

LNE88-11: Taking Charge: Strategies for Sustainable Agriculture in the Northeast (video presentations)

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9. **PROJECT STATUS:** Completed.

10. **FUNDING TO DATE:**

Organization	SARE/ACE Funding	Non-Federal Match Funds	Other Federal Match Funds
Rodale Institute, Emmaus, PA	\$60,000	\$149,258	N/A

11. **ABSTRACT:** The video series profiles the progress that farmers have made toward sustainable agriculture. It documents the methods that farmers have developed to reduce or eliminate the use of purchased inputs. Photographed during the course of an entire growing season, the series was produced with the help of nearly 200 farmers and other experts. It was shot in a 12-state area in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.

There are six videos in all: Field Crops, Rotational Grazing, Vegetables, IPM for Vegetables & Small Fruits, IPM For Apples, High-Value Marketing. Each runs for approximately 30 minutes, and features audio and video footage almost exclusively of farmers and farm-field operations.

Accompanying the series is a "Resource and Viewing Guide" that provides basic background on the subject matter of each individual video.

Together, the videos and printed guide are aimed at providing an introduction to sustainable agriculture for farmers, researchers, policymakers, Extension staff and other interested people.

12. **OBJECTIVES:** This project had six key objectives.

Objective 1: Use video technology to offer northeastern farmers encouragement, ideas and reliable information about making a transition to a lower-input system.

Objective 2: Address separately the needs of northeastern farmers of two distinct kinds: a) the large-scale field crops and/or livestock farmer, and b) the high-value fruit, vegetable and ornamental growers.

Objective 3: Address in separate, sequential programs two distinct

needs for each of the two kinds of farmers: a) encouragement and b) reliable information.

Objective 4: Complement the motivational and informational role of the videos by providing a simple study guide that will assist in the farmers' decision-making process.

Objective 5: Create an avenue for personal assistance by providing the viewer with an address and telephone number for additional advice and information.

Objective 6: Distribute the video presentations and the study guides through multiple outlets for maximum effective coverage of the farming community.

**13. SPECIFIC PROJECT RESULTS:** Here are the achievements against the six objectives listed above.

Objective 1: The comments and advice in the videos focus almost exclusively on switching from chemical-intensive production methods to those relying on minimal or zero purchased chemicals.

Objective 2: Meeting the needs of large-scale producers of field crops and/or livestock are the videos titled "Field Crops" and "Rotational Grazing." The presentations on "Vegetables," "IPM for Vegetables & Small Fruits," "IPM For Apples" and "High-Value Marketing" serve growers of horticultural crops.

Objective 3: The farmer comments provide practical, how-to information as well as the kind of encouragement and inspiration borne of first-person experience. Comments from researchers, Extension staff and other technical experts strengthen the scientific reliability of the message.

Objective 4: The "Resource & Viewing Guide" takes a simple, step-by-step approach to introducing the videos, anticipating viewer questions, and providing opportunities for quick follow-up.

Objective 5: The "Resource & Viewing Guide" lists three "expert contacts" for each video. In addition, the Guide lists other reading materials that can provide viewers with more in-depth background on the six subjects covered by the videos.

Objective 6: Distribute the video presentations and the study guides through multiple outlets for maximum effective coverage of the farming community. In addition to meeting the grant requirements for complimentary distribution of the videos, Rodale Institute and Rooy Media have teamed up to promote them to many audiences. Rodale Institute advertises the videos periodically to the 50,000-plus readers of its national farm magazine, The New Farm. The Institute also promotes the videos in direct-mail marketing efforts to its 23,000 book customers. Rooy Media prepared an attractive brochure about the videos and mailed it to 11,000 professors, librarians, high school teachers and Cooperative Extension personnel.

