

NCR-SARE Youth Educator Grant Project

Final Report Form

Please use this form to write the final report on your project. Use as much space as necessary to answer the questions. You are not restricted to the space on this form. The report may be prepared on a computer or handwritten (please write or print clearly) and needs to be submitted to the North Central Region (NCR) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Office by March 31, 2013. The final payment of your grant will be awarded when NCR-SARE receives and approves your final report and final budget summary.

1. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

- Name: Jessica G. Jones
- Address: PO Box 779
City: Tecumseh State: Nebraska Zip Code: 68450
- Phone: 402-335-3669
- E-mail: jjones12@unl.edu
- Website: <http://johnson.unl.edu>
- Project Title: "Sow What?"

- Project Number: YENC09-010
- Project Duration: March 18, 2011 – March 31, 2013
- Date of Report: May 9, 2011

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

How did you educate youth about sustainable agriculture? What sustainable agriculture knowledge did they gain? Be specific and include the goals, audience, project activities, and results of your project as indicated on this form. Describe how you planned and conducted your project to meet your project goals. Consider what questions other educators would ask about your grant project and try to answer them.

I educated youth about sustainable agriculture through a series of six full day sessions once a month from April 2010 to October 2010. The events included hands on activities and field trips. Youth who participated gained knowledge of sustainability and how it relates to agriculture and the food system. The goal of the project was to make youth more aware of where their food comes from and the issues related to food production. The primary audience of the project was girls grades 7 thru 12 who reside in southeastern Nebraska. Some participants came into the program with knowledge of agriculture, but most did not.

To plan and conduct the project I worked with a Program Specialist at the Spirit of Nebraska Girl Scout Council. The Program Specialist helped to recruit girls to participate and helped to lead some of the sessions. The sessions were as follows:

Session One: "Sow What about Sow What?"

Participants gained a better knowledge of the food system and were introduced to sustainable agricultural practices through a variety of hands on activities.

Session Two: "Foraging for Food"

Participants explored their local food network by visiting a farmer's market, a local dairy, and a food cooperative.

Session Three: "Dig Deeper"

Participants visited local agricultural operations to learn about different sustainable agricultural practices and challenges farmers face in the area.

Session Four & Five: "Planning to Harvest"

Participants identified a project to complete in their communities to help educate others about sustainable agriculture.

Session Six: Wrap Up

Participants reviewed what they learned by participating in the program and shared their knowledge with others.

A. BACKGROUND. Before receiving this grant, were you involved in teaching youth about sustainable agriculture? If so, briefly describe what type of sustainable agriculture training you did and the students you worked with.

Before this grant I was involved in youth agricultural programming, but not specifically programming related to sustainable agriculture. Most of my sustainable agricultural programming was for an adult audience. Also before this grant I was actively involved with the Girl Scout program as a volunteer trainer and former troop leader.

B. GOALS. List your project goal(s) as identified in your grant application.

- *Educate participants about the basics of agricultural production and different sustainable agricultural practices.*
- *Increase participant's understanding of sustainability and the environmental issues related to conventional agriculture.*
- *Introduce participants to local food systems.*
- *Make participants aware of entrepreneurship opportunities available in sustainable agriculture.*

C. PROCESS. Describe the steps involved in conducting the project and the logic behind the choices you made. Why did you use this approach? Please be specific so that other educators can consider what would apply to their efforts and gain from your experiences.

- *Contacted the local Girl Scout Council about collaborating on the project.*
- *Met with the Project Specialist at the Council to draft a plan.*
- *Decided upon once a month meetings for the course of the growing season since an original idea was for girls to work on growing their own garden, but due to location constraints this idea was scratched.*
- *Planned and organized sessions around the guidelines and curriculum set forth in the "Sow What?" leaders guide.*
- *Worked with the Girl Scout Council to recruit participants.*
- *Met one day per month between April and October.*

D. PEOPLE. List people who assisted with the project and explain how they were involved. Please include educators, farmers and ranchers, parents or others who may have helped you. Also, list any personnel from a public agency, such as the Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Services or Soil and Water Conservation Districts who may have assisted with this project.

