a sense, no – the educational needs, per se, may be the same regardless of size, but the delivery needs are very different. We can't expect these farmers to show up for a two-day seminar somewhere far away in the county. We've got to be more creative. I came away with LOTS of ideas for delivery to this audience. NY

The meeting will help our agency strategize around outreach efforts and technical assistance needs.

I think I will be able to do a better job getting my research results out to small farmers, just by getting out and going to meetings like this one.

We did discuss these "registries" (eg land-link services) that Vermont has, and I think Massachusetts has. NH

We agency people have to realize that maybe there are different venues for outreach, dissemination, and promotion that go beyond what we've traditionally been doing. Maybe not everyone is reading the trade journals. Maybe we need to do a better job and get the information out in different formats, in different publications. NY

I think we're trying to be more aware, when we're doing programs, that these farmers are actually getting the information. NH

It's difficult when you're working with the federal programs. But here in our field office (NRCS), we've realized there's lots of ways that we can do better. Like improved outreach, being more sensitive to this audience and how we can reach them. For example, in the past we would have just put an article in the main newspaper, and in our publication. Now we're looking at other ways to get the word out. Like in the Malone area, there is a Free Trader, and a three-county paper. Also, we had an Ag Management and Assistance Program. We just closed it, but (because of the workshop) we started a list of folks inquiring about cost-sharing, and about getting help on certain issues. Even if we can't offer them any help at this time, we're careful to make sure they know about Cooperative Extension and DEC and any other help they can get. And we'll keep this list so we can get back to them. NY

It helped me get out of the box on delivery methods, to be more creative. NY

Hopefully. I'm building my awareness, and making more of a conscious effort to involve SF, to make sure the word gets out to them. NY

I am more certain than ever that we need to develop a strong farmer-to-farmer network so that the communication lines remain open for farmers and for agencies.

I guess I've gotten more savvy about working with farmers. Like, I met a SF the other day, and he wanted some information about selling timber. So, rather than send him everything I've got, I sent him just a few things. Now I have an excuse to drop by to give him some additional information and to just talk, get to know him better. You need a reason to visit. After you stop in about 4 or 6 times, then

they begin to trust you. I know he's got other issues that he needs to address, but until he trusts me, I can't really help him with those issues. I learned this through experience, but also by reading about sales –The Seven Pillars of Successful Sales. It was written for industrial wholesale sellers, but it also works for Extension. NY

Importance of small farms

The workshop increased my awareness of the importance of small farms and that most of Maine's farms fit this category. Email ME

I especially appreciated, and learned from, hearing the panelists speak about their operation in the first session. I walked away with a sense that small-scale farming occupies an important gap between the ag and non-ag sectors, an interface where a fair amount of misunderstanding & blame can occur. Were it not for the small-scale producers, the ag sector would be miniscule indeed, and comprised only of large-scale commercial ventures employing mainly specialized people. If that were the case, our society would lose the holistic understanding about producing food that small-scale producers have.

There are more of them out there than I thought. They're doing things, and some of them have viable businesses. Small farms are the wave of the future. I guess I knew that, but it helped to have that clarified. ME

It's not that we've been reluctant, we've always worked with SF, but it gave support to working with SF. That this is a valid audience to be working with. SF may represent only small part of the total dollars generated in agriculture, but there are a lot of people involved, and it's important to the county.

I guess I've always felt a little guilty about (working with small farms). Now I know about the important contributions that SF make to NYS and everything, and I don't have to feel bad about spending time on them.

