



Improving Farmer Engagement in Sustainable Agriculture Using Participatory Learning Techniques

Northeast SARE Pennsylvania State Program - SNE20-011 PA

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Project: <https://projects.sare.org/proposals/show/657363/6703>

Project Summary. Participatory learning techniques allow farmers and agricultural professionals to actively problem-solve complex issues together. However, agricultural professionals who are highly educated in specific disciplines, often lack training in educational methodology and are unsure how to incorporate teaching tactics that engage adult learners into farmer-based programs. This professional development program will provide education and funding to ag professionals in Pennsylvania who want to use participatory learning techniques at meetings focused on farmer education.

Project participants will have access to educational resources and will contribute to virtual and in-person activities aimed to increase their knowledge and familiarity about concepts related to farmer engagement. Funding will be available to project participants to host a farmer-based event of their choice that incorporates skills acquired from this program. Funding is only available for 30 programs.

Involvement in this project requires a commitment but it was designed to be compatible with educators' existing workloads. Therefore, project requirements (including meeting and travel time) are intended to be minimal and flexible. Participants are encouraged to focus on topics of their choice – new or existing – that fulfil the requirements of their own interests and Extension goals.

Educator Participant Requirements

- Participating ag professionals must work specifically on educating [farmers](#).
- Project involvement requires a commitment from Aug 1, 2021, through Sept. 31, 2023.
- Digital Learning Center (online platform)
 - Review assigned materials and respond to 5 related thought questions in an online platform discussion board (~2 per year/Spring or Summer).
 - Attend 5 virtual meetings to discuss thought questions (~2 per year/Spring or Summer).
- In-person, in-service workshops
 - Attend 2 half-day workshops (1 per year/Fall)
- Respond to all project-related evaluations.
- Lead one farmer-based event of your choosing.
 - To be eligible to receive financial support for the farmer-based event, educators are required to participate in a *minimum* of 4 assignments and virtual meetings on the Digital Learning Center and attend 1 in-person workshop.

Additional Project Benefits

- Funding for a farmer-based program focused on individual interests.
- Support to attend educational events related to adult education (particularly farmers).
- Access and funding for educational materials.
- Involvement with professionals experienced in adult education.
- Collaboration with educator colleagues across disciplines to share ideas.
- Engagement at a project-end workshop.