- *Tracy Stewart, Program Specialist Sprit of Nebraska Girl Scout Council. Served as the contact with the Girl Scout Council and also helped to lead sessions.*
- *Vaughn Hammond, UNL Extension Educator. Lead a tour about alternative crops at the UNL Kimmel Education Center in Nebraska City.*
- *Rod and Kay Christen, local agricultural producers. Lead a tour of their operation to teach participants more about beef and forage production.*

E. RESULTS. What results did you achieve and how were they measured? Sustainable agriculture is farming and ranching that is ecologically sound, profitable, and socially responsible. Which of these aspects of sustainable agriculture did the youth you were teaching learn about? Describe the youth audience you were trying to reach. Include outcomes you achieved and how you measured them through surveys, attendance, or other methods (if appropriate).

As a result of participating youth learned more about sustainable agriculture, especially the ecological concepts Results were measured through presentations youth gave at the conclusion of the final session. Major points youth identified as learning the most about included:

- *What is sustainable agriculture?*
- *Environmental issues*
- *Anyone can change the environment*
- *Healthy eating*
- *Benefits of trying new things*

F. DISCUSSION. What did you learn from this project? How has this affected you and the young people you are working with? Were the results what you expected? If not, why? Are there changes you would make if trying this project again or recommending it to others?

I learned from this project how to be flexible and make changes if necessary. The biggest challenges I was faced with included promotion, attendance, variation in ages and experience levels, teaching without lecturing, and conveying your passion for the topic. In regards to promotion there was a mix up with the advertising that went out to potential participants that was beyond my control, which may of affected total numbers. Attendance was an issue because the program was a big time commitment for girls to make. Variation in ages and experience was an issue that probably affected the quality of the program for some participants. If I was to do this program again I would limit it to a more defined age range either middle school students or high school students. Teaching to a group who had little agricultural knowledge without a lot of lecturing was difficult. I tried to remedy this through hands on activities and field trips, but I sometimes struggled to know if participants were gaining the knowledge I wanted them to get out of the program. Finally, conveying my passion for sustainable agriculture was difficult due to the group dynamics.

3. OUTREACH

How did you share information from your project with others? Who were you trying to reach? What methods did you use for telling others about: a. Your project, b. Project activities or events, c. Project results? Be sure to include the names and dates of outreach activities and events and the number of people who attended. Was there media coverage of your project? What plans do you have for future outreach?

Please enclose any press releases, news clippings, flyers, brochures, or publications developed during this project. Also send any photos that might be helpful in telling your story to others. Please be sure to get permission to use the photos if they include other people. For photos with children, you will need a parent's permission. Please fill out and turn in a NCR-SARE Image Consent form along with your photos.

I was able to share information about my project with others at the Farmers Forum in Columbia, Missouri. I hoped by sharing information about the Girl Scout sustainable ag program other individuals it would educate them about ways to teach youth about sustainable agriculture.

4. PROGRAM EVALUATION

This was the first year the North Central Region SARE Program sponsored a Youth Educator Grant program. As a participant, do you have any recommendations for the regional Administrative Council about this program? Is there anything you would like to see changed?

Overall, I don't have any recommendations to the Council. I think this a great program that really helps those involved with youth teach about sustainability.

5. BUDGET SUMMARY

Complete the Final Budget Summary form and return it with your Final Report. The final budget form is similar to the budget form you turned in with your grant proposal. It has one additional column titled, Actual Costs, so you can show what project items actually cost compared to your proposed costs.

You can only use grant funds for expenses incurred and items purchased for conducting your project. If the amounts for items listed have changed significantly from the amounts listed in the proposal, please include an explanation with the final budget summary.

Please submit your final report and final budget summary by email by March 31, 2013 to:
BenjaminJ@lincolnu.edu

Joan Benjamin
NCR-SARE Associate Regional Coordinator
Lincoln University
South Campus Building
Room 101
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Phone: 573-681-5545
E-mail: BenjaminJ@lincolnu.edu

If you have questions, contact Joan Benjamin, NCR-SARE Associate Regional Coordinator.