Negatives

The case studies were interesting and valuable. It was a really good workshop, but there wasn't much that was new to me except for some new contacts. NH

I was, and continue to be, active in needs assessment, program development & delivery, and evaluation for the small-farm audience previous to this workshop. This workshop did not add to my expertise, contact list, resource base or client need knowledge. Email MD/DE

The workshop itself didn't help a whole lot. Most of us (CE agents and others) have been working with SF for quite a while. It was really too basic. NY

I don't think it had much of an impact. It was good to be there and to talk to people, but I didn't learn a whole lot. NY

I found it interesting to hear from the farmers, but I don't think I heard anything really new. It brought to the surface their concerns; it refreshed my memory about some of the frustrations and challenges. NY

The workshop was really about the normal interactions, the usual customers that we already serve. It provided a lot of reinforcement for the things we're already thinking about, but not really much in the way of new skills or knowledge. ME

I think the suggestion that we need special educational materials or newly invented outreach strategies for these people is not really on-target. All the tools – the financial tools, the management tools, the biological tools – they're all out there. NY

Outcome 3: New Skills

The workshop itself provided me with a perspective of not being so eager to solve people's problems for them. I'd say I take more of a process mode, to sort out who are the people who have an immediate need for an answer, and who doesn't. I have more patience. I don't need to give them an answer and solve their problems right off the bat. NY

There was some skills building in the discussion groups, about communications, listening, goal setting, business management. There's been a lot of training for this kind of thing before, but it didn't hurt to hear it again– it reinforced what we have. NY

I have more patience, absolutely. The NRCS speaker helped me understand that a farmer who comes into my office may not be able to express what they really need. I have to draw that out. ME

I was already working quite extensively with small farms. I work with the "Beginning Farmers of NH" program. So the workshop didn't increase my work with SF. But it did change how I interact with farmers. I'm a better listener. NH

The skills building in listening techniques has been valuable. I've used skills while interviewing farmers, and during meetings. I'm a better listener. NH

Outcome 4: Innovative program resources and delivery strategies

Greater interagency cooperation

I thought the program was very well done. The primary benefit was strengthening inter-agency cooperation. Our inter agency relationships on a county basis are very good here in NH but there is a need for us to get together more on a state-wide basis. email NH

The biggest thing was that I got a chance to meet people from other agencies. I'm pretty new to the state. Other than that, the workshop was enjoyable, but I don't feel that I gained any new skills or knowledge. I've been working with this audience for 18 years. NH

I am working with a group of Extension agents that I did not work with prior to the training. Email ENY

(The most important part was) Interacting with other agency people. We don't often get a chance to interact, and to talk about how we talk to farmers. ME

The best part was being able to meet all these people – like MOFGA, and the state Department of Ag. We just weren't aware of all the resources and programs that are out there. We really need this partnership! I have told two different farmers, since the workshop, about programs they can tap into, one through MOFGA and one through ME Department of Ag. ME

I have a better idea of who to call for specific help. For example, I was writing a newsletter article on irrigation, and because of the workshop, I knew exactly who to call with a question about the EQIP program. NH

I was on the team putting together the workshop and I went to all the meetings. That was the excellent, excellent part of it. DE

I've always had good working relationships with agencies. Now I have an even better understanding of what's available from them. ME

It raised the issue and the awareness of us all about working with SF. We've chatted about that, we've had discussions among us in CE, and with FSA, SWCD staff who also work out of this building. Several of the USDA people went to the workshops also. NY

I made some new connections, for example PASA (PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture) – now I have some faces to put with the names. Also, because of the workshop we are now getting help from the Growing New Farmers folks, help in promoting our new Beef Marketing initiative. I'm also chair of the PA-NJ Extension Partnership. I brought back the workshop 3-ring notebook to our meeting and took ½ hour on the agenda to go over it with the group. PA

We discovered that we need a much better email communications system across the agencies. Each agency has their own networks, but we don't share information across agencies so much. I'm starting to work on that problem. ME

At the first workshop I got together with our county Extension agent and FSA agent. We talked about getting together on a regular basis after that. It hasn't transpired yet, but I may initiate that in the next few weeks. Before the workshop, I had met them, but the workshop helped strengthen the relationship. NY

I had been trying to connect with some of the larger, established crop farms to participate in some of our programs. I know that a lot of our programs attract a mix of people, including some who are really just back-yard gardeners who think they might want to farm. I knew that these bigger farms would feel more comfortable if we did some things really targeted for them. And I knew some of them were interested, but I just didn't have a way to follow up really, because I didn't know them. But I called this Extension guy I met at the workshop and he'd been to some of these farms and said he'd be happy to talk with them. And the next day, another person from Extension called and said she had some more farmers who were interested. NY

I got to know a lot of people I didn't know, especially within CE and USDA. Now I know who to contact. PA

I have a greater knowledge of the agency and organizational resources available for small farms. ME

It has been a great catalyst in getting us more involved with other organizations doing similar work. There's a lot of momentum building around new farmer programs. We already had a very collaborative approach, but this was a good kick-start to bring it to another level. We're partnering with other local organizations on a buy local campaign, and the workshop helped move that partnership forward. I've been stressing the need for collaboration, the need for all our personnel to take initiative in collaboration building, internally, and with other organizations. VT

We (already) stress, at NRCS, cooperation with other agencies to help farmers and other landowners. I guess I have a little more familiarity with some other organizations in the area, that we weren't exactly sure what they did. NY

(Since the workshop) I'm trying to be much more inclusive in developing multi-agency, multidisciplinary teams for the Beginning Farmers of NH program. Also, the workshop created more awareness and enthusiasm for these teams around the state. Agency people who participated in the Listening to Farmers workshop now want to participate in the Beginning Farmers teams. NH

I was already very enthusiastic. But I was frustrated with our agencies in NH. Now I'm more optimistic about the potential for working together. NH

We agency people need to get together like this at least once a year. I think that's going to happen now. ME

I wish we had more time to do this kind of programming. I was part of the NH organizing team, and in our evaluations we agreed that we want to do more, to bring people together more regularly across agencies. NH

Negatives

This was actually a little disappointing. I've always been aggressive about collaborating with other ag agencies, organizations, and agribusiness. I don't know if any of these people attended the workshop, but there hasn't been anyone coming around to talk about collaboration. I'm still the initiator. My collaborations, for example with FSA, are still the same. NY

Innovative program design and delivery

As a result of the training, I am planning a marketing bus tour in the Salisbury region. Email ENY

I will be working with local agencies to sponsor a fall meeting for small scale farmers to learn about the various agency farm programs. MD/DE

We're going to have a bus tour in July. We came up with that during the final B.S. sessions at the workshop. MD

At the end of the workshop we met in county groups to discuss plans. Our county is now planning to put on a similar program this fall at the county level for our SFs. Goal is to have SF become aware of all the services and projects that agencies and organizations have available. ME

We've developed two new farmer programs that have become regionalized over a five-county area. They grew out of the 2001 (professional development) workshop, in part, and also just from the increased demand for new farmer programs that we've seen. There is kind of a "movement" here. NY

If anything, it's made me place a greater emphasis on writing, on my newsletter, and on single-page mailings. They want something they can read, quickly, so direct mailings are ideal. I've experimented with farmer-to-farmer discussion groups, and I've stepped it up a little since the workshops. But it's difficult. You can assemble a group, but then no leader emerges to keep it going, and so Extension has to keep at it. It takes a lot of time. It's not a priority.

Another thing that came through loud and clear, from the research and from the workshops – Farm Tours. They want farm tours! I don't know how much of an actual impact these tours make... it's really hard to find a farm for them to visit where they can actually take back any useable ideas. But these farmers want to go on farm tours. So... we're doing farm tours. NY

I came away with lots of ideas. It helped me in formulating new delivery methods and approaches. I've started to "sneak" stuff in – shorter programs, locally delivered, multi-media. The discussion group concept came through loud and clear, also farm tours. NY

We (DE State U) are purchasing a 100 acre farm for a research and demonstration farm. What animals do we want? I'll be thinking about the R&D tie-in for small farms, we'll be getting goats, and sheep and other animals that the small farms have. DE

Outcome 5: Reaching and serving targeted SF constituents

See all quotes under "Program Design" and "Outreach and Targeting" above.