**14. PRODUCER INVOLVEMENT:** The following farmers appear in the videos.

Charles Smith III (vegetables), Bridgeville, DE; Gordon Bemis (vegetables), Concord, MA; John Bemis (vegetables), Concord, MA; Clark

Griffith (cranberries), South Carver, MA; Hamilton Lincoln Jr. (apples), North Brookfield, MA; Mario Marini (fruits, vegetables), Ipswich, MA; Dan Tawczynski (vegetables), Great Barrington, MA; Maurice Tougas (fruits, vegetables), Northboro, MA; James Wilson (vegetables), Lexington, MA; Michael Wisseman (vegetables), Sunderland, MA; Ken Blevins (poultry), Westover, MD; Steven Cullen (poultry, cash grains), Crisfield, MD; Ned Gerber (farmer/biologist), Easton, MD; Walter Schmidt (hogs, cash grains), Sudlersville, MD; Hank Spies III (cash grains), Cordova, MD; David Colson (vegetables), Pownal, ME; Charles DeGrandpre (beef), Freeport, ME; Austin Moore (dairy), N. Whitefield, ME; Donald Perkins (dairy), Charleston, ME; Mark and Vicki Russell (dairy), Litchfield, ME; Tom Settle mire (sheep), Brunswick, ME; Stephen Wood (apples), West Lebanon, NH; Jim Giamarese (vegetables), East Brunswick, NJ; Margaret Clark (dairy), Lowman, NY; Willard DeGolyer (dairy), Castile, NY; Kevin and Kay Englebert (dairy), Nichols, NY; Elizabeth Henderson (vegetables), Rose, NY; Amy Hepworth (apples), Milton, NY; Lou Johns (vegetables), Lodi, NY; Jeffrey Mulligan (dairy), Avon, NY; Mark and Mary Munson (sheep, hogs), Canandaigua, NY; John Myer (cash grains), Romulus, NY; Robin Ostfeld (vegetables), Lodi, NY; Anthony Potenza (cash grain, vegetables), Trumansburg, NY; Elizabeth Ryan (fruit), Staatsburg, NY; David Stern (vegetables), Rose, NY; Lyle Young (dairy), Fulton, NY; Peter Zimmerman (fruit), Staatsburg, NY; Robert Anderson (grain processor), Penns Creek, PA; Paul Clugston (dairy, poultry), Halifax, PA; James and Emeline Crawford (vegetables), Hustontown, PA; Melvin Gelsinger (cash grain), Robeson, PA; Paul Keene (grain processor), Penns Creek, PA; Murry McJunkin (grain, hogs), Bellefonte, PA; Glenn Moyer (dairy), Friedens, PA; Bob and Dawn Russo (sheep), Friedens, PA; Ernest Van Tassell (dairy), Friedens, PA; Don and Nelson Weaver (dairy), New Holland, PA; Brent and John Brigham (dairy), St. Albans, VT; Austin Cleaves (dairy), East Montpelier, VT; Nick Cowles (apples), Shelburne, VT; Nancy Everhart (dairy), Plainfield, VT; Bob and Kim Gray (vegetables), Newbury, VT; Paul and Susan Harlow (vegetables), Bellows Falls, VT; Jack and Anne Lazor (dairy), Westfield, VT; Peter Young (dairy), Plainfield, VT

**15. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:** These videos would provide a sound, fundamental introduction to sustainable agriculture for viewers in any part of the country. The speakers and subjects are from the Northeast, but the principles are universal.

**16. AREAS NEEDING ADDITIONAL STUDY:** N/A

**17. STATES INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT:** Given that the farmers and researchers on camera were, in fact, major participants, it is fair to say that 11 states were involved in this project. They are: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

**18. EXTENSION INVOLVEMENT:** Nine Extension staffers participated as "Cooperators" in this project.

**19. FARMER ADOPTION:** As of this report, more than 250 farmers, farm groups, farm advisors and others have received copies of one or more of these videos. The number of farmers who have actually viewed the videos is, no doubt, much greater than 250. We anticipate this number continuing to multiply as a result of ongoing marketing efforts by Rodale Institute and Rooy Media.