

# HMI & NCAT Mississippi and Arkansas Peer Learning Program Changes Lives

January 17, 2024 by [Ann Adams](#)



*Arkansas RAMP participants had multiple outdoor activities including learning production practices and evaluating livestock enterprises as well as developing Safe to Fail trials, STAC forage assessments, and biological monitoring.*

In the heart of Arkansas and Mississippi, a transformative collaboration between Holistic Management International (HMI) and the [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) (NCAT) has given rise to the Regenerative Agriculture Mentoring Program (RAMP) program funded by [Southern SARE](#). This initiative has proven to be a beacon of sustainable farming practices, bringing together participants to delve into holistic goals, grazing principles, and many other essential components that shape regenerative agriculture during their training in 2023. HMI Certified Educator [Linda Pechin-Long](#) facilitated this program throughout 2023 to 16 participants who manage 1,750 acres, but influence over 30 million acres.



*Mississippi RAMP participants had numerous classroom activities including developing a SWOT analysis of their businesses, doing a gross profit analysis, and learning key grazing planning calculations to determine carrying capacity on their operations.*

At the core of the RAMP experience is the creation of holistic goals. Participants are guided through the process of envisioning a comprehensive and sustainable future for their farms. This step sets the tone for a journey beyond traditional agricultural approaches, emphasizing a holistic and balanced perspective.

RAMP participants are then immersed in the fundamentals of regenerative agriculture, with a particular focus on grazing principles. Understanding the intricacies of grazing enhances regenerative land management and promotes healthier ecosystems. Safe-to-fail (S2F) trials further empower participants to experiment with innovative approaches, fostering a culture of adaptability and resilience in the face of uncertainties.

This program introduces participants to crucial monitoring techniques, including STAC forage assessment and biological monitoring. These tools empower farmers to observe and understand the impact of their practices on the land and ecosystems. The integration of gross profit analysis adds a financial dimension, emphasizing the economic sustainability of regenerative practices.

RAMP goes beyond the classroom, offering participants the invaluable experience of farm visits. This hands-on approach allows farmers to witness successful regenerative practices in action. Farm visits serve as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, inspiring participants to implement learned principles on their own farms.

One of the hallmarks of RAMP is the adaptability of its participants. All attendees report making significant changes to their management practices based on the insights gained from the program. This adaptability is a testament to the effectiveness of RAMP's holistic and practical approach.

Networking and peer discussions form a vital component of the RAMP experience. Participants find immense value in sharing knowledge and key information with one another, creating a supportive community. This collaborative environment enhances individual learning and strengthens the fabric of the regenerative agriculture community.

A standout achievement of the program is instilling confidence in participants to test decisions against their values. This skill empowers farmers to make choices that align with their principles, contributing to the overall sustainability of their operations.

The lessons learned extend far beyond the fields as the Arkansas RAMP group cultivates regenerative farming practices. From holistic goal-setting to community-building, the program has left an indelible mark on the participants, emphasizing the importance of regenerative agriculture in the broader context of quality of life and community resilience.

*Evaluations from the Arkansas RAMP program showed that as a result of the training*

- 85.7 % of participants found the program excellent.
- 100% of the participants would recommend the program to others.
- 100% of the participants use decision testing regularly
- 100% of the participants have adapted their management.

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# HMI Collaborates with NCAT and Southern SARE in Arkansas and Mississippi

July 21, 2023 by [Ann Adams](#)

Guest blog by *Linda Pechin-Long*



*Kristen Efurd and Nene Hammer Safe to Fail Trial in Arkansas*

In the heartland of America, a diverse group of farmers, ranchers, and professionals are part of Holistic Management International's [Regenerative Agriculture Mentoring Program \(RAMP\)](#) group. Led by an HMI Certified Educator, this program represents a collaboration between multiple organizations, in multiple states made possible through the support of a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grant, with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) playing a pivotal role.

The program's key learning outcomes are shaping participants' perspectives on agriculture and land management. Creating a Holistic Goal is a fundamental pillar of the journey,

and participants appreciate creating clear goals, identifying their values, and making value-based decisions. The holistic decision-making approach embraces complexity and sustainability, enabling participants to prioritize long-term environmental, social, and economic health.

### **Embracing Nature’s Wisdom**



*Arkansas RAMP group learning about each other during high-level introductions.*

In order to aid farmers in the regeneration of their land, a Safe to Fail trial area has been implemented. This area utilizes grazing practices that emulate the historical density and behavior of buffalo herds. Through careful monitoring and maintenance of the land, it is ensured that productivity is sustained for the benefit of future generations

### **The Power of Peer Mentorship**

It’s truly amazing how the program’s success can be attributed in part to the valuable contributions of peer mentorship and collaborative efforts. When diverse participants from varying backgrounds come together, they share their unique experiences and knowledge, which ultimately fosters a deep sense of community and mutual support. It’s so inspiring to see how these individuals rise above geographical barriers and organizational affiliations to become exceptional stewards of the land.



*Kelli “KD”*

*Randle, Felicia Bell and Towanda Farrington eagerly awaiting the release of the goats from the trial area.*

As the program progresses, participants will explore Holistic Financial Planning. Understanding the financial aspects of regenerative agriculture is essential to ensuring its long-term sustainability. Participants aim to balance financial viability and ecological health, ensuring profitability without compromising their commitment to holistic principles and quality of life.

The program includes enterprise analysis to optimize the productivity and impact of farming and ranching ventures. Identifying weak links allows for addressing potential inefficiencies and areas for improvement. Participants share results and brainstorm solutions with peers.

As the program progresses, participants anticipate ongoing peer support, knowledge exchange, and celebration of collective achievements. Their dedication to regenerative practices and Holistic Management is sowing seeds for a sustainable and resilient future in agriculture in Arkansas and Mississippi.



*Dr. Lela Rios Reyes (Mississippi State University), Felicia Bell (NCAT), and Fulton McField Jr with a creative Safe to Fail Trial with goats in Arkansas.*

16 participants from the program manage 1,750 acres, but influence over 30 million acres. 82% increased their knowledge of Holistic Management and 100% said they would recommend this course to others.

Thanks to the USDA [Southern SARE](#) and [NCAT](#) for their support and collaboration in this programming!