Also:

I learned just how important it is to the small farmer that I as an ag agency representative stay in touch when referring he or she to another ag agency rep. I have been careful to do this since the workshop. Email ME

I'd say I'm more familiar with the issues that SF face, and so when I'm talking to colleagues or to legislators or whatever, I can express them more effectively. PA

(Since the workshop) I take more time with the small farms. I've got more patience. When they call me I just go out there and I take more time. I've realized that they have as much right to our services as the larger farms. MD

We made contact with a few SF that we wouldn't have otherwise. We had a SF from this area on a panel, trying to think of other ways of doing things. Now we're working with this farmer. I wrote an article about the workshop, and about the

importance of SF in our county, and I received some compliments. I'd say I'm taking more time with the SF who come in, and seeking them out a little more, trying to find out their needs. NY

I'm working with some new farmers, who were part of the workshop program. NY

(The workshop) pointed out that we should try to find money for these farmers. So now I go in and talk to the banker about being more lenient with the terms of the loan, and making more money available. I tell them, "Look, if you want this young person to farm, you have to make more money available, or it's just not going to work." It's like, you want me to learn how to swim, so you tie both my hands behind my back and throw me in the water. That's what we do to these new farmers. VT

It's forcing me to move ahead on a project that was sitting on the back burner – the statewide Directory of Resources. The workshop made it clear that this is really needed. ME

I'm now trying to compile a resource book, so when I do have clients I have it all in one place. Information about grants, and so on. NY

The new ideas I got will help shape the project I'm developing. PA

It has moved us along in building the program to serve existing farmers, not just beginning farmers. Farmers who are looking at maybe starting a new enterprise, or a new marketing strategy. VT

One of the biggest things, the thing I was most happy about, was that I can be of more help to these farmers... They can have more confidence (in me) because I know more about what's available. We're so isolated here, that farmers don't always get the benefit of existing programs. This is a huge help. ME

I'm starting to keep track (of SF) more carefully, since I realized there are more of them out there than I thought. ME

I'm trying a little harder now. I'm more aware of their frustrations, more sensitive. So I'm taking more time, being more careful to be as helpful as I can be. NY

Within our county Extension staff, we're going to try to approach it as a team. One person is going to focus on the small farms as the major thrust of her program. The rest of us are going to cover her other responsibilities. If we get a call from a small farm and she can't go, I'll still go out there. But she will be the main one. MD

It made us more sensitive to what their needs are. But we're somewhat tied to our programs. We do try to make time to provide technical assistance, and maybe after the meeting we're trying a bit harder to point them in the right direction. NY

I enjoy working with small farms, The enthusiasm hasn't changed. But now, because of the workshop, I can feel more confident about being helpful, knowing what's available. ME

Negatives

If anything I now have a stronger appreciation of the fact that we've all been working with these farms all along. And that the accusation that we've not been working with SF is just not on target. These accusations are being made by SF who don't speak for SF in general. I think they're a "vocal minority" of SF. NY

Other outcomes that were achieved

Attitude shift: Enhanced legitimacy, visibility, enthusiasm, advocacy for SF audience

There is a whole new future for a small farm, and a great resource of support and information available. MD/DE farmer pw

In the past 2 to 3 years I have changed my views regarding small farmer needs and seen others change their views. I believe this is due to the work of the Small Farms Initiative. Email

It's not that we've been reluctant, we've always worked with SF, but it gave support to working with SF. That this is a valid audience to be working with. SF may represent only small part of the total dollars generated in agriculture, but there are a lot of people involved, and it's important to the county. NY

Cornell's Extension service would seem to have an excellent TEACHABLE MOMENT regarding farm businesses of smaller size. Maybe you could work with your FFA chapters and your 4-H club's as a place to begin working with the next group of small but profitable agricultural businesses. Projects and opportunities abound!!!

One interesting thing was the idea that you don't have to grow to be successful. I haven't really been part of the agriculture community, I don't work with an ag agency, but my sense is that their sense is -- if you're not growing, you can't make it. You can't compete. But it all depends on your goals. Some of these farms are part-time, and the farm income isn't necessarily the most critical income for the household. Still they're very much a part of our county. In some ways, maybe a lot of small farms add more to our county than one large farm, because they tend to buy more locally, and sell locally, they're more part of the community. NY

It's easy to get caught up in the big farm thing. But they're not the ones that are going to preserve our rural landscape. NY

I've realized that they have as much right to our services as the larger farms. MD

I speak more on behalf of small farmers than I might have in the past with my colleagues. I'm creating an atmosphere of greater acceptance. NY

Informally, I'm using some of your messages to my own advantage. Messages like: SF are out there, and they'll continue to be out there; that there are specific educational needs (again I don't think they're so different on large farms); that

diversification and alternative enterprises are options.... This intrigues people in the agencies and in agribusiness, these alternatives. NY

I attend our monthly Farm Bureau meetings, and after the workshop I brought up the question of how much time I should be spending with these SF who are resistant to change. And here are all these big farmers, intelligent farmers around the table, and they all agreed that it was important. That it's the people in farming, and not just the number of cows. NY

Since the workshop I suppose I have reached out to agriservice providers and agribusiness people to articulate the needs of the SF audience and help them reach out to SFs. NY

(I think I've communicated the importance of:) sensitivity to the needs of SF and their concerns. The need for a balanced approach – we can't go overboard but we need to address the SF audience. NY

Our IDA-EDC (Industrial Development Agency-Economic Development Corporation) has recently pulled together a group to look at agriculture in the county. We're putting together a little bulletin, and at a meeting we talked about the kind of agriculture we could spotlight. I suggested, What about maple syrup? What about horticulture? We don't think about horticulture much in Cortland County but we have some people doing greenhouses, and they're small businesses. NY

Sometimes when you work with dairy farmers, they're pretty down on their prospects. This program had more farmers with more upbeat attitudes, maybe it has something to do with their enterprise. ME

I'm more receptive to the true and full benefits of living in a rural lifestyle, for what families can get out of farming. I grew up in a small farm setting, and I always thought, maybe it's OK for me, but it's not for everyone. It's not so much about the money, it's more about the changes that it makes in people. NY

I guess I've always felt a little guilty about (working with small farms). Now I know about the important contributions that SF make to NYS and everything, and I don't have to feel bad about spending time on them. NY

It was invigorating. It was good to see a lot of people working on the same issues, feeling like we can really accomplish some things. And, to be a little self serving, there was a lot of discussion about the areas of marketing and business planning, and finance, and these are areas that we've done a lot in. So it really validated what we're doing, and that's invigorating. And I think it lifted up the possibilities for partnering to a new level. VT

Definitely increased my enthusiasm. I didn't realize what they had to go through, what they did. It's harder than I thought. ME

I used to think: Geez, most of our farms are very small. Do we really have an industry? Now I recognize that, even though they're small, they're still important. NY

Methodology shift: legitimacy for different program designs, etc

This training and the surrounding discussion has been very helpful. Hopefully the findings of the small farms focus groups (i.e preference for small group gatherings, farmer-to-farmer education, one-on-one CCE/farmer interaction) are being communicated to mid-level CCE administration (CER's, County Executive Directors, Program Leaders, Advisory Committees, etc.) so that they might begin to accept, even promote programming other than the traditional farm tour/large "extension meeting" and recognize impact other than number of attendees at those traditional gatherings. Many extension educators have recognized the changing needs of smaller farms and have been addressing them discreetly, but advisory/supervisory personalities seem to be more intolerant of change and generally have not encouraged (or, in some cases, even permitted) programming to evolve in their organizations. Email CNY

Pretty much the accepted method for Cooperative Extension outreach and education has been meetings. And the question is always, "Why don't they come to the meetings?" Now, thanks to the efforts of Dave Smith, and Eddy Ladue and you folks (referring to SF research, as well as the workshops), it's now out there in black and white, for (CE) administrators and mid-level managers to see. Our (field staff) efforts to bring programs and information to individual farmers should be made more acceptable, more politically correct because of this. NY

Obstacles/questions/issues raised

Different needs of NRCS, FSA, CE

Unfortunately, so many of the farm programs that we in FSA administer do not apply to the small farmer. The larger states gear what is in a new program and we try our best to make it work here in NH. If Congress could regionalize and create programs to fit our needs, we all would be better off. Email ME FSA

Working with beginning farmers/small farms is definitely a part of our work, but our agency is driven by farm program cost-share programs and meeting goals that are measured in acres or animal units impacted. This drives our work and insures that much of our time will be spent on the larger farms.

NRCS deals mostly with dairy operations. As an NCS engineer I guess I found about 20% of it useful, whereas if I was in Extension I might have found 80% of it useful. Maybe the NRCS planner might have found it more useful than I did. It was a good workshop; there were a lot of good ideas, just that I can't make much use of them as an NRCS engineer. The program did open my eyes to a couple of options for both SF and LF, like strawberries as a sideline, or whatever. I think I've mentioned some of these ideas to a couple of farmers. NY NRCS

With the USDA programs there's not much we can do differently. I think most of the CED's (FSA County Executive Directors) went away feeling like the workshop didn't pertain to them so much. This was somewhat frustrating. I think it was the reason we didn't go back to the second workshop. NY FSA

When you work for Uncle Sam, the programs are pretty much top-down. They come from the National level and we do our best to make them apply. But the workshop gave me an appreciation that I need to be looking out for this audience. It's not just the potato farmer with a hundred or 400 acres, it's also the vegetable grower with just 3 acres. ME NRCS

In our discussion group we had several lower-level Soil and Water, NRCS folks, and there's not really anything they can do, because they're just doing their programs. (And, here they are, we're talking to a dairy couple who's doing cheese, but they're not doing any grazing. The couple is telling about all these reasons they can't graze, and a lot of it is based on preconceptions of grazing, and the facilitator had to turn to these folks and say "Don't you do grazing programs?" They just didn't see that they had an opportunity to talk about their menu of programs. On the other hand, there was a CCE agent there who was really good. She was asking a lot of good questions, she had a lot of ideas.) The NRCS and SWCS field people -- they're the wrong people to have at these kinds of meetings. They can't do anything. I think you need to do it like the NH people did in the Listening to Farmers meeting they had. They specifically invited their participants, people who could make a difference in programming, and outreach, like the head of Farm Credit, the heads of the different agencies. They didn't invite the lower-level people. NY

Allocating effort/resources among different clientele

I view the small farmer as one who is farming as their primary occupation, not someone who is a part-timer looking to increase their personal discretionary cash. We have many folks in this area that I consider to be hobby farmers. I really have a hard time justifying my time with these types vs. a small family farm living on the edge. Email ENY

We're a county that probably has more SF, and more farms, than any other county in NYS. For a long time we've tried to give support to SF. But there's still some mixed feelings, some unanswered questions. You can spend a lot of time working with SF, but they only account for 5% of the agricultural production generated in this county. It's not that the issue is controversial or openly discussed much. But it's a tricky one. NY

I'm frustrated that the state isn't doing a better job keeping track of these farmers. They should have a database. Maybe when someone files their tax return and says they're a farmer, it should go into a database. I'm more frustrated since the workshop because I didn't realize how little they do. Of course, they're short on staff, so it's understandable. ME

I've always been enthusiastic about keeping the SF in. It's a theme that runs through conservation organizations like NRCS. We want to keep the SFs in. With most of the money going to LF, we're always scouting around for ways to help out the SFs. NY

In my county, there is a lot of divisiveness about "small versus large". There's a kind of an unspoken agreement that we don't want to talk about it, and if we don't

talk about it, it will go away. Actually I don't hear this so much from the SF themselves. They say, "Hey, I'm a SF and it's OK. You can call me a SF." It's mostly the large farms, I think, who fear talking about it, who want to ignore it. I guess my tendency is to call it how I see it, put it on the table and talk about it. But I need to respect the feelings that people have in this area, and be sensitive. It's not that I feel pressured by my board or advisory committee one way or the other. There are both large and small farms on those committees. They pretty much leave it up to me to decide how I do my programs. But I think it would be good for them to discuss it. And this is a legitimate issue facing educators – How do I divvy up my time? What's the priority of different audiences? This discussion is not taking place in my county. I think the timing for the workshops was really good. There is a lot of interest among county leaders in ensuring that the SF sector is being nurtured. Especially in the ag economic development efforts. Also Chamber of Commerce. With all the interest in SF, and farmers markets, and all the ag tours, I think SFing is really hitting its stride here in the North Country. But there's still a certain attitude that's out there. A cynicism and skepticism about SF. There's an arrogance. Some of the educators who work mostly with the large commercial farms, they just say "these SFs won't get off their butts to go to a meeting, and I don't want to bother dealing with them. I don't have to." These tend to be the specialists, not so much the people working at the county level. I think it comes down to their feeling downright scared, and threatened. That if we start talking about this, they might be accused of not serving the total public. NY

Continuing confusion over What is a small farm?

In the EQIP program we talk about less than 140 cows being a small farm, but in the workshop I think a small farm was more like about 20 cows. NY

The SF terminology is very confusing. Most people think of "very few acres" but the 400-acre potato growers I work with are now called SF. I was told that 96 percent of ME farms are small. ME

I've always been enthusiastic about working with them. My frustration is that I still don't think we have a handle on what a small farm is in ME. I'm still not sure who we should be focusing our efforts on... beginning farmers? Existing farmers? The workshop didn't help me with that question. ME

Future directions for professional development

Ninety-two percent of the agriservice professionals who responded to our email survey in April-May 2002 said they are interested in more opportunities for training and/or networking related to education and assistance for small farms.

I would like to get training on financial aspects of small farms- with relation to tax issues & planning (not just estate planning), and insurance possibilities. It easier to find the resources for larger farms, difficult to adjust & find for small farms- I know its out there, but I lack time for the search & adjustment. Also, dealing with

the urban/rural interface and municipal constraints- things to look out for- pre-planning. Email ME

We've had two workshops now, and we've sort of worn out that method, so what is the next step? The workshop has made us aware of working with SF, and that's beneficial. But where do we go from here? NY

The workshop helped me realize that I have to figure this out on my own. (e.g. – the workshop was not helpful) Maybe we need to get a bunch of CE old-timers around the table, with ten or more years of experience, and talk about this. (He's referring to the problem that workshop was too basic.) NY

Don't get me wrong – for a certain audience this was a wonderful program. But it was not geared for my needs. (JG prompt – what would meet your needs as an experienced SF educator?) What I would benefit from would be: 1) help me find the money, cost sharing. So many great ideas, but we need funding. 2) we need some specific videos that we can use with this audience. We all have powerpoint presentations, etc, but we really need videos. Topics: 1) tractors for the 20 acre farm (finding, servicing, maintaining); 2) converting facilities from large-farm to small-farm use (eg when a large farm gets subdivided and someone ends up with a big dairy barn...) Greg will write up a list of video needs and send to JG. PA

I'd really like to get together with some key people who do small farms, and just talk for a day. No agenda. Or maybe a list of 6 issues to talk about. E.g. NOFA, MOFGA, PASA, some CE people... NY

A big push should be made towards educating the banking and governmental funders, who seem to push small farms to get bigger to make more money – theoretically, instead of improving the net profit at their current size. Helping to reduce costs to the small farm through alternative energy sources, grazing systems, and off farm feed purchases all can help reach the net profit goals